

RESILIENCE IN ACTION

DUTIFUL[®] PURPOSE

Combine and Unite



online courses

BY MATINA JEWELL

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Watch the Video

⌚ 10 min 00 sec

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Video Transcript

Welcome back, this is the final module of six in the resilience program and I hope you enjoy exploring the importance of purpose and how having a clearly defined purpose can boost your resilience significantly, especially through challenging times.

Research has repeatedly revealed that more resilient people have a stronger sense of purpose, a stronger sense of well-being and even better cognitive functioning. It seems that having a strong life purpose nurtures greater resilience and helps protect the brain against the negative effects of stress.

After I was seriously injured whilst serving as a UN peacekeeper during the 2006 Lebanon war, when I returned home to Australia, I found myself in a very dark place. My injuries were to the extent that I would lose my military career, and I would be medically discharged from the Army.

I then found I had two battles with the Australian government. The first was over health cover. So the injuries that I sustained on the battlefield representing my country that had actually ended my career, these injuries weren't necessarily going to be covered once I transferred out of Department of Defence and across to Department of Veterans' Affairs. That

was health cover I knew that I would need for the rest of my life.

The second issue, was over war service recognition. You see, Australia's legislation states that to qualify for war service, one of the criteria is that you need to be carrying a weapon. So, although I was clearly in a war, and declared a war by the United Nations; as an unarmed military peacekeeper, I just didn't automatically tick that Australian bureaucratic box.

Now we did eventually win on both of those issues, but it was a long drawn out legal battle that went on for many years, and it really took a toll on me emotionally. The battles with the government combined with everything else that I was facing at the time, led for me to hit absolute rock bottom. And I think for most people who get to that stage, you know that real depth of despair of rock bottom? It's not normally one single incident that sends someone down to that level. But more often its a compounding effect, with multiple things going wrong just one after the other, and I was certainly no different.

So, I had the battles with my Government combined with the fact that I just lost my career, my purpose,

a job that I was passionate about. I'd joined the Army when I was 17 years old and had worked damn hard to get to where I was, I had a fantastic future ahead of me in the military. But in a split second, all of that was gone, and I had no say in that decision.

I'd also lost teammates, guys that I truly think of like brothers. And so, I was suffering survival guilt very strongly associated with this. You know in my mind I just couldn't comprehend how I had survived so many near misses during the war, yet my colleagues, who all had children, they'd failed to make it home to their families. And I felt that was a really unfair outcome given that I was single, I had no dependents, and I really wished I could have replaced even just one of the guys so there was at least one set of kids that wasn't having to grow up without their dad. So, I actually got into a state where I really resented the fact that I was still alive.

I had post-traumatic stress disorder, horrific flashbacks of the war, and that made me very sleep deprived. I'd gone from being really fit and active as the first woman in the Australian Army to qualify as a Navy diver, fast roping from helicopters to now I was bedridden. I was immobilized with

pain, in hospital for many months and I wore a spinal brace for a year.

But I think the biggest issue I faced during that entire process was that I had become severely depressed. I was physically, emotionally and spiritually broken. As the fog of depression descended on me, I spiralled downhill and my confidence, self-esteem and self-worth went with it: I no longer had a job, a role or a purpose. I didn't even want to be awake as I didn't want to witness the shell of my former self and so sleep had become my saviour, an escape from the harsh reality of what my life had become.

I feel that the problem with depression is that it robs us of positivity and our resilience. I actually had so many things to be thankful for, but at the time I just couldn't see them as I'd become so consumed in that world of darkness and negativity. I was so focused on all those things that I'd lost that I just couldn't see what I still had to live for. And there were many, many dark days.

But thankfully I have the most incredible support network around me; my family, my friends, military colleagues, and mentors who all played a pivotal role in my recovery. But I must say too that no matter how

much support I had around me, until I first tapped into my own inner fighting spirit, found the will and the resilience to turn things into a positive, I couldn't make the best use of that great support I had at hand.

So, I encourage anyone who is helping someone through a tough time, hang in there, but urge them to find their own inner drive. Because from my experience the turnaround process kind of needs to be self-initiated before I could make the best benefit of all that incredible support I had at hand.

For me, the single most important turning point in the recovery process was finding a new sense of purpose. In my case, this was something very small. I had gone from the incredible privilege of commanding soldiers on operations overseas to now my entire reason for being was to iron my husband a fresh business shirt before he went off to his corporate job each day.

But that small act, it did two really positive and powerful things; One it gave me a purpose to physically get me out of bed each day and while I was in a spinal brace that was a huge achievement in itself; and secondly, it did something that actually helped somebody else. Which boosted my self-worth and confidence, and helped

me believe that although broken, I could still contribute in a meaningful way to the world.

So, my advice to anyone who is trying to build this type of resilience in themselves, their teams or their entire organisation, so that you can get through those tough, changing and challenging times ahead. My advice is to focus on your overarching purpose, because it's often your purpose that combines and unites people on difficult days and if that purpose helps others, it truly does have a double positive effect.

Now when I was well enough to do so, I then wanted to expand on my role and purpose. I became very passionate and driven to ensure that there would be positive lessons to take away from my experiences. In particular, I wanted to make sure that no other Aussie soldier ever had to endure the battles with the government that I had in the aftermath of the Lebanon war.

So, I feel really privileged to have served in a variety of government commissions and roles like the Prime Minister's Advisory Council which created opportunities to effect positive changes to legislation and to help protect our wounded veterans in to the future.

I was also able to meet with the then head of the United Nations, with Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon and share with him first-hand my experiences during the Lebanon War and the lessons I felt the UN had failed to learn from and therefore implement positive changes. The meeting resulted in changes to UN processes that I know will save lives not only in the Middle East but on UN missions around the world.

And I guess what I've taken away from all of those difficult challenges in my life, is a greater understanding of the power or purpose particularly in relation to its impact on resilience. For me personally, there was an intrinsic link between purpose and helping others. In fact, I first needed the element of helping others to then find my purpose as I was simply not able to muster the determination to fight for changes to legislation just for my own benefit. What spurred me in to action was knowing that my soldiers may not have the opportunity to meet with the various politicians and Ministers I had access to and plead their cases for support. That gave me the courage to champion change on behalf of all of our veterans which in turn gave me purpose and strengthened my own resilience to find a way out of the darkness of rock bottom.

I now believe purpose no matter how big or small, is perhaps the most fundamental and important key in building resilient individuals, leaders, teams and organisations that have the capacity to succeed in difficult times.

So now, it's over to you. I invite you to explore the ideas and activities in your workbook and explore what provides you with drive, passion, meaning and fulfillment. Then activate how you might be able to incorporate elements of purpose into your world, starting right now.

Reflecting on the Video

1. What are your key take-outs from the video?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

2. Thinking about this, is there anything you would like to stop/start/continue in your work or life in general? Particularly in relation to purpose.

Stop:

Start:

Continue:

3. Commit to these changes at:

Work:

Home:

Other:

4. Consider sharing one or more of these commitments with someone to help keep you accountable.

☐ Done

5. Take at least one positive action on one of those commitments.

☐ Done

6. Take a positive action on each of those commitments.

☐ Done



Unlock Your Purpose in Life

What is your purpose? Your aim or goal? Your reason for being? Your reason for getting up in the morning?

Brief

Uncovering your 'why' is a worthwhile exercise. It helps to refine and articulate your reason for being.¹

Some time ago, I invested time to go deep, to define my purpose.

But first, I found that I had to understand my 'why'.

When I drilled right down, I found that I felt most fulfilled when I was being 'of service' to others. First, in a career sense, in the military as an officer for 15 years. And since then, championing change for injured veterans, advocating for diversity and inclusion and inspiring audiences around the concepts of leadership, resilience and change as an International Keynote Speaker. And, being a 'mum'.

To me, I always felt a strong sense of duty.

So initially, I defined my why as 'Duty'.

But 'duty' as a 'why' sat uncomfortably with me. The word 'duty'. It kind of comes with negative connotations; an obligation or a burden. (At least that was the sense I got in Australia. It's less of a negative in other cultures where a sense of duty is considered quite favourably – the USA or China for example.

¹ Neil Hazelman, Executive Creative Director – 'We Are Why' and 'Be Your Why'



What is my 'why'?

My one-word why is 'Dutiful'.

Dutiful is the beautiful sense of duty to myself,
to live my true purpose in life.

What is my 'purpose'?

I have defined my purpose as 'A Dutiful Life':

Born to inspire, encourage and empower action through adversity, it's my duty to share meaningful experiences with 'Thrive Seekers', developing leaders of tomorrow through a unique legacy of care imparted in an engaging and enlightening way, to make a positive and sustainable change to people's lives.

When I am living my purpose, I feel more meaning in all that I do. In helping others thrive, I feel truly fulfilled.

That is why I call this 'Dutiful'.

It feels beautiful, almost magical, to live a dutiful life. It is something I am deeply grateful for.

Task: Define your 'Why'

The following are questions that you may wish to revisit time and again, as you learn, grow, and evolve.

1. In the space below, jot down all of the words that describe you.

Top tip: Place one word per sticky note on a wall or use a whiteboard. I also like to do this with someone who knows me well.

2. Now, group like-type words. What do you notice?

3. Summarise your 'Why' into a sentence.

4. Define your 'Why', in one word:

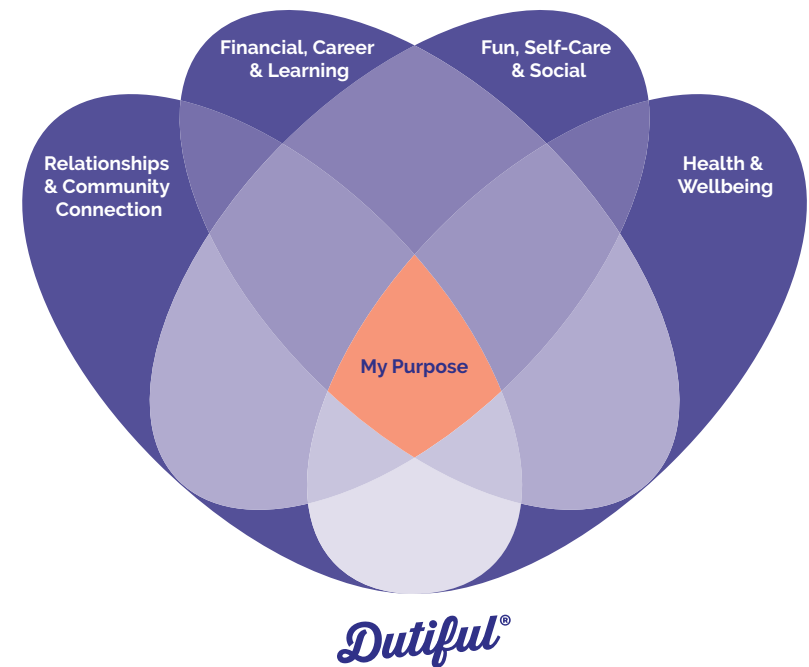
Not sure? The following prompts may help.

- Why do you get up in the morning?
- What keeps you awake at night?
- When are you most alive?
- What does being 'successful' mean to you?
- How might you apply your gifts to a pursuit that is of deep interest to you and of help to others?
- What can you do to make a difference in one person's life, today?
- If you say yes to living purposefully, what do you say no to?
- Consider pledging your why publicly at dutiful.org ²

² Dutiful.org is a philanthropic endeavour owned and operated by Matina Jewell (Jewell & Associates Pty Ltd) to help you share what is Dutiful® to you with the world.

Dutiful® Purpose Planning

Your why & purpose.



Brief

Explore how you want to be in the key areas of your life, based on your values. There is quite a bit of overlap between areas, do what feels right for you by following the prompts over the page.

Dutiful Purpose Planner



Relationships & Community Connection

Meaningful relationships (such as family, friends, and others)

How do you want to live your life; how do you want to 'be'?

Why?

How will that make you feel?

Fun, Self-Care & Social

Hobbies, recreation & leisure, entertainment

How do you want to live your life; how do you want to 'be'?

Why?

How will that make you feel?

My Purpose

Financial, Career and Learning

Work (paid & unpaid), study (formal and informal) and volunteering

How do you want to live your life; how do you want to 'be'?

Why?

How will that make you feel?

Health & Wellbeing

Physical (exercise, sport, rest & relaxation), psychological, emotional & spiritual

How do you want to live your life; how do you want to 'be'?

Why?

How will that make you feel?

Task

1. Complete the Dutiful Purpose Planner.

☐ Done

2. What did you learn about yourself from this? E.g. What did you find easy or difficult? Did you become aware of anything? Did it confirm something you already knew?

3. What commonalities did you find across the areas?

4. Summarise your 'why' & 'purpose'

My WHY	My PURPOSE
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5. Share and explain your why and purpose with your accountability buddy (partner, friend or colleague).

☐ Done

6. Set a time 6 months from now to do the challenge again.

☐ Done



An overarching purpose combines and unites during difficult times

While serving as a peacekeeper with the United Nations in the Middle East, I was faced with the challenge of bringing diverse groups of people with different backgrounds, skills, experience and cultural beliefs together to function as highly effective teams that needed to work in close quarters and in complex, rapidly changing environments.

I found as a female leader working in a multicultural, male dominated industry, I needed to have an understanding of when the mission, task or team purpose was the highest priority, and when I needed to remain true to my own purpose.

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23

Bonus Exercise 1

Passion

Brief

What is it that:

- Lifts your spirit
- Gives you joy
- Makes your heart sing

Task

Try these prompts as thought starters: ³

1. What are you doing when you get lost in time?

2. What means the world to you, that when you talk about it, you light up?

3. What did you love to do as a child?

³ <https://jessicadw.com/blog/find-your-passion>

4. What would you do for the world to remember you by?

5. What is working well for you in life? (What is not working for you? What drains you, makes you stressed, or wastes your time?)

6. If all your financial needs were met, what would you do with your time and energy?

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Bonus Exercise 2

Time Traveller

Brief

Imagine that you have travelled into the future.

You are now 90 years old.



Task

Reflect on the changes you could make right now, in this moment, and how it changed the course of your life.

Stretch: Visualise it. E.g. you are sitting by the fire, talking to your grand-daughter.

1. What kind of a life have you lived?

2. How did you choose to 'be'?

3. What changes did you make, to get to where you are now?

4. What did you stop worrying and stressing about, from right now?

5. What three other things did you change or do differently?

6. How did you change the way you are treating those around you?

SNAP! You're back. (So handsome and pretty.)

7. Reflect on the experience.

☐ Done

8. Commit to putting these changes into practice over the next few weeks.

☐ Done

9. Take at least one action to put a change into practice.

☐ Done

10. Take action on at least 3 occasions.

☐ Done



Bonus Exercise 3

Engage in Meaningful Activities

Task

Get meaningful.

1. Think back to a day you would describe as 'meaningful'.

2. What kinds of activities and relationships did you find meaningful?

3. In what activities do you find yourself in the zone, or in a state of flow (defined here as a mental state where you are fully immersed, feeling energized, focused, fully involved and enjoying the process of the activity)? ⁴

4. If you had any realisations here, what would you like to do with that new information?

5. Take at least one positive, and meaningful action.

☐ Done

⁴ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flow_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flow_(psychology))

Bonus Reading

The Case for Purpose

“Psychologists have found repeatedly that people with a strong sense of purpose experience more resilience, a stronger sense of well-being and even better cognitive functioning. Purpose in life fosters resilience in part by protecting the brain against the negative effects of stress. According to Patricia Doyle, Ph.D., a Neuropsychologist with the Alzheimer Disease Center, **“purpose somehow gives your brain resilience. It makes your brain stronger and more resistant to the effects of diseases like Alzheimers”** (Boyle et. al, 2012).

Other scientific studies support that having a strong purpose predicts health and longevity. Recent research suggests that finding meaning in life’s experiences, especially when facing challenges, is a key mechanism of resilience (Schaefer, et. al, 2013).

Robert Butler with the National Institute of Health researched health and longevity and reported findings in his book “Why Survive? Being Old in America.” People who had a strong sense of purpose lived longer than those who didn’t have a clear purpose.

Dan Buettner, who founded Blue Zones, also has done worldwide research. In studying women of Okinawa, Japan, it was discovered that one of key reasons for their longevity is their strong sense of purpose. Okinawans are known for pursuing their ikigai which is a concept meaning “reason for being”, or “reason for waking up in the morning.” (Buettner, 2005).⁵

Dan has a great TED talk on Blue Zones too by the way!

⁵ <https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-activities-exercises/>

Task: The Purpose Check-Up

by Richard Leider

Many of us accept the wisdom of regular physical checkups. We’re also generally willing to review our financial situation with some regularity.

So, if money and medical checkups are essential, we might be wise to take guidance from the financial and medical worlds and adopt the practice of a regular meaning checkup on that third dimension to ensure that our spirit—our sense of purpose—remains healthy.⁶

Please read each statement carefully and take a few moments to decide on a true response for yourself. Then write the number that reflects your response. The answers offer the following range of responses:

1. Definitely disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Definitely agree

Having (Outer Life)

_____ I derive satisfaction from what I have in my life.

_____ I express my creativity in a number of ways.

_____ I have found ways to offer my gifts and talents to the world.

_____ I have a positive vision for my future.

_____ I feel satisfied with my location.

_____ My physical energy is vital.

_____ I feel satisfied with my personal relationships.

_____ **Total Having score**

⁶ <https://richardleider.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The-Purpose-Checkup.pdf>

Doing (Inner Life)

_____ I follow my purpose when making major decisions.

_____ I feel content when I am alone.

_____ I focus and think clearly.

_____ I have the courage to face my adversities.

_____ I offer compassion to others readily.

_____ I offer forgiveness to others easily.

_____ I am growing and developing.

_____ **Total Doing score**

Being (Spiritual Life)

_____ I sense the presence of a Higher Power.

_____ I have a regular spiritual practice.

_____ I feel a sense of the sacred when I am in the natural world.

_____ I feel a sense of gratitude for my life.

_____ I maintain a balance of saving and savoring the world.

_____ I invest time in making a difference to others or to the world.

_____ I know what I want to be remembered for.

_____ **Total Being score**

_____ **Total Purpose Checkup score**

Interpretation

Having (Outer Life): The dimension of your external experience and activity – how effectively you relate to the “having” choices in your life.

Doing (Inner Life): The dimension of your internal experience and inner activity – how effectively you relate to the “doing” choices in your life.

Being (Spiritual Life): The dimension of your invisible experience and spiritual activity – how effectively you relate to the “being” choices of your life.

Scoring

Your score in each section is one measure of your development in that dimension. Your total Purpose score (out of 84) gives a measure of the power of purpose you are experiencing in your life at present.

Use this checkup to check in with yourself yearly, perhaps on your birthday!

☐ Done

Notes