

# A Day in the Life

A couple things to notice in “A Day in the Life.”

I don't mind getting up early anymore. I used to struggle with this, especially if I was getting up for work.

It's hard to eat right away in the morning. I like to sit and read, to sip a fresh coffee and a glass of water.

I enjoy getting out the door right away, be it work, or for pleasure. My body and mind are groggy that early but I've learned that motion is motivation and I am better, sooner, if I begin to move.

I awake the same time whether its weekends or weekdays, around seven. If I get out the door to work I'm fully awake by nine. I can tell if I'm fully “up and at em” if I'm attempting to make jokes and smiling. On the weekends I sit around and have my coffee, read or scroll the web, and this lack of motion means the jokes don't usually starting coming until about eleven.

Days come in a variety of flavours: sad, happy, contented, dissatisfied, bleak, joyous. They seem to be coloured by the weather and the seasons. In the past I assumed that the types of days had to do with me. Now I put the responsibility for them on the day itself. So instead of “I'm happy” or “I'm sad” it's a dissatisfied day or joyous day.

Joyous days are very pleasant but they lack a character that bleak days possess in spades. I think the comparison between a blue bird day out on the lake versus a day where large storms roll through is a good analogy. The storms make for an epic sort of experience, one that is painted by hardship, discomfort and also relief as the rain passes. I prefer the harder days, even if they come with some pain.

I've lived two lives. One was the tree planting, rock climbing, roaming around and sleeping in my van. The other is owning my own home, having a day job and a group of friends close by that I spend my time with.

The first one provides days with a large variety of experience as well as emotion. Extreme joy proceeded by extreme sadness. A roller coaster is an apt comparison.

The nine to five life provides a much calmer and gentler day to day existence.

Both provide in their own ways. The nomad existence is all about experience and being “alive.” The home life is about building, community and learning to find joy in the familiar.

Most of us have lived the first life in our early years. Our twenties is when we do this, perhaps our thirties as well. The home life is lived as we settle down. We build families, careers, friends and community.

It’s easier to take risks when there is nothing to lose. So for this reason the first life tends to include more risk-taking.

When I was tree planting we earned our money by the tree. And so I worked the whole day with just micro breaks every hour. When I got a job as a carpenter I started with a thirty minute lunch break and two fifteen minute coffee breaks. The building job I have now we take a one hour lunch and no coffee breaks.

A couple things: a break longer than five minutes will pull you out of work mode. I find that it takes at least fifteen minutes to get back into a work pace. So for this reason when I was planting I never took a break much longer than five minutes.

In carpentry I don’t like coffee breaks for the same reason. I prefer working in one large stint until lunch. I will have a few micro breaks where I drink some water or coffee and re-assess what it is I am building.

When I first started taking one hour lunch breaks I thought they were a waste of time. I’d rather break for thirty and get off work earlier. I’ve come to realize that this is short-term thinking. It’s prefaced on not wanting to be at work longer than you need to. But work is half of your life and ideally you should be spending half of your life engaged and present. An hour break lets my mind and body settle enough to provide rest that compounds over the days and weeks worked. It’s a long-term mindset work.

Other things.

Smart phones have killed idle thoughts. I’ve been addicted to podcasts, audio books and endless scrolling. If I avoid them idle thoughts pop into my head. These moments are when my subconscious manifests itself in concrete ideas and concepts. If I write them down I end up actualizing my

subconscious upon the canvas of my life. This is where the sauna, the painting, the music, the carpentry, the “cool” home, the essays and everything else that I consider to be created by me comes from. Shut these thoughts off and I’m just some ripped dude who listens to Joe Rogan and parrots David Goggins propaganda out in public.

I’ve recently become addicted to smoking a vape. 6mg/ml nicotine. If you puff that thing for ten minutes they say it’s equivalent to six cigarettes. Probably not a great habit. But what I have noticed is that the thoughts come flowing even stronger than they usually do. Something about the idle fidgeting combined with the stimulant is a funnel for them. They come pouring out. My snap judgements I used to have when seeing someone smoking have changed.

Walking a dog allows you to go on long walks by yourself which are hard to do of your own volition. There are some similarities to the smoking thing and thought creation when walking. Again, the smart phone kills most of this. My neighbour wears AirPods every time she walks her dogs.

Repetitive work lets the thoughts come. If the work requires thinking they don’t visit.

When lost in the doldrums of life I’ve found that it’s easy to imagine that there is nothing exciting to be found in your circles. But this is a delusion. Lets take my street as an example. There’s sixty four homes on my block. Lets assume an average of 3 people per home. Thats one hundred and ninety two people on my street. So on my regular to work trip and back home and then walking the dog in the evening I have a chance of meeting and interacting with two hundred different people each and every day. An optimistic and open attitude to the strangers you pass everyday in a regular life is one that will allow for a huge number of different and completely unknown experiences on just the block you dwell. Let alone the extended circle of city blocks you tend to exist in.

This is perhaps an argument for more walking and less driving. More greetings and less earbuds. More local bar drinking and less at home Netflix. The list goes on.

Drugs are good for you if you struggle with letting go of your sense of control over your life. They will hurt you in the long run if you use them to chase feelings and peak emotions — ie dopamine and love drugs. Be careful with them. But they are useful in breaking this dull drum pattern. But they are not an ends in of themselves, they are a means to an ends.

If you are tired you have two options: exercise or sleep.

Final thought. I lack the wisdom of elders. In the west we are bad at this. I don’t know if other cultures

are better, but I do know that my experience in Canada is that we don't look to elders too much.

Elders aren't by default wise. So one does need to find the right senior to talk to.

The end.