

**THE CONCEPT OF PURPOSE AND THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN MARRIAGE AND
SUCCESS**

BY

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14th Of September, 2025.

What is Purpose? According to the Oxford English Dictionary purpose is defined as “A plan or aim”, “a feeling of determination to achieve things”, “to be helpful”. I see purpose as the reason a particular thing or being is created. Our purpose is the reason why we were created. It is what we born to be and to achieve in life. According to the book ‘The principles and power of vision’ by Myles Munroe, “Purpose is the intent for which God created you, the reason why you were born” He furthermore defined purpose as “What God has already decided in His own mind that you are supposed to begin to fulfill” Also he stated that “Purpose is when you know and understand what you are born to accomplish”. So therefore, purpose is when we seek to accomplish something with our utmost strength without fear of failing or falling and also what we’ve been born to accomplish in life.

The essay focuses on the role of purpose (God’s purpose) for our life’s success and marriage. From the beginning of time God has always wants the best for us. God cares about us and absolutely wants us to succeed in all aspects of our life. There is no one who was born without a purpose to accomplish. It is our stubbornness to follow God’s principles that makes us to look frustrated, depressed and suicidal. It is suicidal not to know God’s will for your life and this is in all aspects of your life including marriage as said by Dr. Chinyere Oko-Jaja in pg. 55 of her book “Before and After I do”.

The pursuit of a successful life and a fulfilling marriage is the totality of everyone born on earth, yet both are often seen through a smoke of cultural platitudes and ambiguous aspirations. We are told to go to school, find a good job, marry a good person, give birth and be happy but when these ambiguous ideals collide with the intricacies of real life experiences, character reversal, financial burden, marriage troubles. They often crash because they are not built on the foundation of God or lack God’s purpose or will. The God-factor for our life is what I refer to as purpose. By bringing together the deep teachings of Dr. Myles Munroe’s the ‘The principles and power of vision’, the narrative enterprise of Francine Rivers ‘The atonement child’ and the practical atlas of marriage fulfillment by Dr. Chinyere Oko-Jaja’s ‘Before and After I do’, an insightful theory is realized: Our purpose is the seed we need to grow like a tree, that is, our purpose is why we exist and the marriage ‘consciously’ built upon the agreement of two ‘adult’ individual purpose becomes the dynamite for attaining a legendary status of true and shared success. Dr. Myles Munroe provides the ground universal theory of purpose. He stated that the “greatest strategy in life is not death but a life without a purpose”, and also defined purpose as the reason for something existence, predetermined by its creator. For an individual, success is not the accumulation of wealth or status but the fulfillment of this inherent purpose. This

purpose, once discovered, births a “vision”, a clear, compelling picture of a preferred future that dictates goals, informs decision and provides unwavering motivations through challenges. Applying this to marriage, Munroe revolutionizes the concept. A marriage is an institution and like any institution, its success is dependent on the clarity of its mission. If two purposeless individuals unite, they form an agreement of lack, each seeking to get something from the other. This is a weak agreement. However, a marriage between two purpose-driven individuals is a covenant of divine wealth. In this type of marriage the partner blends perfectly into each other. They do not seek to take from the other but to complement each other perfectly. Dr. Chinyere Oko-Jaja spoke about this in her book “Before and After I do”. One of her perceptions was on ‘mixed marriages’ and I quote “God is orderly in His way, and cannot contradict Himself. God has a standard, an established principle”. This is to show that God frowns at disorderliness and he that knows the beginning to the end knows that any marriage that was built on a sandy foundation will crumble. In an orderly marriage, marital success is measured by the companionship and effectiveness of each couple in fulfilling their God-given purposes both individually and collectively.

Francine Rivers’ “The Atonement Child” serves as a perfect narrative case study of Dr. Chinyere Oko-Jaja and Dr. Myles Munroe’s principle in its discovery. In her book Dynah Carey’s life is said to be living a purposeful life but this was clearly driven by the will to please people. I refer to her initially as a ‘people pleaser’. Recall, I said earlier that we were initially trained to follow the pattern of go to school, get a job, marry, give birth to children. That is, initially what Dynah Carey saw as success. She dreamt of going to school, get married to Ethan and become a pastor’s wife. That was what she saw as her purpose in life. This is what I refer to as ‘Limited reasoning’. She felt her life was fixed already but everything changed when she experienced one of the most traumatic experiences. She was raped. This exposed who the so-called “Mr. Perfect” was to her. It brought out Ethan’s real character. That said, if she had married Ethan their marriage wouldn’t have lasted a week. And this is because their definition of marriage is different. Ethan symbolizes a life without true purpose. What he was seeking is based on a social checklist and approval. And when he felt this was not met he abandoned her. This to push Munroe’s philosophy that without self-discovery and purpose we’ll perish both in our academics, marriage and businesses. Ethan seeks for an external validation. That shouldn’t be part of us. We must “Give ourselves a definition and not wait for anyone to define us” as said by Dr. Chinyere Oko-Jaja. The pressure from her family and even church community furthermore shows a decay in the society. That led to a graceless judgement. Dynah’s rejection

by her Mr. Perfect, church community and even close family members stripped her of all external definition. She became an existentialist and started asking herself the most fundamental question in Munroe's book, 'Who am I', 'What's the purpose of my existence'. It was this that led her to a painful family secret and a personal conviction about the sacredness of life and so therefore decided to keep her baby. At the end of the novel she has attained her true purpose. She understood herself and life better. She became more resilient and happy. And this is what Dr. Myle's Munroe referred to as true happiness.

Dr. Chinyere Oko-Jaja book "Before and After I do" stated that every purpose must be intentional and that was why it provided the essential how of marriage. It also stated that a purposeful marriage must be nurtured. That is it must be intentional before marriage and continuously be nurtured. Her book is like an Architect blue print of what a purposeful and successful marriage is and should be. She insisted that everyone should seek and develop their own purpose before entering into marriage. Her motto is: Wholeness is a prerequisite for a healthy and successful life and marriage. Her strong point on communication as stated in the topic "Targeted courtship and engagement" is also a prerequisite for every marriage that aims to be at the forefront of success. She also stated that "each partner must be bold to share their thoughts, views and opinions and make contributions where necessary". If Dynah Carey and Ethan Goodson Turner hadn't had this communication their marriage would've led to an eventual disaster. That communication revealed their hidden incompatibility. It revealed Ethan's rigid mentality which would've crumbled their marriage. The "After I do" echo Munroe's call for self-discovery and actualization. It provides a tool to protect the purposeful relationship and married life. It noted that there'll be challenges in marriage but whatever the challenges are, the couples will remain strong and not waver or give up their marriage. Their purpose becomes the guide that answer all the 'why', 'what if' and 'how'.

In conclusion, these three works are the trinity that defines purpose and fulfillment in marriage and all round life. Dr. Myles Munroe defines success as the fulfillment of a God's given purpose and asserts that a marriage of two purposeful individuals is an agreement that even the heaven agrees with. Francine Rivers gave the consequences of not knowing ones purpose. She gave an exposition on that through Dynah's life and also the life of those around her like Evie. Therefore the journey to a successful life and marriage must be intentional and with clarity.

