

# What I Wish I Knew at 18

## CURRICULUM SAMPLE

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*www.DennisTrittin.com*

### DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE AND INSPIRATION

Find someone whose life is a masterpiece and you'll find a life guided by an inspired purpose or mission. Your life purpose, which might be revealed either sooner or later, is an incredibly powerful force that will direct your life and determine your legacy. One day you'll want to look back on your life and say, "Mission accomplished!" That's what it's all about and it begins with a defining purpose.

Life purposes are usually discovered through personal reflection or the inspirational lives of others. They can be cause-driven (e.g. curing a disease, educating disadvantaged youth, sheltering the homeless, cleaning the planet, protecting our country) or skill-driven (e.g. athletes, artists, mathematicians, designers).

I recommend that you consider both cause-driven and skill-driven purposes and especially a blend of the two. The most transforming lives are found in people who apply their God-given talents to a worthy cause.

Here are some questions to ponder when considering your life purpose:

- What causes (e.g. global or community needs, people, situations, organizations) am I most passionate about? What problems would I most like to solve? What needs or people tug at my heart?
- What inspires me the most?
- What brings me the greatest joy and sense of fulfillment?
- Whose lives would I most like to emulate and why?
- What are my special gifts and talents?
- Where can my skills have the greatest potential impact?

Once you ponder these questions, see if a picture emerges about a cause that could benefit from your unique skill set and experience. Your purpose might be developing inside.

One final point deserves special mention. Chances are that your life purpose may not be revealed for many years. Or, as is often the case, it may evolve through various phases of your life. Today, your answers to the above questions may reveal a vision that's still blurry. If so, that's perfectly okay! I spent 27 years as an investment manager, having no idea that I was being prepared for a far more impacting purpose—teaching life skills, finance, and investments to both youth and adults. I encourage you to periodically reflect on the above questions, but also to be patient. Your highest purpose may not be revealed for quite a while!

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**TAKE FIVE:** ►► When you ponder the questions above, does a picture emerge in your mind's eye? Make a commitment to reflect on your life purpose at least annually. It's one of the surest ways to live a fulfilling and significant life.

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## Chapter 1 — LIFE PERSPECTIVE

*Discover your purpose and inspiration \* Build a living legacy \* Direct your life toward others \* Live life without regrets \* Don't define success by riches \* Diversify your life \* Don't allow work to consume your life \* Plan, practice, and persevere to succeed \* Take risks—even if you might fail \* See the glass as half full \* Control what you can, but accept what you can't \* Value the ride, not just the outcome \* Embrace change as an opportunity \* Commit to being a lifelong learner \* Allow time to reflect \* Immerse yourself in the beauty of God's creation*

Your philosophical approach to life will have a major impact on the person you become. It will guide your interests and pursuits, the diversity and richness of your experiences, how you define success, and, ultimately, the legacy you will leave. As if that's not enough, your life perspective also impacts your disposition and outlook on life. While your family of origin has played a significant role in forming your life perspective, much of it is a personal choice that can be developed and refined along the way. Commit to living life with passion and purpose!

### OBJECTIVES:

- Begin to think about (and eventually identify) some components of your life purpose and why you should have one
- Learn about some common life regrets identified by reflective senior citizens that you can determine NOW to avoid
- Be able to define and measure “success” more broadly than in monetary terms
- Understand what it means to live a diversified lifestyle and how to create balance and variety in your activities
- See the value in being a lifelong learner and identify ways to adopt a passion for learning



### Prepare

- Read Chapter One (“Life Perspective”) in *What I Wish I Knew at 18*, beginning on page 25.
- Use your highlighter pen to mark any sections that jump out at you—things you want to remember, take note of, or consider later.
- In the chart below, identify the pointers from the chapter you consider to be:
  1. the most important in life
  2. ones you think you are already doing well and can model to others
  3. ones you either find the most challenging or that you may need some guidance in to apply to your life

<b>1. the most important in life</b>
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<b>3. ones you find most challenging or that are new ideas for you</b>
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## **POINTER #1 — DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE AND INSPIRATION**



### **Consider**

The most successful people are purposeful and goal oriented in the way they live. They apply their skills and abilities to organizations and relationships and accomplish big things in the process. They are committed to making a positive impact and focus their energy on achieving their mission. Their lives have meaning and are rich in fulfillment. They leave powerful legacies and are honored for the difference they made to others.

Following are some questions to ponder when considering your life purpose. Take a few minutes to fill in the blanks with the first thoughts that come to mind:

- What causes am I most passionate about (e.g., global or community needs, people, situations, organizations)? What problems would I most like to solve? What needs or people tug at my heart?

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- What inspires me the most?

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- What brings me the greatest joy and sense of fulfillment?

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- Whose lives do I admire most and why?

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■ What are my special gifts and talents?

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■ Where might my skills have the greatest potential impact?

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Once you ponder these questions, see if a picture emerges about a cause or area that could benefit from your unique skill set and experience. Your purpose might be developing inside.

**THINK ABOUT THIS!**

If you have a purpose in life—lofty or not—you’ll live longer, a new study shows. “It can be anything—from wanting to accomplish a goal in life, to achieving something in a volunteer organization, to as little as reading a series of books,” said study author Dr. Patricia Boyle, a neuropsychologist and assistant professor of behavioral sciences at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.<sup>1</sup>



**Discuss**

*In your small group, talk about your answers to the following questions (some may include activities for you to do together). Be honest and respect others’ responses. There are no right or wrong answers, and your group should be a safe place to talk freely.*

When in your life have you experienced pure joy and fulfillment? How about times when you had a significant impact on something or someone? Do you think those might contribute to identifying your life purpose? Some people in your group may find it more challenging than others to translate their likes and interests into a life purpose. Help each other out: as you each relate what makes you feel the happiest or most fulfilled, try and identify different life pursuits for each group member that could be worth exploring.



## **Apply**

Tell one person (who doesn't have to be someone in class) a component of what you think your life purpose might be, and why it's important to you. Ask him or her to check back with you from time to time to see whether it still applies, and how you're working toward it. That's called accountability!

# What I Wish I Knew at 18

## CURRICULUM SAMPLE

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### LEARN TO PERSUASIVELY MARKET YOURSELF

Let's face it. Most of us are not natural born salespeople. Instead, we prefer to go about our business and hope that others will automatically recognize our greatness. It would be nice if this were the case but, unfortunately, it usually doesn't work out that way.

In order to land that perfect job or win that prized promotion over others, you must *persuade* management that **you** are the answer! Remember, this is a competition! In order to do that, you have to learn how to market yourself. You need to become an effective salesperson of . . . YOU!

You may lack experience at this, but the good news is that it's a learned skill. Here are some pointers to help you get started:

- Make a list of all of your strengths, qualifications, experiences, and accomplishments.
- Consider why they would be valuable to an employer.
- Identify some personal stories that convey your attitude, unique achievements, and commitment to excellence.
- Be prepared to convincingly answer questions such as:
  - What value can you bring to the table?
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  - Why should we hire you?
  - What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments and personal attributes?
  - What motivates you?
  - What are you passionate about?
  - What are your most significant professional qualifications?
  - What's the most difficult challenge you ever faced, and how did you deal with it?
- Understand what the employer is looking for (qualifications, etc.). Consider how your assets address their needs. *Think of yourself as the solution to their problem.*
- Build a compelling resume that highlights your strongest accomplishments and competitive advantages.
- Network with as many people as you can to receive endorsements and inside connections.
- During interviews, be personable, confident but not arrogant, look your interviewer(s) in the eye, repeat their name(s), shake their hands firmly, listen intently, come prepared with questions, show an interest in their company and the job, ask for a business card, promptly send a thank you note, exhibit confident body language, be yourself, and smile. That's all!

If you're able to do the above, you can become successful at marketing yourself. Your ability to answer why you are the best person for the job is essential and not at all a sign of arrogance!

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**TAKE FIVE:** ►► If someone asked you why you're the best person for a job, would you be able to answer it with confidence, conviction, and humility? Whether your career goals are big or small, your ability to market yourself will give you a big edge.

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## **POINTER #3 — LEARN TO PERSUASIVELY MARKET YOURSELF/LIKEABILITY DURING THE INTERVIEW IS HUGE**



### **Consider**

Wouldn't it be nice if we could just go through life minding our own business and have others automatically recognize our greatness by offering us jobs, scholarships, promotions (complete with big bucks!), and the like? Unfortunately, it usually doesn't work out that way.

In order to land that perfect job or win that prized promotion over others, you must persuade people that *you* are the answer to what they need or are looking for. As pointed out earlier, much of life is a competition—and you need to persuasively market yourself in order to stay competitive. You need to become an effective salesperson of . . . YOU!



Here are some pointers to help you get started in learning to persuasively market yourself in the job market. Whether it's a summer job or the first stop in your career journey, these tips will serve you well.

- Consider how your assets address the prospective employer's needs. *Think of yourself as the solution to their problem.*
- Build a compelling resume that highlights your strongest accomplishments and competitive advantages.
- Network with as many people as you can to receive endorsements and inside connections.
- During interviews, be personable, confident but not arrogant, look your interviewer in the eye, repeat their name, shake their hand firmly, listen intently, come prepared with questions, show an interest in the company and the job, ask for a business card, promptly send a thank you note, exhibit confident body language, be yourself, and smile.
- Remember that the first 30 seconds of a job interview will make or break your chances of landing the job. They may not get you the offer, but they will certainly kill your chances if you don't make a strong first impression. Get off to the right start by being friendly, positive, enthusiastic, humble, relaxed, and natural. Be professional in your appearance and in your grammar.



## **Discuss**

Conduct mock job interviews. Everyone in the group should get a chance to play the role of either the interviewer or interviewee (preferably both, if time allows). Choose from the questions on page 174 of *What I Wish I Knew at 18* (also listed below). Each candidate should be required to answer three to five questions from the list, depending on time. Before you begin, allow a few minutes for everyone to get a head start. Interviewees should be prepared to honestly answer:

- What value can you bring to the table?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why should we hire you? Why are you interested in the job?
- What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments and personal attributes?
- What motivates you?
- What are you passionate about?
- What's the most difficult challenge you ever faced, and how did you deal with it?
- What three adjectives best describe you as a person?

Offer constructive feedback, considering the quality of their answers as well as the way they came across to you as the hiring manager. What was it like to be interviewed? Which questions were easier or harder to answer? With more practice and good “talking points,” you’ll get better and better at interviews.



## Apply

- Make a list of all of your strengths, qualifications, experiences, and accomplishments.
- Consider why they would be valuable to an employer.
- Identify some personal stories that convey your attitude, unique achievements, and commitment to excellence.
- Develop a resume to include with your applications when you apply for jobs. There are some excellent online sites that can help you, and Microsoft Word® has templates to make it even easier.
- Note that resumes are not restricted to the job market. Are you an athlete hoping to market yourself to the coaching staff of a desired university? You can make a sports resume. Simply adapt the above criteria with a view to communicating (and marketing) your athletic abilities and contributions. The same goes for music, drama, and other fields.

## **POINTER # 4 — DIVERSIFY YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUILD YOUR VALUE AND WIN PROMOTIONS**



## Consider

You’ve no doubt heard the saying, “Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.” Well, when it comes to your career, your *value* is in the eyes of your *employer*. How highly prized you are to your employer should be a matter of ongoing importance. It affects your pay, promotion potential, professional reputation, and job security, so it’s a big deal!

Among the sources of your value are your:

- Proficiency and achievement on the job
- Contribution to the financial well-being of the organization
- Ability to develop others
- Ability to work successfully in teams and in projects
- Ability to solve problems and lead initiatives
- Willingness to go above and beyond the job description