



A Season of Happiness

Focus



F19



The Last Day of Your Life what will you do in your final 24 hours?

You have just discovered that tomorrow will be it - no messing, no reprieve, no waking up from a bad dream: simply IT! Get real, you think: here's a forecast you can take with a pinch of salt. After all, loonies have been predicting doomsday, seemingly forever. In the past, practicalities always brought you back to earth - the new deal to broker; the weekly get-together with friends; and the car's going in for a service. No, you say, tomorrow's definitely out - too inconvenient: perhaps next week... **Hey, people, this *is* for real - there won't be any next week!**

Could it happen? Nobody knows. Does it matter? Well, life is about experiences, and you've already had a few. From birth to now you have seen a lot; maybe not as much as you would have liked, but a fair bit. Faced with the prospect of seeing very little else, would you be satisfied with only memories; or will you get out there for one last hurrah?

Dismiss the idea as rubbish if you like. I'm not saying it isn't; in fact, even if our world is destined to end one day, which is an eventual scientific certainty, the likelihood of knowing exactly when is less than minuscule. So, you'll have to do what you do each time you read a fictional novel, or watch a movie – suspend disbelief and rely on your imagination: come along with me and pretend. What you find out about yourself and your inner desires may surprise you...

The world, your life, everything will be gone in 24 hours, starting from midnight tonight. The first thought might be to draft a bucket list if you don't already have one. Would you really waste the precious time left to write it down? Think about it: if you live in New Orleans, an Antarctic cruise would be out of the question – you'd be toast before you saw your first penguin! Maybe you've always wanted to play the piano. With luck, your "Chopsticks" might sound half-good by closing time, always assuming you can access a piano. People are often asked whom they would love to meet: unless they live in the same suburb, there won't be time to knock on their door. All of these are simply dreams that can never be realised.

So far, expedience and convenience have governed your life. This particular time, however, requires extra-special consideration because it can never be repeated. The weather is one element that has often been an influential factor; but not now. Those stormy conditions that would probably have kept you indoors are more of an invitation than a deterrent. I doubt you'd just sit around reading a book or watching a DVD - you've got the rest of eternity to relax. You ought to be craving things to see and do which will stimulate your senses like never before. Restricted though you are by both time and practicalities, my guess is you'll want to give this final day your best shot.

Twelve o'clock chimes and you have 24 hours left. What will you do? To decide, you must first know who you truly are – *you*, that is, not some person you've sculpted for the benefit of others. Your inner feelings, your heart's desire, if you like, will tell you; if you only take the trouble to listen.

Maybe you're the kind that finds deep thought easier with something to drink and eat. Alcohol is out – you have to keep a clear head – so coffee would seem to be the go, one hot and strong with more sugar than is good for you; but who's around to wag the finger? Same with the accompanying fry-up of bacon, eggs, sausage, kidneys, fried-potatoes and mushrooms. You love the stuff, but have been on a diet for ages. Now, you figure, the condemned has the right to enjoy one last hearty meal. It's doubtful you'll be able to finish it, – the adrenalin's pumping, and you have to get going. Where to though, and to do what? Your true personality will decide.

Are you a romantic, a lover of people in general, or one person in particular? You wouldn't want to pass this final day alone. There would be little satisfaction if you couldn't share it. Maybe just being with the one you really care for would be enough: walking hand-in hand, gazing up at the stars and the moon. There might be time to visit your favourite place, the one with so many cherished memories. Where would that be – a high point overlooking a picturesque landscape; a spot in the dunes watching waves crashing on the shore; that city street where you first met? You could propose to your soul mate, something you've been afraid to do for so long, or you could simply repeat the words if you've said them before; and if your proposal is accepted, you can take the next step. There'll be no official ceremony, but you won't need one. The majesty of the Universe and time immemorial will bear witness to the bonding of true lovers.

If family-orientated, you might want to spend the last hours with your own – parents you haven't seen since you left home after a blazing row; siblings you've lost meaningful touch with over the years; grandchildren who have grown up too fast without you being there. Will you have the time to get to them? Even if the answer is yes, but only just, you must make the effort.

The more adventurous might give life one last shake. An avid skydiver could fancy the free-fall of a lifetime, holding off activating the chute till the very last second, or beyond. A petrol-head may wish to push the limits, not on the track which is too far away and closed anyway, but the freeway's a good alternative. Traffic cops wouldn't matter, not at the speed they intend reaching. Buzz-addicts, however, should remember that a crazy stunt could cost them a life that only has hours to run. Even so, the statement is very plain – this is who they really are.

Most will go blank and won't be able to think of anything they'd want to experience on their final day, which is a sad reflection of the way society has conditioned people. That's why happiness is so illusive, because the system can't afford for a world of individuals to discover it. If they did, they wouldn't subscribe to rules, regulations and convention – they'd simply do their own thing. For good or bad, very few would be prepared to join that revolution; but contemplating it doesn't hurt; and it can reveal some very important truths. I'll reiterate: once we know who we truly are, we can discover those things in life that we need to make us happy.

You will have figured that yet another predicted doomsday never happened when tomorrow comes; and after will be tomorrow, and tomorrow. One day, however, your brief candle will finally go out. In the few hours before it does, will you have a desire to feel the cool evening breeze on your face, listen to the finale of nature's chorus; and share past memories of a meaningful life with that special friend as you watch your Sun go down one last time?

Everyone has their own ideas of what peace, contentment and happiness mean to them. Generally, the concepts will be very simple, things that truly matter to the individual. Those elements that you picture yourself wanting to do during your very last day on earth are positive guides to what you should be searching for and trying to achieve during a lifetime. Money and security might help get you there; but, in the long run, are they the be-all and end-all? For me, I think not. For you? Well, that has to be your decision, and yours alone. Do yourself a favour – think deeply, and try to ensure you do it right.

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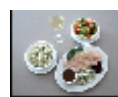
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