

Why are you here?

Not every action in life requires a sense of mission and purpose. Maybe you are just at the supermarket to pick up some things for dinner. But even these small actions, our daily rituals culminate in the life we live and the legacy we leave behind.

It is worth looking at our daily rituals, both conscious and habitual, *to orient ourselves in the greater scheme of things*, in the context of the day, the week, the project, the people you live or work with. People become disoriented under pressure, partly because they were not well oriented to begin with.

What were they thinking?

It can be both comical and tragic to watch how people behave when things are going badly for them.

Large companies in Japan are restructuring, cutting back jobs by tens of thousands of people, in an effort to dealing with sluggish demand in the current economic crisis.

Some employees are offered a generous payoff of a year or two salary, in exchange for being cut loose from any future employment. While this should be a welcome cushion to make a fresh start, some people go into denial, continuing to put on a suit and tie every morning, *pretending to go to the office so that their family doesn't find out they have lost their job*, and spending the day hanging out in movie theatres or coffee shops until it is time to go home. This ruse doesn't last forever, because the family is bound to find out when the money runs out, or the conversation dwindles.

When I heard about this, I assumed it was a rare case. It certainly isn't typical or accepted. However, I heard from a friend who teaches at a major Japanese university, that it is not uncommon for people of various ages to appear in class, though they are not enrolled, and sometimes appear suspiciously out of place. When discovered, they are expelled from the classroom, but when questioned as to why they are there, it turns out that they are there for a strange reason. Not to study or learn, but rather *to pretend that they are attending classes at a well-known university*.

Whether student or company worker, the ruse serves no one, and is doomed to fail. While these may be extreme cases, they show what can happen to people who fail to ask or answer the question, *Why are you here?* If you can answer this question well, you will not be so easily lost or disoriented when conditions change.

Why Am I Here?

Your answer to that question reveals to yourself and to others your sense of purpose and clarity.

Ask yourself this question often, and you will find reasons that empower you with meaning and purpose.

Why? Why am I here right now,
At this time and location?
What trail must I plough?
Ultimate destination?
Rituals culminate, some believe,
In the life we lead each day
And the lasting legacy we leave:
'Manners maketh man', they say.
Conscious and habitual action
We need to practice, sometimes reverse,
To orient us to that faction
In the greater scheme of universe.
And when these habits are fully broke,
Job gone, money lost, no receipt,
Denial descends as a dark cloak,
Woven of falseness and deceit.
Time will uncover such pretence,
The ruse serves none, doomed to fail;
Answer these questions, present tense,
And answer them often; please prevail.
Empower with meaning in your life,
The purpose you seek amidst such strife.

Verse by Hugh Purser