

WHY AM I?

How to Find the Meaning of Life without Religion or Materialism

The Questions



T.E. WHITAKER

Copyright © T.E. Whitaker, 2014
All rights reserved.



Moral Code Questions

What are the core behaviors everyone must follow for individuals to interact peacefully?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these core behaviors into positive statements (*I will*).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What behaviors must everyone *avoid* for individuals to interact peacefully?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these behaviors into negative statements (*I will not*).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What behaviors/policies must communities and nations follow or adopt for civilization to function peacefully? This refers to interaction between governments, not interaction between governments and individuals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these into positive statements.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What behaviors/policies must communities and nations *avoid* for civilization to function peacefully? As in the previous question, this refers to interaction between governments, not interaction between governments and individuals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these into negative statements.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What behaviors/policies must governments follow or adopt for civilization to function peacefully? This refers to interaction between governments and individuals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these into positive statements.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What behaviors/policies must governments *avoid* for civilization to function peacefully? As in the previous question, this refers to interaction between governments and individuals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these into negative statements.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What core behaviors are necessary for humanity to adopt to continue forward (biologically, technologically, environmentally, etc.) not only for survival but for the advancement of our species and/or world?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these into positive statements.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

What behaviors must humanity *avoid* so that we can continue forward (biologically, technologically, environmentally, etc.) without destroying our species and/or world?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these into negative statements.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Which core behaviors, necessary for life and/or civilization to flourish, are you passionate about?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Turn these into positive or negative statements, based on their nature.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Build Your Moral Code

Review your positive or negative statements as well as the raw answers that helped you craft your positive and negative statements. Using these statements as principles, build your Moral Code with the principles you consider absolutes.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

21.

22.

23.

24.

Congratulations. You have created your own Moral Code.

Values Code Questions

What in the world/your country/life inspires you? Who or what contributes to this?

Who in the world/your country/life inspires you? Why?

What in the world/your country/life infuriates you? Who or what contributes to this?

Who in the world/your country/life angers you? Why?

What is right with the world/your country/life? Who or what contributes to this?

What is wrong with the world/your country/life? Who or what contributes to this?

What does the world/your country/life need? Why?

What could the world/your country/life do without? Why?

What about the world/your country/life is unfair? Why?

Is your answer to the previous question a part of the nature of the world/your country/life, or is it something caused by relations among people?

Does anything about the world/your country/life make you emotional or want to cry? Why?

What can't you speak about regarding the world/your country/life without getting angry? Why?

What can't you shut up about regarding the world/your country/life? Why?

What do you watch on television? Is there a common theme?

What are your favorite movies? Is there a common theme?

What are your favorite documentary films? Is there a common theme?

What do you read? Is there a common theme?

**Who has had the most positive influence on you in your life? In what way?
Why?**

**Who has had the most negative influence on you in your life? In what way?
Why?**

What is missing in the world/your country/life that, if it existed, would make everything suddenly all right?

Why do you think it's missing?

For how long has it been missing?

In addition to being missing in the world at large, is it missing in your life specifically?

What is your most common complaint about the world/your country/life?

Can your most common complaint be solved by technology, or would it require a global philosophical/cultural shift of some sort?

Build Your Values Code

Review your evaluations of the world's current state. Simplify your evaluations into sweeping statements of right and wrong such as "It's right that..." or "It's wrong that..." or something similar. Make your statements as emotionally or intellectually charged as you wish. Though much is right and wrong with the world, there is no right or wrong way to write your Values Code, and no required length so long as it's clear to you.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

Congratulations. You have built a Values Code.

Developing Your Ideals Code

Take the behaviors in your Moral Code, and compare them to the behaviors of most people.

If, in general, people behave in the way your Moral Code deems “right,” the world is as it should be.

If, in general, people do not behave in the way your Moral Code deems “right,” the world is not as it should be.

When you come across a behavior that does not correspond with your Moral Code, this is a possibility for change. Write a statement about how the world should be (perhaps something like this: “People should all use smiley faces in their e-mail, but most people don’t, so the world would be better if everyone did”).

Even if most people behave the way you believe they should, if you think a particular behavior is threatened by some general world trend (such as how grammar, spelling, and punctuation are under siege by texting and Twitter), you may want to write something like this: “Most people know how to capitalize and use a comma, but clearly it’s a dying art, so we need to stress the importance of grammar, spelling, and punctuation if we want to communicate clearly in the future.”

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Build Your Ideals Code

Working from the points derived from your Moral Code and Values Code, decide which elements are most important to you. If you're like most people, only a handful will truly move you, sometimes fewer and sometimes only one. For determining the meaning of your life, the thing that moves you most intellectually and emotionally is all that matters.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Congratulations. You have built an Ideals Code.

Assuming for now that one of the items on your Ideals Code moves you more than the others, let's look at that one. Place it into something resembling the following statement:

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that (insert the meaning of your life) is the (biggest threat to the world/best thing about the world that is at risk/most pressing problem in the world)."

Here are some examples:

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that the lack of clean drinking water in underdeveloped countries is the most pressing problem in the world."

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that the lack of access to quality healthcare is the biggest threat to my country."

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that religious radicalism is the biggest threat to the world."

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that affordable college education is the best thing about my country that is at risk."

Now write your own statement:

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that..."

Now that you've written down what could be the meaning of your life, how does it look? Is it important enough to you? Does it mean enough to you? Can it fuel your life?

Once you're satisfied you know the meaning of your life, it's time to take the next step and turn meaning into purpose.

Purpose Questions

Write the meaning of your life here.

Now translate the meaning of your life into the purpose of your life. Brainstorm for actions—paid or unpaid, free or costly—that would fight for or against the meaning of your life.

Of the actions that would promote or combat the meaning of your life, which inspires you most and/or would be most effective?

Statement of Purpose

Nothing worth anything is easy. If your purpose is something you haven't considered and prepared for your entire life, you'll have to take steps to *pursue* your purpose.

Write a statement in a form something like this: "My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to *think this about life* (meaning). Therefore, I am going to fight for or against it by doing *this* (purpose)."

Here are two different perspectives on purpose. The first is by someone who has a career he loves but an unrelated purpose. The second is from someone less committed to her current position.

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that the lack of clean drinking water in underdeveloped countries is the most pressing problem in the world. Therefore, I am going to fight against it by setting aside fifty dollars from each paycheck to purchase a gravity-powered water filtration device and spend my annual vacation in the Sudan, delivering twenty-four water filtration devices to needy people, with help from a local NGO."

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that affordable college education is the best thing about my country that is at risk. Therefore, I am going to fight for it by developing an online, accredited university that, for a nominal fee, teaches and certifies people in new economy careers such as computer science, sponsored by companies that need employees with the specific skills my online university teaches."

Now craft your statement of purpose:

"My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that..."

Pursuing Your Purpose

These are a few questions to ask yourself:

What skills are necessary for you to pursue the purpose of your life?

Will you need formal education, or is it possible to attain the knowledge you need through erudition (self-taught)? Will you need a traditional degree to execute your purpose or to legitimize your voice? Often erudition can take the place of formal education except in cases where professional degrees (or letters such as PhD behind your name) legitimize you as an expert.

How long will it take to attain the skills necessary to promote or combat your meaning?

What is the first step you can take toward developing your skills or obtaining the education you need to pursue your purpose?

An Expanded Statement of Purpose

Expand your statement of purpose to include the steps necessary to pursue the purpose of your life. It might read something like these examples:

“My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that the lack of clean drinking water in underdeveloped countries is the most pressing problem in the world. Therefore, I am going to fight against it by setting aside fifty dollars from each paycheck to purchase a gravity-powered water filtration device and spend my annual vacation in the Sudan, delivering twenty-four water filtration devices to needy people, with help from a local NGO. To do this, I need to find the best filtration device, find the most effective Sudan-based NGO, and set up my online banking to automatically transfer fifty dollars to a new account.”

“My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that affordable college education is the best thing about my country that is at risk. Therefore, I am going to fight for it by developing an online, accredited university that, for a nominal fee, teaches and certifies people in new economy careers such as computer science, sponsored by companies that need employees with the specific skills my online university teaches. To accomplish this, I need to learn computer science, determine which coding languages and careers are the most useful and needed, build a website, and approach companies as potential sponsors.”

Now craft your expanded statement of purpose:

“My Moral Code, Values Code, Ideals Code, reason, experience, and passion lead me to think that...”