



A little book on

Fulfillment

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Common Regrets of the Dying

In a very popular book, palliative care nurse Bronnie Ware recounts the many conversations she had with dying people in the modern age. Among their top five regrets were:

- “I wish I had the courage to live a life true to myself”
- “I wish I hadn’t worked so hard”

This is something that all of us should pause and think about. Our whole lives, we have been told that if we work hard, get a good job, work harder, and then save for retirement, we’ll live a satisfying life.

What Bronnie found is that the opposite is true – this kind of life leads to regret and lost opportunities, not fulfillment.

Journaling Questions

1. If you were guaranteed outstanding success, what would you do with your life?
2. On a scale of one to ten, how fulfilling is your job right now? What does a ten look like?



Authenticity

*No one ever lived a thousand years
Not like things we do or say
Some of those who really changed this world
We would welcome back today
They could really light the way*
“Call Up”, Alan Parsons

One of the most enjoyable parts of life – and one of the most important – is self-expression. Human beings have many ways of expressing themselves, like through actions, words, and art. However, creativity is usually seen as a hobby, not a central part of life. Additionally, our jobs often require us to conform or mask our true selves. In order to become more fulfilled, it’s important that you think about how to be more authentic.

Journaling Questions

1. In what areas of your life are you able to be authentic with others?
2. When do you feel you have to conform, fit in, or not be yourself?
3. What are some things you could do to celebrate your creativity?



Autonomy

When we enter the school system, our natural childhood playfulness is discouraged. We are told to follow rigid schedules, to do our work on time, and to follow lists of rules. When we graduate and move to the working world, our experience is much of the same... almost as if one was training us for the other.

An important part of having a fulfilling life is having some degree of autonomy. What this means is being able to set your own goals while having the freedom to pursue those goals in the ways that you want. Basically, you have to have a plan of some kind that you are working to accomplish.

Far too late in their lives, many of Bronnie Ware's patients realized that they were working to fulfill someone else's plan instead of their own, or had substituted the corporate dream for a plan true to them. But not everyone has to be an entrepreneur! Even if you're an employee at a company, if you have enough autonomy within your role, you'll be happy and fulfilled.

Journaling Questions

1. Do you have a written plan, with goals, that you are pursuing?
2. If not, what are two things you could try to accomplish within the next 3-6 months?
3. Are you satisfied with the level of autonomy you have at work?



Childhood Dreams

Although we don't have to do what we dreamed of as a child, the things that first grabbed our interest often contain valuable clues about what we might be happiest doing.

At some point, however, our childhood dreams were probably discouraged, and we ended up pursuing something that makes us kind of happy, at best. Even though it might be infeasible to drop everything and pursue your childhood dreams, there are almost certainly ways you can channel your original interests through your work and hobbies.

The more "bucket list items" you can tick off, the more fulfilled you'll be in old age.

Journaling Questions

1. What did you LOVE doing as a child? How could you channel that today?
2. At what age were you discouraged from pursuing your childhood dreams?

Further Reading

- “Regrets of the Dying”, Bronnie Ware
- “The 4-Hour Workweek”, Timothy Ferriss
- “Maximum Achievement”, Brian Tracy
- “The Happiness of Pursuit”, Chris Guillebeau



Coach-in-a-Bottle

"Coach-in-a-Bottle" is a practical and affordable coaching solution for people who are seeking more meaning in their career. This bundle of guided journaling activities, career-related reading, and goal-setting material contains the essence of an entire career coaching program... and won't burn a hole in your wallet.

<https://zacharystrong.net/resources/coach-in-a-bottle/>



About Zachary R.J. Strong

I am a fulfillment-focused career coach. If you are feeling undervalued at work, or suspect you might have been meant to do something else, I can support you as you clarify your vision and draft a plan.

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