

Life's Great Question: Discover How You Contribute To The World Book PDF Download

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LIFE'S GREAT QUESTION

DISCOVER HOW **YOU** CONTRIBUTE
TO THE WORLD

TOM RATH

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

STRENGTHSFINDER 2.0 • HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET? • EAT MOVE SLEEP

By:
Tom Rath

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From a personal standpoint, the release of every Tom Rath book is not merely an event, but a veritable cause for celebration. If you find this statement to be an exercise in gross exaggeration, then I would sincerely exhort the skeptic in you to read his bestseller, *Eat, Move, Sleep*. You can thank me once you become a convert to the Rath Philosophy! Humour aside, Mr. Rath's books constitute a blend of wisdom juxtaposed with implementation. If practicality is the mother of his ideas, enriching

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Mr. Rath's latest work, *“Life's Great Question: Discover How You Contribute to The World”* is no exception to the rule. The Rath imprimatur permeates the pages of what arguably must be the smallest book that the author has penned till date. While the message conveyed is neither novel nor ingenious, the path laid down for the reader to follow is downright utilitarian. However, lest the reader be confused, the word Utilitarian is not to be used in the context of what or how Jeremy Bentham espoused it to be. The utility as proposed in this book does not target the maximization of happiness for many at the expense of a few.

At the heart of the book lies the notion of adding value to society in such a way that the value thus added provides something that others need. As Mr. Rath holds forth, *“scientists have determined that we human beings are innately other-directed, which they refer to as being ‘prosocial.’* According to top researchers who reviewed hundreds of studies on this subject, the defining features of a meaningful life are *“connecting and contributing to something beyond the self.”*

Using empirical and qualitative research finding, Mr. Rath proposes that *“all teams need to do three very basic things: Create, Operate, and Relate. If a team is lacking in any one of these three major functions, it is almost impossible for the group to be effective, let alone thrive.”*

Mr. Rath devotes the bulk of his book in dwelling about what he terms are twelve primary contributions.

Mr. Rath introduces his readers to each of the dozen contributions with a brief and perfunctory introduction that alludes to the most quintessential attributes of the contribution in function. This

outline is immediately succeeded by two sections titled, "Contributing to Teams"™ and "Contributing to Other's Lives"™, and "The Energy to Be Your Best"™ respectively. It is in these two sections that one can experience the vintage Tom Rath touch. Shades of "Eat, Move and Sleep" keep darting in and out both unobtrusively and conspicuously depending upon the relevance of the topic being dealt with. However, the repeated emphasis on movement, dietary habits and repose is a telling acknowledgment of the tenets which the author himself swears by.

For example, in the contribution of "Connecting: under the heading, "Contributing to Other's Lives"™, Mr. Rath explains, "one of the challenges of being very active socially is that it involves a lot of dining out in groups. Find ways to get ahead of the endless temptations of bad choices by eating something healthy before you go to an event or setting rules for yourself about what to avoid."

Yet another illustration of the "Eat, Move, Sleep" influence may be found in the "Energizing" contribution: "Today, make a list of the most common foods and meals that almost all experts agree are net positive for health and energy – foods like green leafy vegetables, nuts, legumes, and so on. Help others simplify and synthesize all the disparate information out there so eating well is that much easier for them. If you are better than most at juggling several tasks at once, try applying this to infusing movement into your workday – for example, find ways to talk or type while you are standing or walking. It's likely that your focus on serving other people in your community sometimes comes at a personal cost. Are you taking care of yourself to the degree you should? Understand that the people you hope to serve need you to take care of your own physical health first so they can count on you in a time of need."

The book also lends access to an online resource portal called "Contribify." "The Contribify inventory is a series of questions that asks you to prioritize activities and situations that describe you or appeal to you most. This app will then show you the top three areas where you have the most potential for contribution." The portal allows the reader to build a profile upon entering a unique access code that can be found at the back of every physical copy of the book. The inventory takes the reader through a series of open and close-ended questions. The portal also under a section titled, "Most Influential Life ExperienceS (MILES)" encourages the reader to go back and identify a few of the most formative experiences of her lifetime. "What are the events, moments, or periods of time that most positively influenced who you are today?"

Marc

BLUF: You're paying lots of money for the user's manual to a pseudoscientific instrument. Less than half of what's in the book will apply to you, and even the parts that do are too vague to be helpful.

Rath's "Eat Move Sleep" is one of my favorite books for general wellbeing, and his development of a related website is a go-to resource. "Are You Fully Charged" was less intensive but had a helpful framework and interesting practical ideas for self-care. I didn't like that the book was artificially

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"Life's Great Question" is Rath's most blatant money-grab yet and its an embarrassing addition to his oeuvre. First, it's notably smaller than his other titles (which are already smaller than most books) but also more expensive, despite the fact that it has far less content than his other works. Rath apparently justifies this by giving readers a code to develop their personal profile on his Contribify website. As a result, this book is little more than a users guide to his website and the results of your "contribution" profile. The first 50 pages provide an overview of his theory--that we all have unique ways of contributing to others, which is the ultimate purpose in life--and the remaining 90 explain the significant of each of his 12 personality profiles. Since your profile gives you three strengths, that means over half of this short book doesn't even apply to you.

Is the profile worthwhile? Not particularly. There's no science behind it or explanation of how the items and categories were developed beyond Rath's global comments--"my team perused the literature along with job descriptions, developed some questions, and tested them." There's no evidence that this instrument has any validity or reliability, and we can't help thinking that our answers are simply letting Rath build his n for future editions ("Over 100,000 people have completed this instrument!"). The descriptions of the 12 "contribution" types are filled with Barnum statements (they sound specific but aren't), and padded with the same recommendations for each one (Rath is still a big proponent of healthy behaviors, so each includes recommendations on eating, sleeping, and moving). There's no evidence that the results are particularly accurate or helpful. So what's the point?

The first 50 pages are where Rath explains his theory that happiness in life comes from helping others. He shares a few studies that support his point along with lots of quotations, but there's little focus in this section. Rath touches on several points without putting them into a cohesive structure, so it reads like the filler it is before he tells you to complete his online survey.

In short, Rath lost me on this one. I come to trust authors to deliver worthwhile and practical information, but I no longer trust Rath to do so. This book is not worth the price of admission.

Ashley Picard

Won this book in a goodreads giveaway and soooo glad I did! Very practical book to alter how you look at work and your day to day life. Really enjoyed the fact that each book has a code for a program that helps identify the personalized contributions you can make rather than generic advice. While reading and thinking of my workplace I wrote a list of people I cant wait to share this book with.

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R.

I received Life's Great Question by Tom Rath as a Goodreads' giveaway. The book was not your typical follow your passion advice but rather, how one can make the most contribution to others. I found the book easy to read and inspirational. I particularly liked the very first chapter when Mr. Rath shared his personal health issues with the reader while he was at a family reunion!

Rick Yvanovich

The meaning of life is not 46 its the contribution you make.

This book is full of ideas and suggestions as to how you can make your life meaningful or rather how you can feel and perceive your life has meaning and thats what life is really all about.

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