

THE BIG IDEAS

Authentic Leadership

Is where it's at.

3 Other Potentials

Burnouts, Lotus Eaters, Victims.

Your Authentic Work

And how to find it.

Meditation

The key is regular practice.

Ambition

The shadow side of calling.

Your Holy Longing

How's yours?

Values + Gifts + Calling

= Your inner guidance system.

Don't Want, Choose

Feel the difference.

Become a Blessing

To yourself and the world.

*"High Performance + High
Fulfillment = Creating
Desired Results with
Meaning, Joy, and Integrity."*

~ Eric Klein



You Are the Leader You've Been Waiting For

Enjoying High Performance & High Fulfillment at Work

BY ERIC KLEIN · WISDOM HEART PRESS © 2006 · 164 PAGES

"In organizations around the world, I have met people who are waiting for a leader to come and turn on the lights — to fix things for them, inspire them, make work more meaningful and fulfilling. Great leaders, teachers, mentors, or role models can point the way but they cannot transform your work for you. You are the leader you've been waiting for. In the end it is your own choices and actions that will improve your work life. You have the capacity to lead yourself to a work life of purpose and meaning. You do this by awakening the authentic leader inside you."

~ Eric Klein from *You Are the Leader You've Been Waiting For*

You are the leader you've been waiting for.

And, this great little book by [Eric Klein](#) provides some valuable insights on how to step into that role and rock it.

If you'd like to enjoy high performance and high fulfillment at work, I think you'll dig it.

For now, let's have some fun taking a quick peek at a few of my favorite Big Ideas.

We'll start by defining authentic leadership:

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

"Authentic leadership is the pursuit of excellence (high performance) and meaning, joy and integrity (high fulfillment). It is a path of action and reflection that brings these two factors — performance and fulfillment — together for your benefit and the benefit of the people you work with and serve. In your most purposeful and meaningful work experiences, performance and fulfillment unite:

High Performance + High Fulfillment =

Creating Desired Results with Meaning, Joy, and Integrity"

Love it.

So, there are two ingredients to authentic leadership: high performance + high fulfillment.

→ High performance comes via pursuing excellence in what we do.

→ High fulfillment comes as we create with meaning, joy and integrity.

Got it.

Now, let's take a quick look at what life is like when we're at varying levels of performance and fulfillment!

BURNOUTS, LOTUS EATERS, VICTIMS & AUTHENTIC LEADERS

"This release from the pull of hyper-activity on the one side and entertaining lethargy on the

" Inside everyone is a great shout of joy waiting to be born."

~ David Whyte

other, brings you to a choice point at which two new paths open up. No longer dancing to the accelerated tempo of the burnout and no longer enticed by the vision of the Lotus Eater, you are turned back to yourself. You become aware again of what matters most to you. You either embrace this awareness and let it guide you on the uncharted path of authentic leadership, or you follow the last temptation of the monkey mind, and give up, opting for despair and victimhood."

It's time for a handy-dandy little chart:

		FULFILLMENT	
		LOW	HIGH
PERFORMANCE	HIGH	BURNOUT	AUTHENTIC LEADER
	LOW	VICTIM	LOTUS EATER

So, we can be high performance but low fulfillment and we'll BURNOUT. We can have low performance and low fulfillment and we'll be a VICTIM. Put low performance and high fulfillment together and we have a LOTUS EATER. Put high performance and high fulfillment together and (*queue the band*) we have an AUTHENTIC LEADER.

I love it. Reminds me of [Tal Ben-Shahar](#)'s model in his great book [Happier](#) (see Notes). Here's how he puts it: *"The rat racer's illusion is that reaching some future destination will bring him lasting happiness; he does not recognize the significance of the journey. The hedonist's illusion is that only the journey is important. The nihilist, having given up on both the destination and the journey, is disillusioned with life. The rat racer becomes a slave to the future; the hedonist, a slave to the moment; the nihilist, a slave to the past.*

" I have learned over the years that the most creative and trustworthy actions come from meditative awareness."

~ Eric Klein

Attaining lasting happiness requires that we enjoy the journey on our way toward a destination we deem valuable. Happiness is not about making it to the peak of the mountain nor is it about climbing aimlessly around the mountain; happiness is the experience of climbing toward the peak."

Where are YOU in those quadrants and how can you move toward authentic leadership/happiness?

FINDING YOUR AUTHENTIC WORK

"There is something deep within you that knows what you are here to do and the direction you must move in to find your authentic work. To follow this path is to be an authentic leader. It is your birthright. You were born with unique gifts and with a sense of excitement about contributing to the world. Although somewhere along the way you may have forgotten this, you can lead yourself back to a path that will bring more passion, purpose, and meaning to your work. This can require a change of focus and a willingness to explore aspects of yourself that you may have ignored."

That's beautiful.

As we discuss all the time, you have a unique set of gifts and experiences that you're here to give to the world.

All the great teachers remind us of this truth.

[Rumi](#) puts it this way: *"There is one thing in this world you must never forget to do. Human beings come into this world to do particular work. That work is their purpose, and each is*

"The trajectory of authentic leadership is towards richer more powerful ways of being in the world to create and serve with integrity and joy."

~ Eric Klein

specific to the person. If you forget everything else and not this, there's nothing to worry about. If you remember everything else and forget your true work, then you will have done nothing with your life."

[Paulo Coelho](#) (see Notes) puts it this way: "I learned the most important lesson of my life: that the extraordinary is not the birthright of a chosen and privileged few, but of all people, even the humblest. That is my one certainty: we are all the manifestation of the divinity of God."

Here's how [Deepak](#) puts it in [The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success](#) (see Notes): "Everyone has a purpose in life... a unique gift or special talent to give to others. And when we blend this unique talent with service to others, we experience the ecstasy and exultation of our own spirit, which is the ultimate goal of goals."

Positive psychologists echo this wisdom as well—telling us that we each have "signature strengths" and that we discover happiness and meaning when we use them often in service to others.

In [Flourish](#) (see Notes), [Martin Seligman](#) puts it this way: "In authentic happiness theory, the strengths and virtues—kindness, social intelligence, humor, courage, integrity, and the like (there are twenty-four of them)—are the supports for engagement. You go into flow when your highest strengths are deployed to meet the highest challenges that come your way. In well-being theory, these twenty-four strengths underpin all five elements, not just engagement: deploying your highest strengths leads to more positive emotion, to more meaning, to more accomplishment, and to better relationships."

If you haven't joined the 1 million + peeps who have already taken the Signature Strengths survey to help identify their top 5 strengths, what are you waiting for?

Cruise on over here and get on that.

The book is packed with some great exercises and wisdom to help us discover our values and unique gifts in the process of identifying our calling.

Here's to discovering and expressing our unique gifts and giving them to the world!

P.S. Let's remember [Leo Buscaglia](#)'s wisdom: "Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God."

MEDITATION: THE KEY IS REGULAR PRACTICE

"The key is regular practice. Begin to incorporate moments of reflective silence and meditative stillness into your schedule. Make time — even for only a few moments — to release your mind from the bustle of the day. No matter how many times the mind wanders — simply bring it back to the object of meditation. Do this with a sense of graciousness and ease as though you were placing a rose carefully in a beautiful vase or escorting an honored guest to her seat at the head of the table. Through practice attention becomes steadier and distractions begin to drop away. As they do you are freed to experience the aliveness of the present moment.

The great American psychologist William James has written, "The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention over and over again is the very root of judgment, character, and will. An education, which should improve this faculty, would be education par excellence." Meditation is a practical and portable way to tame your wandering attention and to enhance those qualities of character — clarity, compassion, and courage — that support high performance and high fulfillment."

So much goodness in there.

First, notice we're talking about meditation again. :)

"The high performance-high fulfillment mindset empowers you to make choices and changes in your work from being clear on who you are, what you care about, what you want, and what the world around you needs."

~ Eric Klein

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action. And because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. If you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost. The world will not have it."

~ Martha Graham, visionary modern dancer and choreographer

The first chapter of the book is called "Shift Your Focus." The fact is, we won't be able to create a life with deeper meaning and fulfillment without consciously shifting our focus.

The best way to do that? Meditation.

As Eric tells us, the key is regular practice. We need to take time EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. to allow meditative stillness into our lives. Even if it's just for a few moments, this regular practice strengthens our capacity to release our mind from the bustle of the day and connect to something higher within ourselves.

So, shift your focus via regular meditative practice. Got it.

Now, as you sit in meditation, your mind will wander. Then what?

I just love the way Eric describes how to bring our attention back to the object of our meditation: *"With a sense of graciousness and ease as though you were placing a rose carefully in a beautiful vase or escorting an honored guest to her seat at the head of the table."*

Beautiful.

Reminds me of how [Jon Kabat-Zinn](#) tells us we should *sit* during our meditation (see Notes on [Wherever You Go, There You Are](#)): *"When we describe the sitting posture, the word that feels the most appropriate is "dignity." Sitting down to meditate, our posture talks to us. It makes its own statement. You might say the posture itself is the meditation. If we slump, it reflects low energy, passivity, a lack of clarity. If we sit ramrod-straight, we are tense, making too much of an effort, trying too hard. When I use the word "dignity" in teaching situations, as in "Sit in a way that embodies dignity," everybody immediately adjusts their posture to sit up straighter. But they don't stiffen. Faces relax, shoulders drop, head, neck, and back come into easy alignment. The spine rises out of the pelvis with energy. Sometimes people tend to sit forward, away from the backs of their chairs, more autonomously. Everybody seems to instantly know that inner feeling of dignity and how to embody it."*

Finally, I love that William James wisdom nugget: *"The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention over and over again is the very root of judgment, character, and will. An education, which should improve this faculty, would be education par excellence."*

As Eric tells us, meditation is an incredibly powerful way to *"tame your wandering attention and to enhance those qualities of character — clarity, compassion, and courage — that support high performance and high fulfillment."*

And, I just can't resist dropping in a little more wisdom on the scientific proof of the power of meditation. Here's [Kelly McGonigal](#) from [The Willpower Instinct](#) (see Notes): *"One study found that just three hours of meditation practice led to improved attention and self-control. After eleven hours, researchers could see those changes in the brain. The new meditators had increased neural connections between regions of the brain important for staying focused, ignoring distractions, and controlling impulses. Another study found that eight weeks of daily meditation practice led to increased self-awareness in everyday life, as well as increased gray matter in corresponding areas of the brain. It may seem incredible that our brains can reshape themselves so quickly, but meditation increases blood flow to the prefrontal cortex, in much the same way that lifting weights increases blood flow to your muscles. The brain appears to adapt to exercise in the same way that muscles do, getting both bigger and faster in order to get better at what you ask of it."*

AMBITION: THE SHADOW SIDE OF CALLING

"Ambition is pursuing achievements because attaining them will be impressive. Ambition seeks to attract the attention and admiration of others. Ambition is the shadow side of calling. When pursuing ambition you are driven to look good on paper, to make it, to gain prestige or fame."

"The authentic response to being gifted is to give. You realize that you renew and enhance your gifts by giving what you have been given."

~ Eric Klein

"If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."

~ Gospel of Thomas

"All work can be holy - a pathway to wholeness, integration, and authenticity. It is not the task itself but the depth, presence, care, and awareness that you bring to the task."

~ Eric Klein

These are substitute states of fulfillment that pale beside the bone-deep contentment that comes from following one's calling. Following your calling does not always dictate a change in the role you perform, but it often requires that you transform the way you inhabit your role."

Ambition vs. Calling. Powerful stuff.

Throughout these Notes, we've touched on the idea of intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation.

Recap: When we are intrinsically motivated, we focus on things like personal growth, deeper relationships, and making a contribution. These are the elements inherent to living in integrity with our calling.

When we're predominantly extrinsically motivated, on the other hand, we find ourselves chasing things like fame, wealth and power as we're caught in the grip of our ambition—the shadow side of calling.

Classic wisdom and modern scientific research tells us that, EVEN IF WE THINK WE WILL SUCCEED as we chase the extrinsic goals, we will be significantly less happy than if we focused on the intrinsic goodies.

Unfortunately, our culture is *obsessed* with the extrinsic signs of "success" of fame, wealth and power and it requires a tremendous amount of self-awareness and courage to stay focused on the things that lead to true happiness.

Here's to having that courage and tenacity as we live our calling!

YOUR HOLY LONGING

"What Jeanne discovered, like thousands of others, is that in the depths of her mind was what the great German poet Goethe called, a "Holy Longing." This longing wants to grow, to give, and to create what matters most. Touching this longing brings light to familiar routines. It reveals that high performance and high fulfillment can come through your work, if you are willing to align your work with your calling."

Maslow tells us that one of our most fundamental needs is our need to self-actualize—that what one *can* be, one *must* be.

Sounds like a "holy longing" to me.

How's yours?

YOUR INNER GUIDANCE SYSTEM: VALUES + GIFTS + CALLING

"We have been exploring the three elements of your inner guidance system:

- Core Values — those deep motivators that are the source of your passion and purpose
- True Gift — those talents and abilities that are your unique expression of greatness
- Calling — that which you most want to create through your work

Although you discover them one at a time, these three elements — values, gifts, calling — must be integrated into a unified, living whole. Each element is one facet of your authentic leadership. Values provide the ground of inner congruence and integrity. Gifts are the ways that you most powerfully and naturally interact with the world. Calling focuses you in the direction of your soul's longing and purpose."

This is the core of the book: Helping us develop our inner guidance system. Very cool stuff.

Check out the book for more goodness. For now, know that: "Values provide the ground of inner congruence and integrity. Gifts are the ways that you most powerfully and naturally interact with the world. Calling focuses you in the direction of your soul's longing and purpose."

DON'T WANT, CHOOSE

“Most people want authenticity, high performance, and high fulfillment. They want to create what matters most to them and experience joy and integrity in the process. But wanting is not the same as choosing.

“Life calls to you at every moment and you, by how you live, answer that call.”

~ Eric Klein

You can want to improve your work while still remaining passive. If you say, “I want more teamwork with other departments,” “I want this conflict to be resolved,” or “I want to be more creative at work” without acting then you have not moved across your learning edge from passive wanting to active choosing.”

I want... vs. I choose...

Feel the difference! And *choose* wisely. :)

BECOME A BLESSING TO YOURSELF & WORLD

“When you commit to living authentically, your life becomes an offering. You put your energies, your thoughts, your emotions, and your internal and external actions into the service of life. Transcending selfishness and unselfishness, you do what you have come to do. The laws of nature support and encourage your actions. The question of whether you are ready and willing to experience high performance and high fulfillment is answered, not theoretically, but as a living reality. You have become a blessing to yourself and to the world.”

The end result of all this goodness?

As Eric so beautifully says, we commit to living authentically and our lives become an offering as we give our greatest gifts in the greatest service to the world!

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

If you liked this Note,
you'll probably like...

[Happier](#)

[Flourish](#)

[Wherever You Go, There You Are](#)

[Paulo Coelho](#)

[The Willpower Instinct](#)

About the Author of “You Are the Leader You’ve Been Waiting For”

ERIC KLEIN



Eric Klein is a visionary, author, community leader, business advisor, and professional speaker on leadership and culture change. He has worked with over 15,000 leaders from a wide variety of settings: healthcare, Fortune 500 companies, municipal, governmental and non-profit organizations as well as mid-size companies. (from Amazon)

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.