

meaning in life questionnaire (mlq)

name: _____ date: _____

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life & existence feel important & significant to you. Respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers.

use the scale on the right to indicate how much you feel each statement is true or untrue for you		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		<i>absolutely untrue</i>	<i>mostly untrue</i>	<i>somewhat untrue</i>	<i>can't say true or false</i>	<i>somewhat true</i>	<i>mostly true</i>	<i>absolutely true</i>
1	I understand my life's meaning							
2	I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful							
3	I am always looking to find my life's purpose							
4	my life has a clear sense of purpose							
5	I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful							
6	I have discovered a satisfying life purpose							
7	I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant							
8	I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life							
9	my life has no clear purpose							
10	I am searching for meaning in my life							

the meaning in life questionnaire is subdivided into two components – "presence" and "search".

total for "presence" =

sum of answers to statements 1, 4, 5, 6 & 9 (9 is reverse scored, i.e. the score is subtracted from 8)

total for "search" =

sum of answers to statements 2, 3, 7, 8 & 10

Steger, M. F., P. Frazier, et al. (2006). "The meaning in life questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 53(1): 80-93.
<https://sites.google.com/site/michaelfsteger/themeaninginlifequestionnaire>

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In a study of 8,756 internet users, mean scores (with standard deviations) by age group were:

	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	overall
<i>presence of meaning</i>	23.9 (7.6)	22.4 (8.2)	24.7 (8.1)	26.9 (7.6)	23.5 (8.1)
<i>search for meaning</i>	25.6 (7.1)	25.9 (7.8)	23.3 (8.9)	21.3 (9.5)	24.8 (8.2)

Generally, in this survey, women tended to score a bit more highly than men – so the scores given above slightly underestimate typical scores for women and slightly overestimate those for men. Other surveys of meaning haven't shown this gender effect.

Overall, approximately 70% of people score in the range 15.4 to 31.6 for meaning presence (with about 15% scoring above and about 15% scoring below this range). Across all life stages, higher scores for the presence of meaning in life were associated (with a medium to strong effect size) with higher scores for life satisfaction. In general higher scores on measures of meaning have been shown cross-sectionally and on follow-up to be associated with higher wellbeing, better health, less psychological distress, less disability and greater life expectancy.

You can find out more precisely how your scores compare with people of your age & background by completing this test at www.authentic happiness.org.

Steger, M. F., S. Oishi, et al. (2009). "Meaning in life across the life span: Levels and correlates of meaning in life from emerging adulthood to older adulthood." *Journal of Positive Psychology* 4(1): 43 - 52.
