

The Secrets of a Fulfilled Life

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SESAN A. KAREEM

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*24 Adekunle Street, Ikosi ketu,*

*Lagos State, Nigeria*

*+2347065335797, +2348072983163*

*mareekgroup@gmail.com*

## DEDICATION

To

Our parents for their immense and perpetual sacrifices towards giving us a better future

To

Our teachers for impacting knowledge in us and for shaping our character

To

Problem-solvers in this history of the world for proffering solutions to humanity's  
problems

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With a deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God, the One and the Only, the Self-sufficient Master whom all creatures need, to who there is none co-equal or comparable, for His perpetual grace and indubitable favor bestowed upon me to write yet another life-transforming, thought-evoking and destiny-shaping book.

My sincere appreciation goes to Ayokunle Adeleye (#Ayk\_EDIT) for his professional touch in editing this action-driven book.

It is my prayer that this book will be a gateway of opportunities as well as a guideline to a better, richer and colorful life to anyone who takes the time and effort to peruse it patiently, and makes its principles part and parcel of his life.

Happy reading. Keep growing, keep succeeding, and keep making a difference with patience

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## PREAMBLE

As a teenager I was very curious about the people around me; those who were successful and those who were not. This curiosity led me to study (and imbibe) what successful people know and do. Within a few months my perception and way of life changed positively. After applying these principles for some years, and while learning new ones, I started writing my personal thoughts in a jotter. In the year 2008, I decided to present my ideas in a book. This took another 2 years of writing and re-writing, and learning, unlearning and re-learning. And in December 2010, my first book *Maximise Your Life* was on the bookshelf for all and sundry. To God be the glory.

Since then I never looked back. I have since written four other powerful books: *Grab Your Destiny; Life Is Short, but It's Really Worth It; If Only You Can Be a Little More Patient* and *The Secrets of a Fulfilled Life*. But more importantly, my books have blessed thousands of people across the world. It is a strange fact that many countries I have not been privileged to travel to already have my books. The heartwarming feedbacks I receive virtually on a daily basis from various readers gear me to keep writing in order to touch more lives.

In this life-transforming book, you will learn:

- The meaning of life
- The right perception of life
- Good character as the key to good life
- How action propels success
- The principles of success
- What you need to live a fulfilled life
- How to live a fulfilled life
- The A to Z of a fulfilled life.

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This *action-driving* book teaches about:

- Perseverance
- Humility
- Gratitude
- Determination
- Love
- Smile
- Focus
- Character
- Integrity
- God
- Equality
- Giving
- Honesty
- Service
- Decision
- Cooperation
- Delayed gratification
- Failure
- Education
- Procrastination
- Purpose
- Talent
- Commitment
- Challenge
- Action
- Association
- Patience

and a lot more.

Living a fulfilled life comes at a cost, but who is ready to pay the price? The price involves *knowing, practising* and *mastering* the norms *and* principles of life as contained in this book. It is a grim reality that although the desire to succeed is in every one of us, the steps, actions and decisions we take as we trudge along our allotted paths of life, rather than that burning desire to succeed, are what usually determine our success or failure. And what is worse? Our desires are often *not* in line with our steps, actions and decisions! Yet, what you turn out to be in life chiefly depends on the decisions and choices you made in life, because the blueprint to succeed is already in your DNA.

I believe, firmly, without any shadow of a doubt in my mind, that when you finish perusing this book, you will be adequately *prepared* to challenge what is challenging you in life, and to become successful; *equipped* to confront what will be confronting you in your pursuit of glory; and *determined* to face what will be facing you in your path to greatness. You will experience a simple, noble, rich, worthy and colourful life.

At this juncture, my prayer is: May God give you the required grace to make the optimum use of the insights you will learn in this book and become the best you can ever be in life. Amen.

Happy reading.



## CHAPTER 1

### The Meaning of Life

What is *life*? A lot of scholars have tried to answer the question, and many have not been able to. But they all reached the unique conclusion that *life is an end in itself and it has an end*. The search for the good life is not a modern quest; it is as old as man.

Simply put, life is the ability to breathe, grow, reproduce and perform other essential functions which people, animals and plants have before they die, and which objects do not have. In a nutshell, life differentiates living from non-living things.

The first step towards living a fulfilled life is to *grow*. But then, are we really eager to grow? We must strive hard for *consistent* growth in our moral, financial, spiritual, mental and emotional life. English writer Herbert George Wells said, “The only unpardonable sin in nature is stagnation or standing still.”

To live a fulfilled life we must have a life of *purpose*. Without purpose nothing would be done. William Scolavino observed, “The heights of your accomplishments will equal the depth of your convictions. Seek happiness for its own sake, and you will not find it; seek purpose, and happiness will follow as a shadow comes with the sunshine.” This means that *a life of purpose brings happiness*. A life without a purpose is an early death. “If a man hasn’t discovered something that he will die for, he isn’t fit to live,” American clergyman and activist Martin Luther King, Jr. opined.

For us to live a fulfilled life we must also *know ourselves*. But are we really keen on knowing our *true self*? *Knowing oneself* necessitates an effort to *improve* on our shortcomings and weaknesses through *self-study*; to analyse our imperfections, and endeavour to overcome them. The greatest and most honourable battle a man can fight is to fight with *himself* and win.

To experience a fulfilled life you must *learn* to look in the eye of your weaknesses and *correct* them. *Self-development* is of paramount importance in having a beautiful life. Do not try to make something *for* yourself; instead, try to make something *of* yourself. American author

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Phillip Brook observed, “A man who lives right and is right has more power in his silence than another has by his words.”

*Living for the service of others* brings fulfilment in the adventure of living. “There are three keys to more abundant living: caring about others, daring for others, and sharing with others,” English Baptist missionary and author William Ward asserted. In essence, *the joy of living is in living for others*. Life is what you make of it; *if you give the world your best, the best will come to you*. Failure to source and put to good use the norms and principles of living a fulfilled life will cost you a lot.

The norms and principles of life are interconnected; one without the other renders both void. Good attitude cannot replace honesty; humility can never substitute for hard work. Likewise, having all other virtues without the fear of God, makes all void. They all work together. Anybody can live a fulfilled life. I can. You can. But who is ready to pay the price? The price to pay is to have these norms and principles at your fingertips. This looks simple in theory – and it is – but to be able to *master* them will require a lot more adaptability.

*Information* is the key you need to live a worthy life. When you are informed, you can never be deformed. A lot of people are not maximising their lives; others who believe they are maximising theirs are not yet at the level they should be due to the lack of useful information. Information is a vital weapon that gives you the required skill to sail through life successfully.

Your financial condition has little to do with living a fulfilled life. It takes more than wealth to conclude that someone has actually lived a successful life. It is obvious that fingers are not equal; that man’s provisions are different. But however large your provisions are, the lives you influence positively contribute greatly to your own success story.

There are two categories of life and hence two kinds of people: those who actually lived and are dead, and those who are dead but did not really live. Which category do you prefer? The choice is yours.

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You have only one life to live. It will be a pity, to say the least, not to maximise it. God wants you to live fully and not merely to exist. Making the best use of your one shot at life is a full-time job and cannot be completed in a few days. It is a lifetime project.

No one can help you make your life worthy, beautiful and meaningful; you have to do it yourself. “We inculcate new traits on the conscious level in the course,” says John Cooper, “but *only when they take root in the subconscious, and the person uses them without thinking about them*, can we really say that these changes have become part of the personality.”

Life has an end. This truism gives birth to a crucial question: What will you be remembered for after death? The words of American professor and prolific writer Nathan Schaeffer give us better insight, “The question will not be, ‘how much have you got?’ but, ‘how much have you given?’. Not, ‘how much have you won?’ but, ‘how much have you done?’ Not, ‘how much have you saved?’ but, ‘how much have you loved and served?’ ...”

## SUMMARY

- Life simply is the ability to breathe, grow, reproduce and perform other functions which people, animals and plants have before they die, and which objects do not have. Life differentiates living things from non-living things.
- For us to live a fulfilled life, we must *know ourselves* and live a life of purpose because *a life without a purpose is an empty life*.
- To experience a beautiful life, you must look in the eye of your weaknesses and correct them.
- Self-development is of paramount importance in living a fulfilled life.
- Failure to source and put to good use the norms and principles of experiencing a meaningful life will cost you a lot. More so, these norms and principles are interconnected; applying others without one makes all void.
- Information is the key to living a worthy life.
- Your financial condition has little to do with making the best use of your one shot at life.
- The work of maximising one's life is a full-time job. It cannot be completed in a few days; it is a life-time project.
- No one can help you live a fulfilled life; you have to do it *yourself*.
- Life has an end. This truism gives birth to the crucial question, *What will you be remembered for after death?*

## CHAPTER 2

### What is Your Perception of Life?

Different people have various perceptions of life. We can rightly say that there are three kinds of people by the different ways they perceive life. The first group find life interesting and worthy of living. The second group see life as being cruel and boring. And the third group cannot really define life – It is neither good nor bad – and see life as a jungle. From these considerations, a strange fact emerges: there are as many worlds as there are people inhabiting our earth.

In the first group, we have the optimist, who always moves about with a positive mindset. Only the optimist *always* expects only good things to happen and things to *always* be successful. He feeds his mind upon interesting and refreshing aspects of common life and builds up his philosophy of life from these.

The pessimist (who belongs to the second group) ignores all those things that suggest success, hope and victory. Whenever you question him, he will invariably tell you he does not expect success, hope or victory. But the kernel of the matter is, he has simply shut his eyes (the eyes of his mind) to these virtues and has not brought them into account when reckoning upon the meaning and worth of living.

It is better to belong to the first group and perceive life as worth living. There are two factors that influence optimism: First, you must *be yourself* and *be proud of your personality*. American author and motivational speaker Leo Buscaglia, also known as Dr. Love, counselled, “The easiest thing to be in the world is you.”

Science and research have proven that human beings are unique. DNA profiling has revealed that there are no two completely identical individuals in one trillion people. (It might interest you to know that even identical twins have their differences. For instance, how does one identify one from another if they are entirely identical? And their fingerprints are known to differ!)

When Marcus Aurelius was asked on self-improvement by Roman youths, he replied, “Be thyself.” He understood the fact that each one of us is, and you are, unique, special and rare. Do not be a copy. *A copy adapts himself to the world while an original adapts the world to himself.* You are the *only* person in the whole of creation that has your distinct attributes. So you should *stand out, not blend in.*

### **Imitation Is Limitation**

Be an original individual and not a photocopy. However you try to change your personality, you *cannot*. A Congolese proverb says, “Wood may remain ten years in the water, but it will never become a crocodile.”

Many people spend their entire lives trying to change the way they were made. “To be nobody but yourself,” says E. E. Cummings, “in a world which is doing its best, day and night, to make everybody someone else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting.” *The greatest tragedy that can strike an individual is to fail to know himself.*

When some Greek youths asked Greek Athenian philosopher Socrates what they should do to improve themselves, his fitting reply was, “Know thyself.” Sydney Harris opined, “Ninety percent of the world’s woe comes from people not knowing themselves, their abilities, their frailties and their real virtues.” Whatever you are, be a good one. Be proud of who you are, do not say you are poor; you are rich— life is wealth. Henry Ford started work as a powerhouse worker. Defoe and Cardinal Wesley were sons of a butcher. Andrew Carnegie was in telegraph. These and many others had a humble beginning and rose to great heights.

Your present condition has nothing to do with your success. Aesop was a slave. Burns the poet was a farmer. Franklin was a journeyman printer. Captain Cook was a cabin boy. Columbus was a weaver. Helen Keller, deaf and blind from nineteen months of age, was later a

double graduate and author of several books. *Background, conditions and status do not determine success.*

A perfect start to be proud of your personality is to respect yourself. Always communicate good thoughts to yourself. When you start, others will follow suit. Express your exceptional qualities to other people. Let them be aware that *you are a shoe that needs polish to shine*. You are the only one in the whole creation that can bring yourself down, no one can.

The curious paradox is that *when you are real, you can never be a shadow*. All good things which exist are the fruits of originality. Note, *the original remains intact even after the photocopy might have become faded*. That is why a person who has no opinion of his own, but depends chiefly on the opinion of others is a slave. This does not mean you should not seek advice or counsel of professionals or elders. Of course you need to sample opinions and *sit down to decide having sifted the chaff from the grains*.

You must picture the future in your mind then *feature in it* to turn what you pictured into reality. American author and salesman Zig Ziglar observed, “Your mind will go to work to accomplish it. When you change your pictures, you automatically change your performance.” Your future depends on many things, but mostly on you and your willingness to be great.

Dear go-getter, you are number *one*; *everyone* in the world is your number two. The father of animation Walt Disney remarked, “The more you are like yourself, the less you are like anyone else.” Be yourself; who else is better qualified?

## Originality Sets You Apart

*Originality* is derived from the root word *original*. The word *original* itself has its ancestry from the Latin word *origō*, meaning, *to arise or be born*. Originality is the quality of being *new* and interesting in a way that is *different* from anything that has existed before. Personally, I define originality as “origin plus acceptability.” This implies accepting your social and family background.

Your origin is your ancestry, your foundation, your source, where you spring forth from. God has launched you to where you are; it has become your personal responsibility to launch yourself and your heritage to the world. In Construction, the higher a building will be, the deeper the foundation shall be. In Botany, the deeper the root, the huger the tree is. This implies that *the more you know about your personality, the better you can take total advantage of your destiny*. American essayist, novelist and playwright James Baldwin said, “We cannot escape our origins, however hard we try.” If we cannot escape our origins, our personality, then we have to acknowledge it, embrace it, utilise it.

The Creator of man had fashioned him and placed him where He wanted him to be. We had no power to determine the family we were born into; we merely found ourselves in that family and it is left for us to accept it and be proud of the family or act otherwise. English poet and playwright William Shakespeare remarked, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players, they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts, his act being seven ages.”

A myriad of people were not initially contented with the family in which they (automatically) found themselves. They wished they could have been in a family better in terms of wealth, power, influence and other values. They were disturbed so much on this issue at an early age that if possible they would have changed their family, but it was not. Sometimes life could be quite unfair. This is because from the time we were babies, life threw challenges at us! Some have both parents while others lose one or both quite early in life. Some were placed in a humble background while some had it all rosy. We really cannot choose where life places us.

This is the more reason we must endeavour to wise up to life early and accept our origin, in order to be able to remain on top of situations; the earlier, the better, if not in our teenage years, then in our early adulthood. We must challenge life equally by accepting who we are, our family background, and deciding to make it better than the way we met it. Thus, the future of our lives and our families is in our hands, we could make it better not only for ourselves but also for our unborn generations.



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Let's compare and contrast various family backgrounds using silver, gold and diamond. Silver can never be gold and gold cannot be diamond. But, they are all fashionable and useful precious ornaments for all occasions. However, it depends on their qualities. If a chemical destroys gold for instance, silver may look more fashionable than it, or if a diamond is not perfectly worked on, gold can be more useful than it.

We cannot change the family we were born into, but we can make the world hear the ringing bell of our family names for good. Michael Faraday was the son of a blacksmith; William Shakespeare was a son of butcher and glazier; Chief M.K.O. Abiola was a son of a firewood seller; and Alhaji Aliko Dangote is a son of a cattle rearer. These people and many others had positively affected their families' names. If these people can achieve great feats from a humble beginning, you too can also do it. Let the world hear good things about your family name through you.

## SUMMARY

- Different people have various perceptions of life.
- Optimism and pessimism depend chiefly on the state of mind of a person.
- Two factors influence optimism; being yourself and being proud of your personality.
- You are unique, special and rare. Be an original and not a photocopy. Imitation is limitation.
- Be proud of who you are, don't ever say you are poor.
- Your present condition has nothing to do with your success because background, conditions and status, do not determine success.
- The curious paradox is: When you are real, you can never be a shadow.
- You must picture the future in your mind and feature in it to turn what you pictured into reality.
- Originality is the quality of being new and interesting in a way that is different from anything that has existed before.
- You are number one; everyone in the world is your number two. Be yourself, who else is better qualified?

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