

Liz:

I believe that my purpose in life is to bring joy to those around me. I believe I have a gift – to motivate and inspire others to be their best selves and when I honor this gift I am at peace and living in harmony with the universe. My desire to give back and make a difference has been shaped by religious traditions, the lives of great leaders, and my own personal experience of life.

My idea of what it means to live a meaningful life has been shaped by a strict, but loving Catholic upbringing in my early years, then later by Buddhist ideas and UU principles. What I have gained from my “religious education” is the importance of being compassionate, supporting those in need, turning the other cheek, and respecting others views and beliefs.

I am inspired and motivated by many great activists like the Dalai Lama, Rachel Carson, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, and Rosa Parks. These individuals show me how to put my values into action in the world and make a difference.

I believe that you influence what comes back to you in your lifetime. About 10 years ago I felt this strongly in my life. After many years of living to other’s expectations of me, I took time to reflect and really get to know

myself. For the first few months, life was rather uncomfortable.

However, over time, I started to gain a greater sense of myself through yoga and meditation. I started teaching and coaching where I discovered how much I enjoyed helping others grow.

I feel I am living my authentic life on Monday nights 7PM teaching spin class where people leave exhausted and smiling, when I encourage my partner to meditate by playing the guitar, or when my friend asks me to visit her in the hospital because I make her laugh.

So while I didn't travel to Italy, India and Indonesia to find myself, just to the Summit YMCA and my apartment in Berkley Heights; I did travel to the core of my soul and came out on the other side with a deeper appreciation for my unique gifts to offer the world. I found that the more I listened, encouraged, coached, and supported others, the more I felt at peace.

I am uncertain why the universe created me during this time and place, but I do believe that while I am here my purpose is to create more joy and help others navigate their own paths. I am at peace and feel whole when I am giving back, when I live the values and beliefs that are close to my heart.

