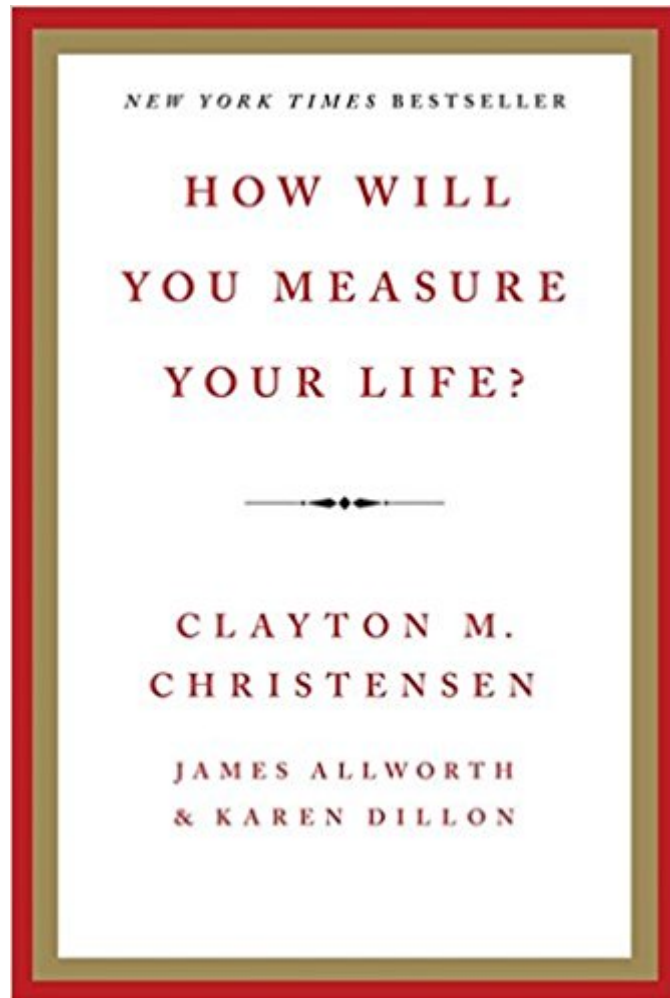




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# How Will You Measure Your Life?



## Synopsis

From the world's leading thinker on innovation and New York Times bestselling author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*, Clayton M. Christensen, comes an unconventional book of inspiration and wisdom for achieving a fulfilling life. Christensen's *The Innovator's Dilemma*, notably the only business book that Apple's Steve Jobs said "deeply influenced" him, is widely recognized as one of the most significant business books ever published. Now, in the tradition of Randy Pausch's *The Last Lecture* and Anna Quindlen's *A Short Guide to a Happy Life*, Christensen's *How Will You Measure Your Life* is with a book of lucid observations and penetrating insights designed to help any reader—student or teacher, mid-career professional or retiree, parent or child—forge their own paths to fulfillment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[A] highly engaging and intensely revealing work. Spiritual without being preachy, this work is especially relevant for young people embarking on their career, but also useful for anyone who wants to live a more meaningful life in accordance with their values." (Publishers Weekly) "The book encapsulates Christensen's best advice to keep high achievers from being disrupted in their own lives....[P]rovocative but reassuring: Peter Drucker meets Mitch Albom." (Bloomberg Businessweek) "[M]ore genuinely a self-help book than the genre it disparages. Instead of force-feeding readers with orders on how to improve, it aims to give them the tools to set their own course" (Financial Times) "[W]ell researched

and thought through material. (Forbes) “A gripping personal story with lessons from business mixed in.” (Bloomberg BusinessWeek) “Clayton Christensen’s new book has the business world buzzing.” (Deseret News) “Recommend the book to friends and family who have no connection to the business world. They will thank you for it.” (Harvard Business Review) “A Business Student’s New Required Reading” (Huffington Post) “[R]evealing and profound.” (Inc. Magazine) “I wish this book was around when I started my career. I bought copies for my kids and other young adults I know. \$16 is not a lot to spend to get them thinking about their future and how to live responsible, ethical and successful lives.” (Small Business Labs)

In 2010 world-renowned innovation expert Clayton M. Christensen gave a powerful speech to the Harvard Business School’s graduating class. Drawing upon his business research, he offered a series of guidelines for finding meaning and happiness in life. He used examples from his own experiences to explain how high achievers can all too often fall into traps that lead to unhappiness. The speech was memorable not only because it was deeply revealing but also because it came at a time of intense personal reflection: Christensen had just overcome the same type of cancer that had taken his father’s life. As Christensen struggled with the disease, the question “How do you measure your life?” became more urgent and poignant, and he began to share his insights more widely with family, friends, and students. In this groundbreaking book, Christensen puts forth a series of questions: How can I be sure that I’ll find satisfaction in my career? How can I be sure that my personal relationships become enduring sources of happiness? How can I avoid compromising my integrity and stay out of jail? Using lessons from some of the world’s greatest businesses, he provides incredible insights into these challenging questions. *How Will You Measure Your Life?* is full of inspiration and wisdom, and will help students, midcareer professionals, and parents alike forge their own paths to fulfillment.

Harvard professor and best-selling author (of *The Innovator’s Dilemma*, *The Innovator’s Prescription*, *Disrupting Class*, and more), Clayton Christensen observed that many of his classmates, despite many accomplishments, were clearly unhappy with their lives. Divorce and the deterioration of many personal relationships were symptoms of something that had seriously gone awry with their lives. With this as a backdrop, Christensen began to challenge his

graduating students with three simple questions to examine, measure, and improve their lives after Harvard: 1. How can I be sure that I will be successful and happy in my career? 2. How can I be sure that my relationships with my spouse, my children and my extended family and close friends become an enduring source of happiness? 3. How can I be sure that I live a life of integrity and stay out of jail? (Enron's Jeff Skilling was in Christensen's class at Harvard.)

**How Will You Measure Your Life?** emerged from this encounter with students. In it, Christensen asks the critical questions and provides a guide about how to think about life, one based on a deep understanding of human endeavor and what causes what to happen, and why. This he believes will help us with decisions we make every day in our lives and decisions that will help us avoid bad outcomes, unhappiness, and regret. Christensen uses business case studies throughout the book. He draws from these to provide a philosophy for life that offers real success. The starting point is a discussion of priorities - finding happiness in your career, finding happiness in your relationships and staying out of jail - so we can avoid the trap of giving-in to the inner voice that screams the loudest. Christensen wants to help you wake up every morning thinking how lucky you are to be doing what you're doing.

**How Will You Measure Your Life?** will help you build a strategy to do exactly that. On career happiness, Christensen warns that compromising on the wrong career path (for fame, money, power) is a cancer that will metastasize over time. What matters most is making sure our jobs are aligned with what really makes us happy. Motivation is much less about external prodding or incentives and much more about what's inside of you and whether the work is challenging, provides for personal growth, responsibility, recognition, and sense that you are making a meaningful contribution. Money is not the root cause of unhappiness but becomes a problem when it supersedes everything else. (One friend of mine commented that when he left Wall Street as a well-known healthcare stock analyst to an executive role in a major healthcare firm that he was surprised to find that people really at this firm were not motivated by income but rather, were focused on reducing mortality and improving lives. The only thing he said that mattered on Wall Street was how much money you made!)

**Before you take that job:**

- Carefully list the things that others are going to need to do or deliver in order for you to successfully achieve what you hope to do for yourself.
- What assumptions have to prove true for you to be happy in the choice you are contemplating?
- Are you basing your position on extrinsic or intrinsic motivators?
- Why do you think this is going to be something you enjoy doing?
- Think about the most important assumptions that have to prove

true? How can you swiftly and inexpensively test if they are valid. What evidence do you have?

• On personal relationships, Christensen notes from his observations and personal experience that the relationships you have with family and close friends are going to be the most important sources of happiness in your life.

“You have to be careful. When it seems like everything at home is going well, you will be lulled into believing that you can put your investments in these relationships onto the back burner. That would be an enormous mistake. By the time serious problems arise in those relationships, it is often too late to repair them. The paradox is that the time when it is most important to invest in building strong families and close friendships is when it appears, at the surface, as if it is not necessary.

• He warns that a common mistake made by both men and women is to believe we can invest in life sequentially. I have seen this many times |career is first, marriage is second, and children are relegated to third. The problem is made worse today with so many two income families. While each relationship needs to be routinely nourished and refreshed, we end up putting relationships on the back-burner because we are busy and preoccupied with less important things of life. We end up neglecting the people we care most about in the world. Without focus, we lose out on those rich and deep personal relationships that are the essence of life.

To succeed with relationships, Christensen asks us to think about the job we were hired to do to œ as a spouse, as a parent, as a friend.

“The path to happiness (in relationships) is about finding someone who you want to make happy, someone who œs happiness is worth devoting yourself to |I have observed that what cements that commitment is the extent to which I sacrifice myself to help her succeed and for her to be happy. Sacrifice deepens our commitment. It applies to all of our relationships.

• Christensen notes that our role as parents is to prepare our children for the future. The tragedy of today œs culture is that we are outsourcing parenting to other relatives, nannies, schools, and extracurricular activities. We have lost sight of the importance of our time - the greatest gift we can give another person. Investing our time in another is a sign of respect and love. It provides a clear signal to others as to what is most important in your life.

Creating a healthy family culture is hard work and requires an investment of self and time. Marriages are the merging of two cultures. Each family should choose a culture that œs right for them. This entails choosing activities to pursue, and outcomes to achieve. With time, family members will be on auto-pilot thinking “this is how we do it.

• Culture development cannot be outsourced. It is doing things together œ working in the yard, fixing the house, camping, homework, family sporting events, table games, cooking, etc. œ to show our children how to love

work, how to solve problems, how to prioritize and what really matters. Culture happens whether you want it to or not. The only question is how much you will influence it. On staying out of jail, Christensen warns against marginal thinking. It applies to choosing right and wrong. We are presented with moral challenges throughout life. When we think about doing something

“just this one time” because the marginal cost appears to be negligible, we get suckered in. We don’t see where that path will ultimately take us nor do we appreciate the full cost of the choice. It could be one of many things: misrepresenting expenses or revenues, stuffing a distribution channel, insider trading, a small bribe to gain business, the use of drugs. The landscape is littered with people who never gave a thought to crossing the line “just this once,” thinking they would never get caught. Doing the right thing 100% of the time is easier than 98% of the time. If we break our own rules just once, we can justify the small choices again. Using marginal cost thinking to justify all the small decisions lead up to a big one. Then, the big one does not seem enormous anymore; it is just another incremental step. The only way to avoid the consequences of uncomfortable moral concessions in your life is to never start making them in the first place. When the first step down that path presents itself, turn around and walk the other way.

The danger for high-achieving people is that they will unconsciously allocate the resources to activities that yield the most immediate, tangible accomplishments. They become accustomed to allocating fewer and fewer resources to the things they would say matter most. They are investing in lives of hollow unhappiness. To avoid the pitfalls of creating hollow unhappiness, it is imperative that we define our purpose. The three parts of purpose are: establishing a direction (career, relationships, and staying out of jail) with milestones to mark our progress; making a deep, unwavering commitment to achieving the milestones; and using metrics to mark progress. The world will not deliver a cogent and rewarding purpose to you. What is the type of person you want to become? What is the purpose of your life? Is that important to you? Is it something you want to leave to chance? “How Will You Measure Your Life?”

Christensen is one of the deepest thinkers and most thoughtful people I have had the pleasure to meet or hear present. Those traits of deep integrity, thought, consideration come through in this book. However, the title will be misleading as this is not another self help book, nor it is an attempt for Christensen to break into the Tuesday with Morrie crowd. Rather, Christensen turns his considerable intellect and experience to perhaps the most fundamental question of all -- why are we here and how do we know we are making a difference. The book is exceptional in its combination of

deep feeling that is personal and experiential alongside deeper thought and business experience. This is a business view of life, not in terms of profit or loss, but more in terms of ideals, ethics, integrity and brutal honesty about yourself, who you are and where you are going. Such deep moral subject matter could be dry and preachy, but Christensen and his co-authors are anything but. They explain their position in a series of theories -- simple ideas that you can use as tools to inspect and apply to your own experience. They avoid simple formulaic answers like you would find in some books and generic principles about success contained in others. This is a book that exposes the theory behind the issues below, the sources of conventional business and management wisdom and offers new ways of thinking about these important issues. The book is organized into parts with a particular focus on core questions: Part 1 -- Finding happiness in your career, discusses the true basis of motivation and reward; Part 2 -- Finding happiness in your relationships, concentrates on spending time consistent with your priorities, patience and how they apply; Part 3 -- Staying out of Jail, about living with integrity and the pitfalls of marginal versus full thinking. The chapters are short, well written and feature some of the material Christensen's prior talks -- for example the question of what is the job of a milkshake. The book is pure Christensen and that says its focused, educational and equips rather than preaches to the the audience. This is not a self help book, but it is a book for people wanting to think about how to help themselves. The difference is subtle but important as after all is said and done, we all have to measure our own lives, and change based on what we see and believe using the tools we have. This book is chocked full of such tools. Highly recommended.

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