

## Doing Your Life's Work

Many people live their lives without ever experiencing connection with their Soul. As a result, they never discern their life's work, and they do not carry this out. Instead, they do something else.

What are some of these other things they do instead?

- Get involved in criminal activities and often become incarcerated
- Become addicted to alcohol, drugs, gambling, food, or pornography
- Become waylaid by a religious cult or a terrorist group, and work on the group leader's agenda
- Become involved in an abusive relationship, and spend their lives in terror
- Spend their time traveling, and watching entertainment or sports
- Raise a family and completely lose themselves in the lives of their children
- Work at jobs that take up all of their time and energy
- Get swept away following celebrities, musicians, or sports stars, or totally dedicate themselves to political advocacy
- Follow the doctrines of religion and never get into touch with their own Soul

What happens is that they become so caught up in this outer drama that they do not hear the voice of their own Soul or the cry of their own spirit above the din of the external world.

As a result, they wind up living lives that never express their Soul's mission, and never fulfill their spirit's longing. While many can have meaningful, pleasurable, exciting experiences, they never truly actualize themselves—so inside there is a sense of inauthenticity, of deep dissatisfaction [even despite obtaining many of their society's signs of success], and of inner emptiness.

Finding your life's work has also been called Self-Actualization. When you find it, it feels like you have touched on what you were born to do. When you do this work it brings you joy, deep satisfaction, and energizes you.

### **Finding Actualization**

Psychologist Abraham Maslow stated that actualization was something that people achieved after fulfilling a hierarchy of needs. He pointed out that many people are caught up in their struggle for survival and security, enmeshed in their pursuit of love and belongingness, or absorbed in their quest for esteem, so they never tap the inner marrow of the corridor of bliss, which leads to actualization.

I have modified Maslow's original formulation to some degree, [*with my additions indicated with italics*] in the article, "What Motivates You?" This article was published in 2011 in *The Practical Applications of Meditation in Daily Life and Education* on pages 94 to 95. I will replicate it here.



Maslow's Hierarchy		Sub-levels	Contents
I – Survival	1	Survival	Obtaining food, water, basic housing, medical care, transportation, childcare; getting money to meet these most basic needs
II – Safety	2	Safety	Locking up possessions, getting insurance, safe baby sitting, getting a stable job that pays enough money to pay bills and live
III – Love and Belongingness	3	<i>Romance</i>	Finding a lover or spouse, enjoying a satisfying sex life
	4	Belonging	Finding a circle of loving friends, family or a group that supports you, loves you, and helps you
IV – Esteem	5	<i>Achievement</i>	Accomplishing personal goals, completing your education, getting your own apartment, preparing for your career and learning job skills
	6	Esteem	Earning enough money to enjoy things you want, like a nice car, a house, vacations and entertainment, wearing clothes you like
	7	<i>Pleasure and Beauty</i>	Acquiring aesthetically pleasing objects of art, creating a beautiful environment, acquiring jewelry and collectable objects, making yourself stylish and beautiful by wearing expensive dresses or suits

Maslow's Hierarchy		Sub-levels	Contents
V- Self-Actualization	8	<i>Spirituality</i>	Activating your spirituality by prayer and meditation, joining a religious group
	9	<i>Aspiration</i>	Inner exploration and self-discovery, leading to deep insights and realization
	10	<i>Self-mastery</i>	Learning to control addictions, habits and behavior, cultivating the abilities of your Soul
	11	<i>Service</i>	Expressing your Soul's abilities and gifts to be of service to others, doing volunteer work for others, living love and compassion
	12	Self Actualization	Discovery of your Soul's Purpose, living in harmony with that purpose and making this deepest vision of the heart real—living your dream



## **Finding Your Corridor of Bliss**

To find your corridor of bliss that reveals the pathway to your Self Actualization, you will explore your expression of its component parts through a series of evocative questions.

1. What holds you back, in your opinion, from truly living your dreams? What would you need to do or have that would make this possible?
2. Consider the ways that you have expressed **Spirituality** in your life. Have you activated your spirituality by prayer and meditation, by joining a religious group, or by invocation of the Divine? In what ways do you feel you can grow or expand in this area?
3. In what ways have you experienced your **Aspiration**? Do you feel motivated to pursue inner exploration and self-discovery, and to gain deep insights and realization? To what degree have you been successful in this endeavor? In what ways do you wish to augment this area of your life?
4. Do you feel that you have achieved **Self-Mastery**? How well have you learned to control addictions, habits and behavior? In what ways have you cultivated the abilities of your Soul? In ways do you feel you could achieve greater Self-Mastery?
5. In what ways do you feel you are engaged in **Service**? How do you sense that you are expressing your Soul's abilities and gifts to be of service to others? For example, are you doing volunteer work for others that brings you satisfaction? What are some ways you are able to live the love and compassion you feel in your Soul? In what ways might you wish to express your Service in a greater way?

6. Do you feel that in some areas of your life you are touching on your core of **Self Actualization**? Do you feel you have discovered your Soul's Purpose? Are you able to live in harmony with that purpose and make this deepest vision of the heart real—to live your dream? What might you have to change in your life to allow yourself to get into touch with this?
7. What makes you feel bliss and joy? Have you been able to express this in your career? Your creative endeavors? Your leisure time pursuits? In what ways might you rearrange your life to allow you to have more bliss and joy?



## **Following the Thread of Bliss**

Many people attribute bliss to some external object or experience. For example, some people say that eating good chocolate, or a delicious gourmet meal, makes them feel bliss. Some attribute it to the euphoria that comes from taking drugs. Some say they touch on it when they are skydiving or surfing a wave. Some say they feel bliss when they are making love. Some say they feel bliss when they get to see their favorite band at a concert.

We invite you to consider another perspective: *Bliss is innate, and is the thread that connects your attention with your Soul.* Though these outer things might temporarily tap into this thread of bliss, the bliss that you feel in your Soul is eternal.

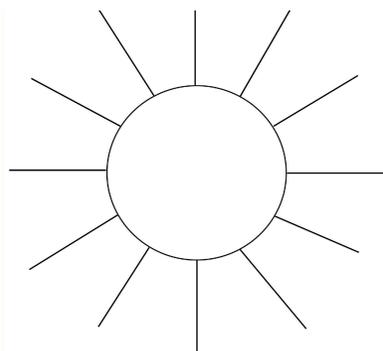
Getting in touch with your Soul's bliss is one of the ways you uncover your Soul's purpose. So we will do a brief meditation on your inner bliss—*but as you do this, your task will be to write down any images or impressions that come to you during your deepening immersion in Ananda.*



Focus on the ground state of your attention in the waking state of awareness. Feel the cord of bliss. Let your attention follow this cord. Record any images or ideas that occur to you as you travel along this thread.

## What is Your Life's Work?

We will complete this webinar with contemplating your life's work using the Little Sun Method. Draw an image like



Write in the center of the circle, "My Life's Work."

Write down any ideas that occur to you on the spokes coming off the circle. [You can extend the lines longer to accommodate what you write down.]

When you are done writing down these ideas, consider

1. How are the elements that make up my actualization related to my life's work?
2. How are the ideas that came to me when I was meditating on the cord of bliss related to my life's work?
3. What can I do in my life, right now, to begin bringing elements of my life's work into my daily activity? How could I make time to ensure I accomplish my life's work?

As you did this exercise, some of you will still be at a loss for what your life's work entails. Others of you will have gotten ideas that point you in the direction of your life's work. For others of you, this exercise will confirm what you have already sensed. *For your life to be truly fulfilling, you need to find your life's work.* May you be guided to discover it and live it.

Thank you for attending our webinar today!

