

Bold Book Notes –

Life Reimagined – Science, Art, Opportunity in Midlife

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Keys to Life

“Somethings are worth doing poorly” (Like me learning to play the drums poorly 😊)

Engage with VERVE... Autopilot is DEATH

Choose where to invest your energy and do it INTENTIONALLY

PURPOSEFUL ENGAGEMENT!

- Why? It makes you **RESILIENT** and **ROBUST**
- You’ve got a reason to get up in the morning
- You’ll:
 - Live Longer
 - Happier in Old Age
 - Better retain your memory
 - Better chance to survive and thrive after diagnosis

Having a PURPOSE is more important than education or wealth in determining long term happiness

Choose PURPOSE over HAPPINESS... pursuing your PURPOSE naturally leads to HAPPINESS

“Having a....

- wider perspective,
- an investment in those you love,
- a willingness to be identified by your passions and not your resume

are the keys to midlife!”

RELATIONSHIPS lengthen your life

- Not just your marriage
- Friendships give more benefit than even family
- Want a flourishing life? LOVE (and show acceptance which IS LOVE)

“People are happiest are those who feel like they are able to express aspects of themselves that feel vital to them.”

Being able to express the core of who you are! This is KEY! (We need it and our kids need this)

Maintain Your engagement with the WORLD!

Shift your attention FROM...

- Seeking happiness and achieving success

shift your attention TO...

- Finding meaning, cherishing people and playing attention to moments

Friendships = you choose these people and tend to the relationship. They better your psychological health!

MOM EXERCISE: Cultivate those friendships! They help your mental health and should be seen as important self-care!

Too much time alone and isolated = you can start to count all the negative and incorrect assumptions

Education is another key! Life time of learnings helps prevent dementia

Neuroticism score = how do you internally respond to stress? Resilient is the goal.

Social engagement Conscientiousness Purpose

Purpose in life – highest of all human goods

Purposeful engagement

- Long Term (Happier and longer life – may take some sacrifice in the short term)
vs.
- Short Term (anxious / depressed, high inflammation and bad health)
- Why do our bodies prefer meaning and deferred gratification and effort?
 - Our bodies feel less threat and less need to fight or flight
- If happiness = outside forces being in alignment for me – they are also things outside my control, I'm at the mercy of all things outside my control
- If I know that my experience = MY THINKING then I CONTROL that and feel less helpless, less stress, less anxiety, etc.
- If I VALUE, the long-term pursuits
 - This cause I believe in
 - These people / community that I want to thrive and bloom
 - Nobel endeavors
 - If My value lies in purpose / mission / community that can live and thrive

THEN....the body then sees this and somehow knows it has resources to rely on then that body can down-regulate the stress chemicals and that body can relax.

6 INTERNAL RESOURCES – to create resiliency and better health

1. Positive Relationships
2. Create your own positive environment (schedule / home / minimalist?)
3. Self-Acceptance – know your strengths and your weaknesses
4. Autonomy – do not look for outside approval
5. Personal Growth
6. Purpose in Life (what is your sense of direction)

The earlier you develop these 6 traits, you will enjoy their protective health benefits

“People that see (traditionally older people) that time is running out – shift motivation and goals to focus on WHAT REALLY MATTERS.”

Remember – DEATH IS A TEACHER – use it daily to help receive these long-term motivated benefits.

Midlife Marriage

- Keep it fresh with novelty
- Diversify – your spouse can not “complete” you
- Have your own friendships / own interests and fill yourself up!
- Go on DOUBLE DATES have couples as friends you’ll be happier in your marriage
- ENGAGE with VERVE (in your marriage as in your life)
- Adaptability – ride through the changes of life and be able to morph to deal with issues
- Are you OPEN, AGREEABLE?
- Embrace ACCEPTANCE – Don’t BLAME.... FIX YOURSELF!
 - It can be in one’s DNA to be a “Hot house flower” and be sensitive to the emotional climate around them
 - show acceptance for people like this (if you are this way – accept yourself by understanding this) because you can’t change DNA, but you can change the thoughts you have (either about yourself or the “hot house flower” in your life)
- Embrace INTENTIONAL FRIVOLITY
 - Enjoy the PROCESS and screw the results
 - Pursue a new passion – the more age-inappropriate the better!
- RESILIENCE = the ability to regulate your response to FEAR
 - How your wise old owl (Pre-frontal cortex/ executive functioning of the brain) regulates your guard dog (your reptilian brain – flight/fight response)
- You need to have other people who you can count on (your social networks are important)

- Use your mind flashlight = shine and focus on what's good – do not use your mind flashlight to highlight the bad

How to Develop Resilience?

Put it into PERSPECTIVE

1. Describe the event
2. What's the worst case scenario?
3. What's the best-case scenario?
4. Identify the most likely outcome
5. Develop a plan

Purposeful thinking

- Is there anything good that can come from this?
- Focus on what you CAN control (“I’m still able to...”)
- See the power of your connections
- List out your top character strengths (or go to www.viacharacter.org) and fall back on them
- “Cognitive re-appraisal” and “mindful meditation”
- Emotion puts an exclamation point on the pain. Lessen the emotion – lessen the pain (physical and mental pain)
 - How to lessen the emotion? BE FULL! We are more emotional when we are on fumes!
 - Separate the pain from who YOU are. Dis-identify with the pain – see it as a brain wiring problem.
 - “It’s not me – it’s my anxiety”
- Understand your brain has faulty wiring (all our brains do!)
 - When you do this – you start to draw down the emotion of it and you begin to understand your brain is sending a false message
- You are NOT a SLAVE to YOUR BRAIN
- Change how your brain works by changing the direction of your attention (Where and What is your MIND FLASHLIGHT illuminating???)
- Start investing OUTWARD – GENERATIVITY and STOP with all the ACQUIREING and CONSUMING
- I AM WHAT SURVIVES ME.... Ask yourself what you want to have survive YOU?
 - Use your gifts/passions and share them with the world
- EMPATHY HEALS – LACK OF IT HARMS
 - Volunteering is good – but why and how are super important to get the benefit. Make sure it’s a cause and in a way that really speaks to your passion.
- Identify your BRAND – your signature qualities, talents, personality traits, proclivities, experiences

Don't be AFRAID – EMBRACE CHANGE!

- What is the something in you that has resisted all of life's changes? That is your ESSENCE – repurpose your ABILITIES.
- To make a CHANGE – FEED YOUR BRAIN
 - (with information and answers to the questions it is going to ask – remember your brain is RISK AVERSE!)
- Make a **CHANGE COMMITMENT** with yourself:
 - What do you want to change?
 - When do you want it to change?
 - Is there something stopping you from doing it today?
 - Can you reframe?
 - What's the actual conflict – right now?
 - What would be the reward if you changed?
 - What are your fears if you don't change?
 - What could happen?

Career change advice:

- What will you do with your years? Invest inward? (with buying more stuff) or outward? (with gathering more MEANING)
- What is your ESSENCE? How will it guide you? (Build on your skills, experience and passion)
- What are you afraid of? Anxiousness is acceptable – it's the brain's default position. Are the obstacles insurmountable?

REMEMBER ABOUT MIDLIFE...

- It's FUNNY! Don't take aging so personally
- Find a passion project and approach it like a kid would. Do it just to do it.
- Use your thoughts to see what you want – choose where and what your mind flashlight will illuminate
- Do good work – meaningful volunteering
- Take your shot
- Avoid regret
- Find gratitude if you must go back to previous work... focus on the upsides
- Choose what matters most (long-term NOT short-term!)
- Broaden your intellectual world!
- Be curious and engaged

- Swim against the stream of habituated opinion

16 Suggestions for Mid-Life:

On Aging Well:

- If you feel blue – remember everyone does too. The most joyous years lay ahead
- Aim for MEANING not HAPPINESS and you will find BOTH
- Ask yourself regularly: “How will I use these glorious days for the best purpose?”
- Your old brain can learn new tricks if you challenge it.

On Living Exuberantly:

- Be a rookie at something at every stage of life
- Create a goal to energize your days

On Living Exuberantly:

- It’s harder to hurt when you are laughing
- Take trouble in stride – setbacks can be good for your growth
- Watch your thoughts – YOUR THINKING SHAPES YOUR EXPERIENCE

On Doing Good Work:

- If possible, go for Plan A (and it’s more possible than not)
- Pivoting on your strengths beats starting from scratch
- Redefine SUCCESS according to YOUR VALUES not the rest of the world’s values

On Choosing What Matters most

- Pay attention: The biggest threat to seasoned marriages is mutual neglect
- Do you value that relationship? Then cut him/her some slack
- It’s dangerous at the periphery
- Happiness is Love – Full Stop.