

James A. Cusumano, PhD



“Suffering ceases to be suffering once it finds a meaning. Being human always points, and is directed, to something or someone, other than oneself—be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter. The more one forgets himself—by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is.”

Viktor Frankl¹

■ The ultimate and most effective definition of success is presented and proven beyond question or doubt in Adam Grant’s current best-selling book, *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success*.

■ Through the results of numerous studies, Grant has shown that there must be a third leg to the proverbial “stool of success,” which by our 300 year-old classical definition has had only two legs—money and power. Without a third leg called “service” there can be no long-term stability or personal satisfaction and true success.

■ Interviews with hundreds of thousands of global workers from a broad spectrum of professions showed that the single most significant factor that creates meaning in a job is when the employee is convinced that his or her job makes a positive difference in the world.

■ Successful businesses of the 21st century will recognize this untapped potential and do all they can to be sure that their employees find inspiration, satisfaction and perhaps even their *Life Purpose* by assuring that the employees firmly and truly understand that they are making a positive difference in the world by doing something of value for their company and for others.

If you read just one book in 2014 and want to change your life for the better, read New York Times best-seller *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success* by Adam Grant, professor at the Wharton School of Business.²

I was motivated to read this book after one of my favorite current-day authors, Daniel H. Pink

BALANCE:

THE BUSINESS-LIFE CONNECTION

PART IV: GIVE AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE—BIG TIME!^{A,B}

[*Drive* and *A Whole New Mind*] exclaimed in his recommendation that “*Give and Take* is a truly exhilarating book—the rare work that will shatter your assumptions about how the world works and keep your brain firing for weeks after you’ve turned the last page.” I believe that he was right on target [Figure 1]!

In my latest book, *BALANCE: The Business-Life Connection*, I present evidence from decades of personal experience and research in founding, and leading the growth and performance of public companies that the only true path to lasting fulfillment is finding meaning in life by discovering your personal *Essence*, that special something that you’re good at and that you relish doing, and then connecting it with a need in the world that makes it a better place. You then have found your *Life Purpose*.

Or, as Grant puts it, the number one feature of a meaningless job is when a person’s effort has little positive impact on others, i.e., from his or her point of view their work makes little difference in the lives of others and therefore does not make

this a better world. Studies of millions of employees point out that this single feature is more important than promotions, income, job security, and hours.³

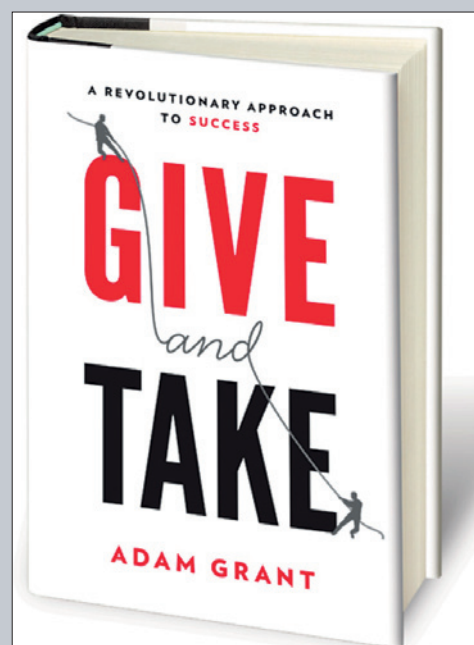
Yes, it is true that personal autonomy, variety, challenge, performance feedback, and the opportunity to work on a product or project from start to finish are important. But as important as these elements of a job are, studies of millions of workers show unquestionably that giving something of value to someone and making this a better world trumps them all in creating long-term personal and professional fulfillment.⁴

Grant references extensive detailed studies that show that 90 percent of the people in jobs such as airline reservation agent, revenue analyst, and TV newscast director have difficulty finding meaning in their life purpose. Why? Because they have a challenge seeing lasting significant positive impact on other peoples’ lives. In contrast, jobs such as adult literacy teacher, fire chief, addiction counselor and neurosurgeon bring lasting fulfillment because these workers can immediately and clearly see that their job makes an important difference in peoples’ lives and in the world.

To drive his message home, Grant points to several independent studies that provide proof of his thesis:

- A study reported in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* by psychologist Stephen E. Humphrey and colleagues, concerning the values of more than 11,000 employees from numerous industries showed that the single most significant factor that created meaning in a job was when the employee was convinced that his or her job made a positive difference in the world [Figure 2].⁵
- Psychologists Ruiz-Quintanilla and England found in their work that when employees were asked, “When does an activity qualify as work?”

FIGURE 1: Give and Take: Best-selling author Robert Sutton [Good Boss, Bad Boss] says that Give and Take just might be the most important book of this young century.”



^A EDITOR’S COMMENT – This is fourth article in a new series based on the author’s latest book, “BALANCE: The Business-Life Connection, SelectBooks, New York, 2013.” The book is based on three decades of personal experience on how to achieve success and long-term fulfillment in both your personal and professional lives. Details concerning the book and points of purchase can be found at www.JamesCusumano.Com.

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they responded, “If it contributes to society.” This response was common in the U.S., Europe and even in China. In a spectrum of cultures and geographic locations around the world, the common response is that work is defined more in terms of contributing to society rather than getting paid to do a task, or just being told what to do.⁶

– Amy Wrzesniewski, an eminent Yale professor and a world renowned expert on the meaning of work, found that when people see their job as a **calling** rather than as a job, they are much more fulfilled. And in their view the central feature defining a **calling** is doing something that makes the world a better place.⁷

The Good News!

The results of Grant’s research and that of others suggest that there are steps we can take to make jobs more meaningful for ourselves and for others, even when they may not seem meaningful as currently practiced, e.g., as mentioned above, for the jobs of airline reservation agent, revenue analyst, and TV newscast director.

In some cases the job may have a significant impact, but the employee is too distant from the end user to see the impact. Grant gives the examples of automotive safety engineers who never meet the drivers of the cars their company manufactures, or medical researchers who make significant healthcare discoveries, but don’t see the patients they help or whose lives they save.

Research shows that by connecting directly with the end users, we can see the benefits of our service or product. In Grant’s research he and his colleagues found that when university fundraisers met with just one student whose scholarship was funded by their work, they increased by 142 percent in weekly phone minutes and over 400 percent in weekly revenue.⁸ And when radiologists saw a patient’s photo included in their x-ray file, they wrote 29 percent

FIGURE 2: Global studies of millions of employees from a broad spectrum of professions show without question that the single most significant factor that creates meaning in a job is when the employee is convinced that his or her job makes a positive difference in the world.

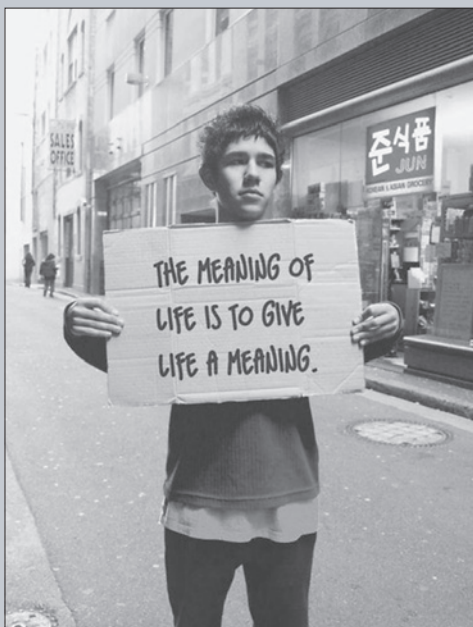


FIGURE 3: Discovering that special thing that you are good at and love to do, and connecting it with a need in the world that makes it a better place, creates your Life Purpose. Pursuing your Life Purpose ultimately leads to deep personal and professional fulfillment. This is the most effective definition of success.



longer patient reports and made 46 percent more accurate diagnoses.⁹

Grant states from his studies that “This is why leaders at John Deere invite employees who build tractors to meet the farmers who buy their tractors, leaders at Facebook invite software developers to hear from users who have found long-lost friends and family members thanks to the site, and leaders at Wells Fargo Bank film videos of customers describing how low-interest loans have rescued them from debt. When we see the direct consequences of our jobs for others, we find greater meaning.”¹⁰ As corroborated by New York Times columnist Susan Dominus, “The greatest untapped source of motivation is a sense of service to others.”¹¹

Have no fear if you are for example, an airlines reservation agent! Grant provides complete details in his book on how to enrich your job by crafting into it specific changes that can make it much more meaningful and help you to recognize your value added and move towards personal fulfillment.

What so amazes me is how book after book and study after study of millions of employees around the world describe and verify the accuracy of the following findings and yet employers ignore the greatest asset before them.¹²

– Nearly 80 percent of all employees are disengaged from their jobs, ranging in a spectrum from simply collecting a paycheck to outright disdain for their job and their management. Could 80 percent of all employees be innately uninspired to do their job? I don’t think so. What an untapped resource! What a shame!

– All employees have a certain innate skill—their **Essence**—which if accessed provides what I call the Triple Win. The employee finds personal fulfillment; the employer receives optimal performance and builds a successful business; the world sees a benefit. What could be better?

Isn’t it worth the time and effort to create an environment that identifies and utilizes an employee’s fundamental **Essence** and helps that person find personal and professional fulfillment while building a great company and helping to create a better world [Figure 3]? Let’s reduce the 80 percent figure of disengaged employees and create a Triple Win—Business, Employee, the World!

As I said at the beginning of this column, if you read just one book in 2014 and want to change your life for the better, read New York Times best-

seller **Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success** by Adam Grant, professor at the Wharton School of Business.¹³ It is a special gift to all of us.

Sat, Chit, Ananda.
Enjoy your journey!

James A. Cusumano, PhD ■

¹ Frankl, Viktor, *Mans Search For Meaning*, <http://www.amazon.com/Mans-Search-Meaning-Viktor-Frankl/dp/080701429X>

² Grant, Adam, *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success* http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_1?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=adam%20grant&prefix=adam+gr%2Cstripbooks&rh=i%3Astripbooks%2C%3Aadam%20grant.

³ Cascio, Wayne F., *Changes in Workers, Work and Organizations: Part III The Work Environment* published in *The Handbook of Psychology*, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/0471264385.wei1216/abstract>

⁴ *The Most (and Least) Meaningful Jobs*, <http://www.payscale.com/data-packages/most-and-least-meaningful-jobs/salary-versus-job-meaning>

⁵ Humphrey, Stephen E.; Nahrgang, Jennifer D.; Morgeson, Frederick P., *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol 92(5), Sep 2007, 1332-1356. See: <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/apl/92/5/1332/>.

⁶ Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. Antonio, England, George W., *How working is defined: Structure and stability* [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-1379\(199612\)17:1%2B%3C515::AID-JOB821%3E3.0.CO;2-G/abstract](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(199612)17:1%2B%3C515::AID-JOB821%3E3.0.CO;2-G/abstract)

⁷ <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0092656697921620>.

⁸ Grant, Adam M. et. al., *Impact and the art of motivation maintenance: The effects of contact with beneficiaries on persistence behavior*: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749597806000641>.

⁹ Turner, Yehonatan N., http://www2.rsn.org/timss-net/media/pressreleases/pr_target.cfm?ID=389.

¹⁰ Grant, Adam M., *How Customers Can Rally Your Troops*, *Harvard Business Review*, June, 2011 and http://www.huffingtonpost.com/adam-grant/the-1-feature-of-a-meanin_b_4691464.html.

¹¹ Dominus, Susan, “Is Giving the Secret to Getting Ahead?,” *New York Times*, March 27, 2103.

¹² Cusumano, James A., *BALANCE: The Business-Life Connection*, SelectBooks, New York, 2013.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, Reference 2.

James A. Cusumano is Chairman and Owner of Chateau Mcely (www.ChateauMcely.Com), chosen in 2007 by the European Union as the only “Green” 5-star luxury hotel in Central and Eastern Europe and in 2008 by the World Travel Awards as The World’s Leading Green Hotel. It is home to Chateau Mcely Forum™ (www.ChateauMcelyForum.Com) which offers programs that teach the principles of Inspired Leadership. He is a former Research Director for Exxon, and subsequently founded two public companies in Silicon Valley, one in clean power generation, the other in pharmaceuticals manufacture via environmentally-benign, low-cost, catalytic technologies. While he was Chairman and CEO, the latter – Catalytica Pharmaceuticals, Inc. – grew in less than 5 years, to a \$1 billion enterprise with 2,000 employees. He is coauthor of **Freedom from Mid-East Oil**, released in 2007 by World Business Academy Press (www.WorldBusiness.Org) and author of **Cosmic Consciousness – A Journey to Well-being, Happiness and Success**, published in English and Czech by Fortuna Libri, 2011. His new book, **BALANCE: The Business–Life Connection** was published in April 2013 by SelectBooks in New York City. It was published in Czech in October 2013 by Fortuna Libri.