

# TEAM PURPOSE - REFLECTION



I ask for what I  
desire as we begin  
this topic



I pray that my entire  
being become open  
to God's grace



I imagine these texts  
being addressed to me,  
and note my response

**Grace: to connect to a compelling purpose that injects meaning and energy in our collective work**

You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth.  
For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons, and to step out of life's  
procession, that marches in majesty and proud submission towards the infinite.  
Always you have been told that work is a curse and labor a misfortune.  
But I say to you that when you work you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to  
you when that dream was born,  
And in keeping yourself with labor you are in truth loving life,  
And to love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret.  
You have been told also that life is darkness, and in your weariness you echo what was  
said by the weary.  
And I say that life is indeed darkness except when there is urge,  
And all urge is blind except when there is knowledge,  
And all knowledge is vain except when there is work,  
And all work is except save when there is love;  
And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.  
And what is it to work with love?  
It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to  
wear that cloth.  
It is to build a house with affection,  
even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.  
It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved  
were to eat the fruit.  
It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit,  
And to know that all the blessed dead  
are standing about you and watching.  
Work is love made visible.

*On Work - Excerpts from Khalil Gibran*

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What gives meaning to our work as a team?
2. Which parts of the three extracts suggested by this reflection resonated the most with you? What invitation do they carry for your team?

The goal of our life is to live with God forever. God, who loves us, gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal. In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God. Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening his life in me.

*The first principle and foundation - From the Spiritual Exercises [23] of Ignatius of Loyola,  
Contemporary version by David Fleming, SJ*

"A man came across three masons who were working at chipping chunks of granite from large blocks. The first seemed unhappy at his job, chipping away and frequently looking at his watch. When the man asked what it was that he was doing, the first mason responded, rather curtly, "I'm hammering this stupid rock, and I can't wait 'til 5 when I can go home."

"A second mason, seemingly more interested in his work, was hammering diligently and when asked what it was that he was doing, answered, "Well, I'm molding this block of rock so that it can be used with others to construct a wall. It's not bad work, but I'll sure be glad when it's done."

"A third mason was hammering at his block fervently, taking time to stand back and admire his work. He chipped off small pieces until he was satisfied that it was the best he could do. When he was questioned about his work he stopped, gazed skyward and proudly proclaimed, "I...am building a cathedral!"

*The Three Stonecutters*

# TEAM PURPOSE - EXERCISE

### Starting from your personal experience

#### Step 1: Individual Reflection

Invite your team to take some individual time to reflect on the below questions. Individually note your answers in your leadership journals.

- What are your personal reasons for working in your team/department?
- Which 2-3 objectives do you personally have for your profession/vocation, within the next year?
- Which values underlie your personal objectives and overall mission?
- What is your dream – vision and deep desire – for your career/vocation? (think about the next 5 or 10 years)
- How aligned is this desire with your strategy and daily activities?
- If you could step in the shoes of your organization's founders, what could have been their reasons for creating your department/team? Take the time to write down in a few words the higher purpose that the founders intended for the department that you belong to.
- How far is the founders' original purpose from the one that your team is currently pursuing? From the one you are currently pursuing?

#### Step 2: Gathering Insights

Once the assigned time for personal reflection is over, go for a 5-minute walk and note down 2-3 key points (patterns you noticed, feelings, a summary of the fruits of your reflection).

### Connecting to the experience of others

#### Sharing in group

Join your small group and share your personal drivers and motivators for being in the team.

- What meaning do we personally find in the work we are doing?
- How well is our current role linked to our personal values, desires and aspirations?
- How can we connect our personal goal and purpose to that of the team and organization?

#### Collecting Insights

- What similarities and differences in the different answers caught our attention?
- Which answers feel important and inspiring?
- What actions do we feel called to engage in as a team following this discussion?

### ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

Following the individual reflection and sharing you may find it useful to engage in a collective exercise to reflect on (or identify) your team's purpose and agree on how to link it with your individual aspiration and values (More on this in the Input document)

# TEAM PURPOSE - INPUT

## INTRODUCTION

Defining a clear team purpose and constantly aligning team members on it is crucial for team performance and motivation. A clear team purpose acts as a cohesive glue and guiding compass that focuses the energy and efforts of the team. When team members understand what they came together to accomplish and are able to see how their individual roles fit with the organization's overall purpose, productivity increases, morale improves and retention rises. Conversely, without such a goal, team members will lack the clarity and initiative to perform and may not be able to realize when their tasks are completed.

### Developing a Purpose Statement for your team

The following steps are suggested to help you generate stories that are a diverse representation of your team as a whole in an attempt to capture at the end of the reflection a purpose statement that resonates with all team-members

- With your team, reconnect with your organization's written purpose statement and mission.
- Take this a step further. Imagine that you could step in the shoes of your organization's founders, what could have been their reasons for creating your organization? Take the time to write down in a few words the higher purpose that the founders intended for the institution that you belong to.
- Looking at your team today, reflect together about how your work contributes to this overall goal.

*One way of doing this could be by using the 5 whys technique: Start by asking "Why does our team exist?" and keep following up with "why" questions until more insights surface.*

The following questions can guide your process and deepen your understanding of your team's reason for existence:

- What accounts for more than 75% of your work focus?
- What do you produce/deliver? What services do you provide?
- Who are you doing this work for and why?
- What is the final impact of your work?
- If your team didn't exist, what would your organisation miss out on?
- What organizational needs is your team helping to meet?
- How does your team improve conditions for others?
- What is the real value that your team offers?
- How does your work benefit society at large?
- Reconnect with the people your team is daily interacting with (colleagues in other departments, beneficiaries, clients...) and recall memorable stories that capture the way your team made a positive difference and left an impact. What do these stories reveal about your team purpose?

- Collect the insights that arise from this brainstorming. What are the common themes that best embody what your team collectively believes is its ultimate purpose? How can you capture them in a short, specific, clear and compelling purpose statement?
- Once a draft statement is finalized, who can you invite to comment, edit or review? How can you reword your statement in a way that connects with people's minds and hearts?
- How can you use the purpose statement you have developed and keep it alive? How will you communicate it to others? Where can you display it where everyone can see?

## EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Understanding the importance of purpose in building meaning and productivity
2. Formulating team purpose and relating it to the strategies, objectives and activities of the team

*"The most effective way to forge a winning team is to call on the players' need to connect with something larger than themselves."*

*Phil Jackson*

# TEAM PURPOSE - RESOURCES

## GENERAL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

Title	Author	Publisher	Year	Link
Purpose is Good. Shared Purpose is Better	Mark Bonchek	Harvard Business Review	2013	<a href="#">Link</a>
How great leaders inspire action	Simon Sinek	TED	2009	<a href="#">Link</a>
Developing Your Team Purpose	John Izzo and Jeff Vanderwielen	Lead on Purpose	2018	<a href="#">Link</a>
5 Questions to Help Your Employees Find Their Inner Purpose	Kristi Hedges	Harvard Business Review	2017	<a href="#">Link</a>
How to Make Work More Meaningful for Your Team	Lewis Garrad and Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic	Harvard Business Review	2017	<a href="#">Link</a>
Can Higher Purpose Help Your Team Survive and Thrive?	Brad Wolfe	Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley	2015	<a href="#">Link</a>
Helping Your People Find Purpose in Their Work		Mindtools		<a href="#">Link</a>
In Tough Times, Help Your Team Remember Their Purpose	Jim Hart	Harvard Business Review	2009	<a href="#">Link</a>
The Fundamental Purpose of Your Team	Linda Hill and Kent Lineback	Harvard Business Review	2011	<a href="#">Link</a>
Create a compelling and powerful team purpose	Keith Hatter	The Performance Room		<a href="#">Link</a>

IGNATIAN RESOURCES

Title	Author	Publisher	Year	Link
Team Building and Authentic Spirituality of a Team	Philip Endean, SJ	Loyola Productions Munich	2016	<a href="#">Link</a>
Ignatian Teamwork: An emergent Framework from the Instructions for the Team at Trent	David Coghlan	Review on Ignatian Spirituality	2001	<a href="#">Link</a>

QUOTES

- "Purpose is the place where your deep gladness meets the world's needs." Frederick Buechner
- "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." Antoine de Saint-Exupery
- "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success". Henry Ford
- "Purpose is intangible. It is felt and experienced, like a calling. It's what a person means when they say, 'I've found my people'. Purpose is deep, resonant and permeates an environment to create a sense of identification and connection that is so powerful—you would do almost anything to partake. It's a reason for being that inspires and lights you up from the inside." - Stephen Scott Johnson
- "Cat: Where are you going?  
Alice: Which way should I go?  
Cat: That depends on where you are going.  
Alice: I don't know.  
Cat: Then it doesn't matter which way you go."  
— Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland