

PURPOSE OF LIFE. Once a man wanted to know the purpose of life. The story has it there was a sage who meditated in a cave on a mountain. So the man climbed the mountain, found the mystic, and asked his question, only to be told: "Go and find your own cave, meditate, and you will know." Is there a more practical answer? Yes, the Dalai Lama says: "Be happy." Other saints will tell you: "Know the Truth," while a philosopher may say "Know your Self" or "expressed in language, the query is meaningless." While pondering all this, you will probably just raise a family and do your duty.

see also DUTY

QUALITY. In *ZEN And The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance* Robert Pirsig writes: "To live only for some future goal is shallow. It's the sides of the mountain which sustain life, not the top. The only Zen you find on the top is the Zen you bring up there"; the book is about a motorcycle trip by the author and his son Chris. For Pirsig the trip is a venture into metaphysics & philosophy. His exploration of Quality is a meditation on the symbiosis of subject & object, actor & act, when working well on a motorcycle, caring, being in the moment ... is to achieve inner peace. In this sense living in Zen is to be intimately engaged in the process of life. When we are 'in the present' ... we find that life potentially has a better Quality.

Quality is the knife-edge of perceptual experience, found only in the present. Equal to Tao, Quality is the fundamental force in the universe, stimulating everything from atoms to animals to evolve and incorporate ever greater levels of Quality. Accordingly everything is a product and a result of Quality.

Quality is Virtue.

Quality is the parent, the source of all subjects and objects. Quality is subjective (mental) and objective (material) reality. Quality - like Tao - is the origin of heaven and earth. Quality is the mother of everything, it is all-pervading, inexhaustible, fathomless ... the fountainhead of all things.

Quality is Dharma.

"Quality is the Buddha. Quality is scientific reality. Quality is the goal of art. It remains to work these concepts into a practical, down-to-earth context, and for this there is nothing more practical and down-to-earth than what I have been talking about all along ... the repair of an old motorcycle."

Quality is Caring.

After a while Chris said, "can I have a motorcycle when I get old enough?" "If you take care of it." "What do you have to do?" "Lots of things, you've been watching me." "Will you show me all of them?" "Sure." "Is it hard?" "Not if you have the right attitude. It's having the right attitude that's hard."

Aftermath

"What was the ulterior motive for writing this book? There was none. Writing it seemed to have higher Quality than not writing it, that was all." But there is a very dark side to the aftermath: "Chris is dead, he was murdered." "Still, there was another child, Nell." "Things are better now." Robert M. Pirsig

*Quality really can't be defined; it can only be understood intellectually by the use of analogy. Dan Glover:
Lila's Child: An Inquiry Into Quality*

see also ZEN