



MODULE 4: WHAT MAKES LIFE FEEL WORTHWHILE?

**Rebuilding a Sense of
Purpose, Usefulness
and Connection**

- Purpose Does Not Retire When Work Does
- One Helpful Way To Think About Purpose
- Discovering Where My Purpose Clues Are
- What Still Brings Energy?
- Ways I Still Want To Contribute
- Connection, Community and Being Needed

Once we begin to understand what helps us stay a little steadier internally, another question often starts to make itself felt:

What am I actually getting up for now?



This question does not always arrive dramatically.

Sometimes it appears quietly.

A sense that the days are fine, but slightly samey.

A feeling that there is not enough pull.

A suspicion that too much time is being spent passing rather than engaging.

For many men, work supplied more than income.

It supplied:

- targets
- responsibilities
- people
- practical usefulness
- external expectations
- and visible proof that the day had gone somewhere

Even when work was tiring, stressful or frustrating, it still gave life a kind of built-in momentum.

Without that, many men find themselves asking:

What now gives the day some weight?

What still makes me feel mentally engaged?

Where do I still feel useful?

What still feels worth the effort?

These are purpose questions.

And purpose in later life does not have to mean a grand mission.

More often it means:

having enough reasons to feel involved in your own days.

This module is about finding those reasons.

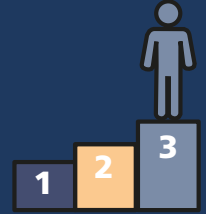
Exercise 4.1 Purpose Does Not Retire When Work Does

One of the most common misconceptions about retirement is that once work ends, the need for purpose somehow ends with it.

But purpose is not the same as employment.

Purpose is the quiet sense that:

- what I do still matters in some way
- that my effort still has somewhere to go
- that the day is not just being filled, but inhabited



Without this, time can begin to feel strangely weightless.

Days may not be terrible.

But they can start to feel repetitive, vague, or underpowered.

Purpose does not need to be dramatic to be effective.

It can come from:

- helping someone regularly
- building or maintaining something
- learning
- mentoring
- volunteering
- creating routine around health
- contributing knowledge
- caring for family
- practical projects
- community involvement

Reflection Prompt

Where in my current life do I still feel that my effort genuinely counts?

Exercise 4.2 One Helpful Way To Think About Purpose

Purpose often feels too vague when we ask:

“What is my purpose?”

That can sound like one giant life answer is required.

A more useful question is:

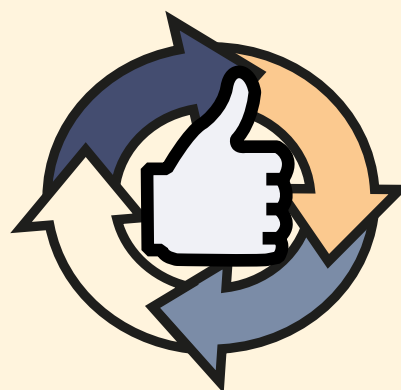
“Where do four things overlap?”

1. What do I enjoy?



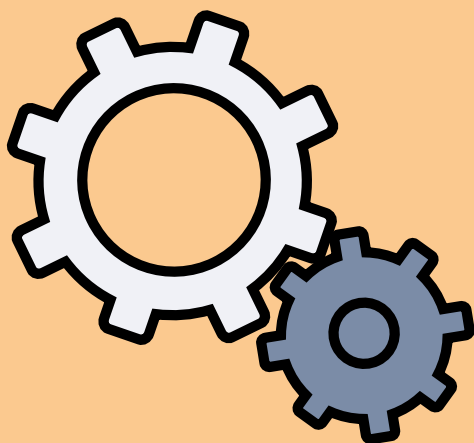
What naturally holds my attention?

2. What am I good at?



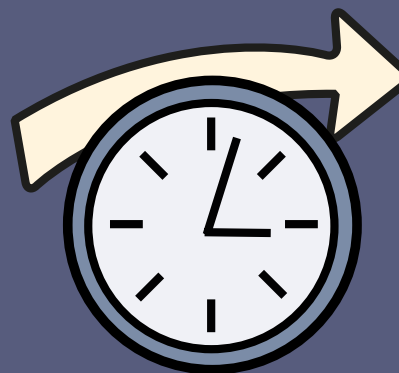
What strengths or experience do I already have?

3. Where do I feel useful?



Where does my input matter?

4. What feels worth giving time to?



What seems meaningful enough to continue?

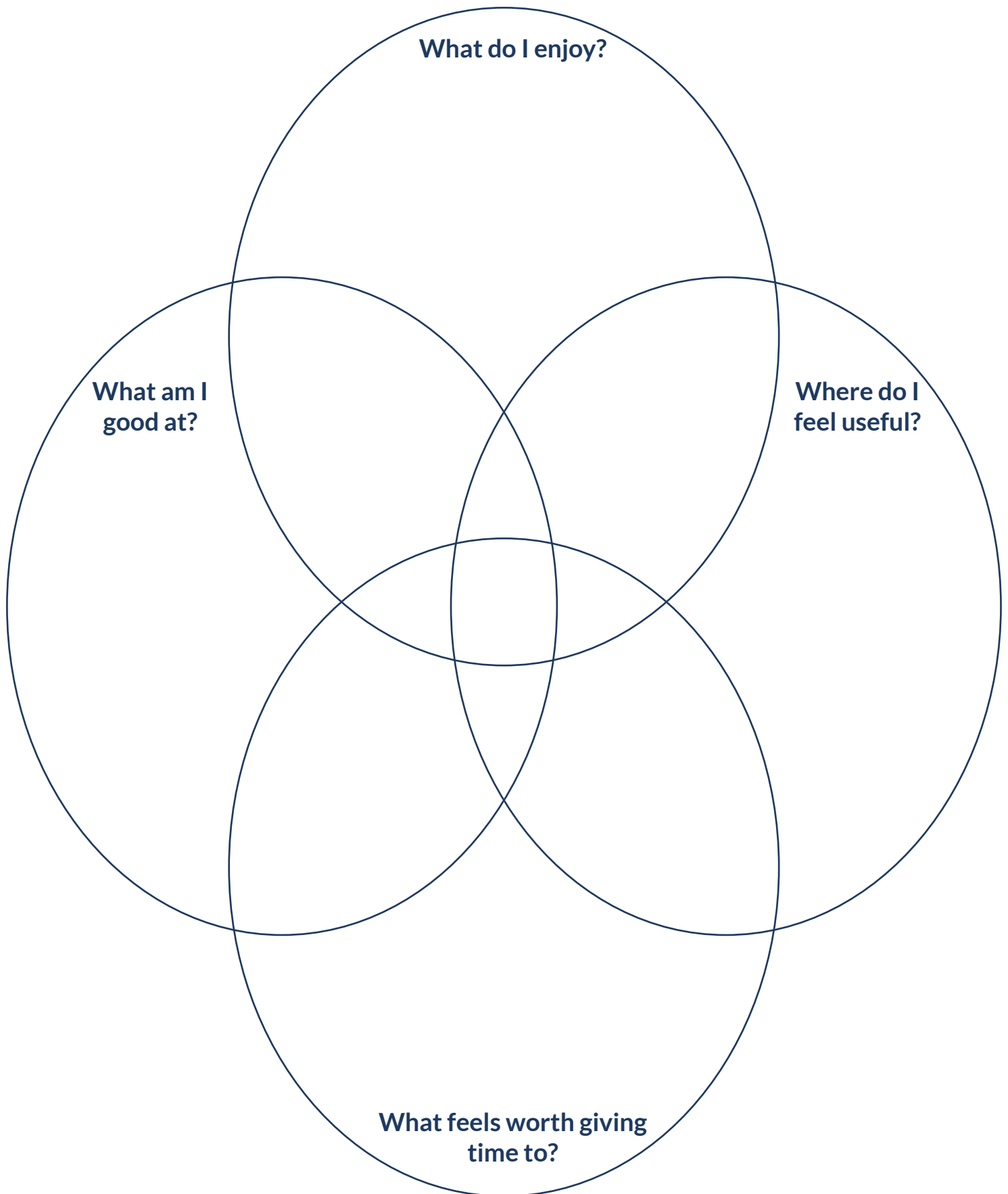
Purpose often begins where some of these areas meet.

Not perfectly.

But enough.

Workbook Exercise

Write notes under each of the four headings and look for overlaps.



Exercise 4.3 Discovering Where My Purpose Clues Are

Often we already have clues, but dismiss them because they do not look impressive enough.

You may notice:

- certain conversations leave you more animated
- certain tasks still absorb you
- certain people draw out your helpfulness
- certain subjects keep your interest
- certain environments make you feel more switched on



These are clues.

Purpose often shows itself first as energy.

As repeated interest.

As a sense of “I do not mind giving time to this.”

The mistake many people make is assuming purpose has to arrive as a fully formed new chapter.

Usually it starts as patterns.

Small recurring signs of engagement.

Reflection Prompt

What do I repeatedly find myself drawn toward, curious about, or willing to spend effort on?

A large, empty light blue rectangular area, intended for the user to write their reflection.

Exercise 4.4 What Still Brings Energy?

Not all activities affect us equally.

Some drain.

Some numb.

Some simply fill time.

Others leave us feeling:

- mentally awake
- quietly satisfied
- more connected
- or more alive than before

Energy is useful information.

This does not mean constant excitement.

It means noticing what leaves you with a little more internal movement.

Examples might include:

- practical making or fixing
- walking somewhere stimulating
- being with certain people
- reading particular subjects
- planning projects
- helping family
- mentoring
- sport
- gardening
- local groups
- writing
- learning something new



Workbook Exercise

List ten things — large or small — that still give me some energy.

Then circle the ones that are currently underused.

1:

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Exercise 4.5 Ways I Still Want To Contribute

Contribution matters because it answers a deeply human internal question:

“Am I still of use?”

Many men underestimate how strongly this question affects mood.

Feeling unneeded for long periods can quietly flatten confidence.

Contribution does not require formal status.

It may involve:

- helping grandchildren
- supporting a partner
- neighbourly practical help
- mentoring younger people
- charity work
- sharing skills
- community tasks
- checking in on others
- fixing, organising or building things



The scale matters less than the felt reality that:

“My presence still adds something.”

Reflection Prompt

Where could I contribute more consistently in ways that feel genuine?

Exercise 4.6 Connection, Community and Being Needed

For many men, work supplied a large amount of casual connection without needing much planning.

Brief conversations.

Shared jokes.

Being known.

Being expected.

After retirement, that casual contact often reduces sharply.

And because men are not always socialised to deliberately build connection, isolation can creep in quietly.

Not always loneliness in the dramatic sense.

But reduced contact.

Reduced inclusion.

Reduced visibility.

Connection matters because it helps days feel inhabited.

It gives shape.

It provides interruption to overthinking.

It reminds us we are part of something beyond our own routines.



Workbook Exercise

Ask yourself:

Where do I currently feel:

- connected?
- welcomed?
- included?
- needed?

And where might I need to build this more intentionally?

Closing Reflection For Module 4

What seems most likely to give my days more meaning, usefulness or momentum than they currently have?

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