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# Purpose In Adolescence: A Review of the Literature and an Intervention Plan

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# Purpose In Adolescence: A Review of the Literature and an Intervention Plan

## **Abstract**

Purpose in life is positively correlated with psychological and physical wellbeing. It is also an important part of healthy identity formation in adolescence and is linked to academic success. However, purpose in adolescence is rare, with only one in five adolescents being able to identify their purpose in life (Damon, 2008). Moreover, purpose in life becomes less prevalent across the lifespan, leaving many people drifting and disengaged. The good news is, that research shows, it is possible to foster purpose and adolescence is an optimal time to do so. This paper reviews the research on purpose in adolescence, reviews existing interventions, and proposes a model for a new type of purpose intervention for adolescents.

## **Keywords**

purpose, adolescence, identity formation, coaching, design thinking

## **Disciplines**

Developmental Psychology | Other Social and Behavioral Sciences

Purpose In Adolescence: A Review of the Literature and an Intervention Plan

Yvonne Biggins

University of Pennsylvania

A Capstone Project Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Kendall Cotton Bronk

August 1, 2018

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Master of Applied Positive Psychology  
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## Abstract

Purpose in life is positively correlated with psychological and physical wellbeing. It is also an important part of healthy identity formation in adolescence and is linked to academic success. However, purpose in adolescence is rare, with only one in five adolescents being able to identify their purpose in life (Damon, 2008). Moreover, purpose in life becomes less prevalent across the lifespan, leaving many people drifting and disengaged. The good news is, that research shows, it is possible to foster purpose and adolescence is an optimal time to do so. This paper reviews the research on purpose in adolescence, reviews existing interventions, and proposes a model for a new type of purpose intervention for adolescents.

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### **Preface**

I've always had a strong sense of purpose, underpinned by a strong sense of values, which have changed in priority throughout my life. When I was seven years old, without even knowing what feminism was, my value of justice and fairness drove me to create a positive change for girls at my local Catholic church and diocese. I used to watch the altar servers, all boys, go about their jobs at church and wondered what it would be like to carry the cross or ring the bell during communion, or to dress in those robes. I also wondered why there were no girls. The following Monday at school, I asked my teacher about it. "Why are girls not able to serve at church?" I asked. My teacher looked at me, slightly befuddled. "That's a very good question". A couple of weeks later, after getting permission from the Bishop, I was a trainee altar server along with four of my friends, all girls. Church became much more interesting as I now had a job to do and it felt good to serve, something I had seen my mother and father do so well.

Both my mother and father were significant influences on me. My mother was the epitome of a servant leader. She helped others in the local community by delivering 'Meals on Wheels' and serving as a Eucharistic minister. My father coached the local youth Gaelic football team. He may not have had the faith my mother had, but he shared her deep commitment to service in the community, not just through coaching football but also by helping others who needed financial support. I was not aware of it at the time, but my parents served as role models to me, and they still do. They sparked in me a sense of purpose, tied to helping others. This capstone is dedicated to them.

### **Introduction**

Research shows that leading a life of purpose has a number of physical and psychological health benefits; however, despite this, most people do not report having a clear purpose in life.



Whilst 87% of teens think they know their purpose (Gallup, 2004) only about 20% can actually identify their purpose (Damon, 2008).

All young people can develop a sense of purpose, although many people require some assistance (Damon, 2008). The aim of the present manuscript is to outline the theoretical and empirical guidelines for an effective purpose intervention. This capstone reviews research on purpose in adolescence, reviews existing interventions in the field, and proposes a new empirically-justified purpose-fostering intervention for adolescents.

## Literature Review

### Purpose

It is Viktor Frankl (1959), a psychotherapist imprisoned in a concentration camp during World War II, who is credited with raising the importance of purpose in psychological circles and beyond. In his book, *Man's Search for Meaning* (1959), Frankl writes that the difference between individuals who survived their time in the concentration camp and individuals who did not, was purpose. Individuals with purpose, he argued, were more likely to survive the hardships associated with life in a concentration camp. Individuals found purpose in living for a loved one waiting for them, finishing unfinished work, or as in Frankl's case, creating something they wanted to share with the world. Frankl found purpose in sharing his insights about purpose and logotherapy, a type of therapy based on the principle that having a purpose for living is a prerequisite for living a full life (Frankl, 1984; van Deurzen-Smith, 1997).

**Definition.** Although definitions of purpose have changed over time, most definitions contain these three elements: commitment, goal directedness and personal meaningfulness (Bronk, 2014; Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). For example, individuals may commit to environmental goals like cleaning up oceans or health related goals, like curing cancer. Whilst

these goals may never fully be realised, they provide a kind of personally meaningful North Star toward which adolescents can work (Baumeister, 1991). The two elements that differentiate a purposeful goal from other types of goals, such as losing weight or getting on the property ladder, are (1) time—a purpose in life is a particularly enduring aim—and (2) personal meaningfulness—a purpose represents a highly significant goal, central to an individual's personal values (Bronk, 2014).

Definitions of purpose generally include the elements mentioned above (Bronk, 2014), but there is one more element that Frankl (1959) emphasises, and that is the impact one has on the world beyond the self (Bronk, 2014). This is a critical component of purpose theoretically as well as empirically. Theoretically it distinguishes purpose from the related *meaning* construct, and empirically studies find that compared to individuals who are committed to self-oriented aims, individuals committed to issues beyond the self are psychologically healthier, more open, and more content with their lives (Bronk & Finch 2010; Mariano & Vaillant, 2012). This beyond-the-self component of purpose is consistent with lay conceptions of purpose (Hill, Burrow, O'Dell, & Thornton, 2012) and it is also a defining principle of the conception of purpose featured in one of the best-selling books of all time, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Warren, 2002). In short then, purpose, as this project conceives of the construct, features goal orientation, personal meaningfulness, and is motivated at least in part by a desire to make a difference in the world beyond the self.

It should be clear from this definition that the purpose construct shares features with meaning. However, although purpose overlaps with meaning, the two constructs are distinct. Frankl (1959) used the terms interchangeably, but more recent researchers have distinguished them. Meaning, like purpose, has been defined in several different ways. For instance, Martela

and Steger (2016) break meaning into three parts: coherence, purpose and significance.

Baumeister and Vohs (2002) propose that connection between things (that are themselves often intangible and therefore difficult to explain), is at the heart of meaning and that there are different levels of meaning ranging from low to high and that high levels of meaning constitute flourishing. They explain that there are four needs or motivations for meaning in life, which are: purpose, values, efficacy and self-worth (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Emily Esfahani Smith (2015) in her book *The Power of Meaning* argues there are four pillars of meaning; belonging, purpose, storytelling and transcendence. She explains that maintaining these four pillars in life is the way to find meaning. Although these definitions obscure the relationship between purpose and meaning, they make clear that the constructs are related.

However, although they are related, they are distinct. More specifically, meaning is a broad construct that identifies anything that makes life seem particularly significant, like spending quality time with loved ones or going for a walk in nature, whereas purpose identifies a subset of those sources of meaning (Bronk, 2014). Although purpose and meaning share a focus on personal significance, purpose, unlike meaning, is necessarily goal directed and motivated by the desire to make a difference in the world, which could be related to core values one holds or issues that an individual cares deeply about like equality, the environment, or health.

**Benefits of purpose.** The absence of purpose predicts poor psychological functioning. For instance, purposelessness has been related to psychopathology (Kish & Moody, 1989), mental illness, depression, (Mascaro & Rosen, 2005) and loneliness (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). A lack of purpose has also been linked to boredom (Falhman, Merce, Gaskovski, Eastwood, & Eastwood, 2009) suicide ideation (Heisel & Flett, 2004) and overt forms of suicide behaviour (Bonner & Rich, 1987). Substance abuse, something that often begins in adolescence

is inversely related to purpose (Coleman, Kaplan, & Downing, 1986; Harlow, Newcomb, & Bentler, 1986; Newcomb & Harlow, 1986).

As one might expect, given that the absence of purpose is associated with poor health, studies find the presence of purpose is associated with positive health. For instance, studies conclude that finding a purpose can support recovery from addiction (Carroll, 1993). Purpose is associated with the protective factor of resilience (Bernard, 1991), which can help buffer against negative states but also promote positive development. In addition to correlating with psychological health, the presence of purpose also correlates with physical health, including better cardiovascular functioning (Ryff, Singer, & Love, 2004), improved sleep (Kim, Hershner, & Strecher, 2015) and longevity (Boyle, Barnes, Buchman, & Bennett, 2009; Krause, 2009). Purpose also encourages positive health behaviours such as pro-social tendencies, which can have significant impact on all five elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing, including positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). In short, purpose represents a defining feature of wellbeing (Bronk, 2014).

### **Youth Purpose**

Although leading a life of purpose is relevant across much of the lifespan, it is particularly relevant during adolescence. Adolescence starts with the onset of puberty and lasts until an individual assumes an independent role in life (Damon, 2004). Laurence Steinberg (2014), describes adolescence as the transition from childhood to adulthood. This stage lasts longer today than it did historically, due to puberty starting earlier and the full assumption of adult roles happening later. Adolescence now spans a roughly fifteen-year time period during the second and third decades of life; this is double what it was in the 1950s (Steinberg, 2014).

Adolescents confront a range of opportunities and potential stressors. Potential sources of adolescent pressures have been exacerbated through the explosion of social media, which encourages social comparison, something negatively associated with wellbeing (Lyburkomirksy, 2007). Social media has the potential to create a malady of meaninglessness, where those who engage in it look outward rather than inward for validation. Research has shown that compared to their peers who spend more time interacting face-to-face, adolescents who spend more time on social media and connecting with screens display increased symptoms of depression and suicide ideation (O’Keefe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, & Martin, 2018). Whilst time spent on social media and subsequent depression has not been empirically linked to the lack of purpose, it is important to note the social pressures faced by adolescents today and how developing purpose may buffer against the negative outcomes associated.

**Purpose in Adolescence.** Historically, purpose has been viewed as a construct associated with adulthood (Frankl, 1959; Ryff, 1989), but more recent research suggests young people can develop a purpose, and in fact, that purpose development is linked to healthy identity formation (Bronk, 2014; Damon, 2008; Erikson, 1968, 1980). Adolescence is the period of life where identity forms, partly because adolescents are capable of understanding, from a cognitive perspective, life’s more existential questions, such as: who do I want to be, why do I care, and what’s my life’s purpose? (Damon, 2008; Erikson, 1968, Erikson, 1980). These questions require an individual to have a level of self-knowledge and self-understanding that is not typically acquired until roughly the second decade of life (Bronk, 2014). During this period of identity formation, young people spend a lot of time figuring out who they are, trying on different roles, and considering different possible futures. It is a time when they seriously reflect on their beliefs, including their political views and their religious and spiritual beliefs (Erikson, 1968).

Identity is a complex construct that combines the aims and beliefs that one has about who they are and who they want to become (Erikson, 1968). Erikson proposed that identity represented the key developmental task of adolescence. Identity formation requires adolescents to determine who they are separate from their families as well as how they fit in with the broader world; discovering a purpose can help address both of these issues (Bronk, 2011). Identity development requires figuring out who one is, and purpose formation requires figuring out what one hopes to accomplish. The interesting difference between identity and purpose, is that all adolescents develop an identity, but only a minority develops a purpose in life. Considering the positively reinforcing benefits of these constructs and the growing research that purpose can be cultivated (Bronk, 2014), perhaps there is an opportunity to create purpose interventions that not only produce the benefits of purpose in its own right, but also help with identity formation and smooth the transition from adolescence into adulthood.

Purpose and identity formation have a symbiotic relationship during adolescence and emerging adulthood; as young people make progress in identity formation, they are simultaneously likely to make progress in purpose development (Sumner, Burrow, & Hill, 2015). The identity capital framework (Cote, 1996, 1997) suggests purpose may facilitate identity development because it serves as a potentially important source of identity capital (Burrow & Hill, 2011). In short, mounting empirical research finds purpose clearly supports healthy identity formation (Damon, 2008; Erikson, 1980).

**The Purpose Gap.** While all young people eventually form an identity (Bronk, 2011), only one in five commit to a clear purpose in life (Damon, 2008). Youth can be categorized into four categories, or purpose statuses, including disengaged, dreamers, dabblers and the purposeful youth (Damon, 2008). These four purpose statuses are linked to the dimensions of intention,

engagement and contribution, which are the essence of purpose (Damon et. al., 2003). Young people who demonstrate all three dimensions of purpose (goal orientation, personal meaningfulness, a desire to contribute to matters beyond the self) are likely to have a clear purpose. Youth who demonstrate two of these three dimensions can be said to meet some of the criteria for purpose and are categorized as dabblers or dreamers. Youth who fail to meet any of the criteria are placed in the disengaged status, meaning they show few if any signs of purpose, at least in that moment in time. According to Damon (2008) as much as a quarter of young adults are disengaged, often leaving them directionless and drifting. This lack of direction and purpose may cause a lack of motivation which, according to Damon (2008), is one of the biggest concerns in education today. Not only is drifting a concern in terms of motivation and academic achievement, but it is also a significant concern for mental health and wellbeing. Anxiety and depression in young people at schools and universities has reached epidemic levels. (Damon, 2008). Damon (2011) also argues that it is meaninglessness rather than stress that causes the most problems for young people today (Damon, 2011).

### **Under the Positive Psychology Umbrella**

The number of adolescents being referred to mental health specialists is on the rise. In fact, in 2018, the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK had the highest number of adolescent referrals on record (Campbell, 2018). In response to this troubling trend, there is an increasing number of positive psychology interventions that may buffer against mental ill health and build wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). Positive psychology calls for a promoting of mental wellbeing and human flourishing, as opposed to minimising psychological problems and mental illness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The traditional psychology field is very good at

diagnosing mental illness, but it is not particularly good at providing strategies for flourishing and living a full life (Seligman, 2002). This is where positive psychology comes in.

Positive psychology is the “science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Purpose, which had not been researched heavily in traditional psychology, gained empirical attention after the field of positive psychology was founded. However, one exception to this was pioneering research by Carol Ryff. Ryff (1989) devised a theory of psychological wellbeing that includes purpose as a key component. Her theory identifies self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, autonomy and personal growth as other key components. Together, these six components comprise subjective wellbeing, which correlates positively with life satisfaction and healthy psychological functioning and inversely with pathologies, such as depression (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Although all six components are critical to well-being, purpose has emerged as a particularly important contributor to psychological well-being and physical health (Boyle et al., 2010; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2002; Ryff et al., 2004).

**Positive Education.** Education represents a promising area of application for positive psychology more generally and purpose more particularly. Positive Education, which focuses on teaching youth both academic as well as psychological lessons (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009), represents a growing movement borne out of the field of positive psychology. Positive education can be thought of as a double helix approach to education that focuses on both academics and psychological wellbeing (IPEN, 2017). The metaphor of the double helix suggests, that like a DNA molecule, these two strands of education are mutually reinforcing. Practitioners and researchers of positive education believe it is possible to teach students both the skills they need to live a happy and balanced life as well as academic



curriculum. Large-scale positive education evaluations, from Bhutan, Peru, and Mexico, suggest this approach shows promise (Adler, Seligman, Tetlock, & Duckworth, 2016). Positive education serves as a tent for many programs that already exist in schools, including those that focus on character, social and emotional learning, and wellbeing. Interventions and programmes designed to teach purpose fit under the positive education umbrella.

**Purpose-Centred Education.** My vision of the future of education is one where purpose is at the centre. I believe that the primary aim of education should be to help young people identify their purpose in life and gain the skills required to pursue it. With a few notable exceptions, most schools today are silent on the topic of purpose. Instead, they focus on preparing students for high-stakes testing in traditional subjects like English and Maths. Whilst teaching these subjects is important, it is not sufficient. Educators should also strive to teach young people the skills they need to pursue a meaningful path in life.

An over-focus on testing on a narrow range of subjects not only leaves students poorly prepared for the future (Gray, 2016) but also negatively impacts their mental health (Hutchings, 2015). Far too many young people today report feeling pressure from exams and testing, and this can negatively influence their psychological well-being (Hutchings, 2015). Mental health difficulties can hold back some young people from reaching their potential (*Future in Mind*, DoH, 2015). One in ten children aged 5-16 years in the UK, experiences mental health problems and half of all mental illnesses begin by the age of 14 (*Future in Mind*, DoH, 2015).

The field of positive psychology and positive education equips us with a new lens and a growing body of empirical research that can be used to maximize schools' effectiveness at teaching academics as well as skills to enhance mental health. In fact, empirical evidence suggests positive mental health and academic achievement are positively correlated (Public

Health England, 2014). Given that purpose contributes to a range of indicators of positive mental health (Bronk, 2014), one way to improve educational outcomes is to cultivate purpose in schools.

### **Cultivating Purpose**

**Passion and purpose.** The constructs of passion and purpose, like meaning and purpose are often used interchangeably and whilst they are related to each other, they too are distinct constructs (Bronk & McClean, 2016). Passion is a strong desire by an individual towards something they find important and toward which time and energy are invested (Vallerand et. al., 2003). Vallerand et. al., (2003) notes there is a dualistic nature of passion; passions can be either obsessive or harmonious. Obsessive passion occurs when the motives for a cause are extrinsically motivated but internally focused on the area of interest, often causing undesirable outcomes, like stalking. Conversely, harmonious passion leads an individual to engage in something that they love that has positive outcomes like more flow experiences, positive emotions, performance and psychological wellbeing (Vallerand & Verner-Filion, 2013).

Harmonious passion may provide the energy for purpose (Bronk & McLean, 2016). It is like the spark that ignites the flame of purpose. Although purpose and passion clearly share a focus on personal meaningfulness, they differ around the goal orientation (a purpose is necessarily goal-oriented whereas a passion is not) and the motivational force (a purpose is necessarily motivated by a desire to make a difference in the broader world whereas passion is not). Purpose provides a direction for passion, and passion moves purpose into action. It seems likely that an effective purpose-fostering intervention will ignite a young person's passion.

**Lessons from Research.** Culling empirical research on purpose interventions sheds light on elements of effective purpose-fostering programs. For instance, a recent study of youth

purpose exemplars finds that mentors and like-minded peers offer important sources of support for purpose formation (Bronk, 2014). Other scholars have similarly concluded that social support, especially from adults outside the family, is critical to purpose development among adolescents (Damon, 2008). Research with exemplars also concludes that the bidirectional relationship between person and context helps shape the ultimate form a purpose in life is likely to take (Bronk, 2014). Other studies suggest that time to reflect on the things that matter most, probing questions about the things that matter most, and discussions focused on the long rather than short-term are effective approaches to encouraging purpose (Bronk, Baumsteiger, Mangan, Riches, & Dubon, under review, 2018).

Further research finds that indirect approaches to cultivating purpose may also be effective. For instance, studies find that encouraging a grateful mindset that helps youth focus on the blessings in their lives and the people who have blessed them can naturally incline young people to reflect on how they want to give back through purpose (Bronk et. al., 2018), and introducing individuals to awe-inspiring experiences may cultivate a sense of self-transcendence that fosters purpose (Gottlieb, Keltner, & Lombrozo, 2018).

Having an understanding of what one values in life is an important pre-requisite to developing purpose (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Damon, 2008). A short values affirmation exercise has been shown to help young people clarify their values, reduce identity threat, support positive identity development, and improve a sense of belonging (Cook, Purdie-Vaughns, Garcia & Cohen, 2011). Further research has shown that brief value-affirmation writing activities can increase one's sense of self and support negatively stereotyped students to perform better academically (Martens, Johns, Greenburg, & Schimel, 2006). Reflecting on one's values is a way

to ignite the first sparks (Benson, 2008) of purpose and will form an integral part of the proposed intervention plan.

A purpose emerges when young people apply their strengths in ways that enable them to make a meaningful difference in the broader world (Bronk, 2014). Accordingly, identifying one's strengths represents a key step toward developing purpose. The VIA character strengths survey offers a useful approach to identifying one's strengths. "VIA" originally stood for values in action, but today it refers to the Latin word "via", which means 'the way' or 'the path' (Niemic, 2017). This is a fitting metaphor for utilising strengths to find a path or a way to purpose.

Furthermore, when individuals capitalise on their strengths, they also improve their wellbeing (Niemic, 2017). Niemic (2017) outlines a model for building strengths in three stages: aware, explore, apply. The aware stage helps individuals develop an awareness of their character strengths, so they understand themselves and others better. The explore stage helps individuals evaluate their strengths, and the apply stage helps to create action items and goals for optimal use and development of strengths. Utilising a healthy balance of strengths can increase life satisfaction and flourishing (Freidlin, Littman-Ovadia, & Niemic, 2017). Character strengths can also be used to develop self-efficacy and resilience by building healthy patterns and coping mechanisms (Freidlin et al., 2017). Lastly, having a good understanding of one's strengths can increase self-knowledge and self-awareness (Niemic, Rashid, & Spinella, 2012) which helps create the conditions for developing purpose.

In addition to being related to personal strengths, purpose is also related to resilience. Early empirical research links purpose as a protective factor to resilience (Benard, 1991; Masten & Reed, 2002) or the ability to bounce back from adversity. People who are more resilient are

more likely to thrive both psychologically and academically; they also have better relationships (Bernard, 2004). Not only would a purpose-focused intervention cultivate purpose then, but it may also help young people to develop resilience, which is an important life skill (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Purpose has also been linked to positive affect (King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006) and positive affect is shown to increase openness and creativity (Frederickson, 2009). Positive affect experienced through positive emotions also increases social connections with others (Frederickson, 2009). Considering the important role that others can have in helping to shape purpose (Damon, 2008), incorporating rituals that generate positive emotions into a purpose intervention may lead to upward spirals of emotional wellbeing (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002) and improved relationships with others. The broaden and build theory of positive emotions posits that micro moments of positive emotions not only increase positive affect, relationships and broaden one's lens on the world, but also help to build resources for the future (Cohn, Frederickson, Mikels, Brown, & Conway, 2009). This is important when faced with the inevitable challenges of life, making one better equipped to deal with them (Fredrickson, 2009). Activities that cultivate positive emotions will therefore be interwoven into the intervention plan, for example through gratitude reflections.

Baumeister and Vohs (2002) posit how suffering can create meaning, by finding purpose through it, generating a sense of control and building self-worth, which relates to the four needs of meaning that they provide. Being able to find gratitude in and appreciate challenging life experiences is a key component of post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Furthermore, Haidt (2006), explains how adversity in adolescence can help young people to find coherence between their personality and their self-concept; their elephant and their rider. Perhaps

even their identity and their purpose. For adolescents who have experienced trauma, a purpose intervention may contribute to their healing and growth (Ginwright, 2018).

Tapping into the intrinsic motivation of an individual is a precursor for fostering purpose. Intrinsic motivation is considered to be the strongest type of motivation for self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which contributes to goal accomplishment, resilience (Brown & Ryan, 2015) and purpose commitment. It's important to guide young people to tap into their intrinsic motivation, which is fuelled by autonomy, competence and relatedness (Brown & Ryan, 2015). One way of doing this is to set self-concordant goals. Self-concordant goals are goals that individuals are intrinsically motivated to achieve as they relate to core values and interests (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). SMART goals and WOOP goals are goal setting tools that have been used to good effect in education (Latham, 2003; Oettingen, 2014). The acronym SMART equates to specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely which help to break a larger goal into smaller components (Latham, 2003). WOOP stands for wish, outcome, obstacle, plan and is an evidenced-based goal-setting tool that uses mental contrasting and implementation intentions to set realistic goals (Oettingen, 2014). An intervention plan designed to foster purpose in adolescence would do well to include activities that uncover intrinsic motivation and help young people set meaningful goals.

Feedback is an important part of goal attainment and is a core principle behind Carol Dweck's (2006) theory of growth mindset, which is now seen as the vehicle to put grit (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly 2007, defined as passion and perseverance toward a long term goal into practice (Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015). Without feedback, goals are less likely to be achieved, self-efficacy may decrease and hope can wane, as feedback is an important part of feeling progress towards achieving a goal and to perseverance (Locke, 1996). As purpose

is a particular type of goal (Bronk, 2014), aided to develop in adolescence through social support (Damon, 2008), including opportunities for feedback in a purpose fostering intervention, is likely to have positive outcomes.

**Existing interventions to foster purpose in adolescents.** In addition to consulting research to learn about the links between purpose and positive psychological constructs, consulting the research around existing purpose interventions sheds light on how to create an effective purpose-fostering program. Just as the construct of purpose is rare, perhaps not surprisingly, so are interventions to cultivate it. Koshy and Mariano (2011) conducted a review of the literature promoting youth purpose in formal and informal educational settings and found that before 1980, there was very little research on curricula explicitly teaching for purpose. The number of interventions has increased since then (Bronk, 2014), but they remain relatively rare.

Following is a brief review of the handful of purpose-fostering interventions that have been tested or evaluated. A fairly recent study by Kosine, Steger and Duncan (2008) advocates for purpose-focused career development programmes in high schools. The quasi experimental pilot study and follow up focus group evaluated a career development programme called Make Your Work Matter. An evaluation of this program revealed that students reported a clearer sense of career direction and answers to more open ended questions showed that many students expressed career goals that encompassed purpose (Dik, Steger, Gibson, & Peisner, 2011). Student evaluations stated that the most popular part of the intervention was a values sort card module that participants said contributed to them understanding themselves better (Dik et. al., 2011).

Another study showing the impact of discussing values with emerging adults was carried out in a pretest/post-test experimental design study involving 102 college students, where post-

test measures were taken nine months later (Bundick, 2011). The intervention was designed to test whether discussing one's core values, life goals and purpose in life in a forty five minute purpose discussion had an impact on purpose and life satisfaction later in life. The results showed that those students who engaged in the purpose discussion saw an improvement in terms of goal directedness and life satisfaction related to their purpose. What's interesting about this study in terms of fostering purpose through an intervention is that the purpose discussion can be conducted without any real expertise and therefore could be carried out by a teacher, youth worker or even a parent (Bundick, 2011).

Developing inter-personal gratitude (Emmons & McCollough, 2003) is another evidence-based way to help young people develop a sense of purpose; in-fact fostering a grateful mindset increases purpose (Damon, 2008). The moral adolescent development laboratory led by Kendall Cotton Bronk has conducted studies that find that interventions based on gratitude can develop purpose. In other words, youth purpose can be forged from experiences of gratitude (Bronk et al., 2018). Bronk cites an example of one young person stating that her purpose in life is to become a teacher because she felt profoundly grateful for the impact her teacher had on her during a difficult time in her adolescence, and she wanted to pay that forwards (K. C. Bronk, personal communication, April 23, 2018). An effective purpose-fostering intervention may include opportunities to cultivate gratitude as a way of helping young people adopt a grateful mindset, as a primer for thinking about how they might want to give back.

Perhaps one of the most interesting purpose programmes from a school system and culture perspective is Cohen's purpose-centred system of education (Cohen, 1993). In this project based learning approach, schools teach students subject matter knowledge about beyond-the-self purposes, which could be related to the improving the environment or local community



(Koshy & Mariano, 2011). Students then undertake a project that relates to the social purpose, where they are able to put their learning into practice. Through learning about common social purposes, they start to identify their own purpose and actually take action, making their learning significant as it is focused on real life issues that they learn to care about. Rather than a one off purpose discussion the philosophy here is longer term engagement with purpose, so it is not seen as an add on, but as an integral part of the curriculum (Koshy & Mariano, 2011). The other difference with this system based approach to purpose is that there are two aspects to developing an adolescent's purpose: firstly, they reflect on and develop their own purpose and secondly, they connect their purpose with wider common societal purposes, which provides more meaning (Koshy & Mariano, 2011).

A similar and more current example is the New York based non-profit organisation, The Future Project. Their mission is to unlock the potential of all young people across the US ("The Future Project", n.d.). They do this by embedding what they call fulltime Dream Directors into each school that they work with. The Dream Directors are a blend of coach, social entrepreneur and transformational leader, whose job it is to help unlock the passion and purpose of students. They work across eleven school districts and ten states across the country, driving change on two levels, by building will and skill in the students and by improving the school culture (C. Fujiyama, personal communication, August 1, 2018). Their methodology is evidence-based and focuses on purpose, sparks, growth mindset, hope, self-efficacy, social emotional learning, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, zest and school culture. The programme is also informed by research around other constructs like goal setting, grit, self-determination theory, inspiration, intrinsic motivation, collaborative leadership, student engagement and imagination. According to their website, The

Future Project has now reached over thirty thousand young people with ninety four per cent either in college, in a job or launching their own enterprise (“The Future Project”, n.d.).

Cosmo Fujiyama is Vice President of the Dream Academy, responsible for the professional development of the Dream Directors within The Future Project. In an interview with Cosmo, I discovered some key learnings that have contributed to the success of the intervention. As each school is different, The Future Project has developed a highly specialised, highly localised model, pulling on national data and research, which focuses on human-centred design and is co-created with the students. The Dream Directors use evidence-based approaches to help young people grow and set meaningful goals. Another contributor to their success is that the Dream Directors are from the community that they are assigned to, which enables cultural relevance when designing programmes. The Dream Directors are like “dreamers in action” being deeply passionate about young people and community organisers who look for exposure opportunities for young people to elevate them up (C. Fujiyama, personal communication, August 1, 2018).

Whilst a whole school approach to engendering a culture of purpose may be the gold standard, there is evidence to suggest that even small social-psychological interventions in schools can have long lasting effects (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Although not the focus of the intervention plan, scholars have identified several short interventions that had lasting effects in schools and could be easily replicated (e.g. Dik et. al., 2011).

Youth spend considerable time in extracurricular activities outside of school and given that these contexts are not subject to the same high-stakes testing pressures, they represent a promising and to-date largely neglected space for purpose-fostering efforts. Worthen, Johnson, Badore and Bently (1973) show how a four-month camp experience for delinquent boys helped

to increase purpose in life and pro-social behaviour. The Future Project are prototyping an outside school intervention called “Future Camp”, in an attempt to reach even more young people (C. Fujiyama, personal communication, August 1, 2018). Further research into highly purposeful adolescents shows that support from people outside of school was a key component to them finding their purpose (Bronk, 2014; Damon, 2008). Key support for purpose development comes from role models or mentors, who provide practical advice and knowledge on an area of interest.

### **Purpose By Design – An Intervention Outline**

**I plan to target adolescents:** Adolescence is an optimal stage of life to cultivate purpose because of the concomitant relationship between purpose and identity formation (Burrow & Hill, 2011).

**I plan to reach youth outside of school:** When designing an intervention for cultivating purpose in adolescence, I reflected on my own experiences of having been a teacher and entrepreneur, working in the field of education. Whilst schools are well placed to foster purpose and can do so to some extent through relatively short interventions (e.g. Dik et. al., 2011), the pressure on teachers to focus on academics, coupled with budget constraints and a lack of resources, means that an intervention that takes place outside of school may be more impactful and cost effective. This is not to say that schools are not in a position to foster purpose. With guidance and support, like that from The Future Project, they absolutely can. In addition to my intervention plan, I have included a two day workshop outline (Appendix A) that schools could run at the beginning or end of an academic year, as timing of shorter interventions is important (Yeager & Walton, 2011) or as a project based learning activity, delivered weekly, over several weeks.

**I plan to use technology to reach youth digitally:** In addition to considering housing a purpose-fostering intervention outside of school, it may make sense to employ a digital platform. The current generation of adolescents were born into a digital world, and these youth are often referred to as iGeneration (Rosen, 2011). Because of the high rates of access to technology and the Internet through increasing smartphone usage (Anderson & Jiang, 2018), it makes sense to utilise digital tools for fostering purpose. The Adolescent Moral Development lab ([www.kendallcottonbronk.com](http://www.kendallcottonbronk.com)) has created online tools that help youth explore and identify their purpose in life (Bronk et. al., under review).

Another interesting digital platform is The Purpose Project which aims to help young people prototype their purpose through design thinking (“The Purpose Project”, 2018). The Purpose Project is a joint collaboration between IDEO and Riverdale Country School in New York. It features an eight-week immersive programme delivered in schools, where students learn about themselves, their passion and purpose (J. Lee, personal communication, August 1, 2018). Students use the digital platform and an app to reflect on and capture their learnings about their purpose journey and experience. Joan Lee, Project lead for The Purpose Project told me that the intervention really helps young people to reflect on their why (J. Lee, personal communication, August 1, 2018). Initial findings from early evaluation work suggests this approach holds promise for fostering purpose along with self-awareness, community engagement, self-direction, impact and self-efficacy (J. Lee, personal communication, August 1, 2018).

### **Underlying Intervention Principles**

**Design thinking.** Along with highlighting the psychological focus for the intervention, empirical research also points to ways of creating an effective purpose-fostering intervention. The current intervention will be framed by design thinking. Whilst there is no definitive

definition of design thinking, there's general agreement that it is innovative problem solving approach which is human-centred, meaning it deals with real life problems (Buchanan, 1992). It reframes traditional problem solving, by cultivating empathy with individuals and their unmet needs. From insights gained, a process emerges for innovation that encompasses concept development, applied creativity, prototyping and experimentation. When design thinking approaches are applied to business, the success rate for innovation improves substantially (Martin, 2009). It seems likely that the same will be the case in education; in fact, emerging research suggests applying design thinking to educational interventions around purpose may be effective (e.g. Cook-Deegan, 2016).

**Coaching.** In addition to using design principles to foster purpose in this intervention, coaching will also be used. Based on research that finds social support is critical to the pursuit of purpose, (Bronk, 2014; Damon, 2008) it seems likely that encouraging coaching relationships will help foster purpose. Coaching, which can take different forms, is a process that seeks to improve performance. Coaching has become popular in business (Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House, Sandahl & Whitworth, 2011) where it is often used to improve individual and company performance; it is becoming increasingly common in educational contexts as well (Jones, 2015; Van Nieuwerburgh, 2018). The Coaches Training Institute (CTI), created a co-active coaching model, which empowers individuals being coached to find their own answers so they can make important changes in their lives (Kimsey-House et. al., 2011). An underlying assumption of co-active coaching is that the coachee is naturally resourceful, creative and whole (Kimsey-House et. al., 2011). Viewing youth as capable is associated with the development of purpose (Benson, 2008).

Research suggests youth enjoy discussing purpose, but they are rarely afforded the opportunity to engage in these kinds of scaffolded discussions (K. C. Bronk, personal communication, April 23, 2018). Coaches can lead youth in these kinds of discussions, which have been found to encourage the growth of purpose (Bundick, 2011). Part of the co-active coaching approach is to co-create an inquiry or challenge for the client to explore in between sessions (Kimsey-House et. al., 2011). Although coaching and mentoring are different performance approaches, mentoring has also been shown to help young people develop their purpose by challenging their mentees (Parks, 2011) and by helping them establish a sense of agency, responsibility and commitment (Bronk, 2014). The opportunity to engage in scaffolded discussions around purpose exploration would- ideally- be made available to all students.

**Storytelling.** Although there are no empirical links between storytelling and purpose in adolescence, storytelling is considered an important skill for purposeful leadership (Coleman, 2015). In a corporate context, leaders of organisations need to be good storytellers in order to inspire their employees, customers and prospects to engage with the company's purpose (Coleman, 2015). Steve Jobs, Co-founder of Apple is recognised as a passionate and purposeful leader. Steve Jobs' passion was design and his purpose was to bring beautifully designed computers to market. He is often cited as a visionary leader as his passion and purpose compelled others to follow him (Bronk & McClean, 2016). But he was also an inspiring storyteller, which he demonstrated through many of Apple's product launches, but most notably in his commencement speech at Stanford in 2005 (Stanford, 2008). Jobs' speech followed a narrative framework, known as the public narrative framework which starts with 'self', extends to 'us' and ends with, 'now' (Ganz, 2008). This framework, according to Ganz (2008), helps leaders communicate the shared values that contribute to a shared purpose and inspire action.

Storytelling, and in particular, the public narrative framework, will form part of the proposed intervention.

### **Planet Purpose**

Planet Purpose will be an online, outside of school, purpose-fostering intervention that targets adolescents. The program will centre on a camp for adolescents designed to foster purpose and a digital platform to support the ongoing purpose journey. Planet Purpose is based on a model developed by THINK, which is a school for Creative Leadership, based in Amsterdam (“THNK”, n.d.). THINK’s mission is “to solve the world’s largest societal challenges by supporting global leaders from all walks of life to unlock their full creative leadership potential” (“THNK”, n.d.). The societal challenges are informed by the United Nation’s sustainable development goals (“United Nations”, 2018). During the six month part-time programme participants of the programme have extensive coaching and learn design thinking tools to create new or improve existing entrepreneurial endeavours that have a societal mission. Whilst this type of executive leadership programme would not be appropriate for adolescents due to attending school, a holiday camp and digital learning platform would be.

There are many existing models of camps that adolescents are enrolled in during the summer whether the focus be sports, music or camps that are focused more on building confidence and leadership skills, like the UK based National Citizen Service (“NCS”, 2018). There are also many learning platforms that have had notable success in flipping the traditional school based learning environment, like Khan Academy (Khan Academy, 2018). Planet Purpose camp will be a much smaller in scale THINK for adolescents that is accompanied by an online platform to support the learning journey before and after the camp. The main aims of Planet Purpose will be to:

1. Help young people cultivate purpose and develop their sense of identity through the scaffolded social-support enabled by assigning youth a coach
2. Teach young people the design thinking tools that enable them to consider and test out possible solutions to personally meaningful societal problems
3. Help young people take action through entrepreneurship and leadership development
4. Support young people on their purpose journey indefinitely

It will do this through coaching and mentoring, storytelling workshops, design thinking lessons, positive interventions and entrepreneurship sessions, as having an entrepreneurial mindset is one of the defining characteristics of purpose (Damon, 2008). Appendix B provides an overview of Planet Purpose and its design principles, which form the word purpose as an acrostic: positive, unique, reflective, prototype, other-focused, storytelling, entrepreneurial. Ideally Planet Purpose would partner with an organization like THINK to leverage resources, but also so that THINK could offer its four thousand strong alumni, (many of whom are coaches and mentors) the opportunity to support the future generation of changemakers. The coaches will be called Purpose Designers and will have the opportunity to facilitate workshops at the camps, but also to act as coaches and mentors to the young people through the camp and online platform that is built to support the ongoing learning journey. Appendix D presents an outline for a six week coaching programme, which could be delivered through the digital platform or through face to face sessions.

Appendix C provides a daily agenda for a one week purpose camp. Woven throughout the fabric of the camp are mini interventions empirically proven to foster purpose and interventions that are also proven to enhance other positive psychology constructs that contribute



to wellbeing. For example, gratitude reflections top and tail the camp, intended to help the young people foster a more grateful mindset, especially towards people who have influenced their lives positively, as this has been proven to cultivate purpose (Bronk et. al., 2018). There are daily broaden and build activities designed to cultivate positive emotions (Frederickson, 2009). There is an intention in the design of the camp to focus on character strengths and to get familiar with the character strengths vernacular, so that strength spotting (Niemic, 2017) in time will become like second nature. Before the camp starts, the young people will complete the VIA character strengths survey and arrive at the camp knowing their signature strengths. One of the activities on the first day is a strength mining hike where the young people are tasked with getting to know each other by asking about each other's strengths whilst hiking, increasing self-knowledge and self-awareness which is key to cultivating purpose.

The values sort card exercise is an example of an activity that may be carried out in a one to one coaching session with a Purpose Designer at camp but could also be carried out as a stand alone exercise outside of camp and is presented in appendix E. It is based on a values affirmation intervention which according to research contributes to positive identity development (Cook et. al., 2012).

### **Conclusion**

The case for fostering purpose in adolescence is a strong one. Purpose is positively correlated with psychological and biological wellbeing and positive identity formation in adolescence, yet there is little explicit focus on cultivating it inside and especially outside of school. Purpose decreases in adulthood and only 13% of the global workforce report feeling engaged at work (Gallup, 2018). The good news is that purpose can be taught, there are many paths to purpose and adolescence is an optimal time to develop it. More research is needed on

interventions aimed at cultivating purpose in adolescence and its impact on wellbeing and future success (Koshy & Mariano, 2011). Looking to a future world where artificial intelligence is predicted to replace thousands of jobs, developing purpose and the skills that are associated with it, is one way to get ahead and make a difference (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2016). Purpose is a uniquely human asset and has the potential, if cultivated in youth, to generate adults who can differentiate themselves in a highly competitive workplace, ensuring they thrive rather than survive at work and in life. Young people, like adults need a way to answer their why (Sinek, 2009). Purpose can give them that answer providing their moral compass (Damon, 2008) through which to navigate an ever more complex and changing world.

## Appendix A

### Changemaking Days: A Two Day Workshop For Schools (Ages 14-18)

#### Explainer text for educators:

There is an opportunity for students to take part in a 2 day workshop focused on purpose, social action and becoming a changemaker. Everyone has the potential to become a changemaker and these workshops will help students get closer to identifying what they care about (their why) and how they can make a difference or change something for the better. This could be at school, in their local community or further afield.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead*

#### For students:

What’s your reason to get out of bed in the morning? (apart from the alarm) Do you know what you really care about? Is there something in your community, school, world that you would like to change for the better? Do you want to create something that helps others? Have you ever thought about becoming a social entrepreneur? If the answer to any of these question is yes, sign up for the Changemaking Days, where you will learn more about your purpose and how you can act on it.

Places are limited to 30 per year group.

*“Be the change you want to see in the world” - Mahatma Gandhi*

#### Aims:

- For young people to understand their inner world to be able to make a difference in the outer world
- To understand the importance of purpose in an often materialistic and unpredictable world
- To take action and see how that action affects their community and themselves

#### Success criteria:

- Young people identify their driving values and passions
- Young people start to explore and solidify their own purpose
- Each young person plays a role within a team and sees themselves as a leader of change
- Young people feel like they have been heard, their voice matters and they matter
- Young people in teams create a plan for a social action project
- For young people to find something meaningful in each day by reflective journaling

**Changemaking Days – Outline****Day 1:**

**Session 1 - Setting the scene** - Intro to Purpose and social action - why focus on purpose and social action

**Session 2 - Gratitude** - how being grateful creates pro-social behaviour  
“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.” — William Arthur Ward.

***Break***

**Session 3** - Stories of Purpose and Social Action, Getting clear on values

**Session 4** - Teen Ikigai and Vision Board - What’s my purpose

***Lunch***

**Session 5** - Everyone a leader, everyone a changemaker

**Day 2:**

**Session 1** - Intro to Social Action

**Session 2:** Sensing and research phase of Design Thinking

***Break***

**Session 3** - Dreaming/ Visioning: Thinking Big

***Lunch***

**Session 4** - Taking Action - Intro Top tips to making social change and Prep Pitch.

**Session 5** - Dragons Den for Good: Pitch Ideas (30 mins), Plan for Action

These changemaking days have detailed activities and facilitation notes and slides and will be piloted across London schools in the academic year 2018/2019.

## Appendix B

### Planet Purpose (Ages 15-18)

Planet Purpose is a conceptual year long purpose journey which starts with a one week immersive purpose camp. The Planet Purpose Camp is like an accelerator for purpose and will utilise design thinking methodologies. The camp will help the young people who attend to develop their purpose and will provide them with design thinking tools to turn their purpose into action. The camp is not just a one-off experience but a full year's programme of coaching and mentoring support through the network of purpose designers. Graduates of the Planet Purpose camp become part of an online community and platform of purpose crafters and purpose designers to continue on their purpose journey. This is Planet Purpose.

#### Planet Purpose Principles:

**Positive** – The platform and camp are positive in focus. We take an asset-based approach to everything we do.

**Unique** – No one person will have the same strengths and values and we celebrate diversity.

**Reflective** – The camp and platform is designed to provide ample opportunities for reflection.

**Prototype** – Planet purpose is a prototype and continually evolving through iterations and feedback as are the attendees.

**Other-focused** – Self-development is important, but so are others - other people matter when it comes to purpose.

**Storytelling** – Storytelling and stories form an important part of communicating purpose.

**Entrepreneurial** – Planet purpose aims to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset.

**Planet** – We care about and respect our planet. We utilise the natural beauty of the planet in our camps and we will treat the planet well whilst we are on camp. There may even be some planet-focused purposes that arise from the camp.

#### Pre camp:

- Call with a Purpose Designer (Coach) who will work with the students throughout the camp and beyond. The call will be a discovery session for the coach and coachee.
- **Pre camp tasks:**
- Complete the VIA character strengths survey for youth and send to coach. Make a note of top strengths.
- What's your favourite story? Maybe it's a book or a film. Bring it to camp.
- Complete questionnaire about what you love to do, what you'd like to try, what you're curious about.
- Do you have a role model? Who is it and why do they inspire you?

## Appendix C

### Planet Purpose Camp Schedule

#### Arrival PM - Evening welcome feast

Dinner and settle in  
Storytelling round the campfire led by Purpose Designers.

#### Day 1

Choice of morning movement activity – HIIT, Yoga, Mindful movement

*Breakfast*

#### Overview of the week

Explanation of Plant Purpose principles  
Intro to purpose  
Gratitude reflection – What and who made it possible for you to be here

#### A Strength Mining Hike - Getting to know each other

Find out who the role model is of 5 people in the group and why  
What do they love to do  
What are their signature strengths

*Lunch – somewhere in nature*

Coaching sessions/Reflections through journaling

Pre-dinner creative activity – music, crafts, zentangle, coding

*Dinner*

Post dinner activity – Talk from an inspirational social entrepreneur

#### Day 2

Choice of morning movement activity – HIIT, Yoga, Mindful movement

*Breakfast*

Broaden and build – What went well  
Introduction to values  
Values sort card exercise

Passion exercise  
UN Sustainable Dev goals – choosing interests

Harvesting values, passions and strengths – Emerging purpose walls

*Lunch*

Introduction to Design Thinking – Expert speaker  
Introduction to the Sensing/Empathise Phase of Design Thinking

Experiential activity – fact finding, scanning the landscape

Coaching check in/Reflective journaling

Pre-dinner activity – circle check in

*Dinner*

Outdoor cinema – purpose story

**Day 3**

Choice of morning movement activity – HIIT, Yoga, Mindful movement

*Breakfast*

Broaden and build – What went well and “Yes and..” exercise  
Sensing/Empathise Phase of Design Thinking continued

Experiential activity – The Good Spy (Observing)

*Lunch*

User and expert interviews  
Experiential activity – carry out user and expert interviews

Coaching /Reflective journaling – Purpose goal setting using WOOP

Pre-dinner activity – cooking

Dinner and nutrition talk

**Day 4**

Choice of morning movement activity – HIIT, Yoga, Mindful movement

*Breakfast*

Broaden and build – What went well exercise and strength spotting  
Sensing/Empathise Phase of Design Thinking continued

User journey  
Reframing  
Creative question

*Lunch – trip to place of beauty*

Group walk in nature – Dreaming/Thinking Big

*Dinner and reflections in nature*

Travel back

**Day 5**

Choice of morning movement activity – HIIT, Yoga, Mindful movement

*Breakfast*

Broaden and build – What went well  
Sensing/Empathise Phase of Design Thinking continued  
User journey

Defining Phase of Design Thinking  
Reframing  
Creative question

*Lunch*

Group trip to woods, lake, beach – Dreaming/Thinking Big (Ideate phase)

*Dinner and story telling*

Travel back

**Day 6**

Choice of morning movement activity – HIIT, Yoga, Mindful movement

*Breakfast*

Broaden and build – Storytelling workshop



Ideate Phase continued

Steal like an artist – the Good Thief

Design by nature – biomimicry

*Lunch*

Theatre in reverse – Reverse engineering purpose through story and theatre

*Dinner*

Performances

**Day 7**

Choice of morning movement activity – HIIT, Yoga, Mindful movement

*Breakfast*

Broaden and build – Strength spotting, Movement making

Prototype and play phase

Role play

Lego serious play

Storyboarding

User testing

*Lunch*

Pitch ideas and stories– with families/parents in audience

Circle of trust and support

Onwards to the next phase – Commitments to Action (Purpose Wall)

*Selected participants come back to camp next year or record videos to explain how the past 12 months have panned out. These will be played on the first day of the following camp.*

## Appendix D

### Six-week purpose coaching package

#### Week 1 – Discovery

In this session, the coach and coachee get to know each other a bit better. The aim of this session is to build rapport and to discover what's alive for the coachee. The wheel of life exercise is adapted for adolescents and helps to identify areas of life that feel full and not so full.

Challenge – Complete the youth VIA survey before next session.

#### Week 2 - Strengths

In this session the coach will review the VIA strengths report from the coachee. The session is designed to help the coachee understand his/her strengths better and to ponder how they might be strengthened further and what they might be useful for.

#### Week 3 - Values

In this session the coachee will identify values that are important to them and reflect on the reasons why. This session is the start of the coachee beginning to identify his/her purpose.

#### Week 4 – My Ikigai

The Japanese word ikigai means “a life worth living” (Sone et al, 2008). In this session the coach and coachee will use an ikigai reflection tool consisting of four overlapping circles. The circles are titled: Passion, Strengths, World Needs, Other.

#### Week 5 - Goal setting

Once the coachee has reflected on their ikiagi/ purpose they can start to commit to it by setting some goals with their coach.

#### Week 6 – Lift off

Time to celebrate progress that has been made over the last 6 weeks and a best self-exercise (Quinn, Dutton, Spreitzer, & Roberts, 2003).

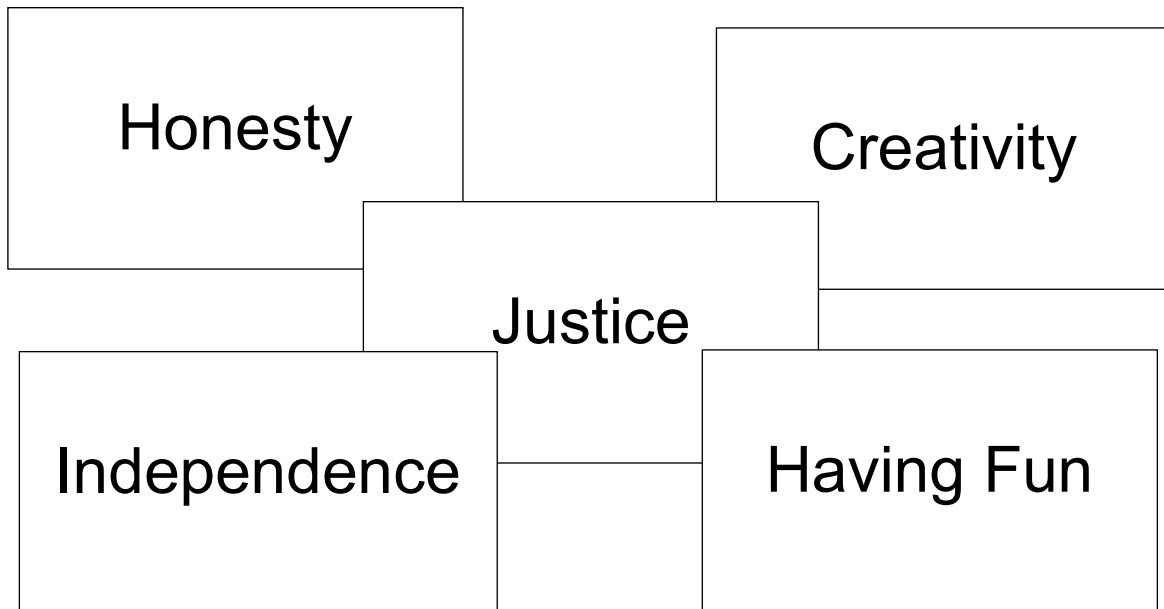
*Although there is a plan for the six-week coaching package, the coach will adapt and modify the coaching sessions based on the coachee and their needs.*

## Appendix E

### Values Sort Card Exercise (Ages 13-18)

This activity can be carried out with very little training, by a teacher, youth worker, parent or coach. The coach and coachee looks through a pack of cards that are spread out on a table or the floor. The coachee chooses a card that stands out for them in terms of something they value in life. The coach guides the coachee to reflect on why they chose the specific card. There are questions on the back of the cards, to help with the reflection, which is based on a values affirmation exercise. The card pack would come with a short guide for the coach on ideas for using the cards and a journal for the young people to use to reflect on their thoughts.

*Below is a mockup of what the cards could look like. They may help to spark the initial seeds of purpose.*



(Front)

**Honesty**

(Back)

- Think of a time that this value was important you and write it down
- List two reasons this value is important to you
- Rate the following on a scale of 1-5
  - this value has influenced my life
  - I care about this value
  - I live up to this value
  - If this value was taken away from me, I wouldn't be me

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