

The Sisyphian task and the search for true purpose

Esforço sisíptico e a busca pelo verdadeiro propósito

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The impetus for achievement is linked to the reward system, more specifically, the proportion between perceived satisfaction and work performed. In the face of adversity, this balance will be constantly consulted and the results can be reflected in the motivation for any purpose in our lives. In the absence of a favorable relationship, with high load and absence or insignificance of perceived reward, we find ourselves in a Sisyphian scenario.

The myth of Sisyphus is built on the perspective of the ultimate punishment of the man who deceived the gods. Sisyphus was condemned to laboriously lift a heavy rock to the top of a mountain, only to watch it slide to the bottom as he prepared to resume the same work for all eternity [1]. The representation of suffering due to a purposeless existence is demonstrated in the tale of Greek mythology and, like the most beautiful productions of humanity, transcends the contextual narrative and allows us to contemplate and question our own lives.

We risk saying that working with purpose is one of the greatest challenges of human achievement, and that neither the desire nor the execution are designed individually. For example, great names in our history, such as Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, and Malala Yousafzai, achieved notable achievements as a result of joint work that aimed for achievements that transcend individual desires. In this sense, the process, even subject to inclement weather, becomes rewarding by having your compass adjusted to a clear destination, with a greater purpose.



Figure 1. Sisyphus, by Titian, 1549

Perhaps upon first reading this brief text, its purposes are still not clear. Usually, students and professionals plan their lives (when they do) based on financial remuneration and derivatives, as if this were the final results of a career of effort and success. However, despite its social importance, the relationship between remuneration and satisfaction does not follow a linear organization, making it necessary to reflect on which scales we will use to evaluate our lives and what the value of the next level will be, after all, using the wrong metrics, the time and dedication spent may not be worth the prize.

But how should we begin to think about our purposes? Perhaps one of the best ways to find your own path is to ask yourself what, within our areas/specialties, can we deliver to the world? This first step of reflection sets us apart from individual desires and grants us the ability to see further and in perspective. In this way, we will outline a directional framework that can fulfill us professionally and as human beings.

Effort and dedication are irrevocable factors [2] in the journey, and when programmed with the true purpose, they allow us to resist adversity and enjoy the process. So, it is up to us to hope that our steps follow clear paths towards the essential meaning of the true and glorious purpose.

References

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