

# **FINDING YOUR LIFE PURPOSE**



**AN UNCONVENTIONAL GUIDE  
TO FIGURING OUT WHAT TO  
DO WITH YOUR LIFE**

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# **“WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY LIFE?”**

If you're reading this, then you're lucky enough to even have the *option* of asking yourself, “What should I do with my life? What's my purpose here on Earth?”

Think about it: for the vast majority of human history, meaning and purpose were forged by banding together in tight-knit communities with the sole aim of delaying collective death by a few extra years.

Humans probably didn't sit around and over analyze whether they should dedicate their lives to making buckskin loin cloths or better arrowheads or gathering more berries. Life may have been short and brutal, but it was simple: just do whatever needs to be done to stay alive.

But over time, being the smart little fuckers that we are, we figured out how to eliminate a lot of awful ways to die. We then turned our ingenuity to figuring out a lot of ways to make ourselves healthier, more comfortable, more entertained, and so on.

And while this progress has created innumerable benefits for our species, it's also left us wondering what the hell we're supposed to do with all this time that used to be spent foraging for nuts and finding a nice tree to sleep under.

And because of this, most of us have no clue what we want to do with our lives. Even after we finish school. Even after we get a job. Even after we're making money.

Between ages 18 and 25, I changed [career aspirations](#) more often than I changed my underwear. And even after I had a business, it took another four years to clearly define what I wanted for my life.

Chances are, you're like me and have no clue what you want to do.



It's a struggle almost every adult goes through. "What do I want to do with my life?" "What am I [passionate](#) about?" "What do I not suck at?" I often receive emails from people in their 40s and 50s who still have no clue what they want to do with themselves.

Part of the problem is the concept of "life purpose" itself—the idea that we were each born for some higher purpose and it's now our cosmic mission to find it. As I said, it's actually a modern luxury to even be able to consider what we *should* do with our lives.

Here's the truth. We exist on this earth for some undetermined period of time. During that time we do things. Some of these things are important. Some of them [are unimportant](#). And those important things [give our lives meaning](#) and [happiness](#). The unimportant ones basically just kill time.

So when people say, "What should I do with my life?" or "What is my life purpose?" what they're actually asking is: "*What can I do with my time that is important?*"

This is an infinitely better question to ask. It's far more manageable and it doesn't have all of the ridiculous baggage that the "life purpose" question does. There's no reason for you to be contemplating the cosmic significance of your life while sitting on your couch all day eating Doritos. Rather, you should be [getting off your ass](#) and discovering what feels important to you.

One of the most common email questions I get is people asking me what they should do with their lives, what their "life purpose" is. This is an impossible question for me to answer. After all, for all I know, this person is really into knitting sweaters for kittens or filming gay bondage porn in their basement. I have no clue. Who am I to say what's right or what's important to them?

We'll get to the specifics of how you can figure that out soon, but first, you and me, we need to have a talk. We need to get on the same page about a few things like the role of "passion" in all of this, about the value of pain and being uncomfortable, and even about your death.

And that's where we'll start: your death.

# PART 1: FIND WHAT YOU LOVE AND LET IT KILL YOU

*“We’re all going to die, all of us. What a circus! That alone should make us love each other, but it doesn’t. We are terrorized and flattened by trivialities; we are eaten up by nothing.”*

- Charles Bukowski

Yes, we’re all going to die. You and me and everyone else. One day, eventually, that fateful moment will come calling and take us all away.

When we die isn’t even really the interesting question, as once you’re dead you won’t be around to care about what you did or didn’t do.

No, the interesting question is how we die. Will it be cancer? Cardiac arrest? Anthrax attack? Choking on a pretzel?

Me? I’m holding out for parachute failure. Or maybe a plane crash.

OK, not really, but sometimes [when I’m on a plane](#), and we’re landing and there’s terrible weather, I start daydreaming about what a crash would be like—the oxygen masks falling, women shrieking, babies crying; maybe I’d reach across the aisle and hold a total stranger’s hand in a final dramatic gesture as we wait for the inevitable together. The earth would sweep upon us and together we’d be slammed into eternity.

Luckily that hasn’t happened yet. But it’s exciting to think about.

When we think about our own deaths we typically think about the final moments. The hospital beds. The crying family. The ambulances. We don’t think about the long string of choices and habits which lead to those final moments.



You could say that our death is a work-in-progress [over the course of our lives](#)—each breath, each bite, each swallow, each late night and missed traffic light, each laugh and scream and cry and crashing fist and lonely sigh—they each bring us one step closer to our own dramatic denouement from this world.

So the better question isn't when you're going to die. It's what are you choosing as your vehicle to get there? If everything you do each day brings you closer to death in its own unique and subtle way, then what are you choosing to let kill you?

## **WITH PASSION COMES PAIN**

The author and poet Charles Bukowski once said “Find what you love and let it kill you.”

Bukowski was a shameless drinker, womanizer, and all-around fuck up. He would get drunk on stage at his poetry readings and verbally abuse his audience. He gambled a lot of his money away and had an unfortunate habit of exposing himself in public.

But underneath Bukowski's disgusting exterior was a deep and introspective man with more character than most.

Bukowski spent most of his life broke, drunk, and getting fired from various jobs. Eventually, he ended up working in a post office filing letters. All his life he wrote fruitlessly, a total unknown and a loser. He wrote for almost 30 years before finally getting his first book deal. It was a meager deal. When accepting it, he wrote, “I have one of two choices—stay in the post office and go crazy ... or stay out here and play at writer and starve. I have decided to starve.”



*Charles Bukowski. Image Bukowski.net*

In my opinion, the honesty in his writing—his fears, [failures](#), [regrets](#), self-destruction, [emotional dysfunction](#)—it is unparalleled. He will tell you the best and worst of himself without flinching, without shifting his eyes or even muttering a “sorry about that” as an afterthought. He wrote about both shame and pride without qualification. His writing was equanimous—a silent embrace of the horrible and beautiful man that he was.

And what Bukowski understood, which most people don’t, is that the best things in life can sometimes be ugly. Life is messy, and [we’re all a little screwed up](#) in our own special snowflake kind of way. He never understood the baby boomer obsession with [peace and happiness](#) or the idealism that came along with it. He understood that you don’t get



one side without the other. You don't get [love without pain](#). You don't get meaning and profundity without sacrifice.

The concept of [life purpose](#) has exploded in popularity in recent decades. We don't just want to make money or build a secure career. We want to [do something important](#). We want to be noticed. We want to be looked up to.

Meaning is the new luxury.

But like any other luxury, we [idealize meaning](#). People believe that all you have to do is find the thing—that one bloody thing!—that you are “meant” to do, and suddenly, everything will click into place. You'll do it until the day you die and always feel [fulfilled and happy](#) and prance with unicorns and rainbows while making a million dollars in your pajamas.

But we just need that one thing—if only we knew [what we were meant to do](#), then everything would fit into place!

And while it's possible to brainstorm some ideas to help one get started, finding meaning and purpose is not a five-day spa retreat. It's a fucking hike through mud and shit with golf-ball-sized hail pelting you in the face. And you have to love it. You really have to love it.

As Bukowski said, “What matters most is how well you walk through the fire.”

Finding the [passion](#) and [purpose](#) in your life is a trial-by-fire process. You don't simply wake up one day and become happy doing one thing forever and ever. Like death, it's a constant work-in-progress. You must [try something](#), pay attention to how it feels, [adjust and then try again](#). Nobody gets it right on the first try, or the tenth or sometimes even the two-hundredth.

And then, when you do get it right, it's liable to one day change.  
[Because you change.](#)

*“Writing is easy; all you have to do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until the drops of blood form on your forehead.”*

– Gene Fowler

And what Bukowski understood more than most was that doing what you love is not always loving what you do. There's an inherent sacrifice to it. Just like [choosing a spouse](#), it's not choosing someone who makes you happy all the time, it's [choosing somebody](#) who you want to be with even when they're pissing you off.



It's something that feels like an inevitability, like you have no choice because this is simply who you are, dysfunction and all. It's your chosen vehicle towards death. And you're happy to let it take you

there. But you're under no illusions that it won't be a bumpy ride or without surprises along the way.

- Your study of speech therapy may lead you to voice acting which may turn into a career in children's cartoons and then you may decide at age 55 that children's cartoons are [corrupted by corporate interests](#) and you spend the rest of your days sketching comics you love but never publish.
- Your interest in fitness may lead you to a deeper interest in posture and form which then gets you into coaching people on body language and sub-communication. This leads you into a consulting business, but after dealing with the surface level issues for years, you discover that the body molds itself to match [repressed emotions](#). So you take your big consulting pension, say fuck it, and open up an acupuncture and massage clinic where you dedicate the last of your days to promoting [mind-body awareness](#).

Just like few of us experience love at first sight, few will experience passion and meaning at first experience. Like a relationship, we must build it from scratch, piece-by-piece, until after years of brick and sweat, it can stand on its own.

And once we're there, like a plane in full nosedive, we let it take us to our grave, holding hands, blanketed upon the earth in a laughing roar of wind and fire and love.

"We're here to laugh at the odds," Bukowski said, "and live our lives so well that Death will tremble to take us."

And when Death does come, how will he take you?

## PART 2: THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION OF YOUR LIFE

With the whole death talk out of the way, let's talk about life—your life, specifically.

Take a few seconds to think of what you want out of life.

Is it happiness? More money? A better job? More friends? The love over your life? A really bitchin' new sofa?

Look, everybody wants what feels good. Everyone wants to live a carefree, happy and easy life, to fall in love and have amazing sex and



relationships, to look perfect and make money and be popular and well-respected and admired and a total baller to the point that people part like the Red Sea when you walk into the room.

Everyone would like that—it's easy to like that.



If I ask you, “What do you want out of life?” and you say something like, “I want to [be happy](#) and have a great family and a job I like,” it’s so ubiquitous and banal that it doesn’t even mean anything.

A more interesting question, a question that perhaps you’ve never considered before, is *what pain do you want in your life?*

What are you willing to struggle for? Because that seems to be a greater determinant of how our lives turn out.

Everybody wants to have an [amazing job](#) and financial independence—but not everyone wants to suffer through 60-hour work weeks, long commutes, obnoxious paperwork, to navigate arbitrary corporate hierarchies and the blasé confines of an infinite cubicle hell. People want to be rich without [the risk](#), without the sacrifice, without the delayed gratification [necessary to accumulate wealth](#).

Everybody wants to have great sex and an [awesome relationship](#)—but not everyone is willing to go through the tough conversations, the awkward silences, the hurt feelings, and the emotional psychodrama to get there. And so they settle. They settle and wonder “What if?” for years and years until the question morphs from “What if?” into “Was that it?” And when the lawyers go home and the alimony check is in the mail they say, “What was that for?” if not for their lowered standards and expectations 20 years prior, then what for?

Because [happiness requires struggle](#). The positive is the side effect of handling the negative. You can only avoid negative experiences for so long before they come roaring back to life.

At the core of all human behavior, our needs are more or less similar. Positive experience is easy to handle. It’s negative experience that we all, by definition, struggle with. Therefore, what we get out of life is not

determined by the good feelings we desire but by what bad feelings we're [willing and able to sustain](#) to get us to those good feelings.

People want an amazing physique. But you don't end up with one unless you legitimately appreciate the pain and physical stress that comes with living inside a gym for hour upon hour, unless you love calculating and calibrating [the food you eat](#), planning your life out in tiny, plate-sized portions.



People want to [start their own business](#) or become financially independent. But you don't end up a successful entrepreneur unless you find a way to appreciate the risk, the uncertainty, the repeated failures, and working insane hours on something you have no idea whether will be successful or not.



People want a partner, a spouse. But you don't end up attracting [someone amazing](#) without appreciating the emotional turbulence that comes with weathering rejections, building the sexual tension that never gets released, and staring blankly at a phone that never rings. It's part of the game of love. You can't win if you don't play.

What determines your success isn't "What do you want to enjoy?" The question is, "What pain do you want to sustain?" The quality of your life is not determined by the quality of your positive experiences but the quality of your negative experiences. And to get good at dealing with negative experiences is to get good at dealing with life.

There's a lot of [crappy advice](#) out there that says, "You've just got to want it enough!"

Everybody wants something. And everybody [wants something enough](#). They just aren't aware of what it is they want, or rather, what they want "enough."

Because if you want the benefits of something in life, you have to also want [the costs](#).

If you want the beach body, you have to want the sweat, the soreness, the early mornings, and the hunger pangs.

If you want the yacht, you have to also want the late nights, the risky business moves, and the possibility of pissing off a person or ten thousand.

If you find yourself wanting something month after month, year after year, [yet nothing happens](#) and you never come any closer to it, then maybe what you [actually want is a fantasy](#), an idealization, an image and a false promise. Maybe what you want isn't what you want, you just enjoy wanting. Maybe you don't actually want it at all.

Sometimes I ask people, “How do you choose to suffer?” These people tilt their heads and look at me like I have twelve noses.

But I ask because that tells me far more about you than your desires and fantasies. Because you have to choose something. You can’t have a pain-free life. It can’t all be roses and unicorns. And ultimately that’s the hard question that matters.

Pleasure is an easy question. And pretty much all of us have similar answers. The more interesting question is the pain. What is the pain that you want to sustain?

That answer will actually [get you somewhere](#). It’s the question that can change your life. It’s what makes me me and you you. It’s what defines us and separates us and ultimately brings us together.

For most of my adolescence and young adulthood, I fantasized about being a musician—a rock star, in particular.

Any badass [guitar](#) song I heard, I would always close my eyes and envision myself up on stage playing it to the screams of the crowd, people absolutely losing their minds to my sweet finger-noodling.

This fantasy could keep me occupied for hours on end.

The fantasizing continued up through college, even after I dropped out of music school and stopped playing seriously. But even then it was never a question of if I’d ever be up playing in front of screaming crowds, but when. I was biding my time before I could invest the proper amount of time and effort into getting out there and making it work.

First, I needed to finish school. Then, I needed to make money. Then, I needed to find the time. Then... and then nothing.

Despite fantasizing about this for over half of my life, the reality never came. And it took me a long time and a lot of negative experiences to finally figure out why: I didn't actually want it.



I was in love with the result—the image of me on stage, people cheering, me rocking out, pouring my heart into what I'm playing—but I wasn't in love with the process. And because of that, I failed at it. Repeatedly.

Hell, I didn't even try hard enough to fail at it. I hardly tried at all.

The daily drudgery of practicing, the logistics of finding a group and rehearsing, the pain of finding gigs and actually getting people to show up and give a shit. The broken strings, the blown tube amp, hauling 40 pounds of gear to and from rehearsals with no car. It's a mountain of a dream and a mile-high climb to the top. And what it took me a long

time to discover is that I didn't like to climb much. I just liked to imagine the top.

Our culture would tell me that I've somehow failed myself, that I'm a quitter or a loser.

[Self-help](#) would say that I either wasn't courageous enough, determined enough or I didn't believe in myself enough.

The entrepreneurial/start-up crowd would tell me that I chickened out on my dream and gave in to my conventional social conditioning. I'd be told to do affirmations or join a mastermind group or manifest or something.

But the truth is far less interesting than that: I thought I wanted something, but it turns out I didn't. End of story.

I wanted the reward and not the struggle. I wanted the result and not the process. I was in love not with the fight but only the victory. And [life doesn't work that way](#).

Who you are is defined by the [values you are willing to struggle for](#). People who enjoy the struggles of a gym are the ones who get in good shape. People who enjoy long workweeks and the politics of the corporate ladder are the ones who move up it. People who enjoy the stresses and uncertainty of the starving artist lifestyle are ultimately the ones who live it and make it.

This is not a call for willpower or "grit." This is not another admonishment of "no pain, no gain."

This is the most simple and basic component of life: our struggles determine our successes.

So choose your struggles wisely, my friend.

# **PART 3: 7 STRANGE QUESTIONS THAT HELP YOU FIND YOUR LIFE PURPOSE**

By now, you should be starting to see that figuring this part of your life out is a *process*. And it's a process that involves some degree of discomfort and even pain at times.

What's more is that it's a process that you have to do on your own. No one else can or will do it for you.

That said, I've come up with a short list of questions to help you get started figuring out just what the hell to do with your life.

These questions are by no means exhaustive or definitive. In fact, they're a little bit ridiculous. But I made them that way because discovering purpose in our lives should be something that's fun and interesting, not a chore.

## **1. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FLAVOR OF SHIT SANDWICH AND DOES IT COME WITH AN OLIVE?**

Ah, yes. The all-important question. What flavor of shit sandwich would you like to eat? Because here's the sticky little truth about life that they don't tell you at high school pep rallies:

**Everything sucks, some of the time.**

Now, this is, like, the eighth time I've said this already, so I'm probably starting to sound incredibly pessimistic. And you may be thinking, "Hey Mr. Manson, turn that frown upside down."

But I actually think this is a liberating idea.

Everything involves sacrifice. Everything includes [some sort of cost](#). Nothing is pleasurable or uplifting all of the time. So, the question becomes: what struggle or sacrifice are you willing to tolerate?

Ultimately, what determines our ability to [stick with something we care](#) about is our ability to handle the rough patches and ride out the [inevitable rotten days](#).

If you want to be a brilliant tech entrepreneur, but you can't [handle failure](#), then you're not going to make it far.

If you want to be a professional artist, but you aren't willing to see your work rejected hundreds, if not thousands of times, then you're done before you start.



If you want to be a hotshot court lawyer, but can't stand the 80-hour workweeks, then I've got bad news for you.

What unpleasant experiences are you able to handle? Are you able to stay up all night coding? Are you able to put off starting a family for 10 years? Are you able to have people laugh you off the stage over and over again until you get it right?

What shit sandwich do you want to eat? Because we all get served one eventually.

And your favorite shit sandwich is your competitive advantage. By definition, anything that you're willing to do (that you enjoy doing) that most people are not willing to do gives you a huge leg-up.



So, find your favorite shit sandwich. And you might as well pick one with an olive.

## **2. WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT YOU TODAY THAT WOULD MAKE YOUR 8-YEAR-OLD SELF CRY?**

When I was a child, I used to write stories. I used to sit in my room for hours by myself, writing away about aliens, about superheroes, about great warriors, about my friends and family. Not because I wanted anyone to read it. Not because I wanted to impress my parents or teachers. But for the sheer joy of it.

And then, for some reason, I stopped. And I don't remember why.

We all have a tendency to lose touch with what we loved as a child. Something about the social pressures of adolescence and professional pressures of young adulthood squeezes the passion out of us. We're taught that the only reason to do something is if we're [somehow rewarded for it](#). And the transactional nature of the world inevitably stifles us and makes us feel lost or stuck.

It wasn't until I was [in my mid-20s](#) that I rediscovered how much I loved writing. And it wasn't until I started my business that I remembered how much I enjoyed building websites—something I did in my early teens, just for fun.

The funny thing though, is that if my 8-year-old self asked my 20-year-old self, “Why don't you write anymore?” and I replied, “Because I'm not good at it,” or “Because nobody would read what I write,” or “Because you can't make money doing that,” not only would I have been completely wrong, but that eight-year-old-boy version of me would have probably started crying.

That eight-year-old boy didn't care about Google traffic or social media virality or book advances. He just wanted to play.

And that's where passion always begins: with a sense of play.

### **3. WHAT MAKES YOU FORGET TO EAT AND POOP?**

We've all had that experience where we get so wrapped up in something that minutes turn into hours and hours turn into "Holy crap, I forgot to have dinner."

Supposedly, in his prime, Isaac Newton's mother had to regularly come in and remind him to eat because he would spend entire days so absorbed in his work that he would forget.

I used to be like that with video games. This probably wasn't a good thing. In fact, for many years it was kind of a problem. I would sit and play video games instead of doing more important things like studying for an exam, or showering regularly, or [speaking to other humans face-to-face](#).

It wasn't until I gave up the games that I realized my passion wasn't for the games themselves (although I do love them). My passion is for [improvement](#), being good at something and then trying to get better. The games themselves—the graphics, the stories—they were cool, but I can easily live without them. It's the competition with others and with myself that I thrive on.

And when I applied that obsessiveness for [self-improvement](#) and competition to an internet business and [to my writing](#), well, things took off in a big way.

Maybe for you, it's something else. Maybe it's organizing things efficiently, or getting lost in a fantasy world, or teaching somebody something, or solving technical problems. Whatever it is, don't just

look at the activities that keep you up all night, but look at the cognitive principles behind those activities that enthrall you. Because they can easily be applied elsewhere.

#### **4. HOW CAN YOU BETTER EMBARRASS YOURSELF?**

Before you are able to be good at something and do something important, you must first suck at something and have no clue what you're doing. That's pretty obvious. And in order to suck at something and have no clue what you're doing, you must embarrass yourself in some shape or form, often repeatedly. And most people try to avoid embarrassing themselves, mainly because it sucks.

Ergo, due to the [transitive property of awesomeness](#), if you avoid anything that could potentially embarrass you, then you will never end up doing something that feels important.

Yes, it seems that once again, it all comes back to [vulnerability](#).

Right now, there's [something you want to do](#), something you think about doing, something you fantasize about doing, yet you don't do it. You have your reasons, no doubt. And you repeat these reasons to yourself ad infinitum.

But what are those reasons? Because I can tell you right now that if those reasons are based on [what others would think](#), then you're screwing yourself over big time.

If your reasons are something like, "I can't [start a business](#) because spending time with my kids is more important to me," or "Playing Starcraft all day would probably interfere with my music, and music is more important to me," then OK. Sounds good.

But if your reasons are, "My [parents would hate it](#)," or "My friends would make fun of me," or "If I failed, I'd look like an idiot," then

chances are, you're actually avoiding something you truly care about because caring about that thing is what scares the shit out of you, not what mom thinks or what Timmy next door says.



Living a life avoiding embarrassment is akin to living a life with your head in the sand.

Great things are, by their very nature, unique and unconventional. Therefore, to achieve them, we must go against the herd mentality. And to do that is scary.

Embrace embarrassment. Feeling foolish is part of the path to achieving something important, something meaningful. The more a major life decision scares you, chances are the more you need to be doing it.

## 5. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD?

In case you haven't seen the news lately, the world has a few problems. And by "a few problems," what I really mean is, "everything is fucked and we're all going to die."

I've harped on this before, and the research also bears it out, but to live a happy and healthy life, we must hold on to values that are greater than our own pleasure or satisfaction.

So pick a problem and start saving the world. There are plenty to choose from. Our screwed up [education systems](#), economic development, domestic violence, [mental health care](#), governmental corruption. Hell, I just saw an article this morning on [sex trafficking in the US](#) and it got me all riled up and wishing I could do something. It also ruined my breakfast.

Find a problem you care about and start solving it. Obviously, you're not going to fix the world's problems by yourself. But you can contribute and make a difference. And that feeling of making a difference is ultimately what's most important for your own happiness and fulfillment. And importance equals purpose.

Now, I know what you're thinking. "Gee Mark, I read all of this horrible stuff and I get all pissed off too, but that doesn't translate to action, much less a new career path."

Glad you asked...

## **6. GUN TO YOUR HEAD, IF YOU HAD TO LEAVE THE HOUSE ALL DAY, EVERY DAY, WHERE WOULD YOU GO AND WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

For many of us, the enemy is just old-fashioned complacency. We get into our routines. We distract ourselves. The couch is comfortable. The Doritos are cheesy. And [nothing new happens](#).

This is a problem.

**What most people don't understand is that passion is the [result of action](#), not the cause of it.**

Discovering [what you're passionate about in life](#) and what matters to you is a full-contact sport, a trial-and-error process. None of us know exactly how we feel about an activity until we actually do the activity.

So ask yourself, if someone put a gun to your head and forced you to leave your house every day for everything except for sleep, how would you choose to occupy yourself? And no, you can't just go sit in a coffee shop and browse [Facebook](#). You probably already do that.

Let's pretend there are no useless websites, no video games, no TV. You have to be outside of the house all day every day until it's time to go to bed—where would you go and what would you do?

Sign up for a dance class? Join a book club? Go get another degree? Invent a new form of irrigation system that can save the thousands of children's lives in rural Africa? Learn to hang glide?

What would you do with all of that time?

If it strikes your fancy, write down a few answers and then, you know, go out and actually do them. Bonus points if it involves embarrassing yourself.



## 7. IF YOU KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO DIE ONE YEAR FROM TODAY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO AND HOW WOULD YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?

Most of us don't like thinking about death. It freaks us out. But thinking about our own death surprisingly has a lot of practical advantages.

One of those advantages is that it forces us to zero in on what's actually important in our lives and what's just frivolous and distracting.



*This man's headstone will read: "Here lies Greg. He watched every episode of '24'... twice."*

When I was in college, I used to walk around and ask people, "If you had a year to live, what would you do?" As you can imagine, I was a

huge hit at parties. A lot of people gave vague and boring answers. A few drinks were nearly spat on me. But it did cause people to really think about their lives in a different way and [re-evaluate what their priorities were](#).

Ultimately, death is the only thing that gives us perspective on the value of our life. Because it's only by imagining your non-existence that you can get a sense of what is most important about your existence.

What is your legacy going to be? What are the stories people are going to tell when you're gone? What is your obituary going to say? Is there anything to say at all? If not, what would you like it to say? How can you start working towards that today?

And again, if you fantasize about your obituary saying a bunch of badass shit that impresses a bunch of random other people, then you're failing here too.

When people feel like they have no sense of direction, no purpose in their life, it's because they don't know what's important to them, they don't know what their values are.

And when you [don't know what your values are](#), then you're essentially taking on other people's values and living other people's priorities instead of your own. This is a one-way ticket to [unhealthy relationships](#) and eventual [misery](#).

Discovering one's "purpose" in life essentially boils down to finding those one or two things that are bigger than yourself, and bigger than those around you. It's not about some great achievement, but merely finding a way to [spend your limited amount of time well](#). And to do that you must get off your couch and act, and take the time to think

beyond yourself, to think greater than yourself, and paradoxically, to imagine a world without yourself.

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