



Personal PurposeQuests

by a leadership consultant

My PurposeQuest took place in Crete, but the process began earlier with a saturation into my history while holding the question 'Where have I come from?' and writing a short autobiography.

Important patterns emerged, the most persistent of which I chose to ignore. I'd imagined some ethereal insight into a deeply hidden self would emerge, but the important stuff was so obvious I could hardly see it.

Once on Crete, we undertook various ceremonies for letting go of our past before we walked onto the mountain, into the wilderness, alone to discover our purpose.

Before dawn I climbed up the valley, eager to see the sun rise. Sunrise had become an important symbol of my new beginning. As the sky grew lighter, although the sun had yet to appear, I figured I'd headed in the wrong direction. Walking on, disappointed, I felt my foot suddenly hurt. I stopped. A yellow butterfly led me to a rock. I adjusted my boot, then looked up ... to see the sun rise behind the mountain.

I kept tripping over the blindingly obvious – being forced to stop and notice what was under my nose. Turning to look at a goat, I fell and hurt my back. Sitting up slowly, I discovered a curious chrysalis on a rock, which would have passed unnoticed without the fall. Through the quest the chrysalis became a metaphor for how I needed to be.

At times I pursued goals, like reaching the top of the mountain or finding a stream. These pursuits became difficult and stressful, whereas when meandering and exploring, my energy was playful and light. I was enchanted by the surprise discovery of a yellow flower or being locked in eye contact with a mountain goat.

The next day, reflecting on these insights and preparing for the final ceremony, where we would embody and declare our purpose, it became clear to me that spontaneity was a vital source of my energy, and being present and open to whatever might emerge created surprise and excitement. No wonder the years I had spent in business planning had felt so arduous and unfulfilling.

Inspired by my purpose, I've now developed a consulting practice working with teams and individuals to help them unlock energy and passion in themselves and their organizations.

It's not always easy to be 'on purpose', but it's a guiding light that has helped me align who I am with what I do and to live an energized and adventurous life.

