

AWAKENING NEWSLETTER

May 5 2005

The Meaning of Life

*A swami walks up to a hot dog stand and says,
"Make me One with everything".*

One of the most frequent conditions I hear from people coming to me is, "What is my purpose? What does life mean?" Even to ask this question requires a degree of maturity, to recognize that there is more than surviving, acquiring money, having lovers and seeking pleasures. But the very question itself contains an assumption: that there is some inherent meaning, or purpose to life, and that if we could discern it some internal problem could be resolved. And although we can find many speculations and concepts explaining life's meaning, none of them adequately quell this unease.

But what if we were to use this question as a koan, not as something to find an answer to, but as an instrument that itself takes us deeper inside to find meaning and purpose? What if the question itself becomes a "grit" that spurs us on to deeper investigation as to what meaning and purpose we decide to bring into our lives?

Osho:

Life in itself has no meaning. Life is an opportunity to create meaning. Meaning has not to be discovered: it has to be created. You will find meaning only if you create it. It is not lying there somewhere behind the bushes, so you can go and you search a little bit and find it. It is not there like a rock that you will find. It is a poetry to be composed, it is a song to be sung, it is a dance to be danced.

Now, you ask me: Why can't I see any meaning in life?

You must be waiting passively for the meaning to come... it will never come. This has been the idea of the past religions, that the meaning is already there. It is not! Freedom is there to create it, energy is there to create it. The field is there to sow the seeds and reap the crop. All is there -- but the meaning has to be created. That's why to create it is such a joy, such an adventure, such an ecstasy.

And from **Joseph Campbell**: *Life is without meaning. You bring the meaning to it. The meaning to life is whatever you ascribe it to be. Being alive is the meaning.*

Many traditions tell us that there is no "Reality", no way that things "really" are, that what we see are reflections of our own level of inner clarity. Doesn't this make the game so much more exciting? Not that we're stuck with some static "way things are" but that

we are in a dynamic co-creation. What an empowerment! This is why a Master and a madman can be in the same human experience but for one it is Heaven and for the other it is Hell.

So the short answer to “What is the meaning of life?” is a profound secret.

And that secret is - **YOU MAKE IT UP.**

*The swami pays and waits for his change.
But the vendor says, "Change comes from within."*

ACTION STEPS

1. Assuming you are making up your life's meaning and purpose, write a few paragraphs describing what you are choosing them to be. Be bold, aim high.
2. List 10 steps you could take that would support this meaning and purpose.
3. Take one or more of these steps each day for the next week.