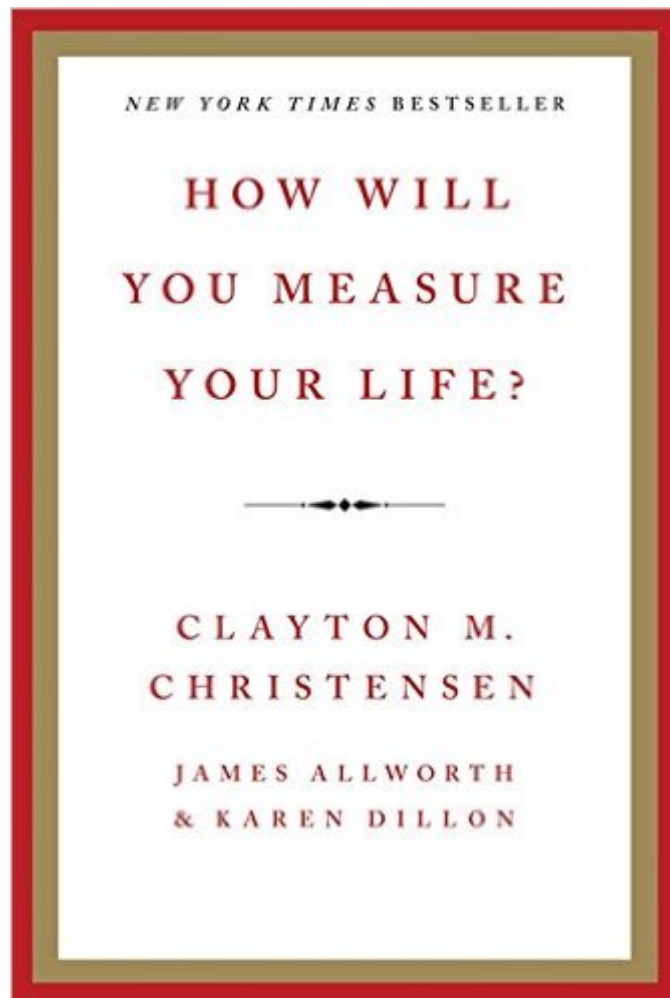




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How Will You Measure Your Life?



Synopsis

From the world's leading thinker on innovation and New York Times bestselling author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*, Clayton M. Christensen, comes an unconventional book of inspiration and wisdom for achieving a fulfilling life. Christensen's *The Innovator's Dilemma*, notably the only business book that Apple's Steve Jobs said "deeply influenced" him, is widely recognized as one of the most significant business books ever published. Now, in the tradition of Randy Paus's *The Last Lecture* and Anna Quindlen's *A Short Guide to a Happy Life*, Christensen's *How Will You Measure Your Life?* is with a book of lucid observations and penetrating insights designed to help any reader—student or teacher, mid-career professional or retiree, parent or child—forge their own paths to fulfillment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Christensen is one of the deepest thinkers and most thoughtful people I have had the pleasure to meet or hear present. Those traits of deep integrity, thought, consideration come through in this book. However, the title will be misleading as this is not another self help book, nor it is an attempt for Christensen to break into the Tuesday with Morrie crowd. Rather, Christensen turns his considerable intellect and experience to perhaps the most fundamental question of all -- why are we here and how do we know we are making a difference. The book is exceptional in its combination of deep feeling that is personal and experiential alongside deeper thought and business experience. This is a business view of life, not in terms of profit or loss, but more in terms of ideals, ethics, integrity and brutal honesty about yourself, who you are and where you are going. Such

deep moral subject matter could be dry and preachy, but Christensen and his co-authors are anything but. They explain their position in a series of theories -- simple ideas that you can use as tools to inspect and apply to your own experience. They avoid simple formulaic answers like you would find in some books and generic principles about success contained in others. This is a book that exposes the theory behind the issues below, the sources of conventional business and management wisdom and offers new ways of thinking about these important issues.

This book grew out of Christensen's address to the HBS Class of 2010. When they entered the school our economy was strong and their ambitions could be limitless. Then came an economic tailspin that we've named the 'Great Recession.' His address to the graduates, and the focus of this book, centered on how to apply his principles to their personal lives. His first key point is that when people ask what he thinks they should do, he has learned to rarely directly answer their question. Instead, he runs the question through one of his models involving an industry quite different from their own. Then, more often than not, they'll say "I get it," and answer their own question more insightfully than he believes he could have. On the last day of class Christensen asks his students to apply the models he's presented during the course to themselves to answer three questions: 1) How can I be sure I'll be happy in my career? 2) How can I be certain my relationships with my family become an enduring source of happiness. 3) How can I be certain I'll stay out of jail. (Not a facetious question - Jeff Skilling was Christensen's classmate at HBS, and two of the 32 in his Rhodes scholar class spend time in jail.) Addressing the first question, Christensen references Frederick Herzberg's assertion that money isn't the most powerful motivator in our lives - it's the opportunity to learn, grow in responsibilities, contribute to others, and be recognized for achievements. He also points out that if management is practiced well it helps others learn and grow, take responsibility and be recognized. Doing business deals doesn't provide the deep rewards that come from building up people.

How Will You Measure Your Life aims to be a fluff free piece on finding purpose and happiness in your life. To achieve this, Christensen examines how businesses thrive and fail, turning those examples as lessons for our personal lives. He breaks down the book into 3 parts: 1. FINDING HAPPINESS IN YOUR CAREER--Readers familiar with the book "Drive" by Daniel Pink or the two factor theory will find similar advice here. Most people think getting rewards for jobs (i.e. money, benefits, vacation) will increase happiness. Instead these factors merely reduce dissatisfaction. Whereas, Challenging work, recognition, and responsibility will increase our satisfaction in a job.

Christensen urges us not to focus on the result of our career, but on the process (which is a running theme throughout the book). I felt this simple cliché was clouded in Academic language. When I state "Academic," - I merely mean using too many words or new jargon to describe simple concepts. For example, he states if you are currently unhappy in your job, try out new things on the side or use an "emergent strategy," while if you are happy in your career, use a "deliberate strategy" to get better. Despite using the words "emergent", "deliberate", and "strategy", I felt this was pretty common advice.

2. FINDING HAPPINESS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS--this section is particularly useful if you are a parent, as much of part II is dedicated to raising better children. Instead of rewarding children for the result (i.e. getting an A), we should congratulate them on their work ethic. I found the point of treating ourselves and people in our lives as "jobs" a particularly fascinating way to look at life. For example, we "hire" school so children can feel successful and have friends.

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