

A Man's Purpose

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“A man is but the product of his thoughts what he thinks, he becomes.-“ Mahatma Gandhi. They say a man needs respect in the world but what a man truly needs is a purpose

David French (2023) is a *New York Times* Opinion columnist. A lawyer, writer, and veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom published an article on February 12th, 2023, **titled**, “*Men Need Purpose More Than ‘Respect’*”. In the article, French discusses the fact that a man should strive for a purpose specifically and not for achieving respect inherently. A man shouldn’t solely seek the approval and respect of others. French highlights that modern men with a purpose will automatically be respected and showcases some problems that men face such as drug abuse, education achievement, and male depression rising *Guardian News and Media*. (2022). He insists that if a man can have a clear purpose, they will inherently have a goal, a plan that others will automatically respect. I agree with French’s opinion on seeking a specific purpose in life rather than seeking respect, having a purpose in life will be the base for a man to achieve his goals, be respected in life, with purpose a man will be distracted from his flaws to achieve greatness.

French specifically states that millions of modern men are in crisis, they are lost. Men lose themselves from drug overdose, substance abuse, education underachievement, and finally suicide. He expresses that the previous list is harming men and eventually leads them to take their own life. French argues that what a man needs is a purpose small goals rather than simply wishing for others to do things for them. French attests that a sense of purpose requires a man to helpful to feel content. Without a purpose falling into tragic traps becomes easy. I very much agree with French’s statement that finding a purpose is vital to avoid rock bottom. A good example of this where French’s opinion hold truth is Robert Downey Jr. (Dreamlife Recovery, 2022). “By 1995, he was smoking heroin and freebasing cocaine, leading to several arrests and stints in rehab facilities. In the summer of 1996, within the span of just a few weeks, Downey Jr.

was arrested multiple times for bizarre and reckless, drug-fueled behavior". This was one of Robert Downey Jr lowest points and he eventually did make it out of the endeavor and rose to a very prominent rich position in Hollywood. Another example would be the Weekend, "Abel Tesfaye" One of the biggest artists in the world. Abel was at one point homeless, and dropped out of high school, but he eventually found his purpose in music and rose to be the modern-day Michael Jackson in today's era.

French emphasizes the significance of purpose over respect, exemplifying how veterans have respect but lack meaning in their lives. In his article French states, "If you speak to struggling veterans, many will tell you that they have respect, but they don't have a purpose." – French argues that people say you should seek respect in life, yet veterans are one of the most respected people in the country they fought for the country and came home. Yet many veterans don't possess a purpose after the war. They find it difficult to fit back into normal society after all the traumatic experiences that they have been through. Many can't go back to life how it used to be, French who is a veteran himself can relate to these words stating after returning home he had felt empty even with his wife and kids. I agree with French that simply earning respect from people wouldn't be enough to keep you going and striving to be better as a person. He didn't have a goal initially or a purpose, so he felt empty as a person fully. I can relate to this a bit even though I am not as experienced as French but during times when I don't do anything I feel unproductive and feel useless to society and that pushes me to more negative thoughts and pushes me to a downward spiral. A specific example of how I related to this was at the start of Junior year I didn't have a part time job or a drivers license. I lacked these two crucial things which my peers possessed. I felt I was missing out on things and that my peers were farther ahead of me, leaving me in the dust. To a degree I understood how it felt lacking a sense of

direction, after getting my driver's license, I started doing PSEO as well which allows me to earn college credits. Small baby steps such as remaining persistent to get my license and eventually getting a job allowed me to push forward for a long-term goal of a successful life.

Furthermore, French suggests how others might counteract the point of men seeking their purpose and label its toxic masculinity. French wants to illustrate that regardless of whether people are labeling men as feminized or possessing toxic masculinity. A purpose expands far more than those terms can reach. French argues that at the end of the day, it doesn't matter who is cooking dinner or who is the breadwinner, but the man needs a purpose above all to elevate to his utmost potential in life. I agree with this statement since people nowadays are too focused on what others say to allow them to reach their goals in life. For example, I've seen content where people are saying not to workout not to strive to be your best self. People suggest its toxic masculinity to want to be strong and healthy but being strong and healthy will help lead a person to their dreams to shape their future. But truthfully being lost and down helps motivate you to strive to be better. Furthermore, in spring semester for example I got a D on my first Physics exam. I realized I was lost and fully unprepared in the class and it was a wakeup call for me to do better and put in more work. To put the time to study, I put the time and work into study to achieve an A on the hardest "unit" which made me really proud and want to continue to be better from that experience. Life is like a highway the destination doesn't change no matter who you bring into the car by your side to reach your dreams and goals.

A final way that French would promote searching for purpose over respect is when he said, "What we do for others is infinitely more rewarding than what we ask them to do for us.". French is saying that the ability to help others and you is far more rewarding than having others provide something for you. He suggests that with a purpose others will automatically respect you

when you have a plan. When you have a sense of direction will automatically have people gravitate to you is what he suggests. I heavily agree with this statement because as a man if you can display leadership potential and know what you want people will automatically ask for your help and be curious about your opinion on topics. For example, not going to college after high school is fine as long as you have a plan for life. Going to college with a plan is also a better choice to follow through. A scenario where people gravitated towards me is when people ask me questions about homework assignment or school material in general. My friends saw I was being successful in class and asked me for help on how to learn the content in a different way. Or when people would come up to me for advice or my opinion on topics because they respect my opinion and idea of thinking. When my friends or family come up to me like this asking for opinions it feels great since it makes me feel valued and appreciated so French's ideas apply to my real-life experiences. French is accurate in the fact having a purpose is far more rewarding since you could potentially change the world with your purpose if you aim high.

A man should aim to live life with a purpose with small goals along the way. With a purpose and reason to continue going a man will eventually achieve all that he seeks such as love, compassion, and respect from people. The reason that this specific opinion article stuck out to me is that I am also searching for my purpose on this earth and the points that French brought up made sense to me. Seeing other people's emotional stories and stories of going from tremendous struggles to major success motivates me to be successful just like them.

References

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