

Mickey Mouse Explains The Meaning of Life

A Short Story



We all have specific days that are etched in our memory—moments we’ll never forget.

Perhaps for you, it was the day of your graduation, your wedding, the birth of your children, or the passing of someone close to you. Moments like these never fade. They are as real today as the day they happened.

For me, one particular moment changed my life forever. You’ll think I’m exaggerating when I tell you what occurred, but I swear every word is true. It really happened, and I’ve never been the same since that day.

I want to tell you about the day Mickey Mouse explained the meaning of life to me.

Many autumns ago, I strolled down Main Street U.S.A. at Magic Kingdom. As I walked from beneath the shadows of the train station into the bright Florida sunshine, the smell of freshly popped popcorn grabbed my attention.

It was around 10 a.m. and too early to eat popcorn, so I resisted the temptation of the nearby cart. I weaved through the crowds and made my way to the town square. The air was filled with the beautiful harmonies of a live barbershop quartet, who quickly attracted a crowd. Adding to the music were the joyful squeals of children, who excitedly pulled their parents toward the centerpiece of Magic Kingdom: Cinderella Castle. The crowd moved toward the castle like fallen leaves gently carried by a breeze down a neighborhood street.

I took my time as I meandered along the sidewalk, casually looking in the windows of the specialty stores along Main Street. Kids and adults emerged from the Chapeau Hat Shop with traditional Mickey ears— freshly embroidered with their names—that they would wear for the rest of the day. The Confectionary offered sweets of every size, shape, and savor. At one point, I peered through a window and saw a Disney Cast Member decorating freshly chocolate-dipped strawberries on the other side of the glass. She smiled and gave me a wave as she placed a tray of those beauties right before me.

Next came Main Street Cinema, which wasn’t a movie theatre anymore. The whimsical storefront offered an array of Disney artwork. As I passed underneath the marquee, I

glanced toward the window. In an instant, my casual stroll came to an abrupt stop. I can't quite express how I felt the moment I saw it. All I know is that it took my breath away. I couldn't stop staring at it. Something about it wouldn't let me go.

It was a painting, a painting of Mickey Mouse.

In my lifetime, especially during my years as the leader of Cast Member Church, I've seen hundreds—even thousands—of paintings, drawings, and sculptures of Mickey Mouse. But something deep and meaningful made this painting different. To this day, I have never felt as moved by a picture of Mickey or any picture.

In the painting, Mickey was sitting on a stool with a big canvas on an easel in front of him and a paintbrush in his hand. He looked into a mirror, studying his features to create a self-portrait. However, what Mickey saw in the mirror and what he painted was different.

The image he was painting on the canvas was not his likeness in the mirror but the face of Walt Disney, Mickey's creator.

When Mickey Mouse peered into the mirror, he saw the face of his creator.

Time stood still as I stared at the painting. People passed behind me and in front of me, oblivious to the masterpiece in their midst. I couldn't believe people didn't notice what I saw in this beautiful work of art. Something unique happened to me there in front of the painting; God spoke these words into my heart:

"This is the meaning of life."

According to the voice in my heart that I was sure was God, this painting revealed an answer to a question I didn't know I had been asking.



I tore myself away from the painting and joined my friends for a day filled with riding attractions and seeing shows throughout Magic Kingdom. Regardless of our activities, that painting continued to linger in my mind.

After the nighttime fireworks, we walked back down Main Street toward the exit. I went to see the painting one more time. While I took what I thought was my final look, a Cast Member at the entrance near the window informed me I could purchase a print of that very painting. I didn't even ask her how much it was. I left Magic Kingdom that night with my beloved new artwork, rolled up and sealed in a round canister. Within a week, I had it framed. To this day, it has hung in either my home or my office— front and center for all to see.

That painting has become a fundamental focal point in my home of the human desire to know our true identity. Deep down, we instinctively know that we exist to reflect something more than ourselves to the world. Mickey so eloquently revealed in that painting how our purpose is to reflect the very essence of our Creator.

Many years have passed. Today, I live about five minutes from Magic Kingdom. I treasure the significance of this print on my wall more with each passing day. What could be so powerful about a painting—especially one of Mickey Mouse—to cause a person to discover the meaning of life with indescribable clarity?

The answer is found in the mirror Mickey Mouse is looking into.

When I walked down Main Street, U.S.A., and happened to glance into a window at a painting of Mickey Mouse, God changed my life in an instant. He gave me a picture to remind me that seeing His reflection in the mirror is my deepest longing.

And that reflecting is what gives my life meaning.

This is an excerpt from A Guide to a Life Beyond Imagination by Steven L. Barr, available on Amazon. (c) 2019 This week, we will be talking about learning our true identities. We will be posting talking points every day on FB and IG. You will also find a follow-up blog and video as well. We will post content around living the adventure Jesus has invited you into for you to use in your CMC: 3•2•1, your CMC: God Conversations, or your particular Kingdom Expression. This content will also be available in French and Spanish. You can find this story, resources, and more at CastMemberChurch.com.

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