

Leo tolstoy's war and peace and the search for the meaning of life

[Experience](#), [Meaning of Life](#)



In search of the meaning of life (War and Peace)

Leo Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace" has become one of the most important works of world literature, affecting the moral problems and giving answers to such important historical and philosophical questions that relate to the meaning of life of the individual and its role in the history of mankind.

For example, moral search of central characters of the novel, that the author shows, helps the reader learn how to highlight in their lives the most important thing, to send their strength and talents in the right direction.

Portraying modern for his age society, Tolstoy clearly divides its members into those who are constantly in search, who do not meet generally accepted standards of behavior, who can not rest on its laurels and are constantly improving their soul, and those who go with the flow and are afraid to look inside themselves, who prefer to succumb to the established rules of life. That is why heroes like Andrew and Mary Bolkonsky, Pierre, Natasha and Nikolai Rostov are best of people among noble Russian families, that are clearly opposed to families like Kuragin, Boris Drubetskoy, Colonel Berg and many other representatives of the secular society.

The last-mentioned see the meaning of their lives in the welfare augmentation with help of advantageous marriage, friendly service position or winning at cards. These people talk about the beautiful homeland, patriotism, politics, but in fact, are not interested in these concepts. All they really care about is their personal safety, narrow family welfare and career development. Vasiliy Kuragin, considering himself a subtle politician,

respected by many in the secular society, is just really busy thinking about how to better arrange their children: send Hippolyte to Vienna, successfully marry off insensible and selfish beautiful Helene. For the sake of building up his state of Vasiliy is willing to sell his daughter to steal the last will of Bezukhov. For the sake of wealth and high position in the world he is capable of any meanness, and this feature is fully passed on to his children: depraved and cunning Helene is ready to sell her beauty, Anatole and Hippolyte lead an idle life and are ready to break people's lives just to satisfy their desires.

Anna Drubetskaya is ready to flatter to the whole world, just to put in a good word for her son, and Boris marries rich but middle-aged Julie, hoping that the state and the noble relationship of his wife will help him to achieve great heights. Colonel Berg is committed to having a life "like everyone else". It is particularly shocking when he buys prized possessions, furniture from Frenchmen and asks Count Rostov for horses to take all that stuff.

And that's not all representatives of the "noble class", which have deeply selfish desires. They are willing to sell their soul for money, they talk, think and live untruly. That is why in difficult moments for the country, when there's war, these people are cowards, incapable not only to defend the homeland, but even for the salvation of themselves.

Quite different are the better people of the novel. Despite her youth and inexperience, Natasha Rostova immediately attracts the attention as a sincere and deeply sensitive person, that has the best human qualities:

kindness, self-sacrifice and compassion, the ability to love and to devote all her forces out to make a happy life for her loved ones and to help those in need. It takes time for careless and ever enthusiastic young girl to turn into Natalia Rostova – dedicated and attentive daughter, loving and faithful wife, a caring mother. Natalia Rostova had managed to keep her soul pure and loving.

The same soul belongs to Pierre, who had to endure more than one test before coming to his true life purpose. Pierre's merit is that, in spite of his timid character, he still managed to overcome his fear and indecision, learned to control his own destiny and the fate of loved ones. Pierre is not afraid to start all over again and make mistakes. At crucial stages Pierre behaves like a real hero, he is not afraid of death and he is sincerely willing to sacrifice his life for the salvation of all mankind.

Bolkonsky has quite other way to truth. In the beginning, he appears as a dissatisfied secular nobleman officer, with outspoken dissatisfaction by the generally accepted norms of behavior and the secular way of life. Being fully covered by vain dreams, he breaks into a war on the battlefield. And the war itself, with its cruelty and truth opens his eyes and makes him see the world differently. He gets closer to ordinary people, soldiers and peasants – and realizes how empty and worthless his aspirations.

And also Maria Bolkonskaya, who strongly believes in God, and this belief leads her life, helps to cope with the difficulties, remain good, honest, helpful to others. Nikolai Rostov appears as a courageous, generous and good man.

All of them are brought up in the spirit of true patriotism, diligence and high morality, that's why these people attach great importance to such concepts as mind, conscience, decency and honesty. All these people are able to truly love and sacrifice themselves for the sake of happiness of their loved ones, they know how to be compassionate and selflessly help those who are in trouble and need help. But the most important thing that elevates these characters and puts them in a centre - it is their ability not to succumb to external circumstances and to maintain their dignity in spite of everything, in any situation to remain true to themselves and their life