



I Will Not Die an Unlived Life: Reclaiming Purpose and Passion

Dawna Markova

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When Dawn Markova was diagnosed with cancer, instead of lying down to die she delved into a search for meaning and a higher purpose for her life. "I Will Not Die an Unlived Life is a collection of stories of Markova's own journey to uncover her purpose and make her life matter, and it has been inspiring readers to do the same for more than 14 years.

"I'm not sure I know exactly what passion is," writes the author, "but I do know what it does for us. I know that it breaks us open until there is no partition between our bodies and the body of the world. I know it acts on us until something takes root inside and insists on growing. I usually forget that it begins as a reaching down into the dark as well as up and out toward the light."

From the Foreword by Justine and Michael Toms, cofounders of New Dimensions Broadcasting Network: "Never have the words 'slow down' been so desperately needed as they are now. Markova asks brilliant questions as she gently challenges us to exit the fast lane and move into the slow river of wonder, which summons us to our true passion. She catches our logical minds and prompts us to remember, 'Why are we here?' She stimulates us to ask essential questions, have more conversations, and tell more stories. She speaks the language of poetry, questions, story-telling, and deep reflection.

I Will Not Die an Unlived Life: Reclaiming Purpose and Passion Details

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Stemsofred says

This is a wonderful book to use while reflecting on your own life's path. The stage of the author's life, as she tells it, will make you realize how fast time goes by and why the passion in your life needs to remain in the forefront at all times.

Ellie says

I'm not as impressed with this book as I was with Wayne Muller's "How, Then, Shall I Live?" Like Muller's, it's quite autobiographical, but that's basically where it stops. There are just a few questions at the end of every chapter that jar readers into engagement, rather than suggestions and exercises throughout.

Ngiamsw says

Understanding and seeing our life as nature's natural cycle of spring, summer, fall, winter. How do I live in a way that brings out the best of who I am?

Christina says

OMYGOODNESS.. OMYGOODNESS. so many earmarks and underlines and double/triple earmarks in this book, too many to count, so many truths, astonishing heart wrenching aha moments! I love, did I say, I LOVE this book. Thank you Dawna Markova for your beauty for showing your realness so that we can feel with you.. been there. love you xo xo

Michelle says

"It is not the events in our lives that determine who we become, but the meaning we choose to place on those events." - Victor Frankl

I have read this book three times, and I always walk away both centered and inspired. One woman's simple exploration of what her life means, Markova experiences it all; trials, joys, the bitter with the sweet, and shares her journey to living a life of passion and purpose. I found it inspiring and, in a weird way, calming. It was a reminder that I can have exactly what I want out of life, and to slow down and appreciate what I have.

She designs an acronym for LIVE to guide her when she is at a crossroads in life:

L: What do I love?

I: What are my inner gifts and talents?

V: What do I value?

E: What are the environments that bring out the best in me?

In doing so, she stays true to her personal path. Part self-help, part memoir, Markova lays her soul bare for the reader, and reminds you to look at the good and move towards the life you want.

David says

This book belonged to an ex and I started it years ago from her place and it ended up on my shelf and I decided to finish. It's not my favorite book of this sort, but it wasn't bad. It's full of personal material - in vignettes, so there's little arc - and with its poetic metaphors it's excessively "feely". But the author is a bright, brimming spirit and she imparts lots of mindfulness wisdom that re-grounds the reader with presence and the importance of soul-nourishment.

Tan says

It was very powerful and very spiritual. It taught me how you let go in order to move on. It taught me how to allow myself to go through all the emotions I have and to understand what they mean and how to move on with life.

It's a great book about finding spirituality

Taylor M. says

A "workbook" so to speak about finding the purpose at whatever point you are at in your life. Inspiring! Great book to read at the point of turning 30. Gave me a perspective on where to direct my life moving forward.

Connie Marrett says

The introductory poem is beautiful and insightful. The rest of the book is mediocre.

Elyse says

A nice range of insights and nuggets of wisdom related to finding personal balance and reclaiming your passion/purpose.

I read the book during a period of personal inertia and apathy, when I have been struggling to find energy and meaning. I found it very helpful to reconceptualize this period as passion's rest, for example. Not a malfunction or dis-ease, but a healthy function for a living organism.

Markova's discussion of constellations ~ as a metaphor for how we navigate through discerning our purpose ~ was also insightful for me. As a person who has long enjoyed breathtaking glimpses and world-reordering awe of the night sky, this image is a powerful one for me.

That said, I found myself resisting this author and her approach at times.

First, very few of us enjoy the luxury of a 6-month sabbatical for absolute solitude to restore and rebalance ourselves. Most of us will not have a private audience with the Dalai Lama (even a cancelled one) or walk on the beach with Thich Nhat Hanh and 1000 disciples. I guess some of her stories, tho poignant and personal, were too lofty and remote to feel relevant for me.

Second, I flinched at one encounter where she spoke of sharing with a man who was really struggling a story about a Santa Rosa church and its disfigured statue of Jesus. After recounting the story, she seemed to acknowledge that she had never heard of Santa Rosa and knows nothing of the Jesus figure from the story. Did she make up a fantasy story for this struggling man? If so, it smacks of stark inauthenticity. And at the very least, it left me wondering whether other stories recounted in the book were likewise imaginative figments.

Finally, the occasional nod to the distinction between purposeful living and remunerative work was too slight, in my opinion. Maybe that's because it's part of my own struggle. Possibly most of her readers have the range of career choices that enable them to reinvent themselves as purpose and passion evolve. But not everyone enjoys that luxury. I wish she had explored this more extensively.

Even so, I give this book three stars because I do think there are nuggets that many people would find helpful and worth the effort to discover.

Sarah says

When I first read this book 10 years ago, I was just starting to explore the possibilities of living a meaningful life as an adult. I found the book good, but I don't think I was yet in a place where I needed to take the kind of space for myself that Dawna Markova writes about. I now find myself in exactly such a place, needing space and waiting to discover what's next for me, and this book resonated incredibly deeply for me. Even just the title, "I Will Not Die an Unlived Life," gives me a deep yearning every time I read it. If you find yourself in a life transition, in a place where you are needing to retreat and renew yourself, I cannot more highly recommend this book.

Kim says

This book made me think and search deep down inside of myself to find what I want to change within myself. I enjoyed the many quotes, poems and references planted like flowers for the soul throughout the book. I feel uplifted, enlightened and ready for a quest..."what am I more curious about than afraid of?"

I will not die an unlived life.
I will not live in fear
of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
to allow my living to open me,
to make me less afraid,
more accessible,
to loosen my heart
until it becomes a wing,
a torch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance,
to live so that which came to me as seed
goes to the next as blossom,
and that which came to me as blossom,
goes on as fruit.

Some quotes I enjoyed:

We all have islands of fear inside us, but we also all have continents of wisdom and truth. How do we find our way to them when we are not educated in the interior dimension? These inner landscapes hold the patterns of our passion and purpose. Without knowing how to journey there, our lives remain unlived.

Let yourself be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love. ~Rumi

When I die, I want my heart and soul fully seeded with rich stories and experiences. I want to be moving forward, falling upward, leaving my body well worn. I want to know presence, staying with what is hard until it softens, staying with what is narrow until it expands. I want to know how to float in the silences between breaths and thoughts. I want to know how to lift above and sink below the flow of life, to drift and dream in the currents of what cannot be known. It's not so much about being prepared for death as it is being full of life. I want to be so well practiced in crossing thresholds that dying is merely another step in the dance. I want to be so comfortable with stillness and silence that I can root in them.

We are part of the whole which we call the universe, but it is an optical delusion of our mind that we think we are separate. This separateness is like a prison for us. Our job is to widen the circle of our compassion so we feel connected with all people and situations. ~Albert Einstein

How could anyone ever tell you
You are anything less than beautiful
How could anyone ever tell you
You are less than whole?
How could anyone fail to notice
That your loving is a miracle
How deeply you're connected to my soul

....how many people live with an overwhelming sense of emptiness, not because they don't have enough in their lives, but because they lack a sense of inner guidance. It is a dark time when so many of us think too small, so many are confined by their beliefs in their own inadequacy, and so many have lost faith in themselves. It's not pain in itself that's so hard on our soul, but the meaningless suffering that comes from

feeling disconnected from a sense of purpose.

We are not broken, we are just unfinished. ~Rachel Naomi Remen

Unlimited access. I have faith that every child, every human, has a gift, specific seeds in their soul they are meant to bring to the community, and they deserve to have unlimited access to that gift. I have faith that each of us brings a unique value to the larger whole. This is my profession. If I take this on, if I give it voice and energy, every one of the days of my life will count for something. If not, every day will be wasted.

What if deep inside, deeper than thought or guilt or worry, you told yourself you were a soul in wonder? How would that change the way you live your life?

We cheat ourselves by identifying with a limited notion of who we are so we can fit in, belong to lives so much smaller than our own souls long for us to be.

No punishment anyone might inflict on us could possibly be worse than the punishment we inflict on ourselves by conspiring in our own diminishment.

While you have a thing it can be taken from you...but when you give it, no robber can take it from you. It will be yours always. ~James Joyce

I wonder why it is that we so often imprison ourselves in the opinions of other people.

Is the life I'm living the life that wants to live in me? ~Parker Palmer

Self-care is never a selfish act--it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer to others. Anytime we can listen to true self, and give it the care it requires, we do so not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose loves we touch. ~Parker Palmer

...through the whole recorded history there has never been another such as you. Each of us is a miracle of uniqueness. Each of us, therefore, is responsible for the discovery of our sustaining passions and rhythms, the cultivation of the green fields in which we can discover what keeps us connected to the full fertility of our soul and all it has to give to the world.

BE HERE NOW!

Claire Brear says

The kind of book I want to buy a hard copy of, write notes in and buy for everyone I know.

Larissa says

She writes in a circular kind of way, weaving in stories that for her signify the point she is trying to make. It's hard to get accustomed to if you like linear reading, but her metaphors are beautiful. The gems are the questions she asks the reader at the end of every chapter. Taking these questions alone and meditating, writing on them was worth the read.

Laurie Dittmar says

I didn't agree with all of her choices; but, with that said, this book came along at a much-needed time of my life. This book brought me some new perspectives. I have to say, this was very much a part of my stepping out of the past and into the future...
