

IN PURSUIT OF FULFILMENT – GETTING TO KNOW YOURSELF

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There are several basic inherent needs we have as humans, needs in which nature set before us as a lifelong preoccupation. At the bottom of the cascade of the basic human needs is survival while the end towards which we all strive is fulfilment. According to Maslow's theory (hierarchy of needs) the peak of human's needs is self actualization i.e. fulfilment. If a man is not striving to survive, he will definitely be striving for some sort of fulfilment. For some immigrants in the US, the sojourn to the country is predicated on a need for survival and ultimately for fulfilment, but for most people it is all about fulfilment. The significance of being fulfilled is therefore more appreciated by immigrants who have, at some point, considered if the sojourn has been worth the price and whether or not they found what they came looking for in the US.

As it is often said, success or fulfilment is not geographically dependent. Being fulfilled in life has more to do with the choices made by a man than his location. Nevertheless, each individual reserve the right to choose where to seek fulfilment. Wherever that may be, the rules for anyone who is in pursuit of fulfilment are as universal as human's inherent need of fulfilment. Over the next two editions or more, I will be exploring the factors that could aid fulfilment in life. I will start by considering the first step towards fulfilment which is 'Getting to know yourself'.

I recently stumbled on a blog with the name 'I just met me' and as funny and strange as that name might sound, it conveys a very deep message about the need for every individual to get to know himself or herself. Psychologists have come up with all sorts of personality tests to promote the understanding of human personality but really, the only one that has the best shot at truly knowing who you are is you. Get to know yourself, what comes easy to you, what you hate to do and why, how you reason, your propensities, your fears, your strengths, what excites you, what puts you off, why you suck at certain tasks, get to know all the whats, wheres, and whys about yourself. Who you are has a lot to do with what you can do best and where you may ultimately find fulfilling.

A good understanding of self will help you align your passion with your strengths; identify the right kind of occupation that, at least, demands less of what you cannot offer and assist you to

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choose a cause where you can be the champion and not the chaperon. It will also help you to identify the right kind of mate, either for marriage, business partnership or friendship. You will agree with me that these three forms of relationship are key to finding fulfilment in life (we will get to that shortly). Your relationships will only work if you make the right choices in that regard based on your understanding of yourself.

I went through a lot of internal struggles in my teenage years due to my little understanding of myself (you can't blame me, I was just a teenage, but there are adults who have never figured out these things) I used to be so mad at myself for not just letting things be when things were not being done right, I often wondered why I had to be the only one in the group that was bold enough to voice the grievances felt but not expressed by others, I was so worried about this 'big issue' in my life which I thought was a huge character flaw and I desperately tried to get rid of it, but as it turned out, that was just me being me, it is something unique about me, something that I have found to be key to my fulfilment in my career as an attorney and indeed in life. Like the name of that blog seems to imply, it is never too late to meet yourself. Take a voyage of self discovery and it would amaze you how these ever readily available information about you can help you make your life better and increase your chances of gaining fulfilment in life.

If you are objective enough in your self assessment, or you allow yourself to be guided by the usually objective results of the personalized tests, assuming you find it difficult being objective or accepting people's objective opinion on such a personal matter, you will discover that as much as there are great things about you which could be useful in your journey to fulfilment, there are also other traits and propensities that may be inimical to it. Embarking on self discovery is thus to assist you to make the best use of your strength, as well as to enable you consciously work on making necessary efforts to alleviate your weaknesses and avoid situations that could aggravate them. It is not to serve as a ground for condoning and or explaining away your destructive oddities and indulgencies.

It is quite usual to hear people say they get angry easily and so people should avoid doing things that provoke them. It is good enough that you know you get annoyed pretty easy but members of the society have no duty to not provoke you. The state has prison facilities reserved for those who hurt others because they cannot manage their anger and a system of justice that will ensure they are put away for as long as possible, you therefore owe yourself the duty of avoiding anything provocative or learn not to be easily provoked so that you do not end up where society keeps those who allowed their emotion to get the better of them. Ask people who have been through that process and they will tell you there is nothing fulfilling about being imprisoned. The whole essence of getting to know yourself is therefore to save you from your demons and not to validate them. It is to make you see your deficiencies and the need to manage them.

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In my experience, some of the traits we perceive as being negative are so perceived because they are not properly channelled. For instance, highly imaginative people tend to exaggerate and embellish the truth so much that it becomes a lie, while that may be a weakness for someone in instances where strict facts are required (you cannot afford to compromise your credibility), being highly imaginative could be a great virtue in other aspects of human calling. Perceived negative traits or excesses could bring fulfilment rather than frustration if properly identified and harnessed. One way to find fulfilment in life is to find positive ways to apply your seemingly negative traits while resisting the temptation to put your good traits to bad use. There is no ultimate fulfilment in doing otherwise.

Having a good understanding of yourself will assist you to appreciate your uniqueness. It will open your eyes to areas where you may have edge over others so you do not end up struggling to be good at something while you can easily become the best in something equally good or even better. It will allow you a reasonable basis for comparison. There is nothing more frustrating than trying to compete with people with differing competences. You will end up concluding you are a failure when you are not. We are all differently able. It will be hard to beat someone who is good at carrying out a physical task based on already outlined instructions when you are rather good at the mental task of designing the outlines and instructions for the performance of the physical task. When you ascertain your uniqueness, it will not be difficult establishing your relevance. The good news is, there is something unique about everybody, but individual's level of fulfilment will depend on how well they explore their uniqueness. Some people spend their entire life time trying to be who they are not while they make nothing of their uniqueness.

Life is much more fun if you spend it doing things that come easy to you as opposed to things that you grapple to understand. You can only become very good at something that is in sync with your natural abilities. You can only have a great relationship with people who you do not have to psyche yourself up to be able to get along with, you can only get to the top of the mountain if you can identify and dislodge every attributes that may be inimical to climbing. You need to know these things about yourself but you hardly know except you take a long inward look and get to really know yourself. Knowledge about how things work is very important to be able to get things done, but the most important knowledge you must gain is the knowledge about yourself.

You just need to get to know you and it will not be hard figuring out what is best for you and how to bring out the best in you. America is always looking for the best; you can be the best.