

Discovering Purpose

Soulwork & The Purpose Octagon

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*Purpose denotes your soul's deep calling, the place
to which you belong and your primary reason for incarnating.*

How does one discover and embody their unique life purpose? The subject of life purpose is addressed here in light of the following: 1. There are three distinct purposes: to wake up, grow up and show up.¹ 2. A person is born with a unique purpose that is best understood in the context of their soul. 3. The key to becoming clear about life purpose is engaging in soulwork. 4. Several forces work against purpose discovery and require attention. 5. Eight facets comprise a unique soul-level purpose: known as a person's "Purpose Octagon."

PART 1 - Three Worlds, One Life

Through multiple roles I have played in my career - which include psychotherapist, meditation teacher and purpose guide - I have observed first hand how the goals of each of these wisdom streams differ. I've also come to the conclusion that the missing piece in both spirituality and psychology is a recognition of the importance of purpose. Unlike psychotherapy, which promotes healing and growth at the level of the ego-personality, and unlike meditation, which emphasizes resting as unbounded awareness, a purpose guide helps the client identify what he or she is here to do in this lifetime.

In many forms of meditation, one inquires "Who am I?". In psychotherapy, one investigates "How do I heal and become happier?". In soul work, one explores "What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?".² None of these inquiries yields its bounty easily. Yet, years of careful cultivation can produce robust results in each of these endeavors: enlightenment (the fruit of meditation); emotional adulthood (the fruit of therapy); and purposiveness (the fruit of soulwork) - that is, the discovery and expression of your unique purpose, the place "where

your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet".³ (Note: soul will be defined in Part #2, and soulwork will be defined in part #3.)

Each of these three paths constitutes what I like to call a whole *world* of human development, with each world having its own purpose. Drawing upon ancient Greek, Sufi, and shamanic cosmologies, we can refer to these three spheres as the Upperworld (nirvana, heaven, enlightenment), Middleworld (emotional adulthood) and Lowerworld (soul-purpose embodiment). Figure 1 presents the three-worlds and their specific inquiries, desires, paths, foci and goals. (Note: please see the last note of this essay, *Disambiguation of the Three Worlds Map*, for two additional renderings of the map.) A different world comes into view depending upon where we rest our attention.

Inquiry	Desire	Path	Focus	Fruition	World
Who am I?	Wake up	Meditation	Awareness rests as Spirit	Enlightenment	Upperworld
How do I heal and become happier?	Grow up	Therapy	Awareness rests as Ego	Emotional Adulthood	Middleworld
How do I bring my gifts to my people?	Show up	Soulwork	Awareness rests as Soul	Soul Purpose Embodiment	Lowerworld

Fig. 1 Three Worlds Graph

UPPERWORLD When a meditator rests their attention upon awareness itself, he or she experiences *being* pure consciousness (which in this essay I'll usually refer to as unbounded non-dual awareness). Because a taste of this awareness offers a taste of primordial freedom itself, such "upperworld awakening" (aka, traditional enlightenment) has often been regarded as the ultimate purpose of life. Indeed, there are numerous monasteries that have been filled for centuries with individuals who regard upperworld enlightenment as the primary goal of their lives.

"Waking up" in this context refers to awakening *out of* an exclusive identification with the ego/personality, and *into* unbounded awareness. To be more precise, we actually wake up *as* unbounded awareness, not *into* it. However, such awareness is *not* disembodied or ungrounded. True unbounded awakening *includes* unitive intimacy with all of creation.

A valuable synergy exists between upperworld/meditative practice and soulwork. Transcendence of discursive mind through meditative awareness has the effect of loosening the

grip of the ego. This loosening aids in both the realization of spirit and the realization of soul-purpose. In both meditation and soul-work, a narrowing or softening of boundaries occurs between one's conventional self and the "other" (Spirit or soul).

MIDDLEWORLD Through psychotherapy, or what I sometimes call ego work, we bring our unclaimed parts into the fold, the shadow into the light, the unconscious into consciousness. When awareness dwells with curiosity upon our everyday personality in *traditional psychotherapy*⁴ we might successfully integrate the various facets of our selves. Sustained therapeutic attention can spur us into a (mostly) stable emotional adulthood - a psychic space where we can give and receive love without undue difficulty and rest in a quiet confidence and self-possession. Middleworld work is inherently relational - both intrapsychic (between parts of the ego-personality) and interpersonal (between two or more people.)

What is the connection between ego work and soulwork? The purpose we are born to often lays buried under the weight of the ego's frantic efforts to obtain acceptance, love, approval and appreciation. Psychotherapy allows us to grow into emotional adulthood, which increases our capability for receiving and trusting the messages that come from soul. When a person excavates the ego out from everything the ego thought it needed, that person is left with who he is meant to be.

LOWERWORLD When awareness turns towards the soul, a rich *imaginal realm*⁵ of inborn archetypal figures opens up, enabling *soul encounter*⁶ - a glimpse of your deep purpose. Imaginal/archetypal figures can show up as visual images, but also as a *felt sense* of purpose, where the body lights up with and aligns to our sense of purpose. Here in the lowerworld, awareness isn't concerned with unbounded non-dual awareness, nor is it focused on the maturation of the ego. Instead, attention can be mysteriously drawn to your *mythopoetic identity*⁷: the soul-level narrative that wants to live through us and as us. Mythopoetic identity transcends common identities regarding gender, race and class. The term refers to our innate ability for myth-making (story telling) that is generated from our depths. These personal myths arise from soul instead of being fabricated by the ego. A mythopoetic narrative is awakened when we recognize the deepest conversation we can have with life, and then live accordingly. The ego is transformed by the soul's narrative/story, resulting in a soul-infused personality. In this way, living our life purpose is an expression of the ego's realization of the soul. Answering the question of how we can attain such a realization will be the focus of the remainder of this essay. What we are building towards in this essay is the opportunity we each have to discover the eight facets of our life purpose, our unique purpose octagon. Because of the increasing threat we pose to all life (including our own species), now more than ever all life on this planet needs a humanity that is awake to its individual and collective purpose.

Please note, that the three-worlds model outlined above represents a *simplified map* of human consciousness. As such, it necessarily creates walls where none exist. For instance, the term “growing up” in *some* schools of psychology (notably Carl Jung’s depth psychology and James Hillman’s archetypal psychology) includes both egoic health *and* the journey to the soul. From the perspective of these psychological approaches, “growing up” addresses levels of maturation beyond the well-adjusted personality. It includes becoming capable of a deep and sustained attention to the inquiries of Spirit (Upperworld) and Soul (Lowerworld.)

However, in this simplified three-worlds map, the term “growing up” refers exclusively to Middleworld health and wholeness (aka, the maturation of the ego). At the same time my intention isn’t to forward the notion that these three pathways do not overlap with one another. Rather, it is to differentiate the fields of purpose guiding, meditation and psychotherapy and distinguish their most elemental inquiries. I hope to clear a conceptual space where one may contemplate the questions of soul-purpose discovery without having to simultaneously work with the rather different questions associated with emotional health and enlightenment.

WORLD FIXATION It is possible to shift attention, moment-to-moment, among the triple purposes of life. But even with this capacity to move easily among the three worlds, humans have a proclivity for becoming stuck within a single world of purpose (wake up, grow up, show up). *World fixation*⁸ occurs when awareness focuses more or less exclusively on only one of three dimensions. Such a fixation can be understood metaphorically as having an excessive attachment to a particular topography: peaks, valleys, or plains. The transcendent *peak* represents a (disembodied) enlightenment; the depth of the underworld *valley* represents soul-purpose, and the Middleworld of daily life is the vast *plain* upon which we live (in the guise of our everyday personality/ego). (Note: Full Awakening isn’t separate from anything, therefore enlightenment isn’t just the peak, it’s the *suchness* of the mountain, valleys and plains. See the endnotes for a deeper discussion on this point.)

Imagine building your home in one of these locations and rarely (if ever) exploring the other two regions. The danger of world fixation is a life spent neglecting the other dimensions of our being. A world-fixated person can become lost in the ego, or addicted to an unembodied experience of Unbounded Awareness, or consumed solely with expressing one’s life purpose.

The opportunity before us is to become integrally awakened to our purpose in each world. We can roam freely among the three topographies of awareness so we wake up, grow up and show up as part of one seamless life. In other words: we are invited to inhabit **three worlds in one life**.

PART 2 - What is the Soul?

Soul is the part of you which whispers your true name: the story of your incarnation, your personal myth, the poetry of your life narrative and destiny...in other words, your mythopoetic

identity. Soul is the essence of your specific life purpose. Soul isn't something other or different than yourself. But, from the perspective of the ego, soul can be contemplated or sensed as a deeper presence within. Soul is the mystery taking a unique human journey. Soul is the creative intelligence and imagination of a living universe expressing itself through you. Soul is the body of your gift that fills up the garment of your life. Soul is the part of you that communicates through (and as) the imaginal realm. Soul is one's *place*: one's unique niche in the habitat of the ecology of life. Soul is the source of your dream for an evolved world. Soul is the mythmaker and narrative spinner.

Alluring and complex, the soul is rich with layers of subtle meaning. While honoring the theological dimensions of soul, this essay promotes a definition of soul closer to that of depth psychologists, especially C.G Jung, James Hillman, Bill Plotkin, and Sufi scholar Henri Corbin. Based on these sources, as well as my own clinical experience and life experience, I believe the three key features of soul pertaining to life purpose are perception, imagination, and place.

1. Soul as perception. Soul is not an object or an entity, but a unique faculty of *perceiving* based on imagination, images, stories, sensations and symbols. We sense and perceive through the body and mind, but it is our soul that gives us a third way of knowing: *deep imagination* (that is sometimes connected to kinesthetic sensing, and sometimes deep imagination shows up *as* kinesthetic sensing). In Sufism, soul is sometimes referred to as a (subtle) “organ” of perception. While somatic sensitivity and intellectual contemplation support soul discovery, neither of these activities is able to constitute the foundation of our life purpose. The soul serves as the medium by which perception of purpose is made possible. Soul, more verb than noun, offers a unique way of looking at life. Soul as rich *imaginal perceiving* is the soil from which a deeply meaningful life sprouts. The soul directs us towards the aliveness, depth, and sacredness of our purpose. Many of our (especially profound) dreams can be thought of as originating from a subtle realm (or subtle body) of the imaginal/soul realm.

2. Soul as imagination. C.G Jung sometimes employed the German word *seelenbild*, a composite term meaning “soul-image.” Whereas the mind “sees” with thoughts, soul conveys its truth through images, symbols, and sensations that arise in awareness but are not sourced from the conscious intellect. According to James Hillman, “We are not dealing with something that can be defined; and therefore soul is really not a concept, but a *symbol*.”⁹ Soul is a symbol for the place from which deep meaning issues forth into one's life. In this sense, soul can be seen as a *root metaphor* - a metaphorical story that shapes an individual's perception and interpretation of the world from a depth perspective.

Hillman writes, “By *soul* I mean the imaginative possibilities of our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and fantasy - that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical.”¹⁰ Soul is a manner or mode of being (as in “his saxophone playing was especially soulful tonight”). Soul is a foundational

myth from which we live our lives. Soul is a *first principle* - the creation story of our incarnation. Soul is the wondrous, mysterious wellspring of our ability to imagine and actualize our calling and destiny.

3. Soul as place. In his seminal book *Soulcraft*, Bill Plotkin writes “Your soul is your true nature. Your soul can also be thought of as our true place *in* nature... At the level of soul, you have a specific way of belonging to the biosphere, as unique as any maple, moose or mountain.”¹¹ From a non-dual perspective soul isn’t your true nature, it is an *expression* of your true nature, not the source itself. Still, Plotkin’s words point to something important, that at a relative level, soul is the true nature of your unique self. Plotkin also offers a profound insight into the relationship between soul and place by employing the term *niche* in a novel way. A niche is the smallest unit of a habitat. A habitat is the physical space occupied by an ecosystem of plants and animals. A niche is the role the plant or animal plays in the community found in the habitat. For example, a giraffe’s habitat is the savannah, and its niche consists of feeding on the canopy of trees. A squirrel’s habitat is the forest and its niche includes eating acorns.

A person’s niche is their soul level gift to the world. The habitat is the place in which the gift is offered. Plotkin writes, “Your soul is both of *you* and of the *world*. The world cannot be full until you become fully yourself. Your soul corresponds to a niche, a distinctive place in nature, like a vibrant space of shimmering potential waiting to be discovered, claimed...occupied.”¹²

You are *of* a unique time and place. These external factors are not incidental to discovering your purpose. You belong to your soul’s purpose, not in a decontextualized vacuum, but as influenced by the time and place in which you exist. It behooves us all to consider soul as rooted *in* the world. Modern people tend to feel uprooted given their unprecedented mobility. According to spiritual activist Stephen Jenkinson, “We are orphans when we aren’t connected to the ground...Indigenosity isn’t racial, it’s about place. Indigenous humans have a place-based identity, and realize that *place* is our fundamental mother...Belonging (to a place) is the antidote to desire.”¹³

Humanity’s insatiable cycle of desiring is inevitable when we experience fundamental dislocation from our place (as well as from our true nature). The cessation of incessant desiring lies (in part) in the quenching of one of our primary desires: a longing to *belong*. Belonging to a community, to the planet, to life itself is found (in part) through the intimate and nourishing experience of place, the niche you were born to serve by embodying your soul’s deep purpose.

Identifying soul as the seat of purpose helps lift the burden from the ego of having to discern one’s destiny and calling. Once we’ve relieved the ego from the heavy lifting of purpose discovery, we can now focus on what *it is* that knows, inspires, holds, and supports the unfolding of our life purpose. With soul as we’ve just defined it, we may conclude the following: awakening to soul (through symbols, images, stories, and sensation) is *awakening to our innate imaginal perception that allows us to assume our place in the ecology of life*. When soul is

understood in this way, a doorway is opened that gives us access to the knowledge of our purpose and then how to live it.

PART 3 - Soulwork

Engagement with soulwork provides the key to becoming clear about your life purpose. Soulwork is a descent into your deep, mysterious interior. Soulwork is initiated by your longing to live a larger life and by the desire to make the world a better place. Soulwork gathers momentum through your willingness to receive your soul's guidance, rather than letting your egoic thinking dictate all your choices. Soulwork isn't a problem to be solved. Soulwork includes the process of winnowing out those symbols, images or narratives that have grown too small to contain your life. Soulwork is the willingness to let the truth you think you know go to ruin. Soulwork is the profound act of letting your life speak.

Soulwork is a key to the embodiment of the wholeness that lies beyond enlightenment and emotional adulthood. Soulwork uncovers one's authentic place and the gift of service you were born for. Of course, there are other aims in life: the foundational desires for security, comfort, esteem, and love (our middleworld needs) that usually require attention before the spiritual inquiry into the soul's purpose can take center stage. Once those needs are at least partially met, we can inquire "What does soul ask of me?" and be guided towards finding a purpose-beyond-self.

How then do we approach soulwork? Would employing an astrologer or a psychic be considered soulwork? Would consulting the I Ching or finding our place on the enneagram qualify as soulwork? Could some forms of psychotherapy be considered soulwork? How does one go about, seeking one's purpose-beyond-self?

The approach to soulwork favored in this essay includes exploring our deep imagination as well as the engagement with the natural world for glimpses of our purpose. Soulwork practices act upon the border between ego and soul. Soulwork actually *thins* the boundary between ego and soul, allowing you to receive the images and symbols of your purpose into awareness through meditation, active imagination, prayer, etc. Soulwork is the candle illuminating your calling that reveals your unique place and contribution.

Upon the canvas of your soul, the Mystery has inscribed with invisible ink your mythopoetic identity – the sacred narrative or destiny of your life. Soulwork makes the invisible visible. Soulwork technologies include a variety of forms of dreamwork, active imagination (aka Jungian journaling), prayer, trance drumming (aka journey work), the vision quest ceremony, and guided soulcentric meditations.¹⁴ All of these of these are essentially dialogues between you (as ego) and soul. Just as you can communicate with a friend through speech, gestures, mail, or telephone, so too in the case of soulwork, you can communicate through a variety of methods of communication.

PART 4 - Forces Working Against Soulwork

As stated earlier, from a soul-level perspective, one is connected to a certain *place* and occupies a particular *niche*. We feel displaced when we experience feeling disconnected from the physical location we inhabit. A parallel dislocation happens when we feel disconnected from our soul-level purpose. The persistent tug at the center of one's being is not only caused by the usual suspects (money, power, fame, comfort, security) nor by the desire for transcendence, or enlightenment. The ache stems from the longing to live in accordance with one's own purpose.

Many of us feel alienated from ourselves at a soul-level, that is, disconnected from the gifts we were meant to give. We come into adulthood knowing that we want to contribute, but not knowing where we fit in. We feel the energy of devotion and dedication, but can't quite make out what the object of that devotion is supposed to be. We want to inhabit our place (where we give our gifts) and, because we are narrative creatures, we also want to be able to describe it.

Why, then, do so many people with adequate security and comfort tend to neglect taking bold steps to discover their purpose? And, for those who do ask the bold questions, what prevents them from finding the answers?

To address this, one must consider the following forces that can impede soulwork:

1. Default Purpose There is a “substitute purpose” that moves our life forward when we are not living from our soul's purpose. It is best understood as our *default purpose*, which I define as a combination of bequeathed values from our upbringing and the defensive psychological positions we learn during childhood.

exterior conditioning + interior defenses = default purpose.

Default purpose consists of a life script or schema usually inherited from our families and culture. This inheritance, acquired when young, often lies outside our conscious awareness, resulting in life scripts that lie partly in the shadow of our psyches. Your family has a vested interest in seeing you fulfil their purpose – instead of your own soul's purpose.

Failing to investigate the inherited, unconscious parts of our default purposes may stymie progress in discovering one's true purpose. Even when default purposes become conscious, they may end up seriously undermining purpose-discovery work due to the strong attachments we've developed to them. Other times, a purpose is *consciously chosen* (i.e., “I want to be a parent”), but then is partially outgrown (our child goes off to college). If it isn't updated, this chosen purpose can degrade into a default purpose. Many such empty-nesters fail to choose another

purpose-beyond-self to replace parenting. Thus, while everyone is living purposefully (through the vehicle of a default purpose or carefully chosen purpose), *not everyone is living their soul's purpose*.

2. We live in a soul-illiterate culture. Few of us grew up with elders who sat us down and told us this open secret, “You have a mighty purpose, that when lived well, will bring you great joy and will serve your people too.” If you didn’t get this message (and few of us did), you can rectify this deficit by seeking a supportive soulcentric community.

Reasons to seek a soul-literate community, or what I like to call a soul-sangha, include the following: First, we need guidance to learn techniques of soul encounter, as neither family, school, nor even religious traditions will provide the purpose-discovery technologies mentioned previously. Second, we benefit from associating with groups or guides that aid us in understanding what we’ve learned from our dialogues with soul. Third, we’ll need social and moral support to courageously live the truth of what we’ve learned about our purpose. A Soul-sangha or a purpose community is essential for these things to occur. The journey to living our purpose is not usually a quick, easy, or a comfortable endeavor. The journey takes place on untrodden pathways – at least to us! It is best to seek community among those who are consciously working on embodying their soul’s purpose.

3. Competing Commitments When you wake up in the morning, you might experience the following competing commitments. Commitment #1: The sleepyhead says, “I want to stay in this warm comfortable bed.” Commitment #2: the responsible voice says, “Let’s get going and plunge into the day.” Which part to listen to?

This same dynamic arises regarding purpose discovery. One voice wants to embody your life purpose, while the other voice offers its legitimate fears regarding purpose discovery. Such concerns include: “Will I like my purpose?”; “Am I worthy of my purpose?”; “Is it safe to live my purpose out in the open?”; “Will living my purpose cause me to go broke or lose important relationships?” I have heard these exact phrases from many people over my twenty years of purpose guiding.

There are facets of our ego-personality (referred to as “parts” or “subpersonalities”) that resist soul encounter. These hidden parts of the ego include our *internal* Protector, Controller, People-pleaser, Chameleon, Skeptic, Critic, and Image Consultant.¹⁵ Each of these “voices” express a prior commitment to a particular concern, which will often compete with your commitment to soulwork. Understandably, these facets or subpersonalities experience trepidations about having us step onto the purpose-discovery path. The key to addressing these voices lies in *dialoguing* with them in ways that produce a win-win. Think of this as a form of relationship counseling for your ego’s subpersonalities, which involves improving communication between the part that wants to know our purpose, and the parts that fear purpose

discovery. Intrapsychic multiple agendas (regarding purpose) are as common as interpersonal multiple agendas in a relationship. A skilled purpose guide can help clients with their competing internal commitments, thereby clearing the way for soul and ego to communicate freely and work as partners.

Now that we've laid out a purpose map, let's take the journey into what it feels like to know, to *really know* your purpose. Let's explore this question through the lens of what I call the Purpose Octagon.

PART 5 - The Purpose Octagon

An 8-facet purpose vocabulary

Purpose is the indispensable concept, informing us about the way something *fits* into the world. Purpose, at the level of the human soul, is simply the reason that an individual exists to serve life. Each of us is called to the *universal purpose* of bringing more Goodness, Truth and Beauty into the world. Within that, we are called to a unique purpose, our soul's signature offering.

I use the word *purpose* as the blanket term to denote our intended design, our soul's deep calling, the place to which we belong and our primary reason for incarnating. Yet, we could bring more precision to the inquiry of purpose if we enlarged our purpose vocabulary. For example, let's use the life of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as an example.

Universal: King's purpose was to bring Goodness, Truth and Beauty into the world.

Unique: His unique purpose was to transform America into a place where social justice could be a reality.

Specific: King fulfilled his *task* of inspiring humanity to have the courage to love and bringing civil rights to African-Americans through the *message* "all people are created equal." He did so by employing the *gift* of oratory, and through *delivery systems* including the roles of minister, activist, speaker and leader.

All three of these constitute King's purpose, as seen from three different perspectives. They are connected holonically¹⁶ (a holon is something that is simultaneously a whole and a part, as in: an atom is a whole atom and part of a molecule, that is part of a whole cell, that is part of a whole organ, etc.). Thus, these layers are not separate/discrete purposes, but *nested purposes*, each a part of the others like a set of Russian Nesting Dolls as in Fig 2.

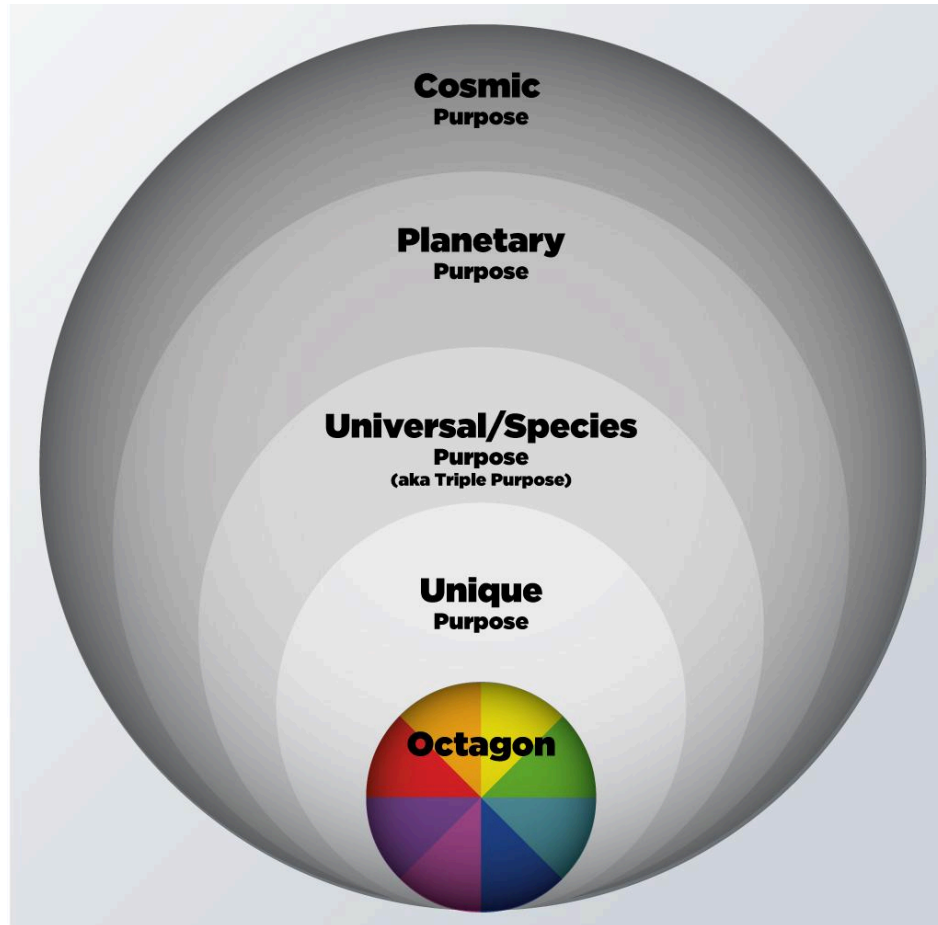


Fig. 2 Realms of Purpose

Let's flesh out Fig 2. Imagine the Universal Purpose of humanity as an ocean. Now visualize this ocean of purpose funnelled through a pipe. The individual stream (from the pipe) represents your individual purpose. Now, imagine your stream flowing through a *purpose colander* with eight perforations, your eight-part specific purpose. These eight perforations (the Octagon) constitute the unique facets or features of your purpose. We can represent these dimensions of your soul's purpose using wavelengths of light instead of water as shown in Fig. 3.

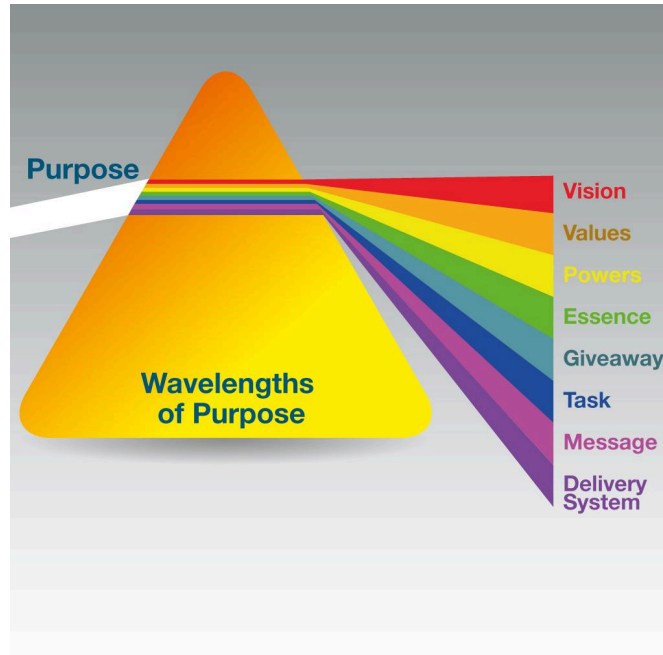


Fig. 3 Wavelengths of Purpose

Through decades of working as a purpose guide, I've come to realize there are multiple facets of purpose, which I have now mapped onto an octagon. The core or hub of your purpose lies at the center of the Octagon, that is, your "Soul Image" or "Mythopoetic Identity." See Fig. 4.

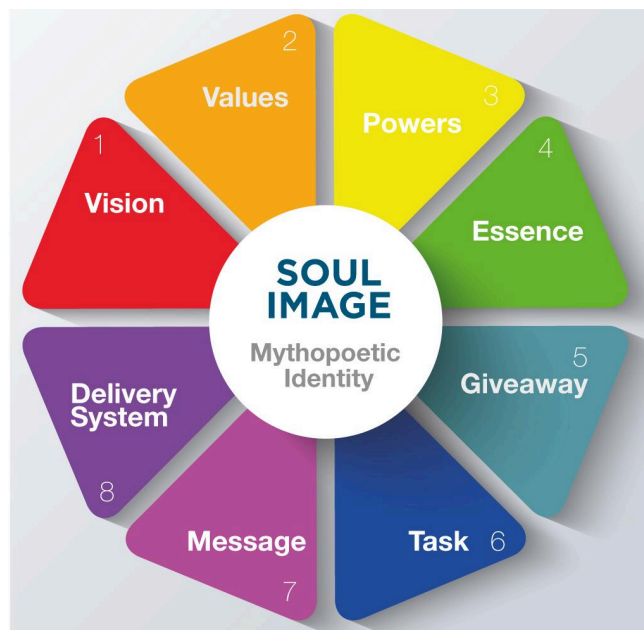


Fig. 4 Purpose Octagon

To live your unique purpose fully, you will want to engage all eight facets of your calling. The following sections illustrate the multifaceted nature of your purpose. At the outset, please note that these facets unfold over time; they need not bloom instantly or simultaneously. To help describe the eight dimensions of purpose, I'll again be using Martin Luther King Jr. as an example, quoting him directly.

1. Vision: your soul's dream (or soul's imagining or sensing) of an ideal/evolved world, were you to embody your deepest aspiration and purpose. Example: "I envision a humanity embodying their wholeness, living the triple purpose of life, to wake up, grow up, show up."

MLK - a vision of love and brotherhood: "I have a dream (Vision) that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Description: A Vision is:

- self-implicating: it describes what the world might be like if *you* embodied your purpose.
- long-term: you may not achieve your vision in this lifetime (e.g., world peace).
- shared: you share this vision with many people (some of whom you'll never meet).
- inspiring: it excites and encourages you to work towards the fruition of your vision.
- idealistic: it is optimistic, aspirational, often utopian.
- big picture: it is not a task/mission (like the bus boycott), but a higher vision (as with social justice).

2. Values: the soul-level principles (core ideals or beliefs) that support your purpose and give shape to your efforts. Examples: equality, justice, lifelong learning, kindness.

MLK - Value of forgiveness: "We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love." Value of service: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

Description: A Value is:

- a guiding principle: educates one how to embody their purpose in the world.
- timeless: rooted in eternal Goodness, Truth and Beauty.
- clarifying: helps you determine which actions to take and how to live.
- life-serving: soul-level values are always a *purpose beyond self*. Example: A person can value listening to live jazz, but that musical enjoyment is not a purpose beyond self.
- inspirational: values foment, incite and inspire Vision.

3. Powers: the soul's purpose is expressed, manifested and supported through your inherent strengths and talents. Your Core Powers¹⁷ are your natural soul level abilities or native genius. When you express your genius, you come ever more deeply into your soul's powers. Examples: speaking, writing, listening, empathizing, motivating, logic, and problem solving. A surgeon needs the power/talent of steady hands, a jazz musician needs the power of rhythm, a psychotherapist needs the power of deep listening and compassion.

MLK - the power of *oratory* ("I have a dream" speech), the power of *leadership* (helping guide the civil rights movement), and the power of *dreaming*: "I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice."

Description: Core Powers are:

- inherent aptitudes (abilities, capabilities or talents) that support the fruition of your Vision.
- strengths you discover that are already inside you waiting to be developed and honed through practice.
- capacities that cannot be faked or learned; they must already be inside you. (Example: a high I.Q. capable of inventing new theorems in quantum mechanics, or the high spatial intelligence of an artist). Therefore, you cannot *choose* to do physics on the level of Einstein or art at the level of Picasso: you have to find your own powers, *your own genius*.

4. Essence: is the quality of presence (at a purpose level). Though, strictly speaking, essence isn't something you *do* (it is the effortless radiance or transmission of your being), nonetheless it has an active transformational power. In a subtle way, your mere presence-radiance can help to transform your people. Essence¹⁸ is the core of who you are without *doing* anything. Examples of essence: Jesus - *love*, Buddha - *illumination*, Gandhi - *justice*.

MLK - love: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Description: Essence is:

- effortless: you emanate your essence without even trying.
- radiant: your essence is like a unique light that radiates from you.
- service: your essence serves people.

5. Giveaway: what you actively *do* to people to transform them. This is your soul-level offering, process, or gift. The giveaway consists of the unique way in which you give your gift,

not the job itself. Example: two well-known African-American activists with similar Visions (civil rights) but with non-identical giveaways: one emphasizing non-violence, the other including more confrontational forms of civil disobedience.

MLK: His giveaway included motivating people to undertake nonviolent activity at the risk of their lives in the service of advancing civil rights. Part of his giveaway (a step in the process of giving his gift) was *motivating*. He spoke to the better angels of white America and called on them to find their compassion: "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."

Malcolm X: His giveaway included inspiring people to look at the difficult truth of their condition. Part of his giveaway was *confrontation with power*. He spoke unflinchingly to the power/dignity of black people and the degraded state of white America: "Our objective is complete freedom, justice and equality *by any means necessary*."

Description: A Giveaway is:

- transformational - it brings people from state 'A' to state 'B'.
- activity - it is something you do, as opposed to something you are (as with Essence).
- process - the giveaway is a series of steps, an activity you do to benefit others.
- multidimensional - it is an action that can be offered to yourself, another, group or habitat.
- evolutionary - it is a process that accelerates a person's or society's growth.
- gift - it is a service that betters, transforms and evolves a person, group or situation.

6. Task: a calling, assignment, or mission that you undertake to support your Vision. Example: The task of creating Purpose Guides Institute supports my Vision of a humanity living on purpose.

MLK - desegregate Alabama public buses (which supports the Vision of equality for all citizens): "I want it to be known that we're going to work with grim and bold determination to gain justice on the buses in this city."

Description: A Task is a:

- goal - something that has a tangible result. Examples: "End homelessness in my town.", "Reduce income inequality.", "Provide emergency medical services."
- project/product - this is what an individual, company or organization actually does.
 - *Public Broadcasting System*: to create content that educates, informs and inspires.
 - *Google*: to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible.

- *Make-A-Wish*: to grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.
- *Purpose Guides Institute*: to help people discover their life purpose.

Disambiguation: Vision, Giveaway and Task

- Visions and Tasks are *goals*: the Vision is the *big picture goal* (*civil rights for all*) and the Task is the *tangible goal* that supports the Vision (*desegregation of public buses.*) While both are aspirational, Visions are long-term idealistic objectives, while Tasks are more practical and tangible.
- Giveaways are *processes*. Your Giveaway is a transformational offering, it is what you *do* to accomplish your Tasks, and Tasks move you a step closer to fulfilling the Vision.

7. Message: a single fundamental truth you were designed to propagate. Examples: Thoreau: “Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth”; Susan B. Anthony: “Men, their right, and nothing more; women, their right, and nothing less.”

MLK - equality and respect for all. “People should be treated equally, with the same respect — no more, no less. Equally.”

Description: A Message is:

- transmissive - has the potential to communicate “Soul-to-Soul.”
- inspired - a prophetic, psychoactive message capable of inciting transformation.
- communication - relays vital ideas/information that can help others.

8. Delivery System: the visible *system* (career, profession, vocation) through which you offer your Giveaway to the world. Think of the delivery system like a delivery vehicle: you can deliver a pizza on a bike, car or truck, and you can deliver your purpose through a variety of vocational vehicles. Each of the following triads shares the same delivery system:¹⁹ Freud-Jung-Skinner; Bush-Obama-Trump; Picasso-Monet-Warhol; Sinatra-Fitzgerald-Armstrong. Yet, each figure’s Giveaway (their process of gifting) is radically unique.

MLK-- minister, activist, writer, speaker.

Description: A Delivery System is a:

- job - how you economically relate to the world, a form of work that is both a “survival dance” and a “sacred dance²⁰.”

- vocation/calling - your delivery system *might* be your vocation/calling (work you feel naturally drawn towards) and it may or may not be a role that already exists in society.

+ + +

I used Martin Luther King Jr, to elucidate the eight facets of purpose, because he is a great example of somebody who has deeply embodied his soul's calling. I want to offer an additional case, someone who is in the *middle* of the purpose discovery process.

Simon is a purpose guiding client of mine. We've met about half a dozen times so far. He is 38, married with one child, and makes his living as a marketing consultant. He is a "committed soccer player and passionate home cook." He is a bright, cheerful and kind man, with a trickster glint in his eyes, who longs for a livelihood that is inline with his soul's purpose. Simon's longing for soulwork was ignited in a high school English class, "where we read the Bhagavad Gita, which launched me into a 20 year exploration of what lies beyond the basics of living a typical American life."

As you read his unique Octagon, keep in the mind that unlike Martin Luther King Jr, you do not know Simon, and therefore will not "get" everything about his purpose. Further, Simon's images will likely mean little to you. The point of presenting Simon's Octagon is to demonstrate what an *in-progress* Octagon can look like, as well as showing how images and symbols can bubble up from the depths of soul when engaging with purpose discovery methods.

Simon's Octagon

Vision - A world lit up by the sacred.

Image: A filter over my view of the world that shows people glowing, trees glowing.

Values - Kindness.

Image: The radiant wisdom of the gentle

Powers - Deep listening, fearless exploration, authentic curiosity, and language that draws people into the unteachable.

Image: SmileDancer.

Essence - Bright love.

Image: Golden Belly, Golden Heart.

Giveaway - (1) Gather reliable information (2) Fix what is in disrepair (3) Offer new perspectives (4) Facilitate creative thinking (5) Illuminate with metaphor (6) Take their hand, light the way to their sacred dance.

Image: Lead them to the dance floor and spin them out into their sacred dance.

Task - Show people the beauty in the everyday. Preserve sacred culture.

Images: (1) Guardian on the borderlands between the sacred and profane. (2) Banish banality from the mouth. (3) Place Holy Peaches on people's' tongues and show them how to let the juices run down their chins.

Message - You are greater than you ever imagined.

Image: “Deep inside your heart, you’ve got an everlasting light, it’s shining like the sun, and it radiates on every one...” (lyrics from a hippie camp song)

Delivery System - International tour guide, specifically to pilgrimage and sacred places. Owner of a tea shop that makes the everyday special. Radio or YouTube show telling stories of the everyday sacred, and stories of the cosmos, consciousness and interconnection.

Image: Sacred Warrior

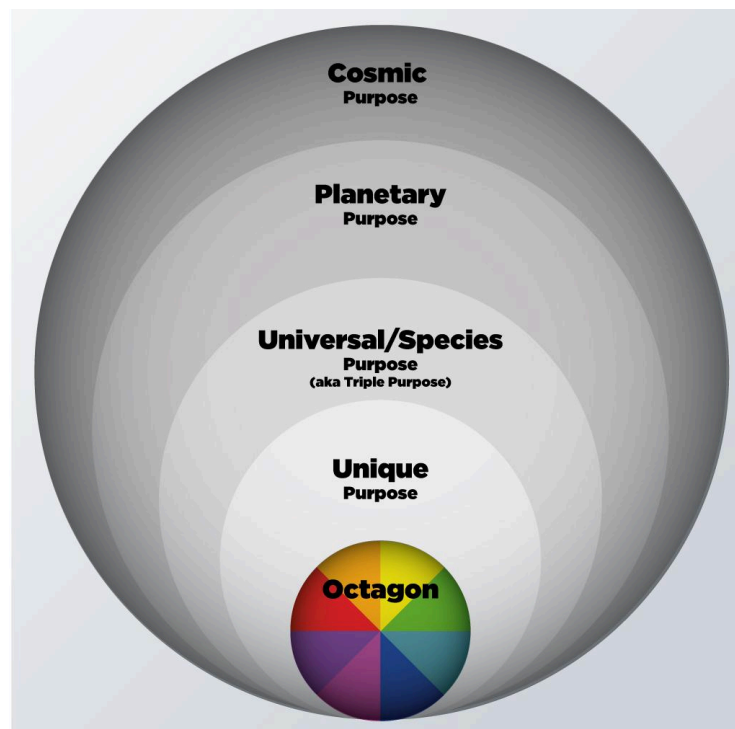


Fig. 2 Nested Purposes

Let's re-examine Fig. 2. It's important to notice that purpose can holonically move up (greater span) or move down (greater depth). Going up we can see that the eight facets of purpose are

part of the soul’s unique purpose, which is part of the triple purpose of life, which is part of the species purpose, which is part of the planetary purpose, which is part of the cosmic purpose. Going down (greater depth/specificity) we can see that each wavelength of purpose contains sub-wavelengths that enrich our experience of living our purpose. As previously stated, purpose can be imagined as *nested purposes*. For example, we could take the wavelength of the Giveaway and shine it through a second prism (see Fig. 5). This would reveal the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of your purpose.

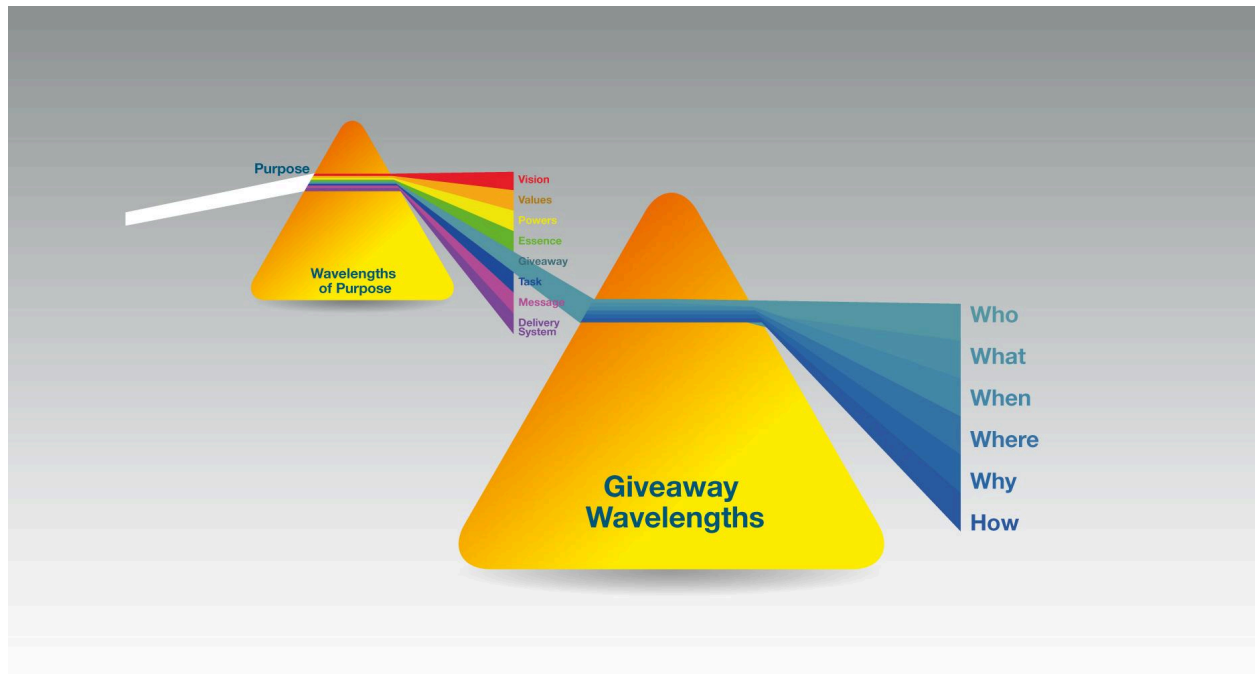


Fig. 5 “Giveaway Wavelengths”

Who	Who are the people for whom my transformational process is intended? What is their gender, age, race, orientation, political affiliation, economic status?
What	(What state are they in): What circumstances are my people in when I meet them? How would they describe their current situation? What part of their life feels like it is in disrepair or in need of some support?
When	When is the optimum time in a person's life for me to meet them and perform my Giveaway? How long does it take me to perform the Process? Is my Giveaway

	something I do once or does it take multiple meetings?
Where	Where will my Giveaway happen? What is the optimal environment for my offering to unfold?
Why	What is the goal for my Giveaway? What are the signs that the target objective has been reached? When will we know the work is finished?
How	What are the progressive “rungs” of the ladder of my Giveaway? What is the first rung? How do I actually carry out the first step? What techniques and competencies will be required? What is the second rung, third rung, etc., of my Giveaway?

Fig. 6 the “Who, what, when, where, why, how” purpose graph

It’s important to realize that you do not have to know every facet (or sub-facet) of your purpose to live it. Further, it's possible to live your purpose without ever being able to fully articulate it. We live our purpose, not as experts, but always as amateurs, forever learning, growing and deepening. Still, much can be gained by taking time to engage in soulwork practices that facilitate awareness of your deep purpose.

CODA

Imagine a soul-infused life of joyful and impactful service. Imagine a future where the most powerful political and business leaders know their high definition, soul-level purpose. Imagine these leaders inviting us (and even expecting us!) to connect with our purpose-beyond-self. Imagine school teachers, professors, shop owners, therapists all living their soul’s purpose.

Our species now confronts an evolutionary imperative to engage in soulwork. Future generations, countless lifeforms, and the biosphere itself, depend on humanity rapidly evolving. Waking up to enlightenment and growing up into emotional adulthood will surely be a part of this evolution. And yet, maturity and awakening alone are insufficient means with which to face our collective self-inflicted dilemma.

What is required in the 21st century are proven pathways to address the perennial questions, “What do I do with my life?” and, “How do we fix this mess?” Now is the time to create modern pathways to purpose, where the profundity of meditation and psychotherapy is wedded to the domain of soulwork . The field of soulwork grows out of a rich heritage. Today,

we have the opportunity to reconnect with these traditions of purpose discovery to create contemporary versions of ancient soulwork practices.

We need all hands on deck, with each citizen embodying an understanding of their purpose, so that we may (as a species) skillfully show up with our unique gifts to meet these perilous times. This proposed species-wide evolution would be a (much needed) developmental advance whereby all humans have the opportunity to tap the riches of soulful living while positively impacting the world.

+ + +

1. Dustin Diperna (*Streams of Wisdom*) coined the term “Wake up, grow up, clean up, show up.” I’ve altered his term to coincide with the three worlds map.
2. Mary Oliver, excerpt from the poem *The Summer Day* (*New and Selected Poems*)
3. Quote from theologian Frederick Buechner.
4. I am using the term *traditional psychotherapy* to refer to those classical therapies and some modern therapies (such as cognitive-behavioral therapy) that focus on a limited, but essential, band of the human psyche. This is not meant as an implied criticism of therapies that “merely” help people to become better adjusted. Nor is it the author's intention to overlook the many contemporary therapies that include Soul/Purpose/Underworld elements in their theory and practice. The inevitable cost of presenting a simplified version of the psyche, with three pathways to approach three worlds (meditation, classical psychotherapy and purpose guiding), is the possibility that the reader will be misled into thinking “therapy is never about Soul,” or “meditation is never a pathway to Purpose.” This is clearly not the case.
5. Henri Corbin (*Alone With the Alone*) coined the term Imaginal Realm, citing Sufi masters Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi as sources for the original term in Arabic.
6. Bill Plotkin (*Soulcraft*) “...soul encounter is an experience of the mysterious image you were born with...” p. 119
7. Bill Plotkin (*Soulcraft*). Though *mythopoetic* is a term from the men’s movement, circa 1970’s (Robert Bly, etc.), and has roots in the terms mythopoeia and mythopoesis coined by J.R.R Tolkien, it is Plotkin who coined the term *mythopoetic identity*. Note: there are potential dangers in allowing an identification with an archetypal/mythopoetic image. Carl Jung warned of the potential for a massive inflation of the ego, were the ego to be possessed by an archetype. A human is meant to actualize one’s mythopoetic image, not necessarily be occupied by it.
8. I coined the term *world fixation* to describe a trend I witnessed as a therapist, meditation teacher and Purpose Guide: a proclivity of some of my clients to attend to one of the three worlds of purpose to the exclusion of the other two. NB in the opinion of this

author, this is not necessarily a bad thing: sometimes life asks us to become *world-specialists*, as opposed to *world-generalists*.

9. James Hillman (*Re-visioning Psychology*) p. x.
10. James Hillman (*Suicide and the Soul*) p. 46.
11. Bill Plotkin (*Soulcraft*) p. 41.
12. Bill Plotkin (*Soulcraft*) p. 42.
13. Stephen Jenkinson (Orphan Wisdom School): Teachings given at his farm May 3-7, 2017.
14. The Soulcentric Meditations we use at the Purpose Guides Institute are: Evolution's Purpose, Entelechy Process, 10 Years Process, Ocean Cave Meditation, Animal Guide Meditation, and Niche Tree Meditation. When thoroughly and properly prepared, I have witnessed a very high success rate amongst clients for receiving glimpses of soul-purpose, using these guided meditations.
15. I've been greatly influenced by the "parts work" pioneers Carl Jung, Hal and Sidra Stone (Voice Dialogue), Richard C. Schwartz (Internal Family Systems Model), Genpo Roshi (Big Mind, Big Heart), and Tim Kelly (True Purpose).
16. Ken Wilber uses the term (coined by Arthur Koestler) throughout his many books on Integral Theory. Wilber's theory of holons and depth/span distinctions have been influential in the creation of the Purpose Octagon.
17. Bill Plotkin (*Soulcraft*) p. 119. Core Powers is a phrase Plotkin uses to distinguish soul purpose from soul powers.
18. I am deeply grateful for being introduced to the Essence/Giveaway distinction created by Tim Kelly in *True Purpose* (though he uses the term *blessing* where I use the terms *gift* or *giveaway*... which is a word central to the Vision Quest ceremony of Native Americans.). The octagon would be diminished without Kelly's pivotal distinction. His excellent four part model of purpose (Essence, Blessing, Mission, Message) served as both a foundation and inspiration for the Octagon.
19. Bill Plotkin (*Nature and the Human Soul*) p. 302. In his watershed books *Soulcraft* and *Nature and The Human Soul*, Bill Plotkin distinguishes between a delivery system and soul-level purpose. For instance, Plotkin writes that his soul image is Cocoon Weaver, and his delivery systems include depth psychologist, wilderness guide, etc.
20. Harley Swift Deer likely coined these phrases.

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Disambiguation of Three Worlds. There are six issues arising from using a simplified and reductive model such as The Three Worlds Map. They are:

1. Soul-at-the-bottom.

2. Soul-in-the-middle (Soul-encounter as descent vs. soul-encounter as descent AND ascent.)
3. Spirit-at-the-bottom (of the three world's map):
4. Multiple planes vs. dimensions of consciousness.
5. Is Non-duality synonymous with Upperworld?
6. Tendency to tag non-dual traditions as lacking Soul.



Fig. 7 - Three versions of the Three Worlds Map

1. Soul-at-the-bottom. Though it was Bill Plotkin's book *Soulcraft* that initiated my use of the three worlds map, my use of the term is deeply informed by Sufi and shamanic cosmologies. Let's turn first to Shamanism. I originally experienced these worlds through *shamanic journeying* to the lower and upper realms, guided by Michael Harner and his apprentices (Center for Shamanic Studies), and Tom Brown Jr. (through my studies of shamanism at his Tracker School). These two shamans spoke briefly about the three worlds, grabbed their drums and off we went. Not much time was spent philosophizing or cosmologizing! Arising out of these journeying "sessions" (and other) experiences I began teaching what I called the *triple purpose of life* in the early 2000's through my SoulQuest and Integral Awakening Groups. I coined the terms "triple purpose," "triple purpose of life," and "three worlds of purpose", thereby making *purpose* in its various expressions and iterations the central and guiding concept of my teaching work. The foundational concept of the *triple purpose of life* gave me a framework that allowed me to experience my work as a seamless whole, as I assumed the roles of meditation teacher (upperworld), psychotherapist (middleworld) and purpose guide (lowerworld.)

In 2003 I was introduced to the terms *Three Worlds of consciousness* and *Three Worlds of identity* by Bill Plotkin (*Soulcraft*). The way Plotkin uses these terms has been hugely influential in my teaching work (as have archetypal psychologist James Hillman's writings, including *The Dream and the Underworld*). Following depth psychology and some (but not all) shamanic teachings, Plotkin places *soul-at-the-bottom* of the three worlds map, indicating that the encounter with soul is experienced as a descent, a burrowing down into our depths, a spiritual *inscendence* (a word coined by geologist Thomas Berry) as opposed to a spiritual ascent. One advantage of the *soul-at-the-bottom* map, especially for people new to the experience (or even

the idea) of the three worlds, is the disambiguation between waking up to your soul-purpose and waking up to Unbounded Non-dual Awareness. Discovering your soul-purpose is the experiential answer to the question, “What do I do?”, whereas abiding as Non-dual Awareness is the experiential answer to the question, “Who am I?” See Three Worlds Map #1 for a pictorial rendering of this map.

2. Soul-in-the-middle. Equally important are the teachings implied by the Three Worlds Map #2 that places *soul-in-the-middle*, between Spirit and Ego/materiality. Following Sufi and (some aspects of) shamanic cosmology, Three Worlds Map #2 renders Soul as the bridge between Spirit and ego/physicality. Map #2 renders the experience of soul-encounter as an ascending experience, *not* to Spirit (Unbounded Non-dual Awareness) but to Soul. Put another way, the experience of soul-encounter can be understood as Spirit pouring itself into a unique shape (our Soul) which then is perceived further “downstream” by Ego.

My understanding of the *soul-in-the-middle* map is deeply influenced by Sufism, particularly the work of Islamic scholar Henri Corbin (*Alone With The Alone*) and his foremost interpreter Tom Cheetham (*Imaginal Love*). Corbin, drawing on the masters Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi, offers a Sufi perspective of the “isthmus” of the imaginal realm (the realm of Soul) existing *between* the physical realm and spiritual realm. For Corbin, the imaginal exists between the material and the spiritual and so is not a “lower world”. Hillman (who borrowed heavily from Corbin) seems deeply suspicious of traditional transcendent teachings. Thomas Berry (*Dream of the Earth*) and Bill Plotkin seem to carry this suspicion as well: that transcendent spirituality devoid of Soul, Purpose, Earth, or Wild Nature is a dangerous thing at any time, and especially so during our present time.

Still, we shouldn’t throw the transcendent baby out with the bathwater. *Soul-in-the-middle* of the map allows for the understanding of soul-encounters as having an ascending flavor, perfume, or “directionality” from the point of view of ego. Whereas Map #1 shows waking up to our calling as *waking down to Soul*, Map #2 shows that discovery of our soul-level purpose is waking up (ascending) out of ego, into the subtler realm of soul. Both maps share this: awakening to soul-purpose is the experience of transcending ego to experience a spiritual reality that (depending on your viewpoint) can be thought of as ascending or descending, transcending or *incending*. There are shamanic descriptions more in line with Map #1 and some more in line with Map #2. My advice: go with the map towards which your *felt-sense* feels intuitively drawn. Ultimately, does it matter if your felt-sense during soul-encounter is more consistent with a burrowing down into your depths (Plotkin, Berry, Hillman and some shamanic sources) or an experience of transcending/ascending? Personally, I have experienced soul as both a descent/incidental AND an ascent/transcendental experience.

3. Spirit-at-the-bottom (of the three world’s map): Another way to organize the map is to have Spirit appear at the bottom of the circle. This indicates that Spirit is the primordial ground

of Being/Becoming. Out of the ground of Absolute Spirit, emerges Soul. Out of soul, emerges ego. This version of the map captures the *involutionary* nature of Spirit contracting (Tzimtzum in Kabbalah) into Soul and then into Ego. Thus awakening to Spirit is awakening to the primordial ground that transcends all AND is the ground of both Soul and Ego. See Three Worlds Map #3 for a pictorial rendering of perceiving the three worlds in this way.

4. Dimensions of consciousness vs. multiple planes. As a depth psychologist, Plotkin (*Soulcraft*) primarily views the experience of the lowerworld of Soul as a “world of consciousness” or “a world of identity” and secondarily (or not at all?) as multiple transhuman planes of existence. I like the simplicity and clarity of Plotkin’s model. But...we get into very tricky terrain here, for we are obliged to ask, “Were ancient shamans using their original terms to speak about what depth psychology would later call the psyche, consciousness, subconscious, and the underworld (like Jung, Hillman and Plotkin), or were they pointing to transhuman realities, or did these ancient shamans hold both to be true?” To the consternation of my students, I see both views as useful and true. That said, in my writings and trainings I emphasize the “dimensions of consciousness” implications of the Three Worlds, and intentionally de-emphasize transhuman planes/realities. This allows for a smoother entryway for people to discover the wonders of the soul’s deeper purpose, without having to negotiate multiple realms of reality that they may never have heard of, experienced, or that may seem to threaten prior religious belief systems. In summary: in the spirit of keeping things simple (and at the considerable expense of being reductive), I have chosen to emphasize soul-at-the-bottom instead of soul-in-the-middle, the journey to soul-purpose as a descent (rather than encounter with Soul as an ascent) and soul encounter as a confrontation with consciousness/identity/psyche, rather than as a transhuman reality.

5. Is Non-duality synonymous with the Upperworld...or not? I have used the term *Unbounded Non-dual Awareness* to point towards the experience of classical/traditional enlightenment often associated with the Buddha and other sages. I come from the nondual wisdom streams of Zen and Advaita Vedanta. In this context, I’ve been on the receiving end of some rather disapproving looks from my non-dual teachers who find the three worlds map to be “empty of any essential substance.” Indeed: seen from/as the absolute reality of Unbounded Non-dual Awareness, the *story* of an ego, soul, imaginal realm, soul-encounter, or *separate* worlds is absurd. Point well taken. But, from a relative perspective, I have found the *fiction* of the three worlds (and it is a *fiction*, in the way a map of North America has three “separate” countries) to be most efficacious in approaching the three central questions of a human life: “Who am I?”, “What do I do?”, and “How can I be happy?” A further fiction/concession I make in this essay is to (sometimes) place unbounded absolute awareness in the upperworld of Spirit. While this move has much to recommend it, it also is technically dead-wrong. Unbounded Non-Dual Awareness is more like the screen or paper on which (and through which) the three

worlds map is written (and the eyes that see it, and the brain that processes it.) Still, there is a place for simplification and reduction, which is why I've chosen to make the concessions I have. But, buyer beware of any map as simple and elegant as the three worlds map...for there is no Mexico, Canada or United States except for the map maker, for on the ground there is only terra firma.

6. Tendency to tag non-dual traditions as lacking “purpose”. The non-dual lineage streams of which I am a part of (Zen and Advaita Vedanta) deemphasize Soul, purpose, calling, destiny and the like. However, this does not mean that these are nowhere to be found within these lineages. On the one hand, you will certainly be hard pressed to find mention of Soul, purpose, etc. in Dogen Zenji, Ramana Maharshi or Nisargadatta Maharaj. You'd be well within reason to read what these sages wrote and believe that the “point” of spiritual life is to wake up out of the dream of the (relative) world. Paradoxically (from the ego's perspective), these nondual traditions are open to the possibility that once “awake” to/as Unbounded Non-Dual Awareness, it is possible that one will feel a GREAT passion to “do something” in the relative dream world that could be described as living a life purpose as an act of evolutionary service. I agree with Jon Darrall-Rew (*Earth Is Eden*) “Healthy waking up isn't just transcendence. It's transcendence PLUS intimacy with the entirety of creation as the One that is it all.” Agreed! Some sages seem to live very simply *as* abiding non-dual awareness without very much movement, action, desire for impact, etc., while other sages seems to be blown off the proverbial cushion by the winds of Mystery, finding themselves on fire with an ecstatic, urgent, evolutionary impulse to transform the world. Bottom line: the nondual traditions hold both as legitimate possibilities for the enlightened life.

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