# Where You Count

Finding a purpose you can act on this week

One question before you fill anything in, and there is nowhere to write the answer. If your purpose is something you have not found yet, how have you been choosing anything up to now?

Most advice treats purpose as buried treasure: look inward hard enough, find it, and you will know it by the feeling. Alfred Adler, a Viennese physician who broke with Freud in 1911, thought that faced the wrong way. People are not only pushed by what happened to them, he argued; they are pulled toward something they are already aiming at, named or not. And the aims that lasted had other people in them.

So this sheet does not ask what you want. It asks what you are already moving toward, and who is on the other end.

## The five places a life gets lived

*Adler worked with three of these; later Adlerians added the last two. For each one, rate how much you are putting into it right now. Not how much it matters, and not how it should be.*

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Work** | **The people closest** | **Friends and community** | **Yourself** | **Meaning** |
| what you contribute, paid or not | partner, family, whoever knows you | your wider circle, neighbours, groups | how you treat you | what you think life is for |

**Rate 1 to 10. 1 = almost nothing right now. 10 = as much as I can give right now.**

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### Who is on the other end?

*Take your two highest numbers. For each one, name a real person who feels the difference when you put that in.*

### Now your lowest number.

*Not a plan to fix it. Just this: what would one point higher look like over the next seven days?*

*Educational content; not a substitute for therapy. If you are working through something significant, consider connecting with a counsellor or your family doctor.*

## The direction you are already facing

Adler noticed that people often build their strengths on the exact spot where they once felt short. He called it compensation. The child who felt unheard grows into the adult everyone talks to. The gap is not the flaw in the story; it is usually where the story started.

**Something you were short of growing up.**

*Not the hardest thing that happened to you. Just something other people seemed to have that you did not.*

**What you got good at because of it.**

*That second answer is worth reading twice. It tends to point straight at what you now protect in other people.*

## One question Adler asked

*He put this to people who could not say what they wanted. Picture waking up tomorrow, and answer in ordinary detail rather than in ideals.*

**If the thing that brought you here were settled, what would be different by dinner time?**

## One useful move

Adler asked people to act as if the change had already happened rather than wait to feel ready. One move, small enough to finish in the next seven days, and pointed at someone other than you.

**What I will do.**

**Who it is for.**

**When.**

**Before you put this down.**

*Without looking back at page one: name the five places a life gets lived, and say which one you rated lowest.*

*You do not have to feel purposeful before you move toward something useful. The order usually runs the other way.*

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