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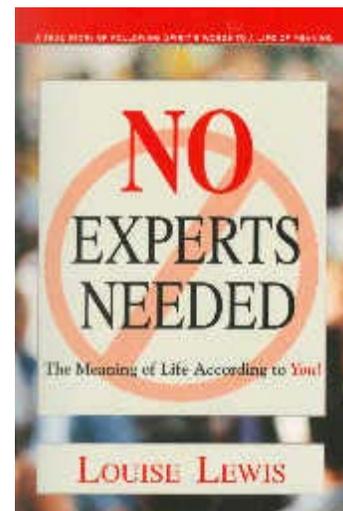


A READER'S JOURNAL

No Experts Needed The Meaning of Life According to You!

by
Louise Lewis

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No experts needed is a way I live my life. Heck, I even learned to write from studying Peter Elbow's [Writing](#)

[Without Teachers](#). Of course I have had experts tell me that it shows, that some of my sentences do not follow certain grammar rules, but I consider the source. Someone once told me that his definition of an expert (ex-spurt) is a "former drip, under pressure." One needs to understand that "drip" refers to a "stupid or insipid person" (Collins Concise) or in simple idiomatic terms, a bore and a social loser. It also refers to a drop of water from a faucet which annoys one with its ping, ping, ping in the lavatory. But if the drop ever gets under pressure, it becomes a spurt, and Katie, bar the door! We may be sprayed upon and get wet all over, whether we asked for it or not. Think of that the next time you pick up a self-help book or get unsolicited advice from some so-called *expert*, regardless of the alphabet soup of initials trailing behind their name like a royal train.

Louise Lewis is not such an expert and writes like she is talking to you. Not lecturing, not trying to enlighten you, not talking down to you, but just getting to know you by sharing herself with you. And, if you read this book, you will get to know yourself better simply by getting to know her.

Ask any expert what you should do when you are laid off, for example, and what will they say? "It's like riding a horse, if you get thrown off, get right back on immediately." Or some such trite sharing of their *expertise*. Should a gal who survives a sky-diving failure of her parachute to open, jump out of the next plane she's in wearing a *defective* parachute? When life sends you a message, and that message is a strong one, experts are the last people whose advice you should ask for or take. Otherwise you might find yourself falling to Earth with another defective parachute!

If Louise had taken the "get back on the horse immediately" advice, there would be no book of hers to talk about. She'd be in another 9-to-5 job, this time with the lowest seniority. Luckily, instead of remorse at losing her job of many years, she felt freedom! Listen as she describes her situation:

[page 1] On October 9, 2002, I was "set free" from my job of eleven years, an event more commonly known as getting laid off. Since I'm a nauseatingly positive person most of the time, it was quite natural for me to shine a positive light over losing my job as well. I now know that if it weren't for losing my job, I would not have been in such a vulnerable state of mind; had I not been in such a vulnerable state of mind, I would not have been open to seeing the moment as the start of a new chapter in my life. Ultimately, both worked hand in hand and allowed me to receive help and guidance, which Spirit immediately provided.

Back in 1977, I recall a similar incident happened to me. I had returned to New Orleans from New England to head a large computer project, and after several successful projects I was promoted into a project which had (as we learned) very little chance of success, and I was let go. I was fired. I was unemployed, back in my hometown, without a job, and I could have been devastated. But I decided that I had been set free and set out to enjoy my time away from work to do full-time all the things I had previously had little time for. I turned my back on the computer field of my expertise and studied massage therapy, Senoi Dream work, Gestalt therapy, NLP, etc. and spent a lot of time reading and studying a variety of writers on such diverse subjects as Sufi stories, General Semantics, and Theosophy, among other things. I had some money saved, but decided to apply for unemployment compensation for the first time in my life.

One weekend, while waiting for the first check to come in, I was sharing a dream from the previous night in a Senoi Dream workshop led by Jack L. Johnston. My dream involved being in a junk yard of automobiles, and watching a tornado roaring through the yard as I cringed and took shelter in an old Buick. Jack asked me to "Be in the dream" and I was. I relived the dream with Jack and at the point the tornado was heading towards me, Jack said, "Ask the spirit of the tornado for a gift which represents its esteem for you." I did, and immediately I saw a hand reach out of the tornado and place into my extended hand, a spinning gyroscope! I was thrilled and excited. As a physicist I was familiar with gyroscopes and gyroscopic principles, but I had never owned one myself. On Jack's suggestion, I went out of the workshop on a quest to find a gyroscope. The next day in the mail a letter arrived from the State of Louisiana with a red-stamped drawing of a gyroscope on the brown envelope! Inside was my first unemployment compensation check! That was some wise tornado, wasn't it? It knew that the energy that I had stored up from my twenty-five years of almost continuous employment since I was a paper boy at age 12, was being returned to me to give me stability, just like a gyroscope gives stability to an airplane or a rocket.

"What about money?" some of you may be thinking. "Unemployment money is much less than one's salary." Yes, it is and it was, but here's the amazing fact of life that I have discovered, not in books by experts, but from living life, my life, itself, "I had fewer money worries with no regular salary coming in!" Later, when I retired, it was like going on long-term unemployment with a smaller check coming in, and my experience of twenty years earlier repeated itself. After eleven years of being retired, I have fewer money worries every year than I did before. To make light of the situation, when I retired at age 55, I told my friends, "I just found out that I have a pension for forty years. What a bummer — that means when I'm 95, I will need to find another job!"

As I was beginning to read this book, a friend of mine and Del's called to tell us that she had just gotten laid off from her job under very similar situations to those of the author's. She said she guessed that the unusual meeting with her boss was about getting let go, and she took over the meeting and before her boss could open her mouth, our friend told her, "I'll make it easy for you, I can have my desk cleaned out in a few minutes." Her boss was abashed and relieved at the same time. She blushed when her hidden agenda was made visible and felt relief that she didn't have to "break the news" to her faithful employee and friend. Compare that to what Louise Lewis said to her boss in her fateful moment:

[page 2] "Gee, all of these compliments . . ." I replied. "Are you laying me off today?"

To say the least, my boss turned pale and appeared rather startled by remark.

Busted!

When one's face flushes, there is an excess of ego called to the fore because one's secret agenda has been betrayed. When one's face pales, the opposite happens, one's ego disappears and that shows up, as the blood drains away from the upper regions of the body, as a sudden ashen look in the face. Two different behaviors, but in both cases the employee anticipated the reason for the meeting.

The author had a moment of visionary imagination which closely mirrors my hands reaching out to receive the gyroscope from the tornado. She considers how she's without a job, with a mortgage to be

paid, and everyone around her is losing their job, too, and sees herself standing at the brink of a deep crevasse. She struggles and soon begins to fall.

[page 4] I spiraled down into the black crevasse. The vision of falling played out in my mind as if set in slow motion. And then suddenly, as soon as the vision fully developed in my mind like that of a Polaroid photo, another image emerged. This image was of two cupped hands rising up to meet me (much like the picture of the hands in the old Allstate commercial: "you're in good hands with Allstate(1)").

From this experience Louise Lewis found her Muse to help her write this book. What is a muse? The ancients Greeks usually began their writing by asking for a Muse to assist them. They merely wrote down what the Muse spoke to them. One can find this at the beginning of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, for example, "Speak to me, O Muse, of the wrath of Achilles" and "Speak to me, O Muse, of the wanderings of Odysseus." Our current word "amusing" comes from Muse, and refers to something unexpected and delightful which appears to us. The author's Muse she calls Spirit, which is what the Muse of the Greeks were to them, a personal Spirit which talked to them. She asked in desperation, "What am I going to do?" and lowered her head in prayerful expectation. Three answers came from her Muse.

[page 5]

1) *You're going to be OK, Louise. I'll take care of you.*

2) *This is only a new chapter in your life.*

3) *You hold the pen; I'll guide your hand. And together, we'll write one hell of a chapter.*

No certified expert would suggest that someone who is teetering at the brink of a black crevasse take the advice of a Spirit, would they? And yet that is exactly what Louise did. Nor would any expert suggest that she spend her birthday alone. Yet she did. And from that elegant dinner at Bayside Restaurant in Newport Beach, California came the first answer to her question, "What is your spontaneous answer to the meaning of life?" She asked this of Carlos after being prompted by Spirit, *You now know what question to ask. And you now know what you have to do.*

Here is what Carlos wrote:

[page 11] Carlos: It is the rational "intent" from a human being to know the universe through knowing himself.

From her courage to listen to her Muse, she begin the adventure which culminated in this book.

Another friend of mine was having problems during the time I began reading Louise's book. Her daughter had just been released from a forced hospitalization due to behaviors which seemed life-threatening and disturbing to her parents, colleagues, and friends. This followed closely upon her break-up with her boy friend. I had gently suggested that she remind her daughter that she had a Guardian Angel(2) who is always available to help her fight the demons of fear and loneliness which she seems to be facing. As I read these lyrics on page 12, I decided to share them with my friend and suggest that she might get this music for her daughter. Perhaps this song can weave for her the healing spell that it did for Louise as she faced a major crossroad in her life with all its uncertainties.

[page 12] So when the pressure of these unanswered questions(3) got the better of me (as it did many times along the way), I took out my secret weapon — a song. To fight the fear building inside of me, I simply sang along to a Melissa Etheridge song — "Talking to My Angel."

Let me share with you a few of the lyrics to this powerful song . . .

*Don't be Afraid
Close your eyes
Lay it all down
And don't you cry
Can't you see I'm going
Where I can see the sun rise
I've been talking to my angel
And he said that it's alright*

I have not yet been able to follow Melissa's advice not to cry. Because whenever I "lay it all down" (which for me means handing over all of my fears and worries to God), that one act combined with the beauty of the song, makes me cry like a baby. And that's a good thing because a good cry always releases the pressure from my body and puts me back on track.

A few days later, she was in Waters Restaurant in Irvine, California, and a man introduced himself as Garrett and asked what she was writing. She explained she would like him to write down spontaneously his answer to her question, "What is the meaning of life according to you?" His answer was very powerful and led her to ask a followup question, something she rarely did to people whom she asked her eponymous question.

[page 13] Garrett: To do good in the eyes of the Lord. To understand the Abramic covenant. To read the words of the prophets and to read in those words the design of the Lord, the one true God of us all. Then, to understand the renewed covenant that is offered through the Messiah as predicted in Psalm 23 and Isaiah 54 and carried out in the new (covenant) testament gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and further amplified in Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians and particularly recounted in Acts. The sea is water, but not the water of life, which is through Jesus. The boat moves not the sea.

Her followup question was, "Why did you choose to give this particular answer?" Garrett's answer held a combination of beauty and truth which brought Louise to tears when she read them.

[page 14] "When you are so lost that you are absolutely sure no one would ever forgive you under any circumstances, when you have given up all hope of finding any love, when you have come to the absolute point of no further hope, when you know no one will ever love you, don't ever forget the one who promises to do so."

The beauty and sincerity of Garrett's words touched my soul, and I cried. Actually, I have cried almost every time I have read his response.

Then Louise ends the chapter on Garrett with another unanswered question, "Who was it who said, 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty.?' " Those famous words are from the last two lines of John Keats' famous poem, [Ode to a Grecian Urn](#).

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty, — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*

Everyone needs to have a good friend. To me that's someone who doesn't take me too seriously when I get too serious. Louise shares with us that Holly was such a friend to her. Holly's technique involved a prop which can be a useful thing to pull someone out of their overly adult and parental state into a playful youthful state. Holly's prop was tiny bubbles. Not in the wine, as Don Ho liked to sing about, but in the air floating over a cubicle(4).

[page 20] One day, after overhearing one of my rather tense telephone conversations, Holly decided to help lighten my mood. While sitting at my desk, deep in the throes of this conversation, tiny bubbles suddenly started floating over my cubicle wall. Yes, Holly had taken time away from her work to blow bubbles into my cubicle. This gave me the biggest laugh, and to say the least, the rest of my telephone conversation went much better!

Fear is something we all face in the course of our lives. Few of us are so lucky as to be infused with fearlessness from birth, given the dramatic events during which we hazard our way through the birth canal. A dark tunnel, *scary*. In a whirlpool which is carrying away from our home, *very scary*. A monster squeezing us in the dark, *real fear there*. Momentary loss of oxygen to our brain when the umbilical cord is cut, and our lungs must take their first breath to replenish it, *life-threatening jolt*. Louise's experience is typical of many of us.

[page 23] Courage is a quality that I very much value because for the longest time, I could barely find an ounce of it in myself. Fear? Yes. I had tons of that. But courage? I had none. For most of my life (oh, let's say the first thirty years), I lacked the courage to rise up against the fear that was ever present in my being. I'm not saying that I spent my whole life sitting in a corner trembling with fear. But whenever it came time for me to test my mettle, fear took over and became as much a part of me as the blood running through my veins.

For a young Doyle Henderson fear was ever present(5). He climbed to the tops of trees as a boy like the other boys did, but his heart was pounding like crazy. He didn't see that same reaction in his friends and wondered why he was different. Again when he tried to enter the service during the waning years of WWII, his heart beat so fast that the doctor told him he couldn't pass his physical. Finally he pleaded with the doctor that he had always been this way and wanted so much to be a radioman in the Army. The doctor sent him running up and down a flight of stairs a couple of times and then took his pulse and its elevated rate was normal (for someone who had just run up and down stairs), so the doctor could put *normal* under his pulse rate on the chart and pass him. Thirty years later as an instrumentation engineer, Doyle suddenly announced to his colleagues one day, "I know where fear comes from! It's a physical body state from my early childhood recapitulated at a later time." That initial revelation led to the science of doyletics and the ability of people to remove such onerous bodily states as heart-pounding fear in a few minutes by a [speed trace](#).

From reading Louise's book, I gather that she rid herself of the most onerous of these fear states by being around the free souls she encountered in the course of asking people to write an answer to her amazing question, "What is the meaning of life?" Life is certainly not meant to be lived in fear, and gradually she must have overcome her fear of taking risks by the risk she took every time she asked someone to write an answer to her question.

[Thus a Teacher, so also a Learner](#) is a basic rule in my life. I treat my teachers as if they are equally there to learn from me as I am from them. That behavior was unconscious on my part and unwelcome on the part of teachers in elementary and high school. In elementary school I got low grades in conduct and in high school reduced grades in courses. In college, my teachers seemed mostly to appreciate the challenges I presented them. In graduate school I found that such behavior was expected and important for one's grade. I should have started out in graduate school! I no longer place a label on myself or someone else as teacher because whatever label they choose for themselves, I know that I am always flowing from one to other in a way that transcends labels.

I was not surprised to find that Louise also understands and values the reciprocal nature of teaching and learning.

[page 26] Steve and I share a common philosophy: always be open to learning. We are especially open to learning from each other. At times, we tend to get so wrapped up in our search for knowledge that we don't even notice when we transition from the role of student to that of teacher. In fact, we are both a bit reluctant to wear the label of teacher. Speaking for my self, I can be comfortable wearing that label only by frequently and audibly acknowledging the fact that "I teach/preach what I most need to learn."

One of the great answers as to the meaning of life I heard recently from Robert H. Schuller, founding pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California. It was not given as an answer to Louise's question, but as a response given to anyone asking Marion Halfacre how things were going. Marion was for many years the head usher at the Crystal Cathedral. More than just a saying, this response was undoubtedly the meaning of life to him, "It's just another great day in paradise!" For Marion, who died recently, every day of his life was like living in paradise. As Dr. Schuller might say, WOW!

My only regret as I close out this review is that I didn't get an opportunity to answer Louise's question spontaneously. I did write out my answer on the cover as I started reading her book, "The meaning of life is in the living." Later on I came upon this answer which resembles mine:

**[page 118] Bill
Life is for the living.**

The word "life" is a noun, a thing, a content, whereas "living" can refer either as a *process* to an ongoing activity in the now, or as a *content* simply to people who are alive. This ambiguity in Bill's answer led me to refine my own answer so that I might remove the *content* meaning. In my endeavor to be concise, I had allowed the ambiguity to slip in.

On page 209 under Birthday Answer #1, I wrote my 67th birthday answer: "The meaning of life is living in the eternal now." What I mean is that eternity is not some distant time aeons and aeons away from now, eternity is what is happening in the instantaneous present, the right now! Eternity is right now. I am living right now as I type these words, and you, dear Reader, are living right now as you read these words. These words, absent a reader turn into content, dead words upon a page, rather like [Sleeping Beauty](#) seemed to be dead for a hundred years when the Prince gazed upon her and she awoke into the living now. It's the living process in which the meaning of life lies for me. I think that's why I liked Marion Halfacre's reply to "How's it going?", "Just another great day in paradise." He knew, as we can learn from him, that paradise exists right now, in our lives at every moment wherever we are in the world reading these words.

Del, my best friend, loyal wife, and earnest copy-editor, wrote her answer to Louise's question thus:

Life is what you make of it or decide it to be. Another beautiful day on Planet Earth!

Thank you for your great question, Louise Lewis. You have blessed my life and those of all the people you asked to write down their answers. Your book also offered an additional treat for me which you and I know about, and my good Readers will enjoy sharing. One of the people you asked the question of was my father's brother, Terral Matherne, who married your mother, Yvonne, several years ago. It was fun reading about people that I knew and especially reading something written by one of my uncles in a book. Your book has made authors of everyone who took the time to answer your question. All I can say in closing is Thus a Teacher, So also a Learner!

What is the Meaning of Life According to You?

If reading this review and/or the book has got you thinking about what the meaning of life is to you, Louise invites you to visit the Contact page of her web site and submit your own answer to this great question for future publication. (Click Here: www.noexpertsneeded)



----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita tore up the coasts of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, and Allstate dropped some of the states formerly covered, one pundit facetiously suggested that they be forced to change their name to Somestates.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)



Footnote 2. This is the best reference on the subject that I know, [Guardian Angels — Connecting with our Spiritual Guides and Helpers](#) by Rudolf Steiner.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)



Footnote 3. What is the power of an unanswered question? This unanswered question stayed with me for years and in [Matherne's Rule #25](#), I provide my answers.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)



Footnote 4. My wife and I often threaten to blow on the other's belly to get rid of a too-serious mood or angry state. Try it on an intimate friend and you'll find that blowing air on a naked belly will bring out the playful kid in any serious-minded adult, especially if you make a raspberry buzzing sound against their belly. After you've done this once or twice, the mere threat to do it again is enough to break the adult spell.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)



Footnote 5. For the full story of Doyle's battle to overcome his, read this [1998 interview](#) I did with him while he was driving his motorhome from California to Louisiana.

<http://www.doyletics.com/dintervw.htm>

[Return to text directly before Footnote 5.](#)





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