

Suggested Questions for Mark Langford

Author of

THANK GOD IT'S WEDNESDAY! THE BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO REALIZING PURPOSE, PASSION & LIFE/WORK BALANCE

You had a pretty frightening near-death experience that changed the course of your life and, ultimately, led to this book. Can you tell us about it?

Yes, and before I give you the details, I'll give you my personal takeaway from the incident and that is; to live everyday like it's your last one on Earth, because – as I found out - it just might be! Back in 2004, and as a result of a routine arthroscopy, I contracted a penicillin-resistant (MRSA) infection while I was working overseas. It caused me to spend 41 days in a foreign hospital, to undergo 12 very invasive and painful surgeries, and to lose 35 pounds (and I'm a guy that needs to gain weight, not lose weight!).

I came out of one 9-hour surgery in really bad shape and my lungs filled-up with fluid and I literally couldn't breathe – it felt like I was drowning in my bed. Between the panic of not being able to breathe, the non-stop extreme pain and emotional fatigue, I finally surrendered all my resistance and I told "God" that I was ready to cash in my chips.

After deciding to let go, I communed with a presence that felt like pure love and that had an omnipotent knowing. The entity – that I can only describe as some higher power or consciousness - caused a cessation of my pain and communicated to me through thoughts and feelings. One of the things this enigmatic, formless being revealed to me that we *all* possess an "inner genius that serves as a unique gift that we can offer the world. It conveyed that my gift included the ability to bring order to chaos and to help others to see, connect to and live their life purpose. I instantly understood that my mission in life was (and still is) to assist people and organizations of people to uncover and define their greater good purpose and to show them how to tap their innate creative abilities to bring forth their unique gift. It's what inspired me to transition out of the corporate world and to become a Career Coach & Consultant.

The book offers a holistic approach to achieving a work/life balance. What are some of the key steps to beginning that approach?

TGIW! offers a unique combination of practical, spiritual and work best practice that enable people to create more time and space for personal passions, optimize productivity and fun and to gain a sense of inner-peace.

Some of the techniques include connecting to your Higher Consciousness to move past judgment, triggers and limiting beliefs that keep people living small; how to infuse joy into everything you do;

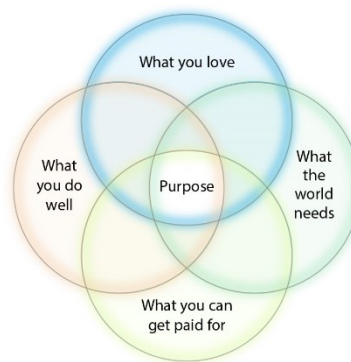
accepting (making peace) with situations, people and events that allow you to move past resistance; and, how to get more present, confident and directed by using 8 Natural Laws coupled with innovative work practices. It truly is a holistic approach that uses mind, body and soul to boldly manifest a life and career that you really want and I am living proof that it works.

Purpose and passion are terms that are used a lot when discussing how we can (or should) thrive in our work lives. How do you define purpose and passion?

You're right, you hear things like, "follow your bliss," "do what you love and the money will follow," and "just quit your job" all the time. This book actually helps you figure out what your purpose is, how to align your entire life around it and how to use more of your talents and abilities.

TGIW teaches how your Professional Purpose is the intersection of:

- What you love to do
- What you do well
- What the world needs, and
- What you can get paid for.



The book shows how your "outer game" – or what your environment and what you are experiencing – is simply a reflection of your "inner game" – or your dominant thoughts and beliefs and what you "tune into." It also offers strategies on how to connect with your inner genius using creative insights, innovative ways to evoke your creative Source Energy. I top it off with hands-on exercises and samples of success that illuminate the path to personal and professional success.

You use the term "Work Sickness" throughout the book to describe one of the biggest problems people face today. What is this sickness?

At its core, Work Sickness is a sense of separation that is "contracted" when we follow someone else's playbook and expectations to the exclusion of our personal inner knowing. It manifests itself in the form of being constantly on the "grid," feeling anxious and unfulfilled, and shows up in the form of cynicism, fatigue and overwhelm. It eclipses the joy of living and replaces it with a sense of obligation, self-sacrifice and lack-of-control. It also saps energy, limits creativity, and evaporates hope leaving victims feeling trapped by routine with seemingly no means of escape.

Fortunately, there *is a cure* for Work Sickness and it doesn't require any heavy-duty therapies, renunciation of wealth or metaphysical incantations. The way to overcome this disorder is to plug into the highest performing asset in your personal portfolio – your own creative ability. The antidote to Work Sickness is to employ a combination of your inner wisdom and efficient work practices and to live authentically to your purpose. These principles used together in a conscious and consistent manner provide a foundation for a healthier, happier and more inspired career.

Healthy, happy and inspired people who are passionate about their work and not afraid to use and express their full creative genius is exactly what the business world needs today. Why? Because these “Spiritual Professionals” will be the ones that ultimately help solve our planet's most pressing problems

What are some of the common myths and misconceptions about success? Why do many people have it wrong when they think about what it takes to be successful?

The modern definition of success in our culture is typically based on some form of expectation – wealth, status, fame or power over others. I see two very big issues with western society's definition of success. First is that such “expectation based” success sets us up to experience a lot of dissonance along the way to realizing goals and even when you do meet an expectation, the feeling of achievement and satisfaction is short lived. The second issue is that most of us have never even thought about what success looks like on a personal level. Most of what we believe about success was inherited from family, friends, teachers, mentors and societal norms. It usually revolves around some form of “having” instead of “being.”

Wouldn't it be better if we measured success in terms of our inner-peace and happiness? You've no doubt heard the term, “you can't take it when you go” and that's true about possessions (material and power). However, I believe that you can take the imprints of your experiences and feelings to the “other side.” Therefore, I propose that a much better path to success is through understanding you who you are, what it is that gives you joy and what gifts you have to give to the world. I think that the most successful people who ever lived were not the ones with the most money, power or fame, but rather those who lived out their passion and experienced the inner-peace that came with living in alignment to their purpose.

You state that companies that focus solely on growth do so at the expense of their employees' productivity and happiness. How so?

Not all companies, but there are many that see their employees as simply a means to an ends. They even use the term “Human Resources” and “human assets” to describe people and treat them more like company assets than human beings. Companies that focus solely on growth and the bottom line are generally not super fun organizations to work for because it usually creates a tense culture based on an attitude of “survival of the fittest” and “get it done at all costs.” People do their best work when they feel supported, acknowledged and happy. So, as more and more studies are finding, productivity usually suffers when the focus is solely on growth and the bottom line.

There are “Conscious” companies emerging that respect the deeper value of their employees. They understand that we are all here on this Earth for the “experience” and to express ourselves creatively. As such, these Conscious Companies value the diversity of their employees’ individual creative gifts as well as their individual wants and needs. They treat employees more like customers and set-up flexible programs that nurture, inspire creativity, and empower their people through trust, transparency and acknowledgment.

What can corporations do to promote a better work/life balance for its people while still maintaining a healthy bottom line?

The next book that I’ve already started writing is about how an organization can become more conscious and part of that is helping its employees create and maintain their life/work balance. You’ll find successful companies that really respect their employees on the “Best Companies to Work for” lists of Fortune, Glassdoor.com and Great Places to Work, Inc. A few reasons why these companies make such lists are because they:

- Have a defined greater good purpose, make it clear and hire people & vendors that buy into it
- Are extremely transparent with all their stakeholders
- Provide copious communication, and
- Are genuinely tuned into their employee’s wants and needs beyond a paycheck

Tactically speaking, companies can promote better life/work balance through:

- flex days & working hours, where possible
- supporting employees to create and develop projects they are passionate about
- providing telecommuting support
- developing programs that enhance connection & networking inside and outside of the workplace
- training leadership on EQ methodology
- periodically surveying employee feedback and level of satisfaction

Basically when employees’ wants and needs are met, it fosters a sense of belonging, acknowledgement and connection that translates into more engagement and buy-in. Creative solutions to promote life/work balance abound, it’s just a matter of placing time and attention on developing a work environment that supports employees to be the best they can.

The book includes a number of ideas for gaining confidence by learning how to better respect ourselves and our talents. What are some of those ideas and how can we implement them?

Here are some straightforward tools and tips to continually become a better version of yourself and to enhance your life/work balance:

- Ask yourself “what am I thinking?” (frequently) and then notice your thoughts, behaviors and actions from that non-judgmental observer place

- Test your limiting beliefs and change those that no longer serve you (ask of your belief: “Is it true?”)
- Acknowledge yourself and become more self-loving and self-caring
- Check-in and make sure you’re focusing your attention on what you want and not what you don’t want to happen
- Asking questions instead of coming to conclusions. A great question to always have handy is, “What else is possible?”
- Get clear on what it is you truly enjoy doing and simply do more of it
- Ask for help
- Be strong in your “no” to avoid over-commitment and obligation
- Make time for right-brained activities to stimulate creativity

You make it clear in the book that it’s not enough to just envision a perfect work/life balance -- we have to manifest it. What are some of the key steps to making a dream life a reality?

There are practical and spiritual steps discussed in *Thank God It’s Wednesday!*.

First off, it’s really helpful to understand that there are Natural (Spiritual) Laws in effect that are the “operating system” of the Universe. Knowing the rules of the game makes it easier to play. The 8 Laws detailed in TGIW are:

Vibration – that everything is energy and connected

Attraction – that “like” energies attract.

Cause and Effect – that everything happens for a reason.

Polarity – that opposites create contrast and balance.

Transmutation – that all energy is transformable.

Gestation – that there is a natural agenda to the Universe.

Rhythm – that cycles create renewal and change.

Relativity – that comparison gives rise to experience and understanding.

What *TGIW!* illuminates is how to tap your spirituality and inner-knowing to play a bigger game. Spirituality is that eternal life force that is pure consciousness and being “spiritual” is simply getting out of your mind, becoming more aware of your “beingness” and allowing your Source Energy to guide you. The key step in this process is to really connect with - or feel into - your intuition because it has access to a whole lot more than what is perceived by your 5 physical senses. The more tapped in you are to this inner knowing, the more you can realize and live authentically to your purpose and the more directed your life and career will be.

Where can I get a copy of the book and find out more about realizing passions, purpose and life/work balance?

Go to www.TGIW.com. There you can preview the book, read more about the powerful 8 Spiritual Laws that affect your career and also get more ideas on how to escape the “Live to Work” syndrome.