

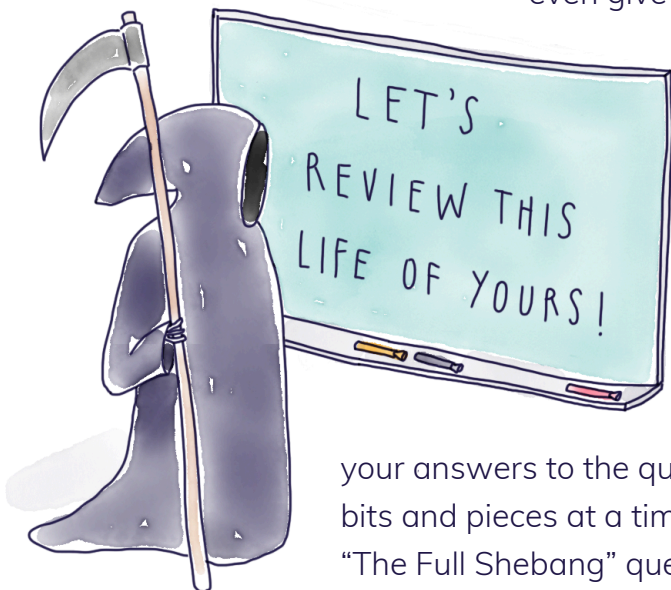
Your Life Review

(Before You Go and Die).

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WONDERING WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?

A life review exercise, which involves revisiting and evaluating your life experiences, can be a profoundly meaningful and therapeutic endeavor. Research has shown this kind of intervention can enhance psychological well-being, strengthen interpersonal relationships, reduce psychological distress, promote self-identity and legacy-building, and improve coping with life's challenges. It might even give you shinier hair! Why wait until the end is near, though?



Rather than conducting this exercise when you're at death's door—which is typically when life reviews are administered—let's reap the benefits of this reflection while we're fortunate to still be alive. We get 4,000-ish Mondays; I'm thinking we should make them count?

WONDERING HOW TO DO IT?

Sit back in a comfy place with your favorite beverage (I'd do a *White Russian* but you do you), take notes on your answers to the questions, and be honest with yourself. It's okay to complete bits and pieces at a time, and if you're feeling a tad pressed for time, jump to "The Full Shebang" questions. Kudos to you for completing this life excavation in an effort to live like you mean it in your remaining Mondays!

THE EARLY YEARS... BIRTH – 12

Congratulations for being born! Look how cute you were back then.

- My earliest memory is ...
- My favorite photo of myself under 13 is this one, and here's why ...



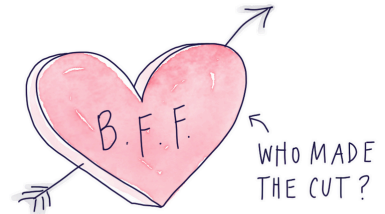
- Three words to describe my primary caregivers are ...
- These were the most influential people while I was a child, and here's why ...
- I was happiest as a kid when I was doing the following things ...
- When I was under 12, I wanted to do this when I grew up ...
- People described me like this when I was a kid ...
- Here's what my relationship with school was like ...
- Here's who my closest friend(s) were and here's why I liked them ...
- Beliefs that were passed down (good, bad, or otherwise) from my elders included (e.g.: cleanliness is next to godliness/ the world is an unsafe place/ you can do anything you put your mind to/ etc.)...
- This is what I miss about being a kid ...
- I was afraid of these things when I was a kid ...
- My experience with loss, when I was a kid, included ...
- My childhood shaped who I am today in these main ways ...
- I look back on my childhood now and would have liked to have given myself the following advice ...



THE TEEN YEARS...

Oh yeah, that ~~hot mess~~ six year stretch.

- My best memories of being a teen include ...
- Three words to describe me as a teen are ...
- School had this kind of impact on my life in these years ...
- These were the most influential people in my teen years, and here's why ...
- When I think of the people I hung out with/ dated/ had crushes on, here's what it was I liked about them ...
- This stuff motivated me when I was a teen ...
- This stuff demotivated me when I was a teen ...
- These things made me feel most alive when I was an adolescent ...
- My thoughts about my future career, back when I was a teen, looked like this ...
- Here's what I learned from my part-time/ summer jobs (like what I loved to do/ hated to do/ what kinds of bosses I loved/ hated, etc.)...
- My typical outfit when I was a teen looked like this ...
- My teen years were formative for me in these ways ...
- I look back on my teenage years now and would have liked to have given myself the following advice ...



EARLY ADULTHOOD...

YOUR 20s and 30s

Things got really real here, right?!

- Fond memories of my 20s and 30s include ...
- This is how people who knew me would describe me in this phase of life ...
- This is what I did (or didn't) do for education after high school, and here's why ...
- Here are my thoughts about what I was doing in my career at that time of life ...
- Here are my thoughts about what I wanted next in my career, back then ...
- The main people in my life at this time included ...
- Here's what I loved/ didn't love about the people in my list above ...
- A lesson or two I learned in this time of life included ...
- These values started to emerge for me when I reached this time of life ...
- The best ways I spent my time as an early adult included ...
- Here's how I felt about my physical body in these years ...
- One of my favorite vacations was ...



- I'm most proud of these things from this period of life...
- I wish I could change this stuff from my 20s and 30s ...
- My experience with death up to this point in my life was like this, and here's how I felt about it ...
- I look back on my early adulthood now and would have liked to have given myself the following advice ...

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD...

YOUR 40s, 50s, and 60s

Chock-full of life experience, that's for sure.



- Fond memories of my 40s – 60s include ...
- Here are my thoughts about my career in this time of life ...
- The main people in my life at this time included...
- Here's what I loved about the people in my list above ...
- Key lessons learned in this time of my life included ...
- These values got really refined for me for me when I reached this time of life ...
- The best ways I spent my time as a middle adult included ...
- These things made me feel most alive when I was in my 40s, 50s, and 60s ...
- I'm most proud of these things from this period of life ...
- I wish I could change this stuff from my 40s – 60s ...
- When people say “you get wiser with age,” I think ...
- I look back on my middle adulthood now and would have liked to have given myself the following advice ...



THE FULL SHEBANG...

The whole enchilada! Let's look at the entirety of your life so far, Sparky.

- If I had to describe my life in one sentence or less, here's what it would say ...
- A key line/ quote that would go on my tombstone could very well be ...
- Here's how I feel about whether I honored the most important values in my life along the way ...
- My happiest time(s) in life included ...
- My unhappiest time(s) in life included ...
- Times I showed resilience included ...
- These things made me feel most alive in my life ...
- Here are things I still want to learn ...
- Here's the role spirituality (not necessarily religion) has played in my life so far (if any), and here's the role I'd like spirituality to play from now on ...



- When I think of the "meaning" in my life (purpose, connection, virtues, etc.), here's how I made meaning ...
- The best gift I ever gave was ...
- I wish I had spent more money on ...
- I wish I had spent less money on ...
- Thoughts about how I'd like to manage my finances moving forward include ...
- I'm most proud of these things in my life ...
- The bravest thing I ever did was ...
- Here's how I feel about my health and physical body, and what I might want to do to treat myself with care moving forward ...
- Something I wish people knew about me is ...
- When I look back on my life, I wish I had done these things ...
- When I think of my legacy, I'll likely be remembered in the following ways ...
- I'd prefer to be described with the following

five words at my funeral ...



- I don't want people to remember me in these ways after I'm gone ...
- I have these remaining goals and ambitions and hopes and dreams and fanciful notions ...

- They say your life might flash before your eyes when you die. Here's what I want to be on the highlight reel of my life-movie-montage ...
- Here are how many Mondays I have left to live, and here's what I'm motivated to DO because of this countdown timer ...
- Advice I'd give others about how to live, based on my experience of being alive ...
- I'd like my life to feel like this, in my remaining years ...
- Reflecting on these questions, here are a few themes that seem to have emerged ...
- One thing I'm motivated to take action on, as a result of answering these questions, is ...



- The people who mattered most in my life included ...
- When I think about my romantic/ love/ sex life, here's what I'd like to see more of/ less of in my years to come ...

- When I think of my "vitality" in my life (fun, pleasure, new experiences, etc.), here's how I think I land on this little vitality spectrum ...

FULL-ON TOE TAG

PARTICIPATION RIBBON

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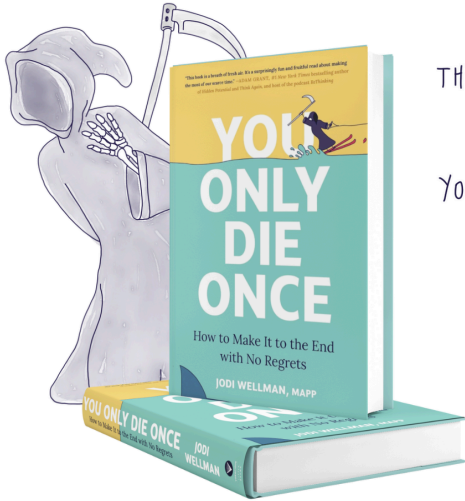


SLIGHTLY DEAD

SIGNS OF LIFE

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE.....

One more mucho-important question as you review this illustrious life of yours.



THIS IS AN EXCERPT →
FROM MY BOOK,
YOU ONLY DIE ONCE!

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND YOUR LIFE?

Here's an unexpected way to look at your life in our pre-mortem: I'm sure you've heard of the Net Promoter Score (NPS)—the gold standard in customer experience metrics and also a guaranteed way to put you to sleep if we keep talking about it—so instead of giving you a boring lesson on NPS, I'm just going to cut to the chase. One of the two questions in an NPS survey is called The Ultimate Question, and it goes like this:

How likely is it that you would recommend [Service X / Organization Y / Product Z] to a friend or colleague?

You've likely filled out surveys with this question before. You've had to think hard if you'd recommend your local Target to a friend... if you'd recommend your doctor to a neighbor... if you'd recommend wherever you get waxed to a colleague in desperate need of a bushwhacking. You've had to quantify this recommendation on a scale of 0-10 (where 10 means "I'd absolutely and gleefully recommend the Brazilian wax to that new gal in HR!" and 0 means "I'm currently litigating my waxologist, and I'm not at liberty to comment").

If you were sent a survey about your life, how would you answer this bastardized NPS question?

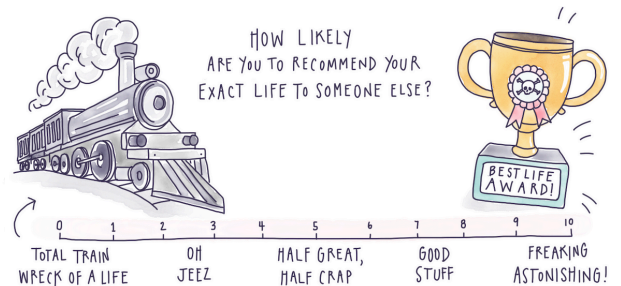
How likely is it that you would recommend your exact life to a friend or colleague? On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to recommend that another human being live the EXACT life you've lived, right down to the minutest detail?

* Life, the disease, is actually an STD—I wanted to share that in case you, like me, find it amusing.



Click here to take the [1-minute quiz!](#)

Let's use a graphic to help you out:



So where are you on the scale?

- ☹️ Is the goal to get to a 10? Maybe, but not necessarily. (*Perfection is pretty, but I'm lucid enough to know it's a mirage.*) Let's not add to the omnipresent pressure to LIVE LIFE PERFECTLY (*yes, in yelling caps*)... so maybe 10 isn't realistic (unless you're already at a 9.4, and who am I to stop you from leveling up?).
- ☹️ If you're in the "recommend" category (over 5 or so), how does your number make you feel? Are you giving yourself a thumbs-up in the mirror, or is that voice of sneaking suspicion telling you, "You could be *living it up*' more than you are today"? Only you know if that voice is the incessant sound of self-judgment or the gentle nudge of your best self, encouraging you to live with more guts and gusto. What might it take to notch yourself a half point up on the NPS-of-life scale?
- ☹️ If you're in the "not recommend my life" category (under 5 or so), you likely have a few circumstantial things going on (e.g., fifth divorce, bankruptcy, maybe you really were in a train wreck). What's one small way to live life from today onward that makes you feel incrementally alive? What can you do today to start nudging your life toward the 5+ zone, so you can answer differently the next time you're surveyed about your life?

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Four Thousand Mondays

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LET'S GO LIVE LIKE
WE MEAN IT! -jodi