

Purpose. You may not have given this a great deal of thought but it just might be one of the single most important aspects of your life. It is at the root of your very being and controls a vast array of thoughts, feelings and beliefs about yourself, who you are, why you're here and your personal valuation of yourself to the world. For most of my life, being wrapped up in the day-to-day grind of obtaining food, shelter and finding the funds necessary to buy a new blower; I never gave "purpose" any thought. I was simply working my way through life, unaware that anything existed beyond the next race event. Later, as I grew older, I became a little deeper in my thoughts and would, on occasion, find myself contemplating my place in the world.

Did I have any duties or obligations to myself, my family, my friends, co-workers or society? If I had obligations, what were these obligations? Who imposed them on me? At the time I came up with few answers but thinking about it would most assuredly occupy my mind for several hundred miles driving down the road between races.

It wasn't until much later in my life that I became aware of the meaning of, and importance of "purpose" in my life. We, as humans, have an absolute need for purpose in life and without it we will not feel satisfied, fulfilled or worthy. And by the way this need for purpose transcends the individual's understanding of it or knowledge of it. In other words you will feel better about yourself, more fulfilled and happier if you have purpose in your life even if you are not consciously aware of that purpose and conversely you will feel less happy and less fulfilled if you feel no purpose in your life even if you are not consciously aware of your lack of purpose.

Let me, by way of a story; give you an idea of how profoundly "purpose" affects our individual lives and our society as a whole.

All the years I was growing up I remember hearing my parents speak of the "war years" as the greatest years of their lives. My Dad had, along with his brother, joined the Royal Navy (British Navy) in 1939 after England declared

war on Germany. Although it would be about three years later that America would enter the war, my Dad was a Canadian and this action, to help England with the war in Europe was common and expected among Canadians. So, for almost five years my Dad sailed back and forth across the North Atlantic, on a British Destroyer often in freezing 40' seas. While at sea they were constantly being fired upon by submarines and when closer to Europe they were attacked by enemy aircraft. Meanwhile my mom worked two jobs for little money, building munitions and other war necessary items, while she raised my sisters by herself. They had almost nothing. Food was rationed, gas was rationed (didn't matter, she had no car) power was rationed and almost anything manufactured from metal, plastic or rubber was not being made for civilian use.

Now wait a minute. These, they told me, were the "best" years of their lives! How could this be? To me these would have been the worst years. For most of my life I never understood this phenomenon. One day I was reading

a book entitled "Nixon in Winter" which chronicled the last few years of the life of President Richard Nixon. In one chapter Nixon talked about "war" and "purpose" and "unity" and a "just cause" and a number of other topics. Slowly, this discussion brought things into perspective. The old adage that "money doesn't buy happiness" began to creep into my mind. There is nothing more fulfilling than purpose. A mission, a need to be needed and the opportunity to share this common goal with another person or possibly our entire nation ... that's what our spirit desires.

The reason the war years are fondly remembered is the idea that we were needed as individuals to unite with common cause to stand up against an enemy that was threatening to take away our most prized possession ... our "freedom". Not only did members of this "greatest generation" have purpose, but "unity in purpose". Their spirit was not only unaffected by the material items they lacked but it was uplifted by the importance of their mission.

Certainly, fighting a war and defending our freedom is “big mission” stuff, however we have missions in our daily lives that, although smaller in scope, can be every bit as important. Raising your kids, providing for your family, helping your friends, running your business or operating your race team are all missions you have. They provide purpose for you to jump out of bed each day and get to work.

In the drag racing community we have the extra benefit of unity. We do, after all, have a great deal in common with one another. We like the same things, speak the same language, travel to the same places and sometimes have the same problems. This unity in mission creates a bond that we should recognize and make good use of. Enjoy your racing endeavors, make more friends, share in their experiences and understand that we are in this together. With an understanding of purpose you will feel more fulfilled, confident and ready to race.