

Young Men of Purpose

A Complete Mentoring Guide for Developing
Successful Young Men

*“Written to inspire young men to effectively manage their lives,
overcome obstacles, and passionately pursue their goals.”*

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Founder of Young Men of Purpose Mentoring LLC

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE

“All men have a purpose in life, but only those who overcome life’s obstacles truly fulfill it.”

This is my life, and I am a young man with a purpose.

I always dreamed of going to college and becoming a professional basketball player. Due to the numerous distractions of a large high school, however, I struggled my freshman year. As a fourteen year old, I was suspended from school, removed from the basketball team, and by the end of 9th grade I earned a 1.3 grade point average.

For the next three years of high school, I struggled to dig myself out the academic hole that I had created for myself. I graduated from high school with an overall 1.8 grade point average. As a result, going to college did not seem like it would become a reality.

My friends had already sent off their college applications and received their acceptance letters in the fall of their senior year of high school. Unfortunately, I didn’t begin applying for college until spring semester of my senior year. Due to my low grade point average, I was rejected from almost every college to which I applied. The letters I had sent off came back, stating that I was denied admission. I finally began to face the harsh reality that my dream of going to college may not come true.

With almost no hope, I waited anxiously for my final letter from Central State University to return. At last, I was accepted into college, but it was on a probationary basis due to my low grades from high school. Nonetheless, I was happy to finally be accepted somewhere.

I remember the day I left for college and all the emotions that I felt. This was a new opportunity, and I knew I had to make the most of it. My parents had always promised that they would do whatever they could to get me into college, and they also promised to pay for my first semester.

When we arrived at Central State University, we went to the Office of Admissions to complete the paperwork for my first semester. It was during this moment that my mother said something to me that I will never forget. My mother counted out \$4,000 in cash to pay for my first college tuition payment. While counting the money, my mother made sure that I saw her count every dollar.

Once she handed the money to the school administrator, she looked at me and said, “**This is your life!**” At that moment, I realized that I had to be accountable for my own actions because I was now on my own. I earned a 3.3 grade point average that semester, and after successfully completing one year, I transferred to Indiana State University in order to be closer to my family.

While attending Indiana State University, I realized that my passion was teaching, mentoring, and coaching students in order to see them reach their full potential. I also became involved in a faith-based organization called Men of Purpose. Though small in size, this organization also played a role in helping me realize my purpose and calling in life. As a result, I became involved in mentoring while working at an alternative school for at-risk males. I valued this experience more than any other because I had a positive impact on young men who desperately needed guidance.

After entering college with a 1.8 grade point average and being on academic probation, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Studies Education. Along with a college degree, I also earned a 4.0 grade point average during my final semester.

Shortly after earning a college degree, I became licensed as a teacher in the State of Indiana. I was hired to be a sixth-grade social studies teacher in Pike Township located in northwest Indianapolis. I was proud to have the opportunity to teach, but I knew my role in the school could not be limited to teaching. During a staff meeting, I became disturbed at the statistics that showed the lack of achievement by the male students so I decided to be part of the solution.

After underachieving in high school, being rejected from multiple colleges, and starting college on academic probation, I never imagined that I would become a teacher, principal, and mentor to students. But I came to realize that all my successes and failures happened so that I would be able use those stories to inspire and mentor young men. This is the purpose and mission given to me to fulfill.

Chapter Focus:

This chapter will help you realize your purpose, self-worth, and value in life. You will be encouraged to leave a positive legacy in every aspect of your life.

Purpose

Your **purpose** is your personal mission to be fulfilled in life. You were born to accomplish a specific mission that only you can fulfill. No one else can fulfill it for you.

- At some point in your life you will discover your purpose if you stay focused, keep an open mind, and passionately pursue it. Your purpose will not always be predictable, most of the time it just happens.
- You may not be great at everything you do, but you will become great at something. When you realize your individual greatness, use it to benefit others.

You are living in your dash (-).

If you have ever read someone's gravestone at the cemetery or read someone's obituary from a funeral, you will notice that they had a birth date, a dash mark, and the end date for their life.

- When you think of life, remember you have a start date, which is your birth.
- No one lives forever, so you eventually will have a date for your death.
- Most importantly, what you do between the two dates represents the dash mark, which is your life story or purpose.

Whatever you desire to become in life, you are becoming it right now. Life is sequential so everything you do today will impact your future. If you want to fulfill your purpose, you cannot afford to go through life lacking an expectation for success. You were born to accomplish amazing things so make the most of life during your dash.

Strive to leave a legacy by making a difference.

Make sure people remember you because of the positive things you do in life. Examples of how you can leave a legacy include being a positive role model by taking care of your family, achieving in school, volunteering to help others in the community, and making a difference with your career.

****Discussion Question:** What do you want your legacy to be? How do you want people to remember you? What would someone say about your life right now?*

****Discussion Question:** How have you made a difference in the lives of others?*

Three Steps for Discovering your Purpose in Life:

1. **Recognize your talents.**

Everyone has talent; it is what you do with the talent that counts. The first thing you must do is recognize what your natural talents are and consider how they can impact your purpose.

**Discussion Question: What are your personal strengths and how do they make you unique? What do you plan to do with your natural talent?*

2. **Reflect on your life experiences.**

The second thing you must do is expose yourself to a variety of life experiences. Everything you experience in life is meant to guide you towards your purpose. Don't take any opportunity, mistake, or experience for granted because every one of them will help guide you to your purpose. **Remember that you will only get out of life what you put into it.**

**Discussion Question: What are some past experiences that left a major impression on your life?*

3. **Realize your passion.**

The final thing you must do is discover what you are passionate about. Your passion will be different than others. Once you discover what you have a compelling desire to do, you should pursue it with all of your heart. Persevere through life's obstacles, and follow your passion.

**Discussion Question: What do you love to do? What do you want to pursue in life?*

Several other factors to consider as you passionately pursue your purpose.

- **Mentors will help guide you towards your purpose.**
I believe every successful young man had a teacher, coach, or mentor who made a difference in his life. When you have concerned adults in your life, be sure to listen and learn from them. These mentors can leave a lasting impression on you and motivate you to do great things in life. Often times, young men grow up and pattern their lives after someone who impacted them while they were young. As a result of this example, you may desire to have a similar impact on others.
- **Education plays a major role in discovering your purpose.**
Throughout your school experience, you will learn things that will spark an interest and cause you to pursue a deeper understanding of that subject matter. In most cases, this compels young men to become passionate about that subject matter and select a career in that field.
- **Career choices directly connect to your purpose.**
You will spend half of your life working in your career. It is important for you to consider how your career choice will allow you to fulfill your purpose. Instead of focusing on how much money you can make, think about how you can impact other people and make a difference.
- **Spiritual values factor into fulfilling your purpose.**
You may decide to pursue a lifestyle based on your religious or spiritual beliefs. Many people choose to spend their lives focusing on accomplishing a mission that was based on their spiritual convictions.

You must overcome life's obstacles.

Unfortunately, many young men never fulfill their purpose because they fall victim to the pitfalls in life. These factors have caused them to underachieve, become incarcerated, or tragically killed at a young age. **When you make mistakes in life, pick yourself up and keep moving forward towards your purpose. Never give up on yourself.**

In time, you will discover your purpose.

As I stated in the beginning of the chapter, I was an underachiever in high school, who barely made it into college. I never imagined that I would become a teacher and a principal or start a mentoring program. However, when I think about my talents, life experiences, and my passion, I realized that I took the perfect path to my purpose.

One day you will discover your purpose, and when you do, you will experience joy knowing that you are fulfilling your mission. Strive to leave a legacy and make sure people remember your name for all the positive contributions you make in society. **This is your life, and you have a personal mission to accomplish.**

Plan of Action:

1. Take time to identify your greatest talents and gifts.
2. Identify several things that interest you.
3. Think about how you plan to leave a legacy at your school.
4. Think about how you plan to make a positive difference in your community.
5. Devise a plan to overcome obstacles as you fulfill your purpose.

Statement of Affirmation:

I understand that I have a purpose or mission to accomplish in life, but I must overcome life's obstacles in order to fulfill it. My life is a terrible thing to waste, so I will make the most of my talent, gifts, and potential. **This is my life, and I am a young man with a purpose.**

Please visit YoungMenOfPurpose.com for more information and additional excerpts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Roy Dobbs is an award-winning educator, who has served as a teacher, coach, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, and Principal in both traditional and alternative school settings. In addition to these educational experiences, Roy Dobbs has served as the Principal of an all-male middle school. As the founder of the Young Men of Purpose Mentoring Program, he inspires today's young men to become tomorrow's leaders through teaching the importance of character, scholastic achievement, and service. He resides in Indianapolis, Indiana, with his wife, Kristen, and three children.

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Building Character, Citizenship, and Academics