

Minor (but great) Goals

By and Based on the Books of Robert J. Cormier (www.thefaithkit.org)
Courtesy of Crossroad Publishing (www.cpcbooks.com)

Permission to duplicate this material for non-commercial purposes is gladly given

Minor (but great) Goals

The Ingredients of a Great Life: a prolog

It is yet another bad effect of television. Since people watch so much television, and “stars” are all that people see, stars are all that people want to be. Anything else is just a life.

This is a mistake for several reasons.

First of all, stardom and greatness are hardly synonymous.

Stardom and happiness are rarely synonymous.

Furthermore, stardom is rarely in our own hands. In almost every case, people need a break; they need to “know” someone; they need to be lucky enough to have a good day on the right day. Stardom is not something people can bring about solely by their own talent and determination.

Finally, stardom is available only to a few. If everyone is famous (or rich), no one is famous (or rich). But what would this say about God? Is it possible that God made life in such a way that only a few of His children can have a great one?

Doesn't it make more sense to suppose that God made a great life available to everyone? This is precisely what we will see as we investigate the true ingredients of a great life.

To begin with, we should expect that a great life would have something to do with the purpose of life. The purpose of life is to prepare for life with God. We do this through a life of faith. Since this is what life is for, we should suppose that God made us so that we will be most happy when this is what we are doing. And so we are.

Of course, living faith also means being responsible for ourselves and those we love. This means work. A work is good if it provides people with the good things that they need. And let us notice that every good thing that happens in this world is owed to everyone's good work. After all, life in modern society requires many people to do their job. Work further exercises

our faith if we do our best—if we do our job with pride—and if we treat the public honestly and kindly. Work is satisfying if it allows us to pursue some of our natural interests and to exercise some of our natural talents.

A great life will often involve an “avocation.” An avocation is something we do for enjoyment or enrichment—but not as our work. How sad it is when people quit playing or painting or some other activity *which they say they enjoy* solely because no one will pay them to do it.

A great life also involves leisure. This is time we spend in conversation (especially at meals), at prayer, and in simple reflection. It is here we live best because it is here that we *experience* our life—we experience that we *are* alive!

Of course, a great life also involves relationships—the making and keeping of friendships. A source of joy, a way to love, friendship is an indispensable ingredient of a great life.

Most people marry. Marriage provides companionship, this world’s greatest gift. Marriage is also an opportunity to love as God loves us—to love another person because of who that person is. This makes marriage both a great life and way to greatness at the same time.

The same can be said of having children. A source of countless joys, being a parent is also a lot of work and the most important work there is. Think about it. If one could cure cancer, the best result would be that people would live a little longer (maybe) so that they would grow a little holier (maybe). But being a parent is direct cooperation with God in the creation and formation of the family which we will be forever. What could be greater than that?

A great life is available to everyone who knows what greatness is.

Minor (but great) Goals

It is already decided that a great life involves “avocations,” the things we do for enjoyment or enrichment—but not as our work. Surely it is also obvious that a rich life should involve a wide variety of interests. This suggests the

following guideline. It tries to cover the bases of people's rightful interests in terms of several broad categories. The specific examples are meant, not to provide you with a checklist, but rather to illustrate the concept and inspire you to come up with a list of your own. Note that you are provided with five spaces to put your own goals. Feel free to make use of the examples. And, please, do not feel limited to five!

Accomplishments in religion

Read the four gospels (Read the four gospels plus The Fifth Gospel available for download free at www.thefaithkit.org/panorama)

Make a tough Lent

Keep the Three Hour Silence on Good Friday

Make a pilgrimage

Say the whole Rosary with 20 mysteries

[]

[]

[]

[]

[]

Things in nature I want to see

See all 12 (or more) full moons

See another galaxy

See the aurora borealis

See a tornado

See a moose (or some other animal in the wild)

[]

[]

[]

[]

[]

Things in the world where I live (or where I'm from) that I want to see or do

Go to the Statue of Liberty

Eat Chinese in Chinatown

Take the Staten Island Ferry

Walk across the Brooklyn (or George Washington) Bridge

Go to High Point to see leaves during Autumn

[]

[]

[]

[]

[]

Adventures

Cross the continent by land

Live for at least a month outside my homeland

Climb a mountain

Sail a sailboat

Fly in something besides a commercial airliner

□

□

□

□

□

Academic accomplishments

Learn another language

Read a book considered a classic

Take an adult class

Give a class

Write a letter to the editor
(or to an author or some other public person)

□

[]

[]

[]

[]

Artistic accomplishments

Play a musical instrument

Sing in public

Play a role in a play

Create an object of art to decorate my own home

Write a poem or piece of prose

[]

[]

[]

[]

[]

Athletic accomplishments

Run X number of miles at one time without stopping

Walk or hike to some special destination

Swim 1 mile

Learn to skate (or ski)

Play a game with an organized team

[]

[]

[]

[]

[]

Domestic accomplishments

Prepare a particular meal

Grow something you actually eat

Make something you actually wear

Paint a room

Fix something normally fixed by a professional

□

□

□

□

□

Really miscellaneous accomplishments

Participate in a road rally

Finish a crossword puzzle

Learn a card trick

Learn to juggle at least three items

Learn to hop on a pogo-stick

□

□

□

□

□

Here's another ingredient of a great life; we know how to

Love the Year

Experience the weather. Feel the sun and the cool night air; see the beauty in the sky; experience a storm as a sign of God's power.

Experience the seasons. Better yet, anticipate them; appreciate that we are soon to find ourselves in a new world without having to travel. Experience the diversity in the length of day, and the special beauty in each season. Do things that can be done only in season.

Pay attention to the universe. Watch the progress of the moon and the planets. Try to be aware of special spatial events. Look up often so you will better see the hand of God.

Work for a Merry Christmas and a Happy Easter. Have a good Advent; make a good Lent. Keep Christmas and Easter traditions, and do so one by one in order.

Acknowledge the holy and holi-days. Do something different if you are free. Do (or talk about, or sing, or eat) something special even if you are not free.

Have and keep anniversaries. (And you don't need to tell the whole world about all the anniversaries you keep.)

Celebrate your victories big and small, and those of your friends and family.

Have projects; have spiritual projects. Watch what can happen, however slowly, with even a little effort over the course of 365 days.

Recognize a year of living as the accomplishment which it is.

Make plans, and anticipate, a Summer that will separate this from next year.