



KILLING YOUR OLD LIFE AND LIVING THE DREAM

BY ALEXANDER HEYNE

WWW.MILKTHEPIGEON.COM

This is a free e-book written by Alexander Heyne at Milkthepigeon.com. Share it with anyone you'd like under [Creative Commons 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/).

Copyright @ 2011 Alexander Heyne

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Prologue: The Epidemic	33	Manning Up and Living the Dream
7	Preface: Waking Up	34	Your Manifesto. Your Legacy.
9	The Promise & A Story by Jeff	40	Doubters, Haters, and Other Thorns in the Path
13	Killing Your Old Life	42	Success's Subtle Signs
14	Does Life Have a Purpose? Does Mine?	44	Fruition
16	Beginning With the End in Mind	47	Ultimatum
21	Cherishing the Lost, In-Between Feeling	48	Afterword
25	The Rat Race	49	Breaking Free: A Story
26	Shit You Hate: The Not-to-do-list	52	Recommended Reading
28	Why You Can Never Get What You Want Unless..	54	Thank You

Prologue: The Epidemic

2011. We are in the middle of an epidemic.

An insidious epidemic has taken hold of humanity, wholly unlike any other seen in history.

People have access to all the wisdom there has been in the universe since the big bang via the Internet.

A person can eat any sort of meal from any continent without going far from home -- a luxury kings of past times never had.

One can go to sleep on a plane and wake up across the world.

We live in an era of unparalleled luxury, yet so many of us still suffer from the feeling of lack.

What's going on?

This is not a story of money doesn't equal happiness.

This is not a story of giving up your life and going and living with monks.

And this is not a story telling you to take up meditation and find your inner child.

This is a story of awakening.

It's time for you to quit sleepwalking through a meaningless life.

This book is for you -- Because if you're like me, you want more from life.

And you were born for it.

Childhood

I think most of us subtly feel that there is much more to life.

After all the partying, all the toys, all the *stuff*, there is still a void in most of us.

At the end of the night in the early morning hours, is the conversation still about cars and women or does it drift towards talk about “life?”

Why is that as children we all naturally dream big and tell mommy, “I wanna be an astronaut!” Because as kids no one has the heart to say *you can't* to a child.

It's just not socially acceptable. You'd be an asshole if you told a kid that.

But as you grow up something happens.

Your mom, or older brother, or friend tells you to “get realistic” and “get a job” and to “get a degree.”

And then we encounter society – a vast mass of people living largely miserable lives, doing work they hate, to support a lifestyle that is never good enough and then retiring half a lifetime later to start living.

The downers [society] eventually grow on us, and by the time we hit highschool we join the “dreams are for kiddies” club.

Might as well, right? Since you probably haven't met a single other person livin' the dream.

I probably would have too.

But the fact that I knew **not one friend, adult, parent or mentor** pursuing their **ideal** lifestyle was my fuel. It was my impetus to work harder than those around me.

And I swore to myself never to end up like so many of my parents' friends who told me, “Enjoy college man, party it up, don't be in a serious

relationship, and travel the world. ‘Cuz **it’s all work from here on out.**”

I decided right then and there to be a role model for everyone before me, after me, and around me.

I would do it myself. And I would do it right.

I was meant to.

And that’s how the story began.

Preface: Waking Up

“Your work is to discover your work and then, with all your heart, to give yourself to it.”

-Buddha

There are a couple reasons why you are here reading this right now.

I firmly believe you have found this exactly at the right moment – because things happen at the strangest, most perfect times.

I don't know why. I don't know how. They just do.

You have found your way here because you're probably tired of two things:

- You don't know what to do with your life
- You're living an empty life with no purpose or passion

And you feel: Like you were born to do much bigger things with your life. You were born for greatness and there is some larger purpose out there for you.

I think these two longings – purpose and passion - are inherent to humans. We all know we are born to do big things in life, but most of us get stuck or sidetracked along the way.

If you're like me, aka human, you probably have a whole boatload of excuses for not doing the stuff you want:

- Money
- Time
- Money
- Fear
- Money
- The How-to
- Not knowing anyone who has done it before
- Laziness

People usually require all kinds of justifications and reasons to DO something.

How is there really a choice?

But I'm asking you to make the leap not because I can give you a list of 15 reasons why it's worth it, but because of the alternative:

“Why not? What's the alternative?”

What's the worst that can happen? My life can go back to the way it is? I'll go back to a suck-ass life where I hit snooze 6 times in the morning, zombie my way through work, and dull the senses at home afterwards.

The weekend rolls around and I party myself retarded, and once Sunday night hits I'm ready to slit my wrists in anticipation of work on Monday.

Sounds fun.

Really, you have no alternative when you think about it.

Your choices are: live a life doing what you want, working towards what you want OR ... not.

The Promise

Here is what you're going to get out of reading this:

- #1 You will “wake up” and realize you were born for bigger and better things, and that working “just because you should” is the most meaningless, undirected use of your life
- #2 You will find a clear path of what you want to do with your life and what you must do; you'll have goals, dreams, passions. You'll have direction. You'll have purpose.
- #3 You'll kill that “WTF do I do with my life?” feeling, once and for all
- #4 You'll understand the origin of the “life is pointless” feeling, and will learn how to create a life that is meaningful

I will have failed writing this for myself, and for you, if I cannot help at least one person achieve the following:

Wake up.

So what is waking up and what does it feel like?

Here's a little story by a friend:

Killing Your Old Life and Livin' the Dream

by Jeff

Note: Jeff and I originally met in 2009 in a Kung Fu class and then both ended up moving to China. He was laid off from an engineering job (that he hated) in 2008 after working for 3 years, and spent time doing some soul searching. Through an interesting set of coincidences he ended up enrolling at the best Chinese medicine university in China, and now is living the dream:

I've always been a happy person, even while working at my horribly boring engineering

job. However, except for kung fu, I never knew what it felt like to have a purpose. At this stage of my life, I believe that fulfillment has two aspects.

The first, which makes us all the same, is that we need friends and family. The second, which makes us all unique, is our purpose. Having the friends and family part is enough for most people, but to reach another level of fulfillment, I believe we need to find that “thing” that makes us want to get up and cultivate ourselves daily. If by chance you do find whatever lights a fire inside of you, that’s when life becomes interesting.

Now here’s the part where I get to tell you about how my life has changed in just a year. The biggest difference I feel on a daily basis is that I know what I’m doing on this planet. I’m not searching anymore, I’m pursuing. I feel like every step I take is a step forward. Other than that, my life now is a process of

continuous cultivation. I don’t feel like I’m waiting for anything; I feel like things are under my control.

I used to worry about old age, but now I’m excited to see what kind of person I’ll evolve into in 5, 10, 20 years. When I was an engineer, I used to dream about retirement. Now that I’ve found my passion, retirement hasn’t even crossed my mind. I’ll be training and practicing medicine until the day I die. I can honestly say that if someone were to offer me a million dollars and let me do whatever I wanted, I would choose to stay in Beijing and continue my studies and training. To sum things up, I feel fulfilled. I feel happy. I feel like I have direction. Most importantly, I feel at peace.

The difference between searching for the path and pursuing the path is like night and day.

One leaves you feeling uncertain, lost, and doubtful. The other makes you feel powerful beyond measure, alive, and in control. They are worlds away from each other.

But there is a third path that is far, far worse than feeling lost.

This third path you should fear more than failure. You should fear it more than the fear of criticism. And you should fear it much more than being an outcast.

It's the fear that one day you'll wake up, realize time has passed, and you haven't changed, grown, lost, gained, pursued new experiences, added anything of value to your life, or really done anything with your time. It's the fear that you're day will go like this: work, home, tv, sleep, work, home, tv, sleep...

It is living a meaningless, purposeless life.
You become nothing but a hollow shell.

This third path is the feeling of lifelessness.

Outwardly you appear somewhat normal; inwardly you are empty.

This is a feeling all of us slip into from time to time – but when you feel this way consistently that should be a warning sign.

When I felt that way for a year, it terrified me and I decided it was time for big changes.

Fear mongering aside, there is one belief about life that I have a hard time letting go of: the belief that everyone was born to do big things with their time on earth. And none of us were meant to work jobs so fucking boring, day after day, that by the end of the week you don't even have any life inside of you.

I want us both to escape an unfulfilling life, and create a life of greatness.

How?

Through creating a meaningful one.

For, in the end, it is impossible to have a great life unless it is a meaningful life. And it is very difficult to have a meaningful life without meaningful work. Perhaps, then, you might gain that rare tranquility that comes from knowing that you've had a hand in creating something of intrinsic excellence that makes a contribution. Indeed, you might even gain that deepest of all satisfactions: knowing that your short time here on this earth has been well spent, and that it mattered.

-Jim Collins, Good to Great

Part 1 – Killing Your Old Life

Getting your head straight

“Make no small plans, for they have no power to stir the soul.”

-Niccolo Machiavelli

Does Life Have a Purpose? Does Mine?

“Many men go fishing all their lives without knowing it is not fish they are after.”

-Henry David Thoreau

The “life purpose” question has plagued humans since the dawn of time. We always wonder if there is some great scheme or plan for us, one singular purpose that would make our lives incredibly simple if only we figured it out.

Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but I don’t think there is one.

I don’t have a purpose.

You don’t have a purpose.

We live just for the sake of living... not for the message written in the stars.

But just because I don’t “inherently” believe in having one life purpose from birth doesn’t mean I’m going to go out and commit murder, join in orgies to Dionysus, or start riots.

All it means is that I need to find out the activities that are so inherently enjoyable that I would do them for the rest of my life. Those can become my calling.

That becomes my purpose.

“So what am I supposed to do with my life?” you may ask.

That question haunts young people all over the world. And here would be my answer:

Do what you enjoy. It sounds almost insultingly simple, but *do what you enjoy*.

Some people have known since childhood what they want to do with their life. They are lucky, and they are outliers.

For the rest of us:

If you don't know what you enjoy, *try everything.*

There is a whole chapter later on devoted to helping you brainstorm what to do with your life. But for now I want to inoculate your mind with the seed of a simple concept:

- Do what you enjoy.
- Do whatever it takes to do so.
- And never settle and say, "You tried your best."

I've found that people generally fall into three types:

1. They know and always have known what they were meant to do
2. People who just want to try stuff that isn't necessarily career-related: travel, run a marathon, or teach English in a foreign country.

3. People who believe they are so far away from their goals, have no idea whatsoever what to do, nothing seems worthwhile, and thus get sidetracked on little paths going this way or that

I'm going to assume that most of us definitely aren't #1.

And I'm going to assume that most of us also aren't #2.

So I'm going to assume the majority fall somewhere between #2 and #3.

You have stuff you always wanted to do, but you think it's unrealistic.

You're kind of hazy about "what you want to do for the rest of your career-related life" but in your head you know it would be really cool to....
< insert idea here >.

So what do *those* of us do?

Beginning With the End in Mind

Let me ask you something. Why do you think the mid-life crisis has become such an expected part of life that we casually joke about it?

Dad goes out and gets a boat, motorcycle, or BMW.

Your mom starts painting, taking voice lessons, or becomes a yoga instructor.

Your daughter that just graduated from college decides to get a plane ticket around the world and backpack for a year instead of getting a real job. (1/4 life crisis)

What's going on?

Are people inherently insatiable? Do we naturally get bored of life and find it impossible to be

satisfied with the people and stuff we already have? Do we just reach a point and freak out?

I don't think so, although those may also be true.

For a long time I've wondered why some of my relatives were happy and inspired me to "do whatever I wanted with my life", and why some others were always unhappy and warned me to take the safe route and be cautious.

I sought to find a theory as to why some people suddenly became unhappy in middle age and started talking like dreamers in their 20s.

So I set out to observe people and talk with them -- starting with my own relatives.

My family is old-school European, where sitting down to dinner for 4-5 hours with a couple bottles of wine is not at all uncommon.

Sometimes on Thanksgiving, after a couple hours and a couple bottles of wine, the conversation drifts towards those "purpose of life" discussions.

And here's what I noticed:

*The people who suffer from mid life crises or who feel like they were born to do bigger things are most often those who, by and large, do not lead a life that they feel **has a purpose**. Work is for work's sake. Leisure time is not used wisely. Day to day enjoyment is the exception not the rule. Monotony dominates.*

So how does this culminate in a mid-life crisis?

Anatomy of a Mid-Life Crisis

I believe this to be a repeatable, predictable procession, which begins in youth. And I believe that in one conversation with most people it's relatively easy to predict whether or not they are prone to a quarter or mid life crisis.

The go switch? The perceived presence or lack of purpose.

Watch this:

1. You don't really know what you want to do with your life when you're young, but that's okay because you've got a decent paying job. So you go with it. (20s)
 - a. **Main Purpose:** Absent.
2. You work your way up through your 20s, and around the late 20s you decided it's time for marriage.
 - a. **Main Purpose:** Absent.
Additional purpose: Spouse.
3. You get married, questioning your job becomes a no-deal, so you go ahead full-throttle trying your best to enjoy home life too. (Mid 30s)
 - a. **Main Purpose:** Absent.
Additional purpose: Spouse.
4. Soon you have children and your children become your temporary sense of purpose and passion for the time being.
 - a. **Main Purpose:** Absent
 - b. **Additional Purpose:** Raise Kids.

5. But not forever

Fast Forward

Twenty years have passed. Your kids have moved away from home. Work is nearing retirement. Time returns to you. Thoughts creep in.

You once again get listless, wonder if there's more to life, need a purpose for living, and feel like you were born to do bigger things with your time.

Your mid-life crisis hits. You start a new hobby, acquire a new possession, get a divorce, start a group or organization, and begin reading philosophy or religion.

So how do you stop it? What's the cure?

Purpose and passion. Purpose is the destination; passion is the way.

I'm not kidding when I say finding purpose is one of the most critical "thresholds" to reach before other non-negotiable priorities enter your life.

Entire tribal societies had processes and societal structures in order to make sure everyone had a purpose, and felt they had a place.

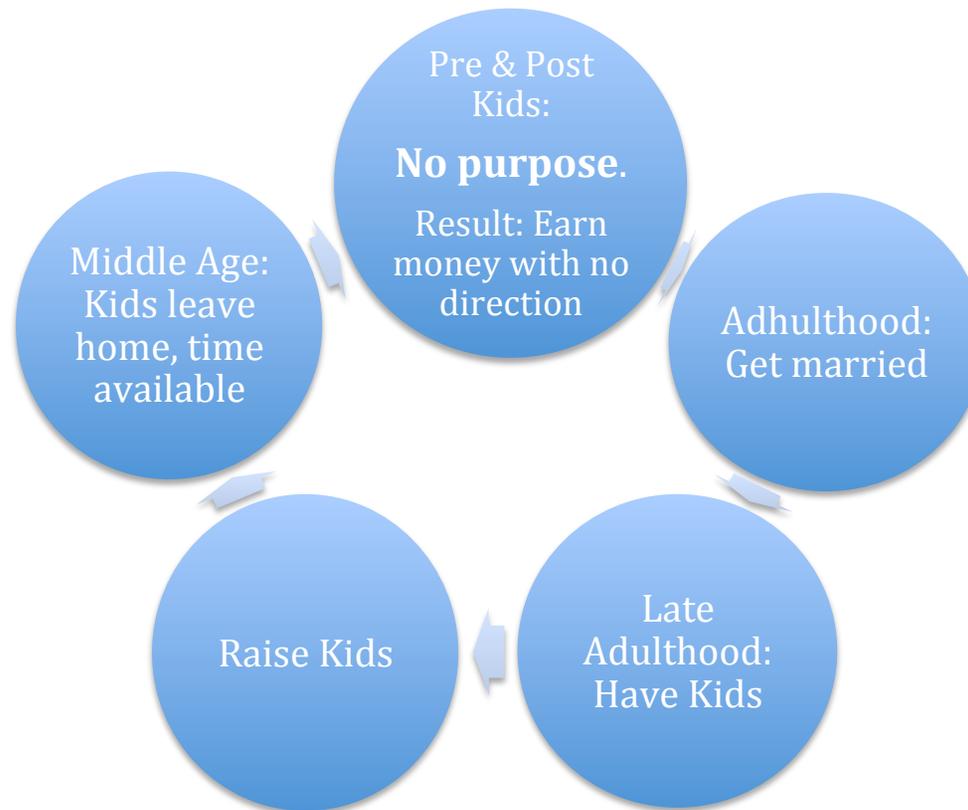
And purpose is what modern man lacks the most.

And that is why we constantly feel lost and live meaningless lives.

I've seen this mid-life procession a dozen times and firmly believe this theory to be the cornerstone of "life crises."

Ponder that when you get a chance.

You're going to have to do *something* for work, so why not make it what you enjoy? Something that gives you a reason for living.



*An entire lifetime can pass with certain things imitating passion and purpose – children (raise ‘em), acquisition of a house (buy one), or seeking promotion after promotion (vacation time!). But the lack of purpose will *always* be hiding in the

background waiting to emerge again. And it will leave you feeling emptier than before.

It doesn’t magically disappear if you pretend it’s not there.

All this talk of purpose may seem incredibly overwhelming, especially if you're like a lot of people my age: feeling *completely and utterly lost*.

So let's first talk about that awesome feeling of floating in limbo, and having *no clue* what to do with your life - and why it's actually a blessing instead of a curse.

Cherishing the Lost, In-Between Feeling

If there is one all-encompassing, underlying, pervasive feeling that a lot of people my age feel today, it's that "kinda lost, in-between feeling" as one friend described it to me.

The person is usually in a transitory period; they're at the start of a new life phase or at the end of another. Ending college, starting a new job, moving to a new place, taking time to volunteer somewhere abroad, or moving back in with their parents.

However, here's the catch and something I want you to remember: that floating in space, kinda lost feeling **is an incredible gift.**

It is the gift of opportunity. Don't mistake it for anything else.

Emerging Adulthood

Dr. Jeffrey Arnett has been the main proponent of a new life phase he calls "emerging adulthood." It's that phase of life you and I are probably in, the 18 – early 30s time-sensitive period.

It's where you want to try a variety of experiences, romantic relationships, travel, and wonder a lot where you fit in, in the grand scheme of things.

It's the age era of identity exploration. The period of great ambivalence. To go, or stay?

What Dr. Arnett noticed was that the common thread underlying this new life phase was not that emerging adults were not reaching adulthood as quickly because we are incapable. Rather, we are taking longer to reach those milestones because we feel a greater desire for *more experiences* from life.

To experience more. To try more. To never settle for a life that's "ok" or expected of us.

We want answers to the "What am I gonna do with my life?" question.

And we want an escape from the overwhelming pressure of expectations:

"It's somewhat terrifying," writes a 25-year-old named Jennifer, "to think about all the things I'm supposed to be doing in order to 'get somewhere' successful: 'Follow your passions, live your dreams, take risks, network with the right people, find mentors, be financially responsible, volunteer, work, think about or go to grad school, fall in love and maintain personal well-being, mental health and nutrition.' When is there time to just be and enjoy?"

(From the NY times article [What is it About 20-Somethings?](#))

If you find yourself floating in the lost feeling, know that you are in fact in a great position. The feeling comes from entering a life phase that has no structure or guided direction.

And that's not just for college grads. It's for anyone who has uprooted him or herself in a major way.

The Cure?

Direction and purpose.

"What do you want to do with your life?" does not mean, "what corporate job do you want to do for your entire life?"

"What do you want to do with your life?" means,

"What do you want to do with your life?"

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then do it. Because the world needs people who are alive."

-Howard Thurman

But before you can do exactly what you want for the rest of your days, you need to understand exactly how the world of most working people works – in order to transcend it.

Enter *the rat race*.

The Rat Race

“Even if you win the rat race, you’re still a rat.”
-Unknown

We tend to throw around the phrase “rat race” a lot, but many of us haven’t spent time really pondering what it means or entails.

I think the analogy is related to the idea of a rat in a wheel – always running and working but never actually getting anywhere.

For me it goes like this: you work a job just to pay the bills, your work is mostly for money, you never seem to get ahead, and you rarely have the time or money to do other things you’d like.

Time passes and you don’t even have *the opportunity* to try anything new in your life, because you’re stuck in a cycle of working just to pay bills.

Work, pay bills, work, pay bills, work, pay bills < 2 week vacation > work, pay bills.

I had friends making a lot of money off their first job out of college, but after talking to them a couple years later many agree on the uselessness of it all.

Getting paid is great. Let’s put that out there first. But if you’re getting paid and you have no clue what to do with that money, since you’re not working towards anything, you quickly become listless and want a change of scenery.

No goals and no point to the work? So you just spend the cash. Drop \$100 at the bar, \$35,000 on a new car, \$5,000 on a Europe trip... and you keep dropping cash left and right.

Kiyosaki in his book [*Rich Dad Poor Dad*](#) (which you should immediately go out and buy) talked a lot about the rat race in the beginning. He says:

[It’s] the pattern of get up, go to work, pay bills, get up, go to work, pay bills.... Their lives are then run forever by two emotions, fear and greed. Offer them more money, and they continue the cycle by also

increasing their spending. This is what I call the Rat Race.

We're all governed by the fear of not having enough money. But once we get the money, we increase our spending and end up in the exact same state of fear. And the hamster cycle repeats.

But there is a larger reason to escape the rat race and officially quit the job you hate.

If you're working "just because" you should be, with no goals you are working towards, no skills you are acquiring or trying to acquire, then you are essentially running in place.

You are working just for the sake of living your lifestyle, and living your lifestyle just for the sake of working. There is no reward in the future, no level or achievement to reach towards, nothing worth working for. And that's the biggie – *nothing worth working for*. Work for work's sake.

It's no wonder that our modern society is *filled* with people who feel their life is purpose-less.

If your job blows so much that you want to drink yourself retarded right after you get off work, then you had better think long and hard about where you'll be down the road.

And then you need to figure out how to get beyond the rat race.

In your quest to transcend the rat race there are a couple *really* important steps:

1. Get rid of shit you hate
2. Know what you want from life
3. Grow the stones to get it done

So, let's get started on the path.

Killing Your Old Life: The Not-to-do List

For most of us, having a life that is awesome probably entails **less of doing what we hate** rather than more of doing what we love.

Think about it. We tend to complain about all the stuff we hate in our lives, just as much as talking about the stuff we wish we could have.

We tend to complain about:

- No time
- No money
- Hating our work
- Hating our bosses
- Hating responsibilities

For some, the not-to-do-list* will be more critical to your success than a want-to-do list.

So how do you do it?

You basically write a list of *shit you hate* and you never want to do again. It's awesome. And fun.

Mine goes something like this. I never want to:

- Work for someone else (no matter how sweet the deal, it's still working for someone else, towards a cause you probably don't care about)
- Deal with people who could care less about the job they do
- Wake up feeling like shit and knowing I have to go through another long day that doesn't actually provide much enjoyment to me, just money
- Hang out with, or date, people with exactly nothing going on
- Live in a city without a large international scene
- Work in a school again

So over the course of a few months I began weeding some of these things out. Some, on the other hand, are still a work in progress like #1.

But as a society we are pretty focused on the addition of things: finding happiness, adding value, and acquiring benefits. In reality, the very act of subtraction is much, much more valuable. Why?

- #1 Subtraction leaves fewer options (analysis paralysis anyone?), and thus facilitates decision making
- #2 Sometimes you don't actually want more, you just want an alteration of the current situation. Bad job ==> Good job. Meaningless life ==> Meaningful life

Determine for yourself the things you *never want to do again* and it will be much easier to determine which stuff you *do* want to do again.

Having your not-to-do-list in combination with the next chapter is probably **the** takeaway essence of this e-book.

If you *know* what you want from life, you're already further down the path to success, greatness, and fulfillment than most people.

But if you *don't* know what you want in life, you'll find that it's much, much harder to find purpose and fulfillment.

* Credit to Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, where I originally found this exercise and found it immensely useful

Why You Can Never Get What You Want in Life, Unless...

You know what you want.

This is one of the biggest, most important principles in a life that is outwardly judged as “successful” and “enjoyable” and inwardly judged as “worthwhile.”

And the concept isn’t new. You’ve probably heard it before. And I hate to repeat it but people don’t listen unless you repeat things.

Frame this and put it on your wall. In your shower. As your phone banner. On a post-it on your steering wheel.

You can’t get anything out of life if you don’t know what you want from life.

Included here you’ll find a quick questionnaire in the original email (or at [milkthepigeon](http://milkthepigeon.com)), which will help you clarify what you want from life.

Since, like most others, I bet you really don’t know what you want from life. You’ve never thought about it.

And like others, you joke about a million dollars, an Audi R8, and living in Barcelona drinking wine – because they are convenient responses, funny, and a way to relieve the stress of *actually thinking about what you want*.

They are socially acceptable responses, and just like most other conventional wisdom, lack depth or real consideration.

But what do you *actually* want? Do you want to be *really* rich? Do you want to own a company? Do you want to work for yourself? Do you want to live in the city? In the country? In a foreign country? Speak 1 language? Speak 5? Marry someone from your own country? Marry a foreigner? Become a doctor? A pro athlete?

You need a vision of where you'd like to be, with an idea of what you want to do. Specifics are unimportant; just get an idea of what would be a "cool position to be in" down the road.

So, without further ado, let's figure out what the hell you should do with your life:

There are two parts to this chapter.

The first three questions will hopefully give you insight into stuff that'd be awesome to do with your life.

The latter part has a couple quick exercises that remove the material portion of the equation, and help establish what kind of intangible, inherently rewarding things you'd pursue.

Part 1

#1 What subject makes you smile and get talkative ?

Note: I notice that a lot of people don't have one specific "thing," but many people have at least one topic you can bring up and their eyes *immediately* light up. They start talking a little quickly and sometimes get embarrassed they are hogging the conversation. *That's* the kind of subject you are looking for. I have a friend who is mostly lifeless when you talk to her, but if you ask her about dance or hip-hop suddenly she lights up and will talk your ear off. Find that.

#2 What thing would you regret not having tried upon your deathbed?

Note: Some people have a couple adventures in the back of their mind they always wanted to do. For example, I have a friend who was obsessed with the stories of old sailors and explorers and always wished he could sail around the world, or go on an expedition in the amazon, or go exploring caves in another country. But for you, I bet there's that *one cool thing* you kinda want to try. One thing you'd regret not having tried upon your deathbed.

#3 What thing do you spend countless hours reading about or researching?

Note: When I was in my early teens I spent *days* reading about the feats and stories of sages, hermits, holy men, and the old shamans. In fact, before I graduated high school I had a sizeable library of anthropology, philosophy, and mysticism. It was an obsession, and one of my dreams was to get to study with one of these legit holy men to compare to my old legends and tales I was reading. That's the kind of obsessively fixed attitude you're looking for regarding the topic or idea of choice.

The following few exercises are useful for figuring out things you do because you enjoy them – under the hypothetical circumstances of unlimited time and money.

Part 2

The Wizard Exercise

A game I use a lot on dates is “the wizard.” A wizard comes along and goes “poof.” You have way more money than you’ll ever need and you are living wherever you want.

Here’s the question: where will you live, and what do you do for daily enjoyment?

This question is awesome at really honing in on those childhood type-dreams. It eliminates the material portion and gets down to the passion part of the equation: simply, what do you enjoy doing?

The “Fuck it” exercise

Life has you stressed out and you are ready to just call it quits and move across the world; where do you go and what do you do?

Sail the world? Kung fu in China? Spanish in Barcelona? Learn about wine in Southern France? Trace family roots in Scotland?

The “I Don’t Ever Want To Do This Again” Exercise

This one is more of a job / calling related exercise.

You basically just make a list of jobs you hated, and figure out why you hated them.

Some of the things you realize here will overlap with your not-to-do list.

Alternatively, you can simply list things you absolutely never want to deal with again, or those you enjoyed.

A couple ideas:

- I don't want to work in school
- I don't want to work in a corporate environment
- I don't want to work with children
- I do want to work with clients and be a socialite
- I do want to travel for work
- I do want the ability to make my own hours

Parents act like you need to have some grand age 25 to 90 plan.

But you don't.

You just need some small inkling of a plan, and you need to go with it.

So incase you don't want to get that corporate job out of college, know that it's okay.

Incasing you always wanted to learn French, know that moving to Paris is a respectable decision.

In the event that you suddenly feel the urge to quit your job and join an ashram and become an Indian guru-following hippy, know that it's just as respectable as anyone else's decision.

The decision to make a decision is the important part.

Just do something, and live your life boldly.

Part 1 – Recap

==> If you want more from life, and feel like you were born to do bigger things – you’re right.

==> Re-read Jeff’s story on what it feels like to be livin’ the dream

==> I don’t believe that life inherently has a purpose. But if you’re someone who never had a “childhood dream” it doesn’t mean you don’t have dreams. It just means that you need to find out what activities give your existence *purpose*

==> The seeds for the Mid and Quarter life crises are sown in youth – if your life doesn’t have a purpose given to it, it won’t magically appear later on in life.

==> Feeling lost? It’s fine. It just means you need to clarify what you want to get out of your life. It is a feeling of liberty, not being lost. Don’t ever forget that.

==> The Not-to-do-list is the single best way to analyze all of the shit you hate in your life and permanently say “bon fucking voyage,” once and for all

==> Transcending the rat race. If you’re working hours upon hours a week just for the sake of working or paying off your bills, you’re literally stuck in life. If you have no ambition for your time or money then your time and money will waste you. Find direction for your time and money and your life will regain meaning and value.

==> *If you don’t know what you want from life, it’s hard to be satisfied with your own life. Working towards nothing is worth exactly that – nothing. But don’t forget that there is **nothing wrong** with doing something just “for the sake of it!” Everything you do doesn’t have to be for a reason – as long as it’s fulfilling.*

Part 2 – Manning Up & Living the Dream

Getting it done

“There’s a difference between knowing the path and walking the path.”

-Morpheus

Your Manifesto. Your Legacy.

Before you even read this, I want you to do one thing. Open up a word document on your computer.

Or take out a yellow legal pad.

Or whip out your iPhone and open up a new note.

Or write on the inside of your arm.

Because this is important.

I want you to write your life's manifesto right now. If you have no idea what a life manifesto is, it's everything including the following and more:

- A list of everything you want to do in life
- A list of everything you want to be in life
- A list of character qualities you want to be remembered for

- A list of accomplishments you want to be remembered for
- The master plan for your life's enjoyment & achievement
- Quotes that inspire you to think, act, and dream big
- Mementos that get you back on the path, when you've gotten sidetracked

It's the document you open up when you want to sit down, give up, and say, "I quit."

It's what you take a look at when you feel lost.

And it's what you meditate on when you feel that everyone around you is telling you something is "impossible."

Mine is entitled, "My Legacy and Contribution to the World." (Gotta make it sound legit, right?)

The reason for the title comes from an experience I had with my grandfather.

In the past few years, my family has started interviewing some of the elders in the family with a list of questions – just things for the future generations to remember the past by.

At the end of my maternal grandfather's interview, my mom asked: What is the one piece of advice you have for the future generations?

He replied, *“Genuine people are in short supply these days. Be a good person and contribute something to society.”*

What will the world remember about you? It's not about being famous; it's about contribution to something greater than just you.

And that doesn't necessarily mean charity or helping starving African children. It just means providing massive value to someone else.

If you are still lost as to how to write it, I'm going to give you a peak at mine

Living Your Legacy

My legacy has only three parts.

1. Live a life of purpose
2. Walk your talk
3. Dream Big

Within each part I have notes and quotes that remind me of the reason why I wrote that part.

Let me give you a peak at what the most important things are in my life, and what actually makes up my legacy:

Part 1 – Live a life of Purpose

Be the dreamer – the person who has huge plans for life, and despite being terrified at what may happen along the way, knows that dreaming big and failing big is ten times better than being too afraid to try.

Be the person who *every day* is living the dream, and does whatever it takes to get to that point. Be the guy who wakes up and says to himself, “I get paid to do this?”

And never forget the few people you have met in your life that *live what they love* – every aspect of their character is worlds beyond most.

“Your work is to discover your work and then, with all your heart, to give yourself to it– Buddha”

“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who are alive.” – Howard Thurman”

“The world makes way for the man who knows where he is going.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson”

“Make no small plans, for they have no power to stir the soul.” – Niccolo Machiavelli”

“Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become your character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.” –Lao-Tze

“Athletes visualize winning 1000s of times before they step on the track. They’ve already won. Other people just don’t know it yet.” - Unknown

Principle 2 – Walk Your Talk

Talk is cheap. We all talk a lot.

But I’ve met some extraordinary characters in my life, and here’s what I noticed. As soon as the discussion begins to turn into lots of “talk,” that person sneaks out the back and gets to work on changing the world.

Every time they see the conversation go towards “talk” of “will do,” and “could of,” these people immediately use it as a reminder to get back to work – because they have realized a simple truth we often forget: action, proof that requires no proving, speaks a thousand times louder than words.

And nothing about it is contestable. It just is. And that’s powerful.

People who haven’t done anything in their lives always try to prove themselves – they are always reminding you of that one time they did something extraordinary, unique, or that one awesome thing.

Because obviously that’s not how people see them.

The runt always tries to prove himself, right?

“Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one” – Marcus Aurelius

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”
– Theodore Roosevelt

Principle 3 – Dream Big

“Dream Big” may seem like a strange concept regarding life principles, but there’s a reason for it.

Dreamers are qualitatively different, in every way, from most average Joes. This isn’t just dealing with having visions of grandeur – it’s an entire outlook on life and default strategy for coping with life’s ups and downs.

Dreamers are passionate about life and inspire others to get excited. Average Joes usually have a list of reasons why you can’t do something.

Dreamers take full responsibility for their lives. Average Joes constantly play the blame game and are full of excuses.

Dreamers get it done. Average Joes talk about how they tried their best.

Dreamers are the changers of entire civilizations. Average Joes do the legwork.

The passion of dreamers is contagious and spreads to others around them. Average Joes usually talk “realistically.”

Dreamers change the entire course of human history.

“The boy didn’t know what a person’s “destiny” was. It’s what you have always wanted to accomplish. Everyone, when they are young, knows what their destiny is. At that point in their lives, everything is clear and everything is possible. They are not afraid to dream, and to yearn for everything they would like to see happen to them in their lives. But, as time passes, a mysterious force begins to convince them that it will be impossible for them to realize their destiny.” – The Alchemist

At the end of my three life principles, I have one little note in bold:

These 3 principles culminate in being happy and living a life of purpose. A life of purpose breeds happiness at its foundation and will be reflected in everything you do.

The final reason for having your manifesto and legacy is help keep your mind focused and impervious to the attacks of doubters [humanity]. So let's take a jump into how to avoid the thorns along the path.

Doubters, Haters, and Other Thorns in the Path

Confidence is the bare minimum required to do big things with your life. That may seem obvious, but unless you have made your mind impervious to the dead weight others are going to throw at you, they'll make you doubt yourself forever.

All it takes is a single comment, and you may end up questioning yourself all day. I know because I've experienced it over and over again.

Just one comment is all it takes.

One person says, "You know how hard that's going to be?"

And suddenly you can't work all day. Yesterday you worked 14 hours and it passed like talking to a pretty girl at the bar.

But today you feel lost. Scatterbrained. Drained.

Are they right?

Any time you get worried, your resolve begins to falter, or you begin wondering.. "are they right?" ponder this next statement, and you'll probably realize there is more than a grain of truth to it:

Most people who tell you *you can't* do something, or it's "impossible" are those people who haven't done jack shit in their entire life. They bring others down without even knowing it.

Any time they see someone striving to do great things they see a semblance of themselves from a time long ago – and they think, "I never succeeded. So no one else can either. I've tried; it doesn't work. Come back down to reality."

But you're doing it.

And the doer commands infinite more respect than the talker.

You tell anyone in your way this:

“Bitch get outta the way. I’m makin’ history.”

Success's Subtle Signs

How do you know your life has improved at all?

How do you know when you've "succeeded" or are "living the dream?"

That may mean quitting a job you hate, living anywhere you want, or just doing what you enjoy every single day.

But in general, "have I succeeded?" is an awkward question.

Why? Society is filled with people that have myriad definitions of success:

- An Audi R8
- A million dollars
- A big house
- A trophy wife
- Waking up excited

- Day to day enjoyment
- Vacation Time
- Time spent with family
- Low stress
- Lots of free time
- ... And many others

But the unfortunate thing is that not all of these definitions of success contain the same underlying principles.

Some are based on intangibles like time and happiness. Others are based on tangibles like money or possessions.

Some are based on things you can acquire more of – like items; some are based on things you can never get back – like time.

How do you define your success?

Is success for you *more* of something? (Time/Vacation/Money) Or *less* or something? (Stress/Annoying Coworkers/Time working)

That is something you're going to have to answer for yourself, and again, it goes back to the importance of *knowing exactly what you want* and having measures for achievement.

If I'm making \$60,000 a year but with no goal other than "having a job," where do I invest that money? Probably into time & money wasting, because it has no direction.

You'll be like most people: buy a new car, new TV, drop a load of money at bars and clubs, buy more stuff, make your main goal at work "earning more money," and then repeat the rat race cycle.

And you are getting no closer to any goal or any form of enjoyment. It's just mindless misdirected work.

And don't for a second think it's a passion OR money game. Most of the wealthiest big names in the world have passion for what they do, and *that's why* they have an absurd amount of money.

So remember: just like enjoyment, fulfillment, purpose, and happiness, you need to find your own definition of "success" so that you can work towards it.

Fruition

This part is about the advice we all need, and often give ourselves, but rarely see to fruition.

And, unfortunately, it's the most important part of the process of living a life that is insanely enjoyable.

If you're like most people, you'll read some of the stuff here. Do exactly none of the exercises. Complete this short book in a session (probably scan it), and set it aside never to think about it again.

Anything dealing with the realm of the intangible is that way – it takes an incredible character to sit down and invest time and energy into making it tangible and real.

And that's where this chapter comes in.

**No one can give you the gift of discipline.
The gift of willpower. The gift of action.
The power to get things done or put
dreams into words on paper.**

But if you choose to skim everything above, remember the following lines:

Anyone can help inspire you. Anyone can give you some of the building blocks to live a life that looks like it belongs in a movie. Anyone can tell you “You can do it!” and give you that momentary motivation.

But only you can sit down and do it.

Today you may be inspired, and sit down and create an epic idea or plan.

Tomorrow you may still be inspired, and may have the plan plotted out.

A month from now you may feel the fire fade. But you still go ahead and inch closer to that dream.

Six months from now how will you feel?

Certainly less inspired than day 1, but will your drive be enough to keep going and putting in daily work?

What about a year from now? Two? Five? Ten?

Part of it is the passion part of the equation. Part of it is the intrinsic fire that no one can give you.

And part of it is how bad you really want to do exactly what you want to do in this life.

Create a vision for the future, no matter how small. Make it worth it. And do it.

Part 2 - Recap

==> Create your own manifesto and legacy to keep as your guidebook and motivational mentor when you feel like you are becoming lost or life begins to feel pointless

==> Doubters will always be there to steal your glory from you. Don't hate them, listen to their criticism, but put little emphasis on it. Keep your mind on your work, and your work only. Nothing else matters.

==> Spend time thinking about your definition of success. Is it a sports car? Is it a 6-figure salary? Is it working on stuff you enjoy? Use the worksheet to help clarify

==> Only you have the willpower to bring any goal or dream to fruition. All the reading, hoping, or wishing in the world won't get you any closer – just action.

Ultimatum

I have one last thing for you to consider. Regarding being childlike and dreaming big once again, I ask you:

“Why not?”

The single greatest gift of “why not?” is its ability to make your life worth living.

If you constantly need justification for everything you do, you’re probably going to live a pretty boring, routine-dominated life that limits you intellectually, physically, and psychologically.

If you’re looking to have a hand in creating something great, and living a life of greatness, get the “why” question out of your mind.

This doesn’t mean being ignorant of the brutal facts of your current situation; it just means you start with the inherent willingness to try it and

see what happens.

“Why” inherently means you don’t want to overcome inertia and change your routine.

“Why not?” means you’re ready to kick some ass and see what happens.

I’m convinced that people don’t take risks not because we are afraid, but because we don’t possess the drive. As soon as we foresee a long road ahead filled with work and hardship, we pass.

In either case, I want you to think of it like this:

What’s there to lose? What’s the worst that can happen? I’ll go back to my shitty monotonous life? Back to being a zombie who sleepwalks through a meaningless existence? Back to racing my car home after leaving work because it’s the most exciting 15 fucking minutes of my life?

I’ll pass.

Afterword

“You’ve got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle. As with all matters of the heart, you’ll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don’t settle.”

-Steve Jobs

This quote has been passed around a lot. But as a lost 20 something myself, I think I’m just a very small part of a large movement that is occurring around the world.

If there were a booklet that could’ve been passed on to me - the way to a virtuous life, living a life of greatness, creating a meaningful life, becoming a lion to lead the sheep – I would hope it would have that small snippet above from Steve Jobs’ Stanford Commencement speech.

Do what you love. Never settle.

The rest is up to you to prove how badly you want it.

This ebook is just a very, very small initial step towards freedom and waking up. It is merely planting the tiniest of acorns that will grow into a great oak over time.

It is sowing the seed of a thought, an idea. An idea that must be nurtured, expanded, and acted upon.

But before you leave, I want to share one last story I hope will be engraved into your brain. It all begins with a thief, and his son.

<><>< *Breaking Free* ><><>

Once there was a thief who had mastered the art of thievery. His exploits were legendary. His son looked up to him and wished to walk in his footsteps.

The son trained hard to practice the skills of theft, but he knew the training could not compare to the real thing. With the impatience of youth, he frequently asked his father to take him along on a heist, but his father always said he wasn't ready.

"When will I be ready, Father?" he would ask.

"You'll see."

One night, the thief told his son to follow him. Finally, the son thought, a chance for real action!

Together they moved stealthily into a large mansion. Once inside, the thief pointed to a door and motioned for the son to enter. The son went in and saw that it was only a closet. He turned around just as his father closed the door on him and locked it.

He whispered urgently: "Father, what are you doing? Let me out!"

Instead of unlocking the door, the thief went running down the hallway, yelling, "Thief! Thief!" Then he fled outside and disappeared into the night.

The son was trapped. Awakened by the disturbance, the residents of the mansion got up to investigate.

The servants banded together to conduct a room-by-room search.

The son had to free himself, but how? An idea occurred to him. When the servants came closer to the closet, he made mouse noises.

Reacting to this, the servants unlocked the closet door to take a look. The son sprang into action. He kicked the door wide open and pushed the servants aside as he ran for his life.

Once out of the mansion, the son was able to get away. He made it back home, where he found his father waiting for him. “Welcome back,” his father said. “Tell me how you escaped.”

The son gave a detailed report. When he was done, he saw his father nodding. “Now you are ready to be a thief,” said his father with a smile.

“Those people that are crazy enough to think that they can change the world – they’re the ones that actually do.”

-Steve Jobs, 1955-2011

Recommended Reading

From Milk the Pigeon

1. [The Generation of Dreamers is dead](#)
2. [Why the hell not?](#)
3. [Living a Conversation-Worthy life](#)
4. [Why Being a Badass is the Key to Success](#)
5. [Young and Lost? You are Not Alone](#)
6. [What Would You do if You Knew You Could Not Fail?](#)

Books That Changed my Life

1. [The Alchemist](#) by Paulo Coelho
2. [Flow, the Psychology of Optimal Experience](#) by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
3. [Meditations](#) by Marcus Aurelius
4. [Moonwalking With Einstein](#) by Joshua Foer

Misc

[Steve Jobs' Stanford Commencement Speech](#)

Don't Forget!

1. There are a couple worksheets that I created that may help with the brainstorming process. The following 3 you can find at <http://milkthepigeon.com/your-ebook-download/>
 - A. *Get a life that doesn't suck worksheet* + the notes and suggestions
 - B. *Creating your legacy worksheet*
 - C. *Measures of success worksheet*

If you found *Killing Your Old Life and Livin' the Dream* useful, **please share it with others.**

Whether that's on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or anywhere else – it would help immensely to pass this on to someone else.

The best thing you could do for me if you enjoyed this? **Link to it and write a review. I'll love you long time ☺**

This movement will happen whether or not I exist or continue to talk about it – many of us have become fed up with our current life that isn't satisfying and seems to have no purpose.

That will change. **See you on the other side,**

Alex



Alex is a relentless dreamer who was never told he couldn't do something. Maybe that'll come back to bite him in the ass – but until then, he plans on doing big things, and finding out he can help others do the same. He believes that people are all inherently born to do big things with their time on earth – and that settling for anything is totally unacceptable. You can connect with him on Twitter [@Milkthepigeon](#), like Milkthepigeon on [Facebook](#), or reach him via email to talk about life: Afheyne@hotmail.com

BY ALEXANDER HEYNE