

Flip Burgers

What is our purpose?

How do we live a more wholehearted life?

Can we find more joy and happiness?

The world is changing. Our mindset is shifting. We are asking ourselves and others large existential questions.

I was not raised with such wonders. Were you? My parents, much like their generation, worked hard, placed value on production, and measured success in dollar signs. They had savings accounts, one career, and enjoyed fraternizing on the weekends. Wholeheartedly was not in their vocabulary.

Today we've upended the work/play balance, attempting to make things more enjoyable. Aspirational sentiments such as *turn your hobby into your career*, *find your purpose*, *live your passions*, *do what you love*, clutter our minds like Starbucks locations. We're determined (exhaustedly so) to bring joy to every aspect of our lives. We shout personal growth over hard work, passion over elbow grease.

While I appreciate the depth we seek, I fear we have tipped the balance; provided lofty goals without a road map. I worry for our children, my children, growing up in a world where happiness is no longer the ideal, but the expected norm. Will this make them stop before they start? Get lost in the gravity of the words, falsely believing that everything worth doing must be enjoyable; that pleasure is a hall-pass for pain; or that success can be as easy as living in your childhood bedroom making YouTube videos and striving to become an influencer?

I realize my children deserve to know that a constant state of euphoria is not only impossible, but also undesirable. That pain will find them as easily as joy, and both hold value. Not every job will bring them happiness; not every experience will be meaningful. That finding their passions, and most certainly their purposes, are life-long endeavors born out of lived experiences.

I do not want them to hide under the weight of these aspirational messages, rather get out and flip burgers. Learn to make Vanilla Lattes, fold t-shirts at the Gap, serve food to disgruntled customers. Have bad managers, good bosses, romantic flings with co-workers. Get uncomfortable to find comfort; and learn what you love in the process.

I will tell them as I put them to bed at night that they are not looking for a universal golden nugget, rather creating their own path one step at a time.