



what do I really want from life?

INTRODUCTION

Here's something I hear from people a lot:

"I have a great life ... yet I feel desperately unfulfilled."

It's something people also feel a great deal of guilt about.

We all know there's legitimately terrible stuff going on out there in the world beyond our borders. So what right do we have to feel unfulfilled? What right do we have to be ... not quite as happy as we'd like.

The fact is – we have quite a lot of right.

I think deep down we all know that when we're unhappy and unfulfilled, we're not as great as we can be to the people around us.

- We're snappy and irritable with our workmates and family.
- We're vague and disinterested when it comes to people we see out in public.
- We get angry over stupid things because there's this constant nagging sensation there that we just can't put our fingers on.

In a nutshell – when we're unhappy and unfulfilled, we're just not able to bring the best of ourselves to this world.

Consider the flipside of this.

You know how having just one really stressed out person in your inner circle is enough to bring everyone down?

Well the reverse applies when just one person in your inner circle is bringing the best they have to offer to the world every day ... it brings everyone around them UP!

When we're happier and more fulfilled, we're kinder to ourselves and the people in our inner circles. Because those people are experiencing patience and kindness from us, they themselves are better able to be kind to the people they come across in a given day. The ripple effect is both huge, and worth striving for.

So let's strive.

Let's try to understand why you're not happy

The most likely culprit is that you don't know what your 'thing' is. You don't know what's really important to you.



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Today's world is ruled by social media and while I love social media, it tends to send us all one main message: you should be doing 'this'/aiming for 'that'.

Social media makes it very easy to get caught up in the shiniest part of everyone's lives, and think the things they're doing are the things we should be doing too.

I'll give you an example.

I'm a writer and thus I have a LOT of writer friends. For many of my writer friends, the holy grail is having a publisher come to them and say "we want to publish your book". My friends want to see their book in bookstores and at the airport. They want the incredible validation that comes from being 'picked'.

And it would be very easy for me to get caught up in thinking that should be/those are my goals too. But somewhere along the line I realised I really love the control and agility that comes with self-publishing. I love the ability to simply get my words into the hands of readers as fast as possible. And I value that far more than I value seeing my books in an airport book store.

It's really important that I know this because if I didn't, I could be spending years and years of my life trying to get traditionally published and being disappointed and becoming more despondent with every rejection. Instead, I spent the end of 2013 writing a book and was able to publish it at the start of 2014. That book has resonated deeply with its target audience, has sent a lot of beautiful feedback my way and also opened a lot of doors for me.

Having my book out there in people's hands (rather than languishing in a publisher's slush pile somewhere) has made me feel incredibly happy and fulfilled over this last year and a bit.

So how am I going to help you answer the question: "What do I really want from life?"

Well the rest of this workbook contain five sets of ideas and prompts designed to:

- Get you thinking about stuff you've not thought of before or consider things from a different angle to before.
- Help you drill right down and figure out what is truly important to you.
- Give you a feel for what you really, actually want in life.

Most of all, they are designed to stop you charging after something because 'everyone else' said you should, only to achieve that thing and find out it doesn't actually float your boat in any way.

Aint nobody got time for that!

Let's get started.



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EXERCISE ONE

Don't ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go do that. Because what the world needs are people who have come alive.

– Harold Whitman

See that quote? That's pretty much the essence of what we're trying to get at over the next five exercises. We're trying to figure out what makes you come alive.

- Is it a very specific way of serving others?
- Is it a specific kind of recognition?
- Is it influencing people in a specific way?

The important thing to keep in mind over the course of this workbook is this: there is no 'one way' to do the thing that makes us come alive.

My 'thing' is helping people bring order to their lives.

I currently choose to do this via writing on my blog. I used to do it by volunteering a lot of time in organisations I was highly invested in. Other people like me might choose to do it by getting into politics, or becoming teachers, or actors, or tv presenters. While writing is my preferred avenue for doing my thing right now, down the track it might change to podcasting or speaking.

The numbers of ways I can choose to do my thing at this current time in my life are limited by a few things:

- My imagination.
- Personal circumstances (ie business owner with a young family).
- My values (I value 'achievement' and 'recognition' quite highly ... but not at the expense of being able to be 'present' in mind, body and spirit for my family).

The same will apply to you – there will be many ways to do your thing and how you do your thing can and will change over time.

This is all a kinda long way of saying, "Please don't approach the questions over the next few days as looking for 'the answer'. Use the questions and the prompts as a way to explore and get a better of understanding of what you value and what actually drives you in life."

Knowing these two things:

- Stops you chasing goals and dreams that belong to other people, not you.
- Allows you to say no to things that might be causing unnecessary overwhelm at the moment.

So let's get to it shall we?!



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EXERCISE ONE: QUESTIONS

PART 1: Describe a (hopefully relatively recent) situation where you felt super 'buzzy' / energised / on top of your game.

- Where were you, who were you with and what were you doing?
- How did you come to be there?
- What was it exactly about the situation that made you feel so buzzy / energised?

PART 2: Describe a (hopefully relatively recent) situation or moment where you felt ridiculously content.

- Where were you, who were you with and what were you doing?
- How did you come to be there?
- What was it exactly about the situation that made you feel so buzzy / energised?



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PART 3: Quick analysis

Going on your answers to the above, what is jumping out at you as things you value highly/bring out the best in you?



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EXERCISE TWO

In this exercise we're going to start answering the question: 'Who am I?'

I say 'start' because this is a MASSIVE question. Yet it's one we don't ever really stop to ask ourselves.

It's important, however, because how we view ourselves, who we *think* we are shapes who we *actually* are. And if you're feeling a bit lost, who you think you are might be being shaped by other people's agendas and thoughts, not your own.

When you're answering the questions below, before you actually write your answer down, just check: is this MY answer ... or is it what other people are telling me? Try and answer from your own point of view, not that of the other people in your life (they'll get their say in Exercise Three!).

Here are the questions:

What are the three qualities you most admire in yourself?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What three qualities do you possess that you know other people admire in you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What's something you're really good at that you seldom get credit for?

What one thing is guaranteed to lift your mood?



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What one thing is guaranteed to kill your mood?

What's one thing you're guaranteed to get really fired up about?

What's something hardly anyone knows about you, but you wish they did?

If each day in your life had a 25th hour and you HAD to spend that 25th hour doing something that makes your heart sing ... what would you spend that hour on?

What do you stand for?

When you've answered all these questions take a step back from them and consider the picture you've just built of 'Who am I?' Is the world seeing that person? If not ... why not?



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EXERCISE THREE

This task is simple: ask five family members or close friends (ie people who know you really well) these two questions:

- What three qualities do you most admire in me?
- What three things do you think I am best at?

What you're probably going to find is there will be answers in there that will make you go 'duh, yeah I knew that already'. But some answers will really surprise you.

When I did this exercise it was a huge to surprise to me to hear that people thought I was really good at connecting people/bringing people together. I'm a massive introvert so I've always had it in my head that I'm quite anti-social and don't really like being around people (!!). But when my friends pointed out to me that I was the one who was always organising dinners and outings so we could all see each other, I could see that, yes, they were right! I do love bringing people together. And not just my friends. I also love organising things like seminars and any kind of event where like-minded people are brought together. Ever since I've had this pointed out to me, I've had a bit of fun exploring this 'new-found' trait and enjoying the 'buzziness' that comes with it.

The other thing that popped up when I did this exercise was recognition of my willingness to set a goal and then work my arse off in pursuit of that goal. Interestingly I'd tended to see that trait as a bit of a failing, mostly because in the past I'd always go very single-minded when in pursuit of a goal (not great for my loved ones). So I've tried to tamp down on that aspect of my personality. But I have since come to realise that having a goal and being able to go after it is something that is very important to me with regard to feeling happy and fulfilled. So I've learned how to have goals and strive for them, but without the single-mindedness.

So ... back to you!

Once you've gotten the responses back from your family and friends (try and get them back today ... they really shouldn't have to think too hard about their answers!) summarise them below:

The qualities people said they admired in me:



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The things people said they thought I was best at:

Which of the things above was I already aware of?

Which of the things above really surprised me?

Have the responses I received changed the way I look at myself? If so, how?

Which of these did I know already?



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What surprised me? Is there something untapped there?

While an underlying theme of this workbook is to ensure we're in charge of who we are (rather than letting other people's agendas shape us) ... it's always interesting to find out what strengths other people perceive in us because those strengths are either:

- Things we tend to take completely for granted (so don't think they are all that special), or are;
- Things we de-emphasise in an attempt to not seem 'up ourselves'!

These things provide big clues about the things that really make us tick. So it's important to take notice of them once they are pointed out!



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EXERCISE FOUR

Today, it's time to dream a little. I want you to tell me what a perfect day looks like for you.

Not a 'perfect day' as in:

I want to lie in bed till noon at which point my butler will deliver me breakfast in bed before calling in my personal masseuse to give me a one hour massage before my hairdresser and make-up artists arrive to get me ready for the day ...

No, we want a perfect day that could actually happen. One that, if this was every weekday for you for the rest of your life, you'd be happy with.

My perfect day involves waking early before the rest of the house and having an hour or two to myself to do whatever I want. I'd then be able to get my kids ready for school with a minimum of fuss before walking with them to school. Upon my return home I'd have five hours at my disposal in which to work my way through three hours of writing and a bit of home admin. I'd then make my way in an unhurried fashion to pick my kids up from school and they'd be able to have a play with their friends while I chat with the other school mums. Once home we'd find Ant waiting there for us and we'd spend the rest of the afternoon playing in the backyard as a family and meandering our way through our evening routine. At 7.30pm the kids would go to bed and Ant and I would have some time to hang out together on the couch before heading off to bed.

Nice.

The biggest thing about my perfect day (you will notice) is lots of quality family interaction, lack of rushing, and time: time for myself; plenty of time to get work done (yes my perfect day involves always having some kind of 'work' to do).

When I first wrote out my perfect day about a year ago, my days looked nothing like this! Fast forward to now and it's getting closer with each passing month.

Knowing exactly how I want my days to pan out means I'm able to filter all requests that are made of me through the question "what impact will this have on how I know I want my days to look like?"

For instance – I'm about to take on a few new personal and business related projects. But because I know I don't want to be getting on my laptop in the evenings; because I know that time with Ant once the kids have gone to bed is precious to me and us, I know I have to cut back on other commitments. And that's what I am in the process of doing right now :)



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So – how about you?

What does your perfect day look like? Map it out below:



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EXERCISE FIVE

Ok team. We're on to the final exercise of this 'What do I really want from life' workbook. And, because I passionately believe in the power of knowing your personality type, today's tasks are the ones I am most excited about as I feel they are the most likely to generate a serious 'aha' moment or two. Especially in light of the things you will have unearthed in the previous exercises.

TASK ONE:

Go to: kellyexeter.com.au/mbti and figure out your personality type.

NB: You might have done your Myers-Briggs (MBTI) personality type before but it's really worth doing again today just to be sure. (Often, if you've done MBTI before in a work setting, you answer all the questions as the person you are at work as opposed to the person you are on an everyday basis.)

TASK TWO:

Go to: kellyexeter.com.au/personality to see what makes your personality type 'buzzy'.

TASK THREE:

Based on what you've read in the above, is there something very crucial that is currently 'missing' from your life?

For example: are you an INTJ who feels like they've not learnt anything new, or achieved a higher level of competency in something for months (or, god forbid, years). Are you an ISFP who is lacking a feeling of 'freedom' in your life? Are you an ENTP who doesn't currently know what their 'legacy' will be when they're gone? Are you an ESTJ who feels like each day is just passing you by and you're not sure what you've 'achieved' on any given day?

Make some notes below:



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IN CONCLUSION

Over the course of this workbook you should have:

1. Gotten a feel for what it is that you value really highly in life ... and what things bring out the best in you
2. Made a good start on answering the question 'Who am I' and you've asked whether the world is seeing that person or not ... and if not, why not.
3. Checked in with family and friends to see what great qualities and talents they see in you that you may not see in yourself
4. Mapped out your perfect day (one that could actually happen)
5. Identified your personality type and got a feel for what kind of thing motivates people with your personality type and makes you 'buzzy'.

SO WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

Well – I have three tasks for you depending on where you currently find yourself:

TASK ONE:

If the reason you embarked on this five day series of posts is because you have a gnawing sense of dissatisfaction with life and you can't put your finger on why ... read this from Mark Manson: markmanson.net/dreams. You might have a 'dream' that is currently unfulfilled and Mark explains why it's ok for dreams to remain unfulfilled. Make sure to read through to the bit that starts "How do we know the difference? How do we know what's worth pursuing? We don't always."

TASK TWO

If the reason you did this five day series is because you're trying to figure out your thing and you think there is only one thing for you ... watch this:

www.facebook.com/MarvinAJackson/videos/10203648443566574/

Play close attention to the bit where he says: "When you know your **why**, you have options on what your **what** can be." And then make sure to watch right through to end to see the difference between knowing your 'what' and your 'why'. My hope is that this workbook has given you a feel for your why.



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TASK THREE

Make the commitment to start small. A MAJOR reason people find themselves a little lost or dissatisfied in life is because there is no space in their day for them to just BE themselves. And generally speaking, this space doesn't just present itself, you need to create it. So start with creating 15 minutes of space in your day, each day. Even if you have to get up a little earlier or stay up a little later – just carve it out. It must become a habit. And then once it's a habit, carve out a bit more. And once you start seeing the results of having this space in your life – the contentment it brings; it will become easier to find more of that space.

And that's it folks.

I so hope you've found these exercises helpful! If you had a 'lightbulb moment' in there, I'd really love to hear about it.

Feel free to drop me an email via kelly@kellyexeter.com.au.