

THE MEANING OF LIFE

It's the new year; a time when people often reflect on their lives and make resolutions for change.

When we look around at how other people are using their lives, we sometimes wonder how best to use our own. We wonder what lessons we have actually learned traveling this mysterious journey.

We started a tradition three years ago by asking Gateway readers to share the knowledge they have gleaned from living. We continue today with the collective wisdom and belly smarts of six more notable lives.



JAFAR TAGHAVI
CEO OF PENINSULA LIGHT CO.

I believe that our perception of what life means is shaped by the events or defining moments that occur throughout our lives.

As a younger man working on my graduate degree at Ohio State University, I was determined to be the best that I could be in my career. When I entered the world of employment as an electrical engineer, I was driven by my career and determination to be successful. I worked long hours to prove my abilities and quickly advanced my career.

I realize now that I would have been a difficult person to work for 20 years ago. I demanded perfection from myself and others and wasn't pleased if the results were less.

Over the years, I developed long term friendships, raised a family and maintained a strong connection to my parents and siblings. Like many of you, I lost some of those that I was close to and over time realized that life is too short and precious to worry about achieving "true perfection."

Creating a work environment that is healthy, challenging and enjoyable is what is needed for all us to want to report to work. We need a balance between a professional work environment and one in which we can also enjoy laughter and lighter moments. We need to be supportive of our efforts and accomplishments and learn from our misfortunes.

I have learned that our time spent here is a privilege; with each day presenting a fresh opportunity to forgive the past and to live for those precious moments that really matter. As we begin a new year, let's reflect on what is truly important. It seems unimaginable that our time here is not without a profound sense of purpose.