

Reverse Engineer Your Ideal Day

Annie Dillard, in her book *The Writing Life*, says, “How we spend our days is of course how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour and that one is what we are doing.” This exercise is designed as a way to help you find the gap between who you are and who you want to be, start by defining what you want to spend your life doing. The way you spend your time is a reflection of your values, goals, and priorities.

Instructions:

Fill-in-the-blanks to articulate what the vision of your ideal day looks like. Bonus points: do one “wild and crazy” vision, then do another for your ideal typical day — what an energizing “standard” work-day might entail for you. Whatever you do, be radically honest with yourself about your wants, needs, and desires.

My Ideal Day

The sun is shining and after an amazing night’s sleep, I stretch and open my eyes at (time). I look around (the place I’m sleeping in) and take a minute to appreciate (aspects of the room or environment that are appealing to you, including whether or not anyone else is there with you).

When I’m ready to get out of bed, I put on (favorite outfit or most comfortable clothes) and sit down to (energizing morning routine) while over-looking (another aspect of your environment, maybe outdoors, maybe something in front of you). I might also make time for (activity or exercise) before or after breakfast to get me ready for the day.

After breakfast, I get really excited because I know I have the whole day ahead of me to (activity 1), (activity 2), and (activity 3). Awesome! I might even call (person 1) and/or (person 2) and have them join me for (another energizing aspect of your routine). And since I can spontaneously travel wherever I’d like, I will probably start planning a few quick jaunts to (ideal spot 1) and (ideal spot 2).

After a long, fun day spent doing things I love, I sit down to have my favorite meal. This is the meal I always tell people I’d choose if I were stranded on a desert island and could only eat one thing for the rest of my life. Luckily, I get to make it a fancy one, which includes (favorite appetizer 1), (favorite appetizer 2), (main course), (dessert), and a (favorite drink). Before

dinner, I toast to a recent major accomplishment of mine that I am incredibly proud of: (name and describe the accomplishment).

Before I wrap up for the night, I take some time to (unwind or maybe go out) with my (favorite thing and/or people) and (activity). I notice that I feel relaxed, happy, and joyful. I'm thankful to have (this) and (that) in my life.

Once I'm back home, I take a minute to appreciate what an incredible day I've had. I make a list of the reasons it was so amazing:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

And five things in my life that I'm grateful for:

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

I go to sleep with a huge smile on my face. I'm proud of myself for making this day happen, and I can't wait to do it again tomorrow.

Until then,

(Your Signature)

Reflect: Ideal Day Debrief

What overarching themes made your day feel so great?

What qualities of your ideal day are already present in your life?

What qualities are things that you could take steps toward implementing even just in little bits?

What aspects of your day might speak to longer-term goals that you want to set (financial, travel, or career)?

If your life could be anything you wanted (without worrying about money, time, or anything else), what would it be right now?

How would you spend your time, if you could do anything you wanted?

What would you do/not do?

What would you want to know, learn, or become?

What needs to be true TODAY in order to make this possible?

You may not realize it, but even if you can't re-create your ideal day every day, or even tomorrow, you are a lot closer than you think to incorporating many of the things that made it so great. Pick one small thing you can do every day to take you one step closer to your "ideal day" vision. The small things add up!

Take Action

Take your ideal day from mad lib to a REAL experience: set aside one day in the next two weeks to replicate your ideal day, as much as possible. Even if you can only create some of the elements of your ideal day, go ahead and try!