

WRITE YOUR OWN OBITUARY EXERCISE- Artistry in Action 2015

This is a very useful exercise in goal-setting and thinking about your life in a longer time frame. It is a way to get at the larger question of what you want your life to represent. By thinking of how would you like to be remembered, you can gain insight into deciding what you wish to accomplish and what really matters to you in life. Paradoxically, you find that by focusing on what you want your absence/memory to represent the stronger your presence will gain those attributes.

The Exercise:

Sit down and write your obituary as you want it to look, at some time far, far in the future.

The goal of the assignment is to use your reflections on your own mortality to imagine the future as you want to live it. The idea is to "Follow your bliss," but be realistic. Think about who you want to be, what you want to accomplish in this world, and how you most want to be remembered when you die. Write this piece for yourself and someone you trust.

Here are some tips and ideas from an article by Daryl Gibson entitled. "Write Your Own Obituary and Reform Your Life."

1. Brainstorm and make lists of the people, places, and activities you most value along with a list of personal and career goals.
2. Do some free writing using the first person ("I").
3. Decide an appropriate death date. But make it far in the future: 50 or 100 years or so from now.
4. Start off with your name. Then, pick an appropriately bizarre way to die. You don't want anything typical. You don't want anything obvious. Heart disease, liver ailments, car accidents, cancer are all out of bounds as "cause of death" for this little exercise, as is having a heart attack while you're sitting on the toilet.
5. Decide who you want to be (or have been)- Do you want your obituary to reflect your family? Should it reflect your career?
6. Decide what you've accomplished. -Try to make your "accomplishments" as

concrete and possible as you can. Try to define yourself in terms of what you are likely to be able to accomplish, with a little or a lot of stretching. Keep unlikely things out of your projected obit. It looks great to say you developed a cure for baldness, but unless you're a doctor or a microbiologist, or have the desire to become one, you're not that likely to gain it. Keep your "accomplishments" to things that you are likely to be able to do.

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8. Lastly, when you're done writing it, share it with someone important to you. Then you might want to put it away. Revisit it every now and again to see how it reflects who you've become. Then write a new one.