Aspen Family Business Group

Personal Statement of Purpose

"Why are you here?"

INSTRUCTIONS

Part I

Assume that during the next three years you live your life in the most fulfilling way you can imagine. And then you die. What would a family member, a friend, a (work) colleague, and a member of your community say in response to the following questions if they focused only on the last three years of your life and how you affected them in that time?

1. Something you taught them or helped them to understand better.
2. How you brought more meaning into their lives.
3. How you inspired them.
4. Something that was personally important to them that they were able to do because of your support.
5. How knowing you made their lives better.
6. Something that made them grateful to know you.
7. Something they admired about you.
8. Something you did or created that expanded what was previously thought possible.

Part II

1. After you complete the questions above, or others of your own choosing, from the perspective you chose, go back and answer them from the other three. Use this information to craft eulogies for each of the four people in which they focus only on how you impacted them in the last three years of your life.

2. Look between the lines and see what type of information emerges that is relevant to a sense of purpose. Expect several false starts as you do this exercise.

3. When you are finished, your goal is to craft one sentence that is relevant to every role you play, i.e., a parent, a professional, a spouse, a citizen, etc. It should make you feel a little self-conscious or even a little presumptuous. When you have taken the step of defining the purpose of your life you are doing something that many people never even consider. Your defining purpose will act as a compass when you come to important decisions. You can ask yourself: "If I have decided the purpose of my life, what is the decision that I must make to fulfill that purpose?"

Empowering family businesses of all sizes

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