

题目： There's more to life than being happy

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I used to think the whole purpose of life was pursuing happiness. Everyone said the path to happiness was success, so I searched for that ideal job, that perfect boyfriend, that beautiful apartment. But instead of ever feeling fulfilled, I felt anxious and adrift. And I wasn't alone; my friends -- they struggled with this, too.

我曾经认为 人生的意义便是追寻快乐。世人普遍认为 成功是通往幸福的道路， 因此我寻找理想的工作， 完美的伴侣还有舒适的住处。可我非但没有感到充实， 反而感到焦虑迷茫。这种情况不止发生在我身上， 我身边的朋友也一样。

Eventually, I decided to go to graduate school for positive psychology to learn what truly makes people happy. But what I discovered there changed my life. The data showed that chasing happiness can make people unhappy. And what really struck me was this: the suicide rate has been rising around the world, and it recently reached a 30-year high in America. Even though life is getting objectively better by nearly every conceivable standard, more people feel hopeless, depressed and alone. There's an emptiness gnawing away at people, and you don't have to be clinically depressed to feel it. Sooner or later, I think we all wonder: Is this all there is? And according to the research, what predicts this despair is not a lack of happiness. It's a lack of something else, a lack of having meaning in life.

最终我决定去研修“积极心理学”， 去研究什么才能让人们 感到真正幸福。 我的成果改变了我的人生。 数据显示一味寻求快乐 反而得不到快乐。 同时让我震惊的是： 全球的自杀率都在上升， 最近美国的自杀率达到了 30年来的最高峰。 但事实上人们的生活水平 在你能想到的领域上都有所提升， 越来越多的人感到绝望， 抑郁以及孤独。 即使你不是抑郁症患者， 也能感受到 空虚感正侵蚀着我们的内心。 迟早， 我们都会疑惑： 人生就是如此了吗？ 研究显示造成这种绝望感的 并不是生活缺乏快乐。 而是因为生命缺少了 人生的意义。

pursue

v. 追寻

searched for

寻找

adrift

adj. 漫无目的  
的

positive

psychology

积极心理学

conceivable

adj. 可想象的

emptiness

n. 空虚

clinically

adv. 临床地

But that raised some questions for me. Is there more to life than being happy? And what's the difference between being happy and having meaning in life? Many **psychologists** define happiness as **a state of** comfort and ease, feeling good in the moment. Meaning, though, is deeper. The **renowned** psychologist Martin Seligman says meaning comes from **belonging** to and serving something beyond yourself and from developing the best within you. Our culture is **obsessed with** happiness, but I came to see that seeking meaning is the more fulfilling path. And the studies show that people who have meaning in life, they're more **resilient**, they do better in school and at work, and they even live longer.

因此我思索 人生除了快乐还有什么 更重要的事情？ 以及快乐的人生与 有意义的人生有什么不同？ 很多心理学家把快乐定义为 一种安心舒适的状态， 在当下感到开心。 意义则有更深的含义。 著名的心理学家马丁·赛里格曼认为 意义来源于归属和献身 高于自我的事物 还有塑造最好的自己。 我们的文化醉心于寻求快乐， 但我意识到寻求意义更 能让你有满足感。 研究显示有意义的人生 让人更变得更坚毅， 在学业和事业上更成功， 寿命也更长。

So this all made me wonder: How can we each live more **meaningfully**? To find out, I spent five years interviewing hundreds of people and reading through thousands of pages of psychology, **neuroscience** and philosophy. Bringing it all together, I found that there are what I call four pillars of a meaningful life. And we can each create lives of meaning by building some or all of these pillars in our lives.

这一切都让我思考：如何才能让人生更有意义？ 为了找出答案，我在五年间采访了几百余人 并翻阅了浩如烟海的心理学， 神经系统和哲学文献。 经过所有这些努力， 我发现构成有意义的人生 需要四大支柱。 只要我们能构建全部 或部分支柱。 我们所有人都能拥有有意义的人生。

psychologist

n.心理学家

a state of

以...状态

renowned

adj.闻名的

belonging

n.归属感

obsessed with

痴迷于

resilient

adj.有适应力的

meaningfully

adv.有意义地

neuroscience

n.神经系统科学

The first **pillar** is belonging. Belonging comes from being in relationships where you're valued for who you are **intrinsically** and where you value others as well. But some groups and relationships deliver a cheap form of belonging; you're valued for what you believe, for who you hate, not for who you are. True belonging springs from love. It lives in moments among **individuals**, and it's a choice -- you can choose to **cultivate** belonging with others.

第一大支柱便是：归属感。归属感来源于人际关系中 你的内在价值在哪里，以及同时你对别人的价值认可。但某些组织和人际关系 给予廉价的归属感；你的价值在于你的信仰，在于你讨厌谁，而不是你是谁。真正的归属感来源于爱。它时时刻刻都萦绕在你身边，这是个选择——你可以选择 跟谁培养归属感。

Here's an example. Each morning, my friend Jonathan buys a newspaper from the same street vendor in New York. They don't just conduct a **transaction**, though. They take a moment to slow down, talk, and treat each other like humans. But one time, Jonathan didn't have the right change, and the vendor said, "Don't worry about it." But Jonathan insisted on paying, so he went to the store and bought something he didn't need to make change. But when he gave the money to the vendor, the vendor drew back. He was hurt. He was trying to do something kind, but Jonathan had **rejected** him. I think we all reject people in small ways like this without realizing it. I do.

举一个例子。我的朋友乔纳森每天都在 纽约同一家 小店里买报纸。他和店主不止是商业交易。他们会花点时间聊聊天，很亲切地对待对方。有一次乔纳森没有零钱，店主就说，“没事，不用付了”但乔纳森坚持付钱，为了换零钱他去店里买了些 他不用的东西。当他把钱给店主的时候，店主拒绝了。他心里很受伤。他本想慷慨对人，但乔纳森拒绝了他的好意。我想我们都会无意中伤害他人。我也如此。

**pillar**

n.柱子，支柱

**intrinsically**

adv.本质上

**individuals**

n.个人

**cultivate**

v.培养

**transaction**

n.交易

**reject**

v.拒绝

I'll walk by someone I know and barely acknowledge them. I'll check my phone when someone's talking to me. These acts devalue others. They make them feel invisible and unworthy. But when you lead with love, you create a bond that lifts each of you up.

我有时撞见我认识的人却没打招呼。有时候我在别人和我说话时看手机。这种做法贬低了他人。让他们觉得自己没有存在感和价值。但当你用爱联系他人，你建立的纽带就激励了你们双方。

invisible

adj. 看不见的

For many people, belonging is the most essential source of meaning, those bonds to family and friends. For others, the key to meaning is the second pillar: purpose. Now, finding your purpose is not the same thing as finding that job that makes you happy. Purpose is less about what you want than about what you give. A hospital custodian told me her purpose is healing sick people. Many parents tell me, "My purpose is raising my children." The key to purpose is using your strengths to serve others. Of course, for many of us, that happens through work. That's how we contribute and feel needed. But that also means that issues like disengagement at work, unemployment, low labor force participation -- these aren't just economic problems, they're existential ones, too. Without something worthwhile to do, people flounder. Of course, you don't have to find purpose at work, but purpose gives you something to live for, some "why" that drives you forward.

essential

adj. 至关重要的

participation

n. 参加

economic

adj. 经济的

对很多人来说，归属感是人生意义的 最重要来源，那些与家人和朋友的纽带。而对其他人而言，意义的关键来源的第二大支柱是：人生目的。找到人生目的和找到让你快乐的工作不一样。人生目的并不在于你所得而在于你所给。一位医院的管理员说他的人生目的就是治愈病患。很多家长会说人生目的是“养育自己的孩子”。人生目的意味着尽自己的能力去帮助他人。当然对很多人来说，我们通过工作来实现人生目的。这是我们的贡献，也是感到被需要的方式。但这也同时说明工作中的疏离问题，失业，低劳动参与率——不仅是经济问题也是关乎生死存亡的问题。没有值得做的事情，人们就会陷入困境。当然不一定非得做份满足人生目的的工作，但目的给了你活着的意义，这些“为什么”能让你坚持走下去。

The third pillar of meaning is also about stepping beyond yourself, but in a completely different way: **transcendence**.

Transcendent states are those rare moments when you're lifted above the hustle and **bustle** of daily life, your sense of self fades away, and you feel connected to a higher reality. For one person I talked to, transcendence came from seeing art. For another person, it was at church. For me, I'm a writer, and it happens through writing. Sometimes I get so in the zone that I lose all sense of time and place. These transcendent experiences can change you. One study had students look up at 200-foot-tall **eucalyptus** trees for one minute. But afterwards they felt less self-centered, and they even behaved more generously when given the chance to help someone.

第三大支柱同样跟超越自我有关。但方式完全不一样那就是超验。超验的状态非常罕有，那一刻你忘却了日常中的繁琐喧嚣，进入忘我的状态，你感到自己与更高的真实世界相连。我聊过的某个人说他欣赏艺术时便会进入超验状态。另一个说进入教堂时会如此。对我来说，作为作家，这会发生在我写作时。有时候我太投入了，以致忘记时间流逝，忘记身处何处。这些超验的体验能真的改变你。有个让学生们仰视200英尺（约61米）的桉树一分钟的实验。在这之后，他们会感到更少的自我，有机会帮助他人时会变得更慷慨。

Belonging, purpose, transcendence. Now, the fourth pillar of meaning, I've found, tends to surprise people. The fourth pillar is **storytelling**, the story you tell yourself about yourself.

Creating a **narrative** from the events of your life brings clarity. It helps you understand how you became you. But we don't always realize that we're the authors of our stories and can change the way we're telling them. Your life isn't just a list of events. You can edit, interpret and resell your story, even as you're **constrained** by the facts.

归属感，人生目的，超验。第四个构成意义的支柱，让人意想不到。那就是讲故事。向自己讲述自己的故事。从生活事件中提炼出故事让你更加清晰。帮助你理解你如何成为你自己。人们总是忽视我们是故事的作者，可以改变讲故事的方式。人生不只是一连串事件。虽然发生的事情不可改变，但你可以编辑、解释和复述你的故事。

**transcendence**

n.超越

**bustle**

n.喧闹

**eucalyptus**

n.桉树

**storytelling**

n.讲故事

**narrative**

n.描述

**constrain**

v.限制，约束



I met a young man named Emeka, who'd been **paralyzed** playing football. After his injury, Emeka told himself, "My life was great playing football, but now look at me." People who tell stories like this -- "My life was good. Now it's bad." -- tend to be more anxious and depressed. And that was Emeka for a while. But with time, he started to weave a different story. His new story was, "Before my injury, my life was **purposeless**. I partied a lot and was a pretty selfish guy. But my injury made me realize I could be a better man." That edit to his story changed Emeka's life. After telling the new story to himself, Emeka started mentoring kids, and he discovered what his purpose was: serving others. The psychologist Dan McAdams calls this a "**redemptive** story," where the bad is **redeemed** by the good. People leading meaningful lives, he's found, tend to tell stories about their lives defined by redemption, growth and love.

我曾遇到一个叫艾马卡的年轻人 他因打橄榄球而受伤瘫痪了。他受伤后不断告诉自己，“我曾经是打橄榄球的好手，可你看看我现在的样子。”人们经常用这样的基调讲故事——“我生活曾经美满，现在很糟糕。”这样只会让人更焦躁和抑郁。艾马卡过去有一阵就这样子。但一段时间后，他开始讲述不一样的故事。他的新故事是：“我受伤前，人生并没有什么目的。我整日游乐，十分自私。受伤后我意识到我可以变成更好的自己。”这样的讲述改变了他的生活。在重述了自己的故事后，他开始指导孩子们，并且还发现了自己的人生目的是：帮助他人。心理学家丹·麦克亚当把这种行为叫做“救赎性故事”，用好的来救赎不好的。他发现，过着有意义人生的人说的故事通常都是由救赎、成长、爱来定义的。

But what makes people change their stories? Some people get help from a therapist, but you can do it on your own, too, just by reflecting on your life thoughtfully, how your defining experiences shaped you, what you lost, what you gained. That's what Emeka did. You won't change your story overnight; it could take years and be painful.

是什么让人们改变了他们的故事？有些人从心理师那得到了帮助，但你也可以完全依靠自己。只需仔细地反思你的生活，那些塑造你的经历，你所失去和你所得到的东西。艾马卡就是这么做的。你不可能一夜之间改变自己的故事。这可能要经历多年的痛苦挣扎。

**paralyzed**  
adj. 瘫痪的

**purposeless**  
adj. 无目的的

**redemptive**  
adj. 救赎的

**redeem**  
v. 补救，弥补

After all, we've all suffered, and we all struggle. But embracing those painful memories can lead to new insights and wisdom, to finding that good that sustains you.

毕竟，我们都经历过苦难，都挣扎过。但接纳这些痛苦的回忆会让我们有新的见解和智慧，去找到支撑你的好东西。

Belonging, purpose, transcendence, storytelling: those are the four pillars of meaning. When I was younger, I was lucky enough to be surrounded by all of the pillars. My parents ran a Sufi meetinghouse from our home in Montreal. Sufism is a spiritual practice associated with the whirling dervishes and the poet Rumi. Twice a week, Sufis would come to our home to meditate, drink Persian tea, and share stories. Their practice also involved serving all of creation through small acts of love, which meant being kind even when people wronged you. But it gave them a purpose: to rein in the ego.

归属感，人生目的，超验，讲故事：这就是构成有意义人生的四大支柱。当我还小时，我很幸运地被所有的四大支柱围绕。我父母在蒙特利尔的家开了个苏非派礼拜堂。苏非主义是一种与诗人鲁米和苦行有关的心灵修炼。苏菲教徒们每周两次来到我家冥想，喝波斯茶，分享故事。他们的修行还包括做微小的善事来帮助世间万物，这意味着即使别人误解你，你也要善良对人。这给了他们人生目的：约束自我。

Eventually, I left home for college and without the daily grounding of Sufism in my life, I felt unmoored. And I started searching for those things that make life worth living. That's what set me on this journey. Looking back, I now realize that the Sufi house had a real culture of meaning. The pillars were part of the architecture, and the presence of the pillars helped us all live more deeply.

最后，我离家去读大学，并且日常生活中没有了苏非主义，我感到生活没了重心。于是我开始寻找如何过有意义的人生。这样我才开始了这段人生旅途。回首过去，我意识到苏非礼拜堂充盈着真的文化意义。这些支柱是结构的一部分，这些支柱的存在帮助我们更深入生活。

insights

n. 见解

meetinghouse

n. 教会

unmoor

v. 起锚

architecture

n. 建筑设计

Of course, the same principle applies in other strong communities as well -- good ones and bad ones. Gangs, cults: these are cultures of meaning that use the pillars and give people something to live and die for. But that's exactly why we as a society must offer better **alternatives**. We need to build these pillars within our families and our institutions to help people become their best selves. But living a meaningful life takes work. It's an ongoing process. As each day goes by, we're constantly creating our lives, adding to our story. And sometimes we can get off track.

**alternative**  
adj. 可供选择的

当然这样的法则也适用于 其他强大的组织—— 好的或坏的组织。黑帮，邪教：它们同样提供了文化上的意义支柱，给了人们为之生，为之死的东西。因此社会更应该 给予更好的替代。我们应该在我们的家庭和机构里 建设这些有意义的支柱，来让人们成为最好的自己。但要过有意义的人生需要努力。这是一个连续不断的过程。每天我们都在书写自己的人生，加入新的故事。有时我们会偏离正轨。

Whenever that happens to me, I remember a powerful experience I had with my father. Several months after I graduated from college, my dad had a massive heart attack that should have killed him. He survived, and when I asked him what was going through his mind as he faced death, he said all he could think about was needing to live so he could be there for my brother and me, and this gave him the will to fight for life. When he went under **anesthesia** for emergency surgery, instead of counting backwards from 10, he repeated our names like a **mantra**. He wanted our names to be the last words he spoke on earth if he died.

**anesthesia**  
n. 麻醉

**mantra**  
n. 咒语

每当那发生在我身上时，我会回想我与父亲间的一个重要谈话。就在我大学毕业几个月后，我的父亲心脏病发作，这差点让他离世。但他活下来了，之后我问他面临死亡时他在想什么，他说他满脑子想的都是活下去，这样才能陪在我哥哥和我身边，这给了他努力活下去的信念。当他被麻醉进行紧急手术的时候，他不是倒念10，而是重复我和哥哥的名字当做祷语。如果他死了，他希望我们的名字是他最后的话语。



My dad is a **carpenter** and a Sufi. It's a **humble** life, but a good life. Lying there facing death, he had a reason to live: love. His sense of belonging within his family, his purpose as a dad, his transcendent **meditation**, repeating our names -- these, he says, are the reasons why he survived. That's the story he tells himself.

我父亲是一个木匠和苏非教徒。过着谦卑的生活，但也是一个美好的生活。当面对死亡时，他有活下去的理由：爱。他对家里的归属感，他作为父亲的人生目的，他念我们的名字时的超验冥想——他说这就是他活下来的原因。他就是这样讲述自己故事的。

That's the power of meaning. Happiness comes and goes. But when life is really good and when things are really bad, having meaning gives you something to hold on to.

这就是人生意义的力量。快乐来来去去。当生活一切顺利，或者遭遇不幸时，有意义会让你坚持下去

**carpenter**

n.木匠

**humble**

adj.谦卑的

**meditation**

n.冥想