



# Face the granddaddy of all fears

Bởi:

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*“Contemporary psychological research into the importance of meaning and purpose in life demonstrates that without a sense that life is meaningful, people are more prone to anxiety, depression, and a variety of physical ailments. Studies have found that hope too is essential to physical and mental well-being and is a major ingredient in a person’s resiliency in the face of crisis, illness, and suffering. Hope, meaning, and purpose turn out to be critical for mental and physical health and for psychological strength and coping.”*

James W. Jones: *In the Middle of This Road We Call Our Life*

One of the most memorable of all the memorable lines in *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien is this one, spoken by Gandalf the wizard: “All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

In the years since I wrote *Never Fear, Never Quit: A Story of Courage and Perseverance*, I’ve thought a lot about fear and courage, and about perseverance in the face of obstacles and setbacks. Lately I’ve become convinced that the greatest fear of all, the Granddaddy of All Fears, is not fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of humiliation, or even fear of success (which author Steve Pressfield calls the mother of all fears). No, I’m convinced that the greatest fear is that we eventually and inevitably run out of time. It’s a cliché that football coaches say they don’t lose games - they run out of time. It’s also a metaphor for the Granddaddy of all fears - we don’t fear dying so much as we fear running out of time for life. We don’t fear failing as much as we fear running out of time to get back up and try again.

When I’m speaking about Core Action Value #9, Focus, from our course on [The Twelve Core Action Values](#), I’ll make the (rarely contested) statement that no one on their deathbed says “I wish I’d watched more television.” Then I’ll ask what people do regret toward the end of their lives (as they realize how close they are to running out of time). The same four things come up, and always in the same order.

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*Relationships:* Without exception, at the top of the list comes family and friends. People know that someday they will wish they had spent more time on relationships and less time on things that were really much less important. Spending time on relationships is always something we intend to do later, but in too many cases later never comes because we run out of time.

*Experiences:* The second thing I hear is that toward the end of their lives people regret that they didn't travel more, didn't write the book that had been burning up inside of them, didn't quit the job that was killing their soul and start the business doing something they had a burning passion to do. These experiences were always something they'd get around to one day, but that day never came because they ran out of time (Zig Ziglar used to give people in his audiences a wooden nickel with the letters TUIT on it; he'd say you've always been saying that someday you'll get 'round tuit - and now you have a round tuit, taking away your last excuse.

*Finances:* The third thing people always say is that in old age, people regret that they weren't more responsible for their finances. Because of youthful indulgences, many older people retire to the equivalent of Jeff Foxworthy's redneck retirement community, where the houses have wheels and the cars don't. When people blow ten grand for a week in Vegas or Disney, the implicit assumption is that they'll have time to make it up before they have to retire; the fear is that they'll run out of time before that happens.

*Health:* You often hear older people saying some variation of this: If I'd known I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself. We buy exercise machines and gym memberships and diet plans with the resolution that we'll actually use them - eventually. But all too often, "eventually" never comes because we run out of time.

*An Unpleasant Truth* You will run out of time. Period. No exceptions. You might have some warning that your hourglass is about to run out, for example with a diagnosis of terminal cancer. Or your hourglass might run out suddenly, the way an aquarium would drain when the side is smashed in by a rock. Procrastination causes you to push off what you need to do today into tomorrow with the consequence that you are always living in the shadows of yesterday. It takes courage to act, to conquer the procrastination that robs you of your precious time.