

# Thriving in the Second Half of Life

Is it time to take inventory and see what is working in your life and what needs to change? Take stock of your life!

Ancient Romans named the month of January for Janus, their god of gates, doors and beginnings. Always pictured with two faces – one looking toward the future, the other looking back at the past, Janus is a fitting symbol for a new beginning.



As we step through our doorways, whether it is from 2007 to 2008, or from our thirties to our forties, or from our fifties to our sixties, it is natural to do as Janus does: look back and at the same time, look ahead. But this year, instead of just reflecting on the past year or making New Year's resolutions as we look ahead, consider using the first part of the year to take stock of the rest of your life. Just as financial advisors encourage us to balance our portfolios and to make sure our money will outlast our lives, let's make sure that our individual lives reflect all that we have wanted to achieve to have lived a whole life. Many people have written that it is not death that frightens us, but not having lived full lives.

What are your important questions, especially if you are thinking of selling your company, or jumping off the corporate ladder, starting your own new venture? Who are you? Where did you derive your core identity? Did you get it from work? From parenting? From your faith? What do you believe? What do you really need?

These questions are worth examining, even if the answers might be scary or hard to hear. For when we discover who we really are, we stop living on auto-pilot and start to live with intention, focus and purpose. Our choices become clearer. We begin to make active choices in our life, instead of making excuses or passively living with the status quo.

Here are a few questions to get you started. Write down your thoughts in a journal or if you don't like to write, use some other way to record your thoughts. (Writing by hand, though, keeps you in touch with your heart.)

1. What is aching within you to be expressed?
2. What needs healing?
3. What unique gifts, talents and skills do you bring to the world?
4. How are you using them (or not)?
5. Who do you need to forgive?
6. Do you need to forgive yourself?
7. Are your beliefs holding you back or getting in your way?
8. What can you let go of in your life?
9. What truly makes you happy?

*"My goal in life is to play all four quarters."*

*CEO Journey member*

Taking inventory of your life shouldn't be just an intellectual exercise. When we only use our head, our experience of thinking about ourselves and the world becomes limited. We miss out on the vital information that other "parts" of ourselves are giving us. As one executive says, "Don't just trust your gut, obey it." Like the phenomena written about in the book [Blink, The Power of Thinking Without Thinking](#), by Malcolm Gladwell, our intuitive selves are often our best guides.

What is your body telling you? Do your shoulders stiffen up when you have focused too hard on fulfilling others' needs but ignoring your own? Does your stomach go into knots when you head into the office? Are you noticing the messages your body is giving you? Check in with your heart. The heart is the home of what is most alive in us. What does your heart have to say about your job? What does it say about how you spend your days?

Does your heart tell you that you need to have more play time? What, according to your heart, really matters? Listen also to your intuition, your "gut." Your intuition speaks volumes, but it often gets ignored. Connect back to a time when you paid attention to what you knew was right, even though you didn't know exactly how you knew it. You knew what your voice was telling you then, so what is that voice saying now? Carefully notice what you are already doing that works. We know that 'an

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attitude of gratitude' is part of authentic happiness. Acknowledge and give thanks for all the gifts and beauty and miracles that are in your life right now.

Tell the truth. Now is the time to start being honest about who you really are. When you encourage those un-lived parts of yourself to emerge, it can provide an exhilarating sense of discovery and optimism for the New Year and for all four quarters of the rest of the next year in your life.

*"We alone are responsible for what we do. Our choices reveal our true priorities."*

## *Thriving in the Second Half by Taking Charge of What You Can Control*

**IMPERFECT CONTROL** – What things do you really have influence over or what things do you need to let go? We can't control the weather, death or another person's thoughts, choices or actions, much as we would like to. But our lives are rich with choices that we make every day. This is what we mean by living with intention. The choices that we make in the following ten important areas are what steer our way through the sea of life:

1. *Our actions.* We alone are responsible for what we do. Our choices reveal our true priorities. If you are honest with yourself, you might admit that too many choices are based on fear, so we have a need to develop more clarity and courage.
2. *Our words.* Spoken or written, the words we choose impact our lives and the lives of others. Words have a wake; they can't be put back in your mouth. Consider all the e-mails we send out now...how many are written without much consciousness?
3. *Our beliefs.* Our thoughts, values and beliefs form the basis for all of our emotions. At times, we have to change our beliefs. How we talk to ourselves influences our actions, so we have to consider our thoughts carefully.
4. *Our values.* What's important to us is constantly calling to us. No one can tell us what to value. Our actions display what we truly value. Always trust your movements because what you do speaks louder than any words. Your movements display how you show up to other people.
5. *Our work.* Although many of us complain of being trapped in a job or profession, we do actually get to choose what our work in the world is.
6. *Our friends.* Those with whom we associate with say a lot about what we think of ourselves. We can choose to have friends who bring us down or we choose friends who support us. The author, Richard Lieder says nutritious people have three characteristics- they light up when you enter the room, they listen to what you have to say, and they have no major plans for your improvement.
7. *Our input.* We want to carefully select our sources of news and everything we read. We can turn off televisions, computers and cell phones, and we can ignore advertising pressures.
8. *Our time.* Though it sometimes feels like we have no say in this, we do choose every day how we will use the 24 hours that a day gives us. If we live with greater awareness, we can pay attention to where the time goes and then choose consciously how we spend our time each day.
9. *Our basic health.* We can't control our genetic make-up, but we can choose to exercise, get enough sleep, eat healthy food, go to the doctor for routine check-ups, and give up proven unhealthy habits such as smoking, heavy drinking, etc.
10. *Our legacy.* All that we choose while we live – our actions, words, etc. – will become the gift we leave behind after we die. Life is about making memories, and those memories that we are part of will live on in the hearts and minds of others.

Check in with yourself. Use this time to take inventory of your life -- make an honest, non-judgmental appraisal of where you are now compared to where you want to be this next year. A plan, an inspiration and recognition that you can't do it all alone might just help you get all that you need to thrive for all the four quarters of your life.