Choosing Presence Over Postponement

MAR. 6, 2025

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If you only had a year left, what would you do with your time?

Because you may or may not only have a year. This is not a morbid prediction—it's just a reminder that the things we put off may be better brought into focus now, while we can.

I visited Nova Scotia when I was 16, and every year since, I have thought, *I must get back to this amazing place.* It has never happened. The trip lives in the brain bin labeled *sometime in the future.* Delaying gratification and taking actions that will benefit us in the future is one of the foundational stones of wisdom and living a good life. Save money, work a bit harder, put off some of those trips—you get the drift.

On the other hand, shockingly bad things can happen out of nowhere, and if there is one thing I really don't like, it's the regret of chances not taken.

The Simple Pleasure of Now

Our resources, especially time, are limited. Even the fantastically rich, who may never run out of money, will most certainly run out of time. As I look at my calendar for the coming year, I ask myself: Are these truly the best ways to use my time? Can I take an adventure, and how do I balance that with my need for time to do nothing? Have I reached out to the people important to me in meaningful ways? Have I spent enough time with my family?

Recently, I took in a handful of rolls of film to be developed—a time capsule of the last 10 years. What stood out among the vacations and adventures were not the places, but the simple pleasures of routine moments spent with the people I care about.

Nova Scotia may get another go-around after 50 years, but if I do make it back, as wonderful as it may still be, it will probably disappoint. At 16, the bar for transformative experiences can be rather low.

Looking back has never been one of my great interests. The future fuels my imagination, but the present is where I live. *It is where I am calling from,* to quote the poet Raymond Carver.

This is where tenderness lies.
This is where real meaning happens.
This is where my memories are created.

So as I look at that calendar, I pull my attention away from future forecasting and back to what I know to be true: This is where I am. These are the days that count—especially this one. And these are the people with whom I make the memories that move me.

I'd love to hear from you—what experiences or advice have helped you focus on what truly matters? How do you make sure your life is aligned with what you value most? **Write and tell me**.

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