The Align Your Purpose Program

STEP SIXTEEN: ALIGN WITH PURPOSE

HARMONIZING WHAT YOU LOVE WITH WHAT OTHERS NEED
Here we are at Step 16!

Now that we’ve defined our purpose, in this step we will begin aligning with that purpose so that our vocation, daily living and personal fulfillment harmonize with the needs and desires of the people we choose to serve, and the larger patterns created by those people en masse.

In essence, we’re going to look at how you can align what you love to do with what others most need to receive. This is both the key to living a fulfilling life and also to creating a successful vocation you enjoy.

It seems that most people think you have to choose between the two: to either create a business or accept a job that makes money or serves someone’s need—but which you probably don’t enjoy... or to create a business or accept a job you love, but that never makes a dime.

Yet with each of our Visionaries, whether they were wealthy beyond measure or making a humble living, they were happy and fulfilled because they figured out how to do both—through aligning with purpose.

The easiest way to simplify the idea of aligning purpose is to consider that it is essentially a harmonizing or matching: between what you love to give... and what others want to receive. This is why so many people discuss purpose in terms of being in service to others.

It’s also helpful to remember that **we can give to ourselves what we need most to receive** (and also show others how to give to themselves in similar ways). This is a beautiful expression of purpose as well!
HALF WAY TO HARMONY...

One of the reasons the Align Your Purpose Program is so powerful is that by the time we reach pivotal steps like this one, we’ve already done most of the work.

In the previous lesson on Defining Your Purpose, we explored several key aspects of purpose:

a) What you most enjoy doing and deeply love
b) How doing what you love is also a contribution to others
c) What transformation or experience you most want others to receive from you

Together these aspects harmonize 1) what you most love to do or give with 2) something others want or need to receive.

We can also revisit the 7 Human Needs discussed in Step 6: Empathy. You may recall the example I gave in Step 15 where the transformation I wanted to help inspire in others was intimacy. If we refer back to the 7 Human Needs, the desire for intimacy is an expression of the core human need for Love.

Identifying this opens us up to an enormous treasure trove of information we can use to translate our passion into a profitable business venture... a powerful social movement... a creative artistic legacy... or any other manifestation you choose to create in your new world.

So as you can see, you’ve already come a long way in aligning with purpose and carrying yourself forward into new patterns that support you in reaching your desired destiny. All that’s left to do now is to clarify the path you’ll take within this new pattern, i.e. the concrete vision and action steps for your new direction.

So as an exercise, let’s connect your Definition of Purpose from the previous lesson with a core human need and look at how that can evolve into a concrete business plan, social movement, artistic brand or volunteer opportunity...
For this exercise, you’ll probably want to refer back to Steps 6 and 15 – for an overview of the 7 Human Needs, and for your Definition of Purpose. So please go ahead and print them out or bring them up on your computer for easy access as we move through this exercise.

Also, a brief note on what to expect here as we move into the final steps of this program:

The purpose of this exercise and lesson is to help you produce a concrete and specific Unique Purpose Statement. In business this is often referred to as a Unique Value Proposition or Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

Although I’ll be speaking throughout this exercise in terms of business and branding priorities, such as target markets, differentiating against competition, and so forth, what we’re really doing is understanding the world of your audience. This is crucial no matter how you wish to express your purpose, because purpose is always a bridge between you and your world, and the world of those you give your gifts to.

For example, I use a very similar process to assist healers, authors, speakers, social movements and spiritual thought leaders in building their personal brands and platforms.

**STEP ONE. IDENTIFY THE CORE HUMAN NEED YOU CAN FULFILL WHILE LIVING YOUR PURPOSE**

For this step, take a look again at your Purpose Statement in the previous lesson, where you answered our two questions. Then review the 7 Human Needs in Step 6.

Which Human Need is fulfilled when you express your purpose?

**Here’s some examples to get you started:**

... If your purpose is to create art that expands the viewer’s consciousness to break out of conventional thinking and ask new questions... the Human Need you are likely fulfilling is that person’s need for Growth.

... If your purpose is to help people create a sturdy financial foundation through innovative financial planning (either as an actual financial planner or as a thought leader/author educating people on how to be their own financial planner)... the Human Need you are likely fulfilling is that person’s need for Certainty.

... If your purpose is to empower others through inspiration and step-by-step guidance to create their own freelance consulting business so that they are free to travel, pursue their own interests, and participate more fully with their families – all while making a full-time income part-time... you might notice that there are a few needs we could identify here:

Love (family), Certainty (strong financial success) or Contribution (the function of being a consultant in service to others). There is also, in this example, a strong pull toward fulfilling the need for Uncertainty (freedom, travel, variety in clientele projects and personal pursuits).

In cases such as this, identify the primary need and one secondary need. This becomes your core brand message... and helps you identify your primary market. For instance in my own coaching business where I teach freelance consultants, the core need I focus on is Contribution, with my strong secondary being Uncertainty.
This differentiates me from others who focus on Love and family or on Certainty. I draw a different kind of audience and I know exactly how to communicate with them because I’ve filtered them by their strong need for Uncertainty. I know they’ll respond to themes of adventure, travel and freedom, which happen to harmonize well with my personal story and brand.

**STEP TWO: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE BASED ON THEIR TOP NEED**

Now that you’ve identified the primary need (and perhaps secondary need) that you can fulfill for others when you live your purpose... the next step is to create a concrete picture of the kind of person who has that need as their top need.

Another way to look at this is: “How would I describe the person out there who is experiencing pain because this particular need of theirs is going unmet?”

With this question, we’re looking at people who have a tangible negative experience because their need is going unmet. An obvious example of this would be people who have suffered one or more painful breakups in their life and they’re finding it hard to find or trust in real love again.

So go ahead and take out a piece of paper or use the notes section at the end of this lesson and free-write some thoughts about the type of person who is not getting this need fulfilled right now – this very need that you can address – who would also be interested in fulfilling that need via the service, product or information you wish to give as part of your purpose.

Be careful here to focus primarily on the person you serve, rather than on you and your service. And don’t be afraid to get really specific, down to an individual person and what his life looks like. Make him an avatar that symbolizes the majority of your larger audience. It’s always easier to speak to one person in your messaging, book, marketing, art or speeches than it is to try and talk to a crowd.

Ironically, the crowd will also respond better to you when each person feels that you’re talking directly to them as an individual.

So in this step, go ahead and give your avatar a name, an occupation, a home life and income level. What can you know about him based on his unmet need? If you offer financial services that meet the need for Certainty, then you know your perfect customer in this case is someone who values security, long-term thinking and planning, and is probably not the most adventurous “fly by the seat of your pants” kind of person.

On the other hand, if you were perhaps a “fly by the seat of your pants” kind of person who healed some long-term bad habits and broke a cycle of struggles or failures by diving into financial planning in a fun and playful manner that’s perfect for creatives... well then that’s exactly who your perfect customer is too!

Someone who values Uncertainty but needs to balance it with more Certainty (in this case, you want to harmonize your purpose with their love of Uncertainty... but the unmet need you’re looking to directly fulfill is the need for Certainty).

Visualize, explore and create as much of this avatar as you can. Get excited about the kind of person you’ll most enjoy serving and working with... not just the people who will most need you.

Again, don’t worry that every single person you could work with won’t be exactly like this. The idea is to start specific to get your UNIQUE message. Then you can broaden out from there.
STEP THREE. RESEARCH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND HOW THEY’RE CURRENTLY ATTEMPTING TO FULFILL THAT NEED

This is the most important step most people skip. Or, they try to research their market yet they made it so broad and general in the previous step (“I can help everybody!”) that they have no specific and targeted interests or details to pursue in research.

So once you have a concrete idea of who your target audience is (those people you’ll most enjoy serving through your gifts and purpose), now you want to learn everything you can about them.

Most importantly, you want to identify two things:

Where are they currently going to meet their need? This tells you the conversation currently going on in their head, which you’ll need to tap into. For example, if they read certain magazines for advice, or certain books, or they buy certain products... you want to know what those are.

Yes this helps you find out who your ‘competitors’ might be, but more importantly you’ll discover how your target audience currently thinks about their problem and unmet need. Plus looking at top websites, bestselling books, and popular experts tells you what message is currently working for your marketplace—what people currently respond to.

This research will also illuminate another vital point: your competition isn’t just a particular company, person or service. It’s also the belief in your audience that such a solution is the solution to their problems.

For example if someone is heartbroken after a bad breakup... it’s been 1 or more years since... and they’re ready to find love again, they may believe the solution is to get back out there. In this case, they may currently try to fulfill their need through online dating sites, meetup groups and books on “dating etiquette” or “how to make him love you.” If this is the case, and you offer a how-to course on healing breakup pain through clearing the internal emotional blocks and wounding that can often draw repeat cycles of painful relationships (remember all we’ve discussed about personal patterns locking us into unhealthy larger patterns and cycles?)...

Well as you can see, you can’t just communicate the value of your course to this audience.

You first have to explain how the solutions they currently believe in won’t address the deeper cause of their pain, nor meet their true need for Love. But you can with your course, which – if it’s your purpose – probably stems from a touching personal story you can share about how it became your purpose through your own healing journey they’ll be able to relate to.

What is their lived experience with this unmet need? This is where empathy and emotional intelligence comes in. Much of effective communication is about knowing how the other person naturally communicates. The more you can harmonize your message with their experience and the ways they talk about or think about it, the more you’ll be able to connect with and serve them.

‘Lived Experience’ simply means the visceral tangible experience one has, so in relation to an unmet need, this would be how their pain manifests for them – in their eyes.

Sometimes, such as with financial matters or relationship sorrow, the pain may be severe and acute. We call this type of audience “in crisis.”

When your purpose aligns with an audience “in crisis,” then it’s important to echo the very real pain they are in—with compassion and genuine understanding (and so enquiry is vital here to truly understand their pain and their world).
They need to know someone gets it. That you do not belittle their suffering or simply pretend it’s not there. They need to feel understood and witnessed. Because when someone is in crisis, trust is very difficult to come by, and it’s nearly impossible to trust that someone can help us get out of that crisis if that person doesn’t understand the crisis we’re in.

On the other hand, it’s also equally important to get them out of their pain as quickly as possible, even in your messaging, communications and preliminary conversations—whether they ever work with you, buy your product, or join your social movement.

This means that you deliver hope and love in the ways you communicate your purpose and vocation. It means that once you echo someone’s pain and let them know you understand their world, in that same stroke you also bring them back out of the pain and show them your vision for their future: where there is healing, happiness and comfort.

Most people focus on one or the other, but particularly for an audience in deep pain, it’s important to speak their truth, which is both: pain and hope.

If your audience is not in crisis, such as most people interested in a new vocation, skill, service or personal development journey, you don’t want to dive too far into the pain because they’re probably not feeling it very much. Most people aren’t even aware they have an unmet need until you highlight it for them. And they may resist you and your message if you push the point too hard. So my recommendation in these cases is to touch on the discomforts they experience. The daily grind for someone who no longer loves her job but hasn’t yet decided to leave... or the subtle dread one feels every time a new bill comes in the mail...

Keep it light but also keep it tangible, real and specific.

We tend to want to communicate generalities when trying to rally customers for our business or torchbearers for our cause – yet it’s the specifics that people respond to. It’s counterintuitive, but you actually alienate people more when you’re too broad then when you’re too specific.

A great trick is to bullet out a few short examples of the ways their need is going unmet – the bullets are ultra specific, but you cover several different scenarios across all the bullets, which still gives a generality that encompasses the majority of people in your market.
WAYS TO RESEARCH YOUR AUDIENCE’S UNMET NEED (TO UNDERSTAND THEIR WORLD):

• **Keep track of all your research** whether you use it now or not. You will come back to it repeatedly as you grow your venture or movement! Perhaps use Evernote or Springpad (both free services) to easily store web links, notes, images, and data.

• **Begin by using a search engine to search the kinds of enquiries your target Avatar would search** to fulfill his unmet need. For example, if your purpose is “to heal breakup pain and help people find true love,” search things like “how to get over a breakup” and “how to find true love.” Bookmark the sites in the top 10 results as well as the sites paying for sponsored results (such as along the top and right side of Google results).

• **As you visit the top websites, this gives you an idea of the primary solutions people encounter when they first attempt to solve their pain and meet their need. The people who visit these sites are therefore likely your target audience.**

To learn more about the visitors of these sites, use the free versions of these tools:

**Alexa.com** (look at visitor demographics and other related searches. Also look at related links to find additional sites that might be relevant to your audience.)

**Spyfu.com** (look at visitor demographics and terms the site owners bid on if they use any paid advertising... if they’ve been bidding on those terms a long time it likely means they’re profitable, which can help you begin to formulate your own marketing plan later on)

**Quantcast.com** (look at organic search terms, visitor demographics, etc.)

**Visit website forums** where your target audience posts questions, answers and advice. Look particularly at the language and words they use to describe their pain, to offer guidance, and so forth. When you harmonize your own messaging with those same words and ways of communicating you instantly establish a rapport and trust with them because you’re speaking the same language. It also exudes the essence that you understand their world.

• **If you have your own social following, email list, or mailing list, I also recommend you survey your own followers with a questionnaire.** Include open-ended questions where they can free-write their answers so you can learn more about how they describe their frustrations, their hopes, their daily lives, and so forth.

• **Dig into your own story, or talk to people you know who might be your target audience.**

Ask questions like:

- How would you describe your primary challenge or pain related to [THE SERVICE/PRODUCT/MOVEMENT YOU WANT TO PROVIDE IN RELATION TO YOUR PURPOSE, SUCH AS ‘YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE WHEN MOST PLANNING SERVICES ARE FOR LINEAR THINKERS AND WE’RE MORE THE CREATIVE TYPES!’]

- How did that challenge/pain show up in your daily life? How did it affect you on a day-to-day basis? (this gives you their ‘lived experience’)

- What were the common solutions people recommended, or that you initially thought would address the problem? Did those solutions work?

If so, what was most it about them that did the trick? If not, where did they fall short... what was the key element missing, or key thing you needed that went unmet?

(This can bring you to some powerful secondary needs you might not have previously considered, such as the need for Significance and Appreciation as a customer or client... that became Zappos’ famous USP – their customer service! They sell shoes, but what they deliver is Happiness.)

- What transformation, shift or result were they seeking from the solution? Did they get it? (look at how you can deliver that desired result through your venture, movement, art or service.)
STEP FOUR. FORMULATE YOUR CONCISE ‘UNIQUE PURPOSE STATEMENT’

Now that you’ve gathered a lot more information about the people you’ll most enjoy serving as you express your purpose, the final step in this lesson is to clarify that in a concise purpose statement of one to a few paragraphs.

Think of this as the brief executive summary of your business plan, or the descriptive back-jacket summary of your book... or if someone were to showcase your art in a gallery with a handout describing your vision and purpose as an artist...

There are no exact rules for how to create your Unique Purpose Statement, but here are a few tips for what to include in it:

• What is your purpose? (You can pull this from your answers to the questions in Step 15 where you defined your purpose)

How did you come to this purpose? (This is your brief personal story for why this, and why you.)

• Who do you serve with this purpose and what gift do they receive from you? (This is your target audience and the transformation or result they seek fulfilled that you enjoy providing. You don’t necessarily have to state the Core Human Need, but you can if you want to. In many cases, that is for your information purposes so that you know what to research and how to communicate, and not always something you’ll share with your audience in your messaging.)

• State the transformation or result they achieve through your gift (product, service, art, book, etc.)

Whew! That was a lot of research and creation we just covered there, but now you should have far more clarity about what you wish to offer through your purpose and how it aligns with the needs of those you seek to serve.

I also hope this has shown you how your personal passions and purpose can more directly and profitably harmonize with a money-making venture or social movement. None of us should have to choose between living our passion or making money. There are ways we can achieve both!

At this time, if this exercise has sparked some serious excitement, ideas, and desire to dive in, I encourage you to begin creating a business plan or book outline. Begin creating in detail your vision for how you wish to express your purpose!

In our next Step: Engage With Passion, we’ll discuss how to start putting your plan and purpose into action, and ways to keep the passion flowing. Until then, congratulations on the enormous leaps you’ve made to get to this point.