

(Excerpted from the preface of MIDMEN)

...I was troubled. I needed solutions to my problems so I set about seeking them out. I like to read so I took to the bookshelves for my answers. It turned out there were precious few books that even attempted to address my situation. I would be lying if I said there were none... but there were none. I was thus left with no other choice but to seek out the answers wherever they could be found. My search led me around the world and I gleaned knowledge from sources as disparate as Buddhists in Cambodia to Rastas in Jamaica. The Rastas were funnier, the Buddhists were more serene, and they both smelled like incense. I even spent time with hospice patients who can be funny and serene... and could often benefit from a little incense.

Then I dipped my toe into the heady work of philosophers and thinkers who have attempted to demystify this subject before me, from Carl Jung to Larry David. I thank them for their generosity in sharing their astute observations about this difficult time of life. I will share some of those with you within the pages to follow (read: I plagiarize people who are much smarter than me). As I tossed the different thoughts and contemplations around, concepts and methods began to form that would guide my very personal midlife transition. Light appeared on the horizon.

I had done all this studying and contemplating for all those endless hours, across the thousands of miles, in the hopes that I would find true happiness or at least a night of un-interrupted sleep. The result was that I had no big problem absorbing the truths of items 1 and 2:

1. I'm actually getting old.

2. It's ultimately going to suck.

But item 3, "Tough sh*t. I will still need to live life to the fullest until I can't anymore," took a little longer. In a moment of enlightenment, I experienced another, even more stirring, epiphany. I came to the realization that notwithstanding diet, exercise and Viagra, I could not change the more dominant physical aspects of aging—not mine, not my parents', not anybody's—but many other factors were actually under my control. My happiness was one of them. It all came down to identifying and acknowledging the things that really mattered to me and making sure those things were well represented in my day-to-day life.