

"Clinebell's book is so engaging and came to me at just the time I needed it in my life. With this book, he offers us hope, meaning and purpose in a turbulent world."

—Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, The Los Angeles Area of the United Methodist Church

SERVE JOY
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JOY LIFE
MEANING



Discover Your Path to Meaning, Power & Joy!

D O N A L D C L I N E B E L L

**THE
SERVICE
DRIVEN™
LIFE**

A gray silhouette of a person with their arms raised in a celebratory gesture, positioned to the right of the text 'DRIVEN™' and overlapping the word 'LIFE'.

Discover Your Path to Meaning, Power & Joy!

D O N A L D C L I N E B E L L

Praise for *The Service Driven Life*

“A privilege to read! I found myself saying a big ‘yes!’ to every line of *The Service Driven™ Life*. Donald Clinebell offers a unique and excellent educational and self-study guide book, introducing a revolutionary new way of discovering the path to meaning, power and joy. Through a beautifully blended form of biblical exposition, superb research, and his own spiritual experience, this compact volume provides practically and therapeutically a very resourceful tool for living—God-affirming, self-affirming, and affirming of others.

The Service Driven™ Life is an important work, a must-read companion to several of the writings of the late Dr. Howard Clinebell, the author’s father. (Howard Clinebell was Professor of Pastoral Counseling at Claremont School of Theology for nearly 35 years; a world renowned author, a pioneer in the pastoral care and counseling movement; and a founding President of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (“AAPC”).)

I wholeheartedly recommend *The Service Driven™ Life*! Not only to all Christians in the world today, but to all who seek meaning, power and joy in today’s broken world.”

— Dr. Steve Sangkwon Shim, Ph.D. (Claremont School of Theology, 1990)
*AAPC Diplomat, Executive Director, Korea Professional Psychotherapy
Institute - Seoul, Korea*

“*The Service Driven™ Life* is an amazing book! It is a brilliant combination of theological insight and practical guidelines for personal growth and fulfillment. This, and Donald’s passion, keen intellect, and excellent writing style make this a “must read.” Inspiring! Excellent for group study too.

— Rev. Dr. James King, Doctor of Rel.D
*Claremont School of Theology; United Methodist Minister (Ret.), 40
years; Instructor in Sociology and Marriage and Family (Ret.), California
Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.*

“Clinebell’s book is so engaging and came to me at just the time I needed it in my life. It touched the hunger and ache in my heart for the church, for every Christian, to be fully in the world where we belong. With this book, he offers us hope, meaning and purpose in a turbulent world.”

—Bishop Mary Ann Swenson
The Los Angeles Area of the United Methodist Church

The Service-Drive Life: Discover Your Path to Meaning, Power and Joy
by Donald Clinebell, J.D.

Published by HigherLife Development Services, Inc.
400 Fontana Circle
Building 1—Suite 105
Oviedo, Florida 32765
(407) 563-4806
www.ahigherlife.com

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ISBN 13:

ISBN 10:

Cover Design: Principle Design Group – David Whitlock

First Edition

12 13 14—9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

To my parents, Howard and Charlotte, who from the beginning
nourished my faith and taught me that I am filled with the capacity
to love and to serve.

I love you.

Acknowledgments

The writing of this book has truly been a joyful process. The book would not have come to fruition without the good work and many talents of the men and women of faith at HigherLife Development Services: President David Welday; Product Development Manager Nikki Jenkins; Marketing Coordinator Kristin Hester; and Senior Editor C. Hope Flinchbaugh. Hope's editing skills are evident throughout the book. The marketing skills of David Whitlock and Wes Harbour have been invaluable.

I am ever grateful for the love and support of my family during this process. My parents' unconditional love and support have been present throughout. My mother, Charlotte Ellen, encouraged me and believed I had something to say. She was a very helpful sounding board during the initial drafts. My father, Howard Clinebell, instilled in me a love of learning and writing. Sadly, he did not see the book come to fruition before his "final awakening." But during my work on the book, I have often felt his presence—which has increased both my faith and my love for him.

My precious children, Brennan and Tessa, are a constant source of joy in my life. I am very proud of each of them and love them dearly. I suspect that there were times during the writing of this book that I was less available than usual. I so appreciate their understanding in that.

And finally, my heartfelt thanks to Bonnie—whom I love and adore—for believing in the importance of this work and loving and supporting me throughout.

Sometimes this book seemed to write itself. I thank God for that. And I thank God for entrusting to me the message of *The Service Driven™ Life* and allowing me to share it with you, the reader. May God truly bless you.

In love and service,
Donald Clinebell
San Clemente, California

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*The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who will
have sought and found how to serve.*

—Albert Schweitzerⁱ

I live as a servant and thereby I am changed ... I am renewed.

—Mother Teresaⁱⁱ

Preface

A person starts to live when he can live outside himself.

—Albert Einsteinⁱⁱⁱ

Not long ago, I found myself standing in the self-improvement section of one of today's few popular "brick and mortar" bookstores. I was drawn by the smell of the books and distant coffee that mingled with the attractive book covers. I was struck by the sheer number of books, workbooks, audio tapes, and DVDs in this section of the bookstore, each designed to improve me. What I didn't find was help.

This book is not about self-improvement. But it can help you find what we all want—an abundant life, a life worth living. If you are looking for glib answers to unanswerable questions, this is not the book for you. If you want to get in shape, have the right journal, listen to the right tapes, walk on hot coals, have the right Blackberry or blueberry, the right iPhone or Droid or anything else, close this book now. But if you are looking for help as you address life's most important questions—or as Walt Whitman^{iv} so eloquently put it: "What good amid these, O me, O life?"—then read on.

C. S. Lewis^v once said, "We think our childish toys bring us all the happiness there is, and our nursery is the whole wide world. But something must drive us out of the nursery and into the world of others."

This book is about getting out of the nursery and moving into the world of others—not as conqueror or boss, and certainly not as a victim or rug to be trampled. *It's about emptying me of egoism—it is about leaving that lifestyle of self-absorption and self-focus—and filling our lives in service to others.* You may be reading this book at a time of personal loss, pain, sorrow, addiction, or loneliness. Or you may be grasping for joy, peace, a special relationship, or prosperity. We all want a wonderful life, but finding that place of wonder may take us to a surprising place. Are we truly willing to seek and find how to serve? Are we willing to serve others in every part of our lives—at home and in family, in vocation, and with our neighbor? Are we willing truly to live

as a servant? If so, we will find our lives filled with meaning, power and joy beyond measure! I invite you to embrace the service driven life.

Introduction

In late 1976, the world seemed a bleak, self-serving place to me. I tried to find meaning in the practice of law. I tried to find meaning in a marriage—then another. And I watched, almost from outside of myself, as the storybook ending of “happily ever after” simply didn’t happen. Sorrows replaced that expected happy ending: the loss of a child through miscarriage, a failed marriage. I *thought* I controlled everything, when in fact I controlled nothing. I found myself confined to a very dark place.

For me, the re-ordering of my life did not come by lightning bolt. It took time and it took work. It came step by step. And still does. The service driven life was not thrust upon me. With God’s help, I chose such a life and I live life today, empowered and renewed. In fact, the service driven life has radically moved me out of that dark, confining place to a place of great joy in service.

In the pages of this book, we will explore love and service in three places:

1. Through home and family, those most precious in our lives
2. Through vocation, the way in which many hours of our days and much of our substance are spent
3. Through service for our “neighbor,” in the literal and biblical senses

As we move out of self-absorption into the maturity of serving others, we gain the power to renew our minds and change, perhaps, decades of negative and controlling thinking. Although it’s hard, one of the best things we can do in a time of utter darkness is to take an honest look at ourselves and ask ourselves some important questions:

- How am I of service?
- How can I be of service?
- When God stands at the door (of my heart) and knocks, do I open the door?
- Am I too busy to listen to God, or do I allow God to lead me in service to others?

At the end of each chapter in this book, you will find scripture, devotional thoughts, and questions in an effort to help you focus and implement the ideas in the chapter. I want to encourage you to take your time with these most important questions. Write about them. Pray about them. Be patient with yourself. This is *your* life, nobody else's life. Think about your journey and your path. Pray. Be still ... and ask for help, His help. He is present on your path to meaning, power and joy!

As you seek to embrace the service driven life, you may want to explore the “avenues of service” in Appendix 2. Included there are a wide array of service choices which may help you to discover your path of service. As you consider these avenues of service, beware! That tug at your heart may be something quite wonderful, something quite unexpected—it may be God moving your life!

Chapter 1

The Service Driven Life

*Day breaks,
And the boy wakes up
And the dog barks,
And the bird sings
And the sap rises
And the angels sigh ...
—James Taylor^{vi}*

So what do you do when day breaks tomorrow morning and you'd rather not put your feet on the floor to face another day? Perhaps the song of the bird and the bark of the dog seem distant and angels a myth from childhood fairy tales. If life seems to be losing its day to day joy for you, you're reading the right book. Most likely, the answer is right in front of you but difficult to see right now.

Think of the happiest person you know—someone who seems to live life with energy, passion, and joy. Have you noticed how much time he or she devotes to serving others? How does that “happiest person” think of himself or herself? How would you describe that person's priorities? I have found that the happiest and most content person is the one who understands that the power and meaning in life is found in service.

The story is told of a life-long missionary, Mother Teresa, who for more than fifty years lived in the poverty and squalor of India helping the orphans, widows, and families who were the poorest of the poor in India. Late in her life, she was asked a simple but profound question.

“How can you live with such energy and passion in the midst of this pain and suffering?”

She answered, “I live as a servant and thereby I am changed ... I am renewed.”^{vii} A person who lives as a servant chooses to have no time for dark reflection, depression, fear, or self-doubt. Such a person sees meaning and purpose outside of herself, passion and joy within. Such a person finds herself with “an inner strength that survives all hurt”^{viii} and readily learns to grow in relationship with other human souls and with God.

Does this mean that each of us must seek purpose and meaning in mission work in a far off land? Is every person on our planet somehow called to live a life of self-denial among pain and suffering? No. Some are called to such daily work and they are indeed angels among us.

Matthew's gospel tells this story of Jesus' first encounter with Peter and his brother:

As He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And He said to them: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men and women.” Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. As He went from there, He saw two other brothers,

James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him (Matthew 4:18-22).

The same story is also told in the gospel of Mark in the first days of Jesus' ministry—when He called the disciples (Mark 1:16-20).

In this story, the fishermen are called to “follow Me.” They immediately, on the spot, leave their nets, their livelihoods, and their families, literally to follow Jesus as He begins His Galilean ministry. They serve Him. Does this mean that each of us is to drop everything—including our livelihood and family—to be of service? No. Or are we required to walk away from our house and vocation in order to find meaning, power and joy? No. Does it mean that the time is now to follow Him and be of service? Yes and yes!

Charles Kuralt^x tells the story of a seventy-eight-year-old farmer he met on the road in Virginia. Every year, the man visited a public park in the rural village where he lived. And every year, the man took vegetables grown in his own garden and left them randomly on the park's picnic tables so that there were vegetables distributed for anyone who might want or need them.

The farmer was asked, “Why do you do this?”

The farmer replied, “If you don't leave the world a better place than when you found it, what's the sense of your being here?”

The farmer was on to something, and he was not unlike the man who plants shade trees.: “A man or woman makes at least a start on understanding the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit.”^x Surely, part of the meaning of life is simply to give and to leave the world a better place than we found it. That's part of the meaning of life, but it's really only the beginning.

For most of us, our quest for meaning, empowerment, and joy in life begins when we take a hard look at ourselves and our relationship with God. Our fulfillment is found by learning to listen to God and learning to serve Him by serving others. When we truly embark upon the service driven life, we find our lives filled with meaning, power and great joy.

To order the full version of this book in either
print or ebook format, [click here](#).