



Greater Good in Education  
SCIENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR KINDER, HAPPIER SCHOOLS

## PURPOSE QUOTES REFLECTION

*"The wisdom of the wise, and the experience of ages, may be preserved by quotation."*

*—Isaac D'Israeli*

### OVERVIEW

Students choose a quote about purpose and reflect on why it resonates with them.

### PLANNING FOR IT

#### WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Any time during the school year, but especially at the beginning of the year to help students discover or start on the path to finding their purpose
- To help students develop content for college entrance essays. Visit [www.purposechallenge.org](http://www.purposechallenge.org) for more information.

#### TIME REQUIRED

- 15-30 minutes

#### LEVEL

- Middle School
- High School
- College

#### MATERIALS

- Purpose Quote Handout
- Writing materials

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Choose a quote about purpose that resonates with them
- Write about why they chose the quote and what it makes them think about

## SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness

## HOW TO DO IT

### REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Looking at the list of quotes on the handout, which one resonates with you and why?

## INSTRUCTIONS

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### SUBHEADING 1

Before you begin:

1. This practice can be used on its own, but is meant to be the seventh in a series of practices that help students discover or begin their search for purpose.
  2. Students can also do the entire series of practices online for free at [www.purposechallenge.org](http://www.purposechallenge.org). Have them click on "Toolkit" and then register for an account. When they finish the practices, they will receive a digital record of their written answers for each exercise in addition to instructions on how to take these answers and turn them into a college entrance essay.
- If using this practice on its own, review the definition of purpose with students using the instructions from the first four bullets in *Discovering Your Strengths and Talents--Purpose Challenge, Exercise 1*
  - Give a Purpose Quote handout to each student.
  - Explain that they are to select a quote and then write about why they chose it.
  - When students have finished, give students the opportunity to share which quote they chose and why with each other or with the whole class, if they feel comfortable doing so.

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### CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on whether this exercise confirmed their sense of purpose or, if they aren't sure of their purpose, did it give them any clues or insight into what their purpose might be?

## REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

How did students respond to this practice? Did they find it helpful in helping them decide what their purpose might be?

## THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

### EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Studies find that pursuing one's purpose is associated with psychological well-being. For example, compared to others, [people with purpose](#) report they are happier, more satisfied with their lives, and more hopeful about the future.

For teens, purpose is related to indicators of academic success, such as [grit](#), [resilience](#), and a belief that one's work is [feasible and manageable](#).

### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

In spite of the benefits, only about [20% of adolescents](#) lead lives of purpose. Granted, the developmental task of teenagers is to discover who they are (identity) and what they want to accomplish that benefits the world (purpose); however, students who have a sense of purpose or are actively looking for one are propelled by a personally meaningful and highly motivating aim--they know what they hope to achieve and how academics can help. Hence, they are more likely to work hard and excel in school.

## SOURCE

The Purpose Challenge Toolkit was created by [Dr. Kendall Cotton-Bronk](#) in partnership with the Greater Good Science Center and [Prosocial](#). For more information, visit [www.purposechallenge.org](http://www.purposechallenge.org).