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**It's Not About You: A Brief Guide to a Meaningful Life**

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16 Highlights | Yellow (16)  
5 Notes

**Page 4**

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 4**

Life is not about you. It’s about what you do for others. The faster you are able to get over yourself, the more you can do for the people who matter most. Yet external forces keep pulling you toward self-centered pursuits. From books pushing “happiness” to advertisements convincing you that consumption leads to adoration, these messages tempt you to focus inward. That is all a trap (and a load of crap).

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 4**

I have studied and written about well-being for twenty years, and the last thing I recommend is chasing your own happiness. It may even do more harm than good. The key to creating collective well-being is to start by improving the life of another person, not your own.

**Page 5**

**Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 5**

Your life has an unknown expiration date. Your efforts and contributions to others do not. The time, energy, and resources you invest in people you care for and your community keep growing forever.

**Bulls eye**

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 5**

When you move past self, life is simpler and less stressful.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 6**

My doctor told me I had a catastrophic genetic mutation, one that essentially shuts off the body's most powerful tumor suppressor. As a result of this mutation, in addition to the large tumors already growing on my left eye, I was likely to have kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer, and tumors in my spine, brain, and adrenal glands. He also told me they could try to save my left eye, but after a few failed surgeries my vision in that eye was gone. If you decide to have kids, they may also have it.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 7**

But in my case, I have a rare de novo mutation, meaning I am the first in my family with VHL. The geneticist explained how future generations would forever be affected if I ever wanted to start a family. I was the box at the top of her page—the one who my future kids and grandkids could point to as having started this whole sequence of events.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 7**

The brilliance of the human species lies in our ability to put collective interests ahead of our own. We have the opportunity, every day, to contribute to collective efforts and others' lives. These contributions will live on, well beyond our brief life span here on earth.

**Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 8**

It takes time to develop an outward focus. In far too many cases, people move into this mindset only when the end is in sight. It does not need to be that way. Anyone can learn about and develop an outward focus, starting early on in life. But, fair warning: you must put your mortality in clear view first. Acknowledging that all our stories have an end can be deeply beneficial. In my own experience, orienting my efforts to where I could make the greatest contributions, both during and beyond my lifetime, helped me to push through major challenges and made life far more meaningful.

**Well said**

**Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Page 9**

Life is about what you put back into the world, not what you take out of it.

**Pearl**

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 11**

You may not get to control how another person initiates your next interaction, but you always get to choose your response. Even when you're having a horrible day and someone says something rude to you without reason, you get to decide if you will dig in on the negative tone or try to turn things around. With that choice, you will likely set off a cascading process that will make your day progressively better—or progressively worse.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 12**

You always have a choice of how to respond. Start by assuming the other person has positive intent.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 12**

One thing I learned clearly from my grandfather is that strong relationships are the cornerstone of growth and contribution in life.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 13**

I am increasingly convinced that even fifteen minutes of time spent listening to another person is one of the most valuable things you can do today. In this era of hyperdistraction, asking great questions and listening are two of the qualities we look for most in friends, partners, and colleagues.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 15**

So often, people take on roles they don't want and stay in jobs that don't excite them, never exploring a wider set of possibilities about the types of contributions they could be making.

**Highlight (Yellow) | Page 18**

My initial issue was I had no way to know if I truly deserved a job at Gallup. The company had grown into a legitimate midsize business with over one thousand employees worldwide. Presumably there were hundreds of people more qualified than I was but lacking the direct family connection. If I did go to work at Gallup, I assumed my family would try to set me up for success at every turn, as they always did. Again, not a level playing field if I wanted to be confident that I was making a meaningful contribution with my efforts.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 19

When you see a rare opportunity, take it. Life is too brief for living with regrets.

Note | Page 22

Gallup strength finder. I had participated in it

Note | Page 33

Well said

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