

How to Get a Life and Live to the Fullest

You only have one life to live, but many aren't sure how to live it to the fullest. Here are 10 ways that show you how to get a life and live it in the best way possible.

I will never forget a moment I had with my daughter a few years ago. I was lying next to her as I put her to bed. As she held her stuffed animal close to her face and we talked about the day, she paused from our conversation for a moment and leaned in... 'Mom,' she said thoughtfully. 'You want to spend life the best way you can. Because you only have one life and you want to make it good.'

She was 7 at the time, wise beyond her years. And she was right. We have one life to live, and I believe we should all live a life we love — or at least really like.

When you look back at the end of your life, you want to be able to confidently say, 'Yes! I am satisfied, content and feel like I lived my life to the fullest.'

Sure, you will likely be faced with setbacks, obstacles, stress, and frustrations along the way. Some days you'll feel on top of the world, jumping out of bed in the morning; other days you'll feel like the proverbial stuff has hit the fan, and you'll just want to pull the covers back over your head.

Part of living life to the fullest extent is completely experiencing *all* that life has to offer. After all, we cannot fully appreciate joy unless we have felt pain. We cannot fully experience love until we have lost. Experiencing the full range of good and bad is what gives life meaning and purpose.

So whether you are in a period of thriving, or a time of just trying to survive, here is how to get a life and live it to the fullest.

1. Take Care of Yourself

'Take care of your body, it's the only place you have to live'. —Jim Rohn

If your body is falling apart, if you're unhealthy and struggling with disease, you will never be able to live life fully. Taking care of yourself isn't just about taking care of your body. It's taking an integrative approach to your health and wellness.

This means taking care of yourself mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. So many of us focus on one area and forget the others.

Try this: Find ways to take care of yourself holistically. Start with the basics: stay hydrated, exercise regularly, get enough sleep, eat nourishing foods, spend time in nature, take deep breaths, and meditate.

Check out 30 more ways to take care of yourself here.

2. Be True to Yourself

'To thine own self be true.' –Shakespeare

If you are going to live life to the fullest, you must first know what that means to *you*.

From a young age, there are many competing expectations, demands, and dreams coming from every direction: family members, friends, and your community. This leads many people to live a life that others want or expect of them, not the one they would choose for themselves.

Often, people are living a life that looks good to others from the outside, but inside they are unhappy, stressed, or feeling insecure or like a fraud.

Add to that the constant and relentless messages from social media, books, and resources that tell us how we *should* do things, what we are *supposed* to do, and how we are *meant* to succeed, and it can be easy to lose yourself.

Bronnie Ware is a palliative care nurse who has worked with hundreds of patients in the last few weeks of their lives. When she talked to them about the most common regrets they had or things they would have done differently, the number one answer was this:

I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.^[1]

Try this: Get to know yourself and what you need to thrive. Identify and honor the visions, dreams, and goals you have for your life. Make a commitment to dedicate time and energy to the things that are important to you.

3. Get a Job You Love (Or at Least Like)

'Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.' –Confucius

Most people spend at least a third of their lives at work, and yet 85% of the world's full-time workers hate their job. A whopping 85%! That's a disheartening statistic. Are you bored, hate your job, or feeling unfulfilled and unhappy as you go to work each day? If so, it's time to make a change.

There are likely realities about what job opportunities might be available where you live, how much money you need to make to support your family, and the skills required to land the job you really want. I also know and have worked with hundreds of individuals to confirm that there are *always* other options — even if you can't see them right now.

Try this: If you're unhappy or unfulfilled in your role, actively seek out other options. If, for some reason, you *truly* can't change jobs, find a way to make your job work for you. Ask for a raise, flexible work hours, or an increased level of responsibility or experience. Perhaps you can start a side hustle, go back to school, or do *something* to make progress towards what you really want to be doing.

4. Find Your Tribe

'Choose people who lift you up.' –Michelle Obama

We are social beings hardwired for connection. That means we need to spend time engaging with others to thrive. Studies have shown that people who socialize often have higher levels of happiness than those who don't. [2] In addition, in the longest study in history on happiness, Robert Waldinger found:

'The clearest message that we get from this 75-year study is this: good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Period.'^[3]

However, it's not just about spending time with people. You must spend time with people who you love being with, who understand you, and who you trust. They should be people who support you and make you feel safe and loved, as well as heard and seen.

Try this: Make an extra effort to grow and nurture *healthy* relationships in your life. Spend time, in person, with friends, family, and colleagues. Schedule a regular date night with friends or family. Find more ways to create a sense of community and be social in your life – and have fun in the process!

5. Let Go

It is only when we let go, that new, untold possibilities present themselves.

Sometimes living life to the fullest is as much about what you let go as much as what you hold on to. Remember in the movie 'Up' when Mr. Fredricksen is trying to get his house to fly? It was too heavy. He had to dump his belongings until the house was light enough to lift off. The same is true for your life. What do you need to let go of so you can move forward, live life to the fullest, and ultimately fly?

Try this: Identify what you need to release to move forward. What are you holding on to that's holding you back: an old habit, limiting belief, or story you are telling yourself? Let it go. Perhaps it's resentment, anger or frustration. Then forgive. When you wake up each day, treat it as a clean slate. If things didn't go the way you wanted yesterday, leave that behind and move forward.

6. Be the Best YOU Can Be

'All of us are seeking the same thing. We share the desire to fulfill the highest, truest expression of ourselves as human beings.' –Oprah

We are all here to become the fullest expression of ourselves. That means being the best YOU that you can be. Take every opportunity to learn, grow, and evolve. The only way you can do that is through new experiences that push beyond your current capabilities, beliefs, and boundaries. Learn anything you can from anyone you can. Be open to feedback. Seek out opportunities for growth.

Try this: Take chances. Say yes more often. Get out of your comfort zone. Make a goal to have one new experience a month or take time for your own personal and professional growth and development. With each

new experience, ask yourself, 'What did I learn? How can I progress? How can I move forward on my life's journey?'

7. Be Thankful

'Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.'
–Eckhart Tolle

The best way to live a life you love is to love the life you live. Studies have proven a multitude of benefits from expressing gratitude, ranging from how it improves relationships, physical and emotional health, sleep, mental stamina, energy, and overall happiness. Being grateful is one of the simplest and most powerful things you can do to live a full and happy life.

Be appreciative for what you have. Yes, I know things may not be perfect, and you likely want something more. But you can still be grateful for what you have. You can *always* find something to be thankful for.

Try this: Start a daily gratitude practice. Here are 10 ideas to get you started.

8. Listen More

How often do you find yourself somewhere, but not really *there* at all? Your mind has wandered far from the moment and the people you are with. Maybe you're talking with someone, but you're distracted, in your head, multitasking, or thinking about something else. With so much going on in our lives, I know I'm guilty of this.

Take the time to listen. Tune in to the world around you. Listen more. Listen better. Listen harder. Listen with all of you. Listen with focus, love and intention. Listen to yourself. Hear your inner voice. Heed your intuition. Listen to your partner, friends, kids, nature. Just listen.

Try this: The only way to truly listen is to be still. Be present. Focus on what is in front of you. Put everything else away. Put your phone down. Stop multitasking (yes, it's possible). If you're in a conversation, focus on hearing what's being said, ask questions, seek to understand at a deeper level and find out more. Listen to yourself by being mindful, doing one thing at a time, journaling or tapping into your inner voice.

9. Have Fun

'Don't be afraid your life will end; be afraid that it will never begin.' –Grace Hansen

In order to live life to the fullest, we must experience all that life has to offer. The only way to live life to the fullest is to truly **live** life. Do things you enjoy. Chase your dreams. Achieve your goals. Take advantage of every experience and opportunity you can.

So much of what we do is wrapped around what we *have* to do or what we *should* do. The result is that we often don't do things just because we *want* to. Find things that bring you joy, invigorate you, and light your fire.

There will always be a reason you can't do something, and the timing will never be perfect. If you want to do something, do it now, or at least make a plan. Don't get caught in the 'when, then' trap. 'When I get the promotion, then I'll go on that trip,' 'When I have enough money, then I'll start volunteering.' What can you do now?

Try this: Identify what brings you joy and makes you feel happy or fulfilled. Do more of that! Plan more time for fun and adventure. Say yes more often. Make an effort to truly live a full and happy life.

10. Be Generous

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.

Studies prove that the act of giving lowers blood pressure, increases self-esteem, improves happiness, and even helps you live a longer life!^[4]

Not only that, but giving provides so many benefits to others, ensuring that you are not only living life to the fullest for yourself but that you are contributing to a positive, greater good for the whole — and helping others have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest, too! You can leave people, animals, or the earth a little better for having been here.

Try this: Identify how you can serve, contribute, and give back. This may already be part of your daily life or job. If not, find a cause you care about and jump in. Giving back can come in many forms. It can be as small as smiling at everyone you see on the street or as big as starting a foundation for a cause that's important to you.

Do One Thing. Do Them All. Just Do Something.

Your life will likely be full of ups and downs. Good and bad. Tragedy and triumph. How can you ensure you live your life to the fullest?

Imagine yourself many years from now, at the end of your life, looking back on the life you lived. What will you wish you had done? How will you wish you had spent your time? What would you be proud of? What would you regret? What would it mean to live a full and happy life? Ask the questions, get clear on the answers, and then work your way back to now.

Remember, our lives are made up of moments. Those moments make up hours, the hours make up days, the days make up years, and the years create your life. Ultimately, the best way to live life to the fullest is to live each moment to the fullest.

'You think this is just another day in your life? It's not just another day. It's the one day that is given to you today. It's given to you. It's a gift. It's the only gift that you have right now, and the only appropriate response is gratefulness.' –Benedictine Monk Brother David Steindl-Rast

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