

One important aspect of well-being is your perceived meaning in life. Do you believe you have a meaningful life? Are you interested in personal growth and developing your own values?

Researchers believe that there is a relationship between finding meaning in life and a person's well-being. As you search to uncover the meaning in your life, the first step in the process is increasing your self-awareness about your sense of meaning and purpose.

There are two subscales in the questionnaire. The first, Presence of Meaning, measures how meaningful people perceive their life to be. The second, Search for Meaning, measures how actively people are seeking to discover or augment the level of meaningfulness they experience in life.

### PRESENCE OF MEANING

	Absolutely untrue		Can't say true or false			Absolutely true	
1. I understand my life's meaning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My life has a clear sense of purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My life has no clear purpose.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

### SEARCH FOR MEANING

	Absolutely untrue		Can't say true or false			Absolutely true	
1. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am always looking to find my life's purpose.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I am searching for meaning in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### SCORING

Add up your numbers for each section. Scores will range from 5 to 35.

**Presence of Meaning score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Search for Meaning score:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you scored **above** 24 on Presence and also **above** 24 on Search, you feel your life has a valued meaning and purpose, yet you are still openly exploring that meaning or purpose. You likely are satisfied with your life, are somewhat optimistic, experience feelings of love frequently, and rarely feel depressed. You are probably somewhat active in spiritual activities, and you tend not to value pursuing sensory stimulation as much as others. You are generally certain of, and occasionally forceful regarding, your views and supportive of having an overall structure in society and life. People who know you would probably describe you as conscientious, thoughtful, easy to get along with, somewhat open to new experiences, and generally easygoing and emotionally stable.

If you scored **above** 24 on Presence and **below** 24 on Search, you feel your life has a valued meaning and purpose, and you are not actively exploring that meaning or seeking meaning in your life. One might say that you are satisfied that you've grasped what makes your life meaningful, why you're here, and what you want to do with your life. You probably are satisfied with your life, are optimistic, and have healthy self-esteem. You frequently experience feelings of love and joy and rarely feel afraid, angry, ashamed, or sad. You probably hold traditional values. You are usually certain of, and often forceful regarding, your views and likely support structure and rules for society and living. You are probably active in and committed to spiritual pursuits. People who know you would probably describe you as conscientious, organized, friendly, easy to get along with, and socially outgoing.

If you scored **below** 24 on Presence and **above** 24 on Search, you probably do not feel your life has a valued meaning and purpose, and you are actively searching for something or someone that will give your life meaning or purpose. You are probably

not always satisfied with your life. You may not experience emotions like love and joy that often. You may occasionally, or even often, feel anxious, nervous, or sad and depressed. You are probably questioning the role of spirituality in your life, and you may be working hard to figure out whether there is a God, what life on Earth is really about, and which, if any, religion is right for you. People who know you would probably describe you as liking to play things by ear or “go with the flow” when it comes to plans, occasionally worried, and not particularly socially active.

If you scored **below 24** on Presence and also **below 24** on Search, you probably do not feel your life has a valued meaning and purpose and are not actively exploring that meaning or seeking meaning in your life. You may not always be satisfied with your life, or yourself, and you might not be particularly optimistic about the future. You may not experience emotions like love and joy that often. You may occasionally, or even often, feel anxious, nervous, or sad and depressed. You probably do not hold traditional values and may be more likely to value stimulating, exciting experiences, although you are not necessarily open-minded about everything. People who know you would probably describe you as sometimes disorganized, occasionally nervous or tense, and not particularly socially active or especially warm toward everyone.

Sources: Adapted from Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., and Kaler, M. (2006). The Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53, pp. 80–93; Steger, M. F., Kashdan, T. B., Sullivan, B. A., and Lorentz, D. (2008, April). Understanding the search for meaning in life: Personality, cognitive style, and the dynamic between seeking and experiencing meaning. *Journal of Personality*, 76, pp. 197–227.

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## CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Analyze your scores for each scale. Were they higher or lower than you expected? What areas of strength do you see? Where is there room for growth?
2. Think about the environmental factors in your life, like your friends, family, school, and community. How do they affect your pursuit of meaning in life?
3. After having taken this assessment and considered the results, do you want to be able to find more meaning in your life? If so, what are some actions you can take to begin this process?