

Developing a Significance Mindset

Recently at Colorado State University, I delivered the Sigma Chi Beta Tau Chapter 100th Anniversary Keynote Address to ~250 of my fraternity brothers and friends . . . I shared how to move from a success mindset to a “Significance Mindset.”

I encourage you to read the message because what I share may be game-changing for you as I provide some keys to living a meaningful, purposeful, significant life. . . The message may transform how you interact with people and how you influence your world. You’ll learn how the power of generosity, making waves, and enlarging others can make a positive difference. Now, **“Developing a Significance Mindset.”**

Good evening. It’s an honor to be with you, my Sigma Chi Brothers, and friends. Thank you for inviting me to share some thoughts with you. I want to introduce my beautiful bride, Carla – a University of Alabama grad, Chi Omega member, and wonderful mother of our two children, Caroline and Benton.

Tonight, I want to talk about something that may be a game-changer for you. It may transform your life, the way you interact with people, and how you influence your world.

If you’re experiencing a successful career but seem empty on the inside and wonder if there’s something more, this message may be for you.

If you’re struggling to determine life’s purpose and what truly matters, this message may be for you.

If you’re a student, early in life’s journey and or an alumnus enjoying retirement and want to learn about how to make a

positive difference in the world, this message may be for you.

I encourage you to listen to what I share. It may be the most important 15 minutes of tonight, this month, this year, or your life.

Tonight, I want to share my thoughts on our need to mentally shift from success to **significance**. Meaning how we think about things, how we approach life, developing a “Significance Mindset.”

What does it mean to have a “Significance Mindset”? It means to move away from a self-focus to an others-focus; from using your time, talents, and resources for your own good to using them for the good of others; to swap adding value to yourself for adding value to others; to transition from spending time on things that don’t matter to investing time in things that do; things that have meaning and purpose. Serving others rather than serving self.

John C. Maxwell, the most prolific leadership author and speaker of our times, said, “A lot of people believe they are successful because they have everything they want. They have added value to themselves. But I believe significance comes when you add value to others, and you can’t have true success without significance.”

Does any of this resonate with you? Do you want to grow beyond success and develop a Significance Mindset? What would your family, community, business, school, or place of worship look like if you did? What would happen? How would you be able to influence your culture and change your world?

Let me share a simple story where I began to learn about developing a Significance Mindset, shifting to a life that matters. . .

I met Juan in a dump, a city dump. Juan was a “pepenador,” a scavenger. He made his living by rummaging through trash in

the Tijuana City Dump and reselling what he recovered to local merchants. Everything that he owned came from the dump – clothes and food – *one man's trash is another man's treasure*.

Juan and 200 families that live in the landfill are among the poorest of the poor in Tijuana. Homes were created with tarps, pallets, tin scraps, and old garage doors – whatever residents could find and use to build a roof over their heads. The rancid odor that arose in the summer's heat overwhelmed me but was barely noticeable to the dump's residents.

Why was I in the Tijuana City Dump? I volunteered to go on a mission trip with my church to serve the people that lived in the landfill. We aimed to help those who couldn't help themselves, shine light into a dark place and invest our time, talents, and resources to bring hope to the hopeless.

Once we arrived in the dump, we spread out across the canyon, knocking on doors, giving them a gift of rice & beans, and inviting them to a Vacation Bible School. We shared that the School would include games, music, and food. We also mentioned that we'd be providing personal hygiene supplies and services at the event. Why? As you might imagine, water was a scarce resource in the dump. The place was pretty much a third-world country. Showering, washing hair, and brushing teeth were all considered a luxury. But, it provided us an opportunity to show extravagant generosity, love in action, to the dump residents by providing hygiene supplies and services.

After making the rounds and inviting folks to join us, we set up the School location, including a long line of hair washing stations. Each station included a chair, buckets of water, and shampoo.

What was missing? Volunteers to wash hair. . .

A mission trip leader asked, "Who'd like to wash hair today?"

Okay, I have to admit, this is where I got a little

uncomfortable. I put my head down and stepped back, not wanting to make eye contact with the leader.

The leader explained that women volunteers would wash women's hair, and men would wash men's. I grew a little more uncomfortable but remembered that the best way to grow is to move out of one's comfort zone and into the awkward zone.

I raised my hand and said, "I'll do it."

Soon after, the Vacation Bible School started. I was amazed at the large number of adults and children that came. I found the dump residents a kind, warm-hearted, and gracious bunch considering their living conditions. We connected with people through translators, sang songs, watched skits, and broke bread together.

Then came the hair washing. Ladies first. A long line developed, and the pampering began. Next, the men lined up, and it was my turn to step up. I went to my assigned station and saw a middle-aged man urged by his significant other to wash his hair. He was hesitant at first but slowly shuffled in my direction. I smiled and introduced myself to Juan as he sat down in the chair. He didn't look me in the eye. I could tell this was a very humbling experience for him.

I slowly poured the water on his head, applied the shampoo, and washed his lice-infested, thick black hair. It only took a few minutes, and when we were done, Juan offered no gratuity for washing his hair other than a bright smile and saying "gracias" as he looked me in the eye, man to man. He waved goodbye and left with his family.

I'm not sure I will ever see Juan again or know how his life turned out. I do know that he experienced a moment of happiness and refreshment and that I played a small role in it.

What may seem like a trite experience to you was huge for me.

It was the genesis of my shift from a success mindset to a **Significance Mindset**. It was a moment that mattered, one where I took the focus off of myself and placed it on others to help someone who couldn't help themselves.

This led me to ask: How does one develop a Significance Mindset? Here are three principles I discovered:

1. **Be Generous.** "The greater the giving, the greater the living." [1] Invest your time, talents, and resources to benefit others. Instead of spending hours on social media, invest time serving your family, community, school, or place of worship. Leverage your strengths and talents to help build something that lasts, that matters. Lastly, give money to people, churches, and charities. You'll care more about to whom or what you give money – The good book says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be." King Solomon wrote, "The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped." [2] Even industrial magnate Andrew Carnegie got it. He said, "No man becomes rich unless he enriches others." [3] Be generous.
2. **Create Waves.** Mother Teresa said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." [4] Cast stones in the water to make a positive difference. What do I mean? Do you see injustice at work? Speak up. Is someone being bullied? Stick up for them. Is someone you know feeling down? Encourage them. Is someone lacking resources? Meet their need. Shift the focus off yourself and onto others. Look for opportunities to make a positive difference in your sphere of influence and change your world. Do things that matter. Help the helpless. Be a light in our often dark and chaotic world. Create waves.
3. **Enlarge Others.** Help people reach their potential

through coaching and mentoring them. Invest in them. Think for a moment about who's had an impact on your life. Play along with me for a minute. Close your eyes for just a moment. Picture the individual. Can you see them? Was it a teacher, coach, manager, friend, or family member that inspired you to grow? Did they believe in you? Did they bring out the best in you? Looking back, how did they help you? Now, tell someone next to you the name of the individual. Let's turn it around. How do you take what you were given and pour it into others? Imagine someone you can build up, enlarge. Share the name with someone. I encourage you to intentionally build your identified person up. Invest your time, talents, and resources in them. Help them reach their potential. What if you don't invest in people and enlarge them? "Composer Gian Carlo Menotti forcefully stated, 'Hell begins on that day when God grants us a clear vision of all that we might have achieved, of all the gifts we wasted, of all that we might have done that we did not do.' Unrealized potential is a tragic waste. And as an enlarger, you have the privilege of helping others discover and then develop their potential." [5] Enlarge others.

I want to drive home one more point. You don't need to be a president, CEO, famous actor, or billionaire to live a meaningful life. Why? Did you know that sociologists say that even the most introverted individual will influence up to 10,000 people during their lifetime? That's right. 10,000 people. Whether you realize it or not, you have incredible influence. Develop a Significance Mindset by being generous, creating waves, and enlarging others. You'll be a positive influence and change your world.

I want to end tonight with a piece by Michael Josephson titled *What Will Matter*: [6]

"Ready or not, someday it will all come to an end.

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours, or days.

All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame, and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.

It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.

Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.

So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire.

The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks you lived on at the end.

It won't matter whether you are beautiful or brilliant.

Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So, what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought but what you built; not what you got but what you gave.

What will matter is not your success but your **significance**.

What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage,

or sacrifice that enriched, empowered, or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence but your character.

What will matter is not how many people you knew but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories but the memories of those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom, and for what

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.

It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

Choose to live a life that matters."

In closing, may I get personal with you for a moment and ask a few provocative questions?:

- Do you have a desire to live a meaningful life, one that matters? If so, why?
- What do you need to do to shift from a success mindset to a "Significance Mindset"? What actions will you take?
- When will you do it? – don't hesitate – do it now. Why wait?
- Who will you share your plan with? Who will hold you accountable? Tell someone you can trust and who will help you make the mindset shift.
- Lastly, if you are curious in matters of faith, in whom do you find your significance? I find mine in God.

If any of tonight's messages resonated with you or the questions I just asked inspired you to think or behave differently, I'd love to hear from you and learn how I may be able to help you along your journey.

May you choose a life that matters, develop a Significance

Mindset, and make a positive difference in your world. God bless, In Hoc, and thank you.

Do you want to learn more about living a significant life and becoming a leader others will gladly follow? Visit my website, prestonpoore.com, today!

Cheers,

Preston

[\[1\]](#) John C. Maxwell Today Matters

[\[2\]](#) Peterson, E. H. (2005). The Message: the Bible in contemporary language (Pr 11:24–25). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

[\[3\]](#) Excerpt From: John C. Maxwell & Jim Dornan. “Becoming a Person of Influence.” Apple Books. <https://books.apple.com/us/book/becoming-a-person-of-influence/id607555354>

[\[4\]](#) <https://www.inc.com/john-brandon/38-quotes-to-help-you-become-a-change-agent.html>

[\[5\]](#) Excerpt From: John C. Maxwell & Jim Dornan. “Becoming a Person of Influence.” Apple Books. <https://books.apple.com/us/book/becoming-a-person-of-influence/id607555354>

[\[6\]](#) <https://whatwillmatter.com/2011/10/what-will-matter-745-3/>