



A MANIFESTO FOR ALLOWING EVERY PERSON'S NATURAL-BORN POTENTIAL TO BLOSSOM

Including Supplementary Comment

"I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set her/him free"- Michelangelo

I believe every person was born to enjoy living their best life by developing their talents/gifts, following their passions to allow their natural potential to blossom.

THE WORLD

The realities of modern living are too often limiting people in their natural desire to find and become the person they were born to be.

In terms of Michelangelo's quote, the 'marble' represents peoples' 'imprisonment' within a 21st century way of life that requires people to live according to the expectations of an economic rationalist world. To put the dollar ahead of the heart. The 'angel' is the self who yearns for the freedom to grow his/her natural gifts, allowing their unique potential to blossom.

The only person who can be the 'sculptor' is the individual, authentic inner self.

The role of society at all levels is to recognize, value, and extol the natural advantages and benefits of this approach as being essential to building a global environment of true, sustained human progress and achievement.

Covid is dramatically changing the world. Now is the time for a paradigm shift in our approach to personal development and human progress.

PEOPLE

The Michelangelo quote, in today's terms, means freeing the true self within and allowing that self to feel accepted, publicly valued and greatly wanted in this new emerging "post-Covid" world.

Every person was born to be different. We each have our own naturally unique mix of gifts/talents and passionate interests. These give us all the basis of achieving a potential unachievable by anyone else.

Living the life we were born to enjoy entails becoming self-aware, valuing our unique individuality, enjoying using/developing our natural-born abilities in our personal, business and community lives.

The Law of Correspondence - one of the 12 Universal Laws – includes the statement "So within, so without." This advocates the need to bring our inner self and outer self together as the oneness. It also suggests that finding balance and happiness starts from the inside.

Freedom to develop one's abilities, talents, gifts and passionate interests would give each individual the following benefits:

- the enjoyment of learning with purpose,
- working with energy,
- managing stress and building resilience,
- to feel positively engaged,
- purposeful, passionate, creative/innovative,

- solving problems more easily,
- feeling closely connected, and
- enjoying high self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-belief.

WHAT PEOPLE WANT

People want to be free to focus their lives on searching, discovering and pursuing the meaning behind, and purpose of their unique mix of natural abilities and interests. A clear illustration is the sportsperson who recognizes and pursues the potential of their natural physical and mental abilities. Purpose and goals become clear. They become aware of their opportunities and the hurdles to be overcome in achieving their life dreams.

Would that we could all have the same clarity of our abilities, and potential achievements – and be encouraged to do so! It is commonly believed that once we know what we want to achieve, the ‘universe’ finds us a way. Or, ‘when the student is ready, the teacher appears’.

THE PROBLEM

1. Traditional thinking.

We have a 21st century problem of entrenched traditional thinking – based on outdated 20th century thinking. Even 19th century when the Industrial Revolution embraced the principle of the work ethic.

Today’s perception of human progress and success is set solidly in the ‘work ethic’ belief that:

- paid work is the centre of life
- economic development is the measure of success
- work is ‘hard work’ in which enjoyment is not valued
- we identify ourselves by the job we have and the work we do
- stress is a badge of honour
- we perceive ‘retirement’ from work as retirement from life
- doing what we enjoy is a ‘soft skill’ that has no place in the concept of work.

Covid is shaking the work ethic to the core, as people re-consider their aims in life and their ‘place in the sun’ in the emerging post-Covid society. Pre-Covid research had been indicating something like 70% of workers were not feeling engaged in their work. Now we are experiencing in many developed countries what is generally called the Great Resignation. These are strong indicators of workers wanting a greater sense of purpose in their lives.

An alternative philosophy is needed to better reflect the realities of this changing world.

Flying under the radar is the [OECD Better Life Index](#) . This Index is officially maintained by all OECD countries. It measures annual progress in terms of more than money. It captures – by countries – annual statistics on housing, jobs, income, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life education, safety and work-life balance.

While I am sure these statistics are useful in government decision-making, the economic factor continues to be the prime indicator used to determine the state of human progress and wellbeing. Yet there is plenty of evidence that money is not *of itself* the driver of wellbeing and this is being supported by the Covid-driven reactions of workers who realize now that life purpose is driven by many factors, not only money.

I suggest the Better Life Index information complements the aims of this Manifesto.

2. Our Dependence on Artificial Living

We have turned the role of nature from being the centre of the world's health and wellbeing to becoming a slave to an economic hunger that devours all in its path.

For some 10 000 years (the Agrarian era) humans based their lives and growth around the use and development of their natural-born talents and gifts. Our connection and relationship to nature was the core of our way of living.

Artificiality may be bringing people perceived material success but it is still the natural things in life on which our long-term emotional strength, personal development and wellbeing depend.

For almost 50 years I have been an active member (now Life Member) of my professional association Parks and Leisure Australia (previously the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation), including a term as National President. This has taught me how much people love and greatly need to enjoy being outdoors in nature. "Nature has kept me sane" became a popular catchcry during the months of Covid lockdown. It's time to remember we are partners with nature, not its master.

3. The Future of Work



Even more unclear is the place of work in peoples' lives. Power is increasingly in the hands of the worker as employees make their wishes known in key issues such as work flexibility wants, professional development and mental health needs. Hierarchical organization charts are rapidly re-shaping, even flattening. All of this adds credence to recognizing the need to free the person within and allow their essential natural-born gifts to flow.

The diagram outlines what I see as the only certainty about the future, not just of work but of the deeper desire for overall human progress:

- People will always want "conduits", i.e. structures within which to bring together people needed to achieve a purpose
- Connections with positive like-minded people to share and achieve outcomes of common interest
- Effectively manage this era of increasingly rapid change, including the growth of Artificial Intelligence
- The aim being to advance human progress in a way that improves people's wellbeing.

THE SOLUTION

I believe this Manifesto depends on replacing the 'work ethic' with what I call a 'development ethic'. This would reflect the desire to:

- maximize corporate and global development based on the use and development of peoples' natural abilities (in all areas of life, not just at work), and
- greater harmony between personal development/goals and corporate development/goals.

What this can mean for the individual

The basics of this is for each person to become self-aware – aware of one’s unique individuality and enjoy using/developing their natural-born gifts and passions in all aspects of their personal, business and community lives. People want to feel accepted, publicly valued and wanted for their natural abilities.

I re-emphasize this would generate all the personal benefits on which our lives thrive, such as

- the enjoyment of learning with purpose,
- working with energy,
- managing stress and building resilience,
- feeling positively engaged,
- purposeful, passionate, creative/innovative,
- solving problems more easily,
- feeling closely connected, and
- enjoying high self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-belief.

What this can mean for business

Businesses, particularly senior managers, would quickly recognize the potential of these sorts of benefits in the workplace:

- productivity would boom,
- mental health issues reduced,
- stress being limited to the ‘positive stress’ aspect of good business,
- conflicts reduced and, conversely a higher quality of output of teamwork,
- Greater blending of personal and corporate goals would improve staff stability, and
- Improved attraction of the right staff to suit the right jobs.

The effect would spread ‘virus-like’ throughout the business world, through to governments and other influencers of public policy and opinion.

The Global Dream

21st century communication technology has been drawing the people, communities, businesses and countries of the world closer together. Daily issues of concern, ideas for improvement and views on what works or doesn’t work, travel at speed throughout today’s fast-paced world.

Covid has dramatically accelerated this process, with people all over the world realizing “we are all in this together”. Not just in relation to Covid but the longer-term realization that we are all human beings with natural personal and community needs and wants.

IMPORTANTLY this is causing people everywhere to stop and reflect on what’s important in the life of humanity, irrespective of culture, colour, or creed.

What ‘human nature’ means in our lives is ripe for attention today like never before. Now is the time to turn our minds to what naturally drives our thinking, our lives and our desires for true progress.

WHO IS PETER NICHOLLS?

For nearly 50 years I have been fighting the work ethic principle that dignifies work and demeans enjoyment.

For the first half of those years I worked professionally in the development of leisure and recreation opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. I was working with people who were truly

enjoying doing what they freely loved. Those years taught me much about the benefits of enjoyment to personal health and wellbeing, personal development, and the drive to improve our situation, stress management, and work life harmony. Dealings with influential authorities were, however, frustratingly difficult. Work was king and recreation simply 'fluffy stuff' for which funding and other public support was seen as being of low importance.

The pressures and stresses of 21st century lifestyle have made dramatic inroads to this thinking, both in terms of worker perceptions of the work ethic principle and the search for means of managing prolonged, excessive negative stress. People are desperately looking for ways of enjoying life more.

From all of this has evolved a core message of appeal to clients in my encore career as a Life Enjoyment Mentor:

'When you lose yourself in any interest that you enjoy, you find yourself'.

The real self comes to the fore, energized, enthusiastic and with a positive attitude. Such interests trigger all our natural-born talents/gifts and passions.

Since 2003 I have taken and broadened my experience, knowledge, insight, and perspective. I now deal with the whole of the community, including the corporate sector, who want to improve the enjoyment quality of their lives.

The impact of basing one's life around what we enjoy can go so deep as to help answer life's fundamental question, "Why are we here?")

Purpose Found Me – Three Times (so far)

Writing this Manifesto is founded on much more than simply accumulating many years of relevant experience.

At 30 I was doing mundane desk work, earning money to pay the bills. I began questioning if there was more to my life. Four years later purpose found me at a (then seemingly futuristic) one day seminar suggesting leisure may be the social issue of the next decade. I went on to gain (with Distinction) the required Graduate Diploma to become a professional Recreation Planner.

Purpose found me again in 2003 after I had retired with no plans for my future. I was approached to do a corporate workshop on burnout, based on my book "Enjoy Being You" (2001). Its immediate success launched me into becoming a Life Enjoyment Mentor.

Like so many of us, Covid shut down my business in 2020. Only to see it revived in a new format under a model of Seven Keys to Enjoying Being Your True Self.

I believe I was meant to write this Manifesto. Purpose has found me again – perhaps it's the reason I am here.

MY EXPERTISE

"I would recommend your course to anyone, no matter what problems in life they face. It was great to just realise that Life is a true gift." C. Harris, Adelaide Australia

"Peter is very skilled at being able to identify connections between what I enjoyed then and what I am good at now...and why". G. Edwards, Adelaide Australia

My own natural skills include the ability to listen to hear what is not being said, to listen without judgement, being independent of the issues facing the client and to not place my own values on anything the client says.

My program, called simply “Enjoy Being You”, offers a structure that takes the client back to the basics of what has always given them enjoyment throughout their life to date. From this we together bring to light the natural abilities used and developed through those interests. This gives clients a positive foundation on which to build the sort of future they would enjoy living – including life after they leave work.



Everything I work through with a client is covered in the Seven Keys to Enjoying Being Your True Self:

Any of the seven can trigger the other six keys and the outcome of them all is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

MY CORE PRINCIPLES

1. When you lose yourself in any interest you enjoy, you find yourself. The real you comes alive with positive enthusiasm, an enquiring mind, creative, and with a sense of purpose.
2. Only the individual person can decide what he or she enjoys...it may well be their most basic sense of personal freedom to enjoy anything they (responsibly) wish.
3. Enjoyment is the creative expression of one’s natural talents, gifts and passions for the intrinsic satisfaction of the experience – in personal life or at work.
4. Every person in the world has a unique mix of natural abilities and a potential only they can achieve.
5. Enjoyment generates the energy that drives one’s personal development and growth throughout their life from birth to death.
6. A tree doesn’t stop growing at any pre-determined age, nor do we humans.
7. ‘Age’ is a fact of life; ‘old’ is a perception, usually of other people and usually negative.
8. We measure age in years, we measure growth in depth – depth of understanding self and others, and depth of perspective, insight, and wisdom.

Peter Nicholls

Adelaide Australia

Life Enjoyment Mentor “It’s time to enjoy, back and trust the true self”

August 2022

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS

Since this Manifesto was first published in August 2022, extensive comment has been made by the author and by various readers around the world. Some salient additional thoughts are worth mentioning here.

You’ve probably said, at some time in your life, “If only I knew when I started out in life what I know now, I could have made much better decisions”. The dramatic changes resulting from Covid are now making this possible. We are now, in effect, starting all over again. This time with the benefit of what life to date has taught us, including:

- A deeper understanding of ourselves, our developed strengths, talents, what we are good at, what has worked for us and what hasn’t worked for us
- Our knowledge and experience has given us new and greater assets – insight, perspective and wisdom...answering more of life’s “why?” questions

The lockdown period was in many ways the pause we had to have. Far from wanting to go back to the way things were, we are now each free to start a new approach to life, based on what we have learned and enjoyed in our adult lives.

We can each unravel and dismiss our past disappointments and regrets. We can identify and re-pack our strengths to take forward as the basis for our future. And to enjoy doing so for the rest of our lives, be it for pay or for passion (or both).

In applying my proposed Development Ethic, for many of us it is likely to be the first time in our lives that we can gain clarity. Not just of our strengths and best talents but how and where we want to apply them. It may well be the first time in our lives we have come to understand and appreciate why we are here.

Three tips to help you move forward into your new life adventure:

- “Tweak” the skills you have always enjoyed using in your life to date, and apply them to a desired new purpose (a passion?) of your choice.
- Your adolescent years (aged around 11 -16) can tell you a lot about the real you and the skills you would enjoy taking forward into a new life phase.
- Parents: Your teenager needs to feel that you love him/her as a blossoming human being, whose talents and uniqueness need constant nurturing, support and encouragement and whose dreams are sufficiently intriguing to be worth exploring.

The Work Ethic has impacted on much more than just our work

The work ethic belief that there are three phases of life – preparing for work, our working life and life after work has been a significant factor on almost every facet of our lives. Significant impacts include the following:

- Ageing and ageism – centred around the concept of not being employable once we reach the “peak of the bell-curve lifecycle”
- Adolescent years of dreaming about what to do with their lives
- Parental advice on what children should do with their lives
- The traditional belief we should conform to public perceptions of social norms and fit in with the rest of society.

There are people who already live the life they were born to enjoy, who know the sort of life they want to lead and are encouraged by their parents to do so and who can decide for themselves if and when they want to stop working (or reduce their hours, or decide which aspects of the business they love and relatively stress-free. These people include:

- self-employed business owners
- professionals in most professions – law, medicine, clergy, etc
- others who grew up knowing what they wanted to do with their lives and were encouraged to do so
- elite sports people (at least while they continue competing at an elite level).

My point of difference – I come from the “other side” (leisure side) of the Work Ethic wall that divides work and leisure. I was helping people to more greatly enjoy their opportunities to participate in their favourite recreation or sport.

WHY I wrote this Manifesto:

Promote the benefits of removing traditional barriers to people’s freedom to enjoy developing their born potential for life – at work and in personal life:

- to individuals and employers
- to teachers and the education system generally about creative education rather than conforming to the traditional education for the work ethic
- to encourage parents to recognize the benefits of a creative education for their children (stop trying to direct them to traditional work careers)
- demonstrate the life growth and work/corporate benefits of enjoyment in both their work and personal life
- eventual reduction of global problems of money being the central controlling factor in measuring human progress, including the impact the spending of money has on material needs, energy resources, pollution of land, sea and air, etc
- ageism and the disappearance of the “bell curve” concept of the human lifecycle.

Peter Nicholls
Life Enjoyment Mentor
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