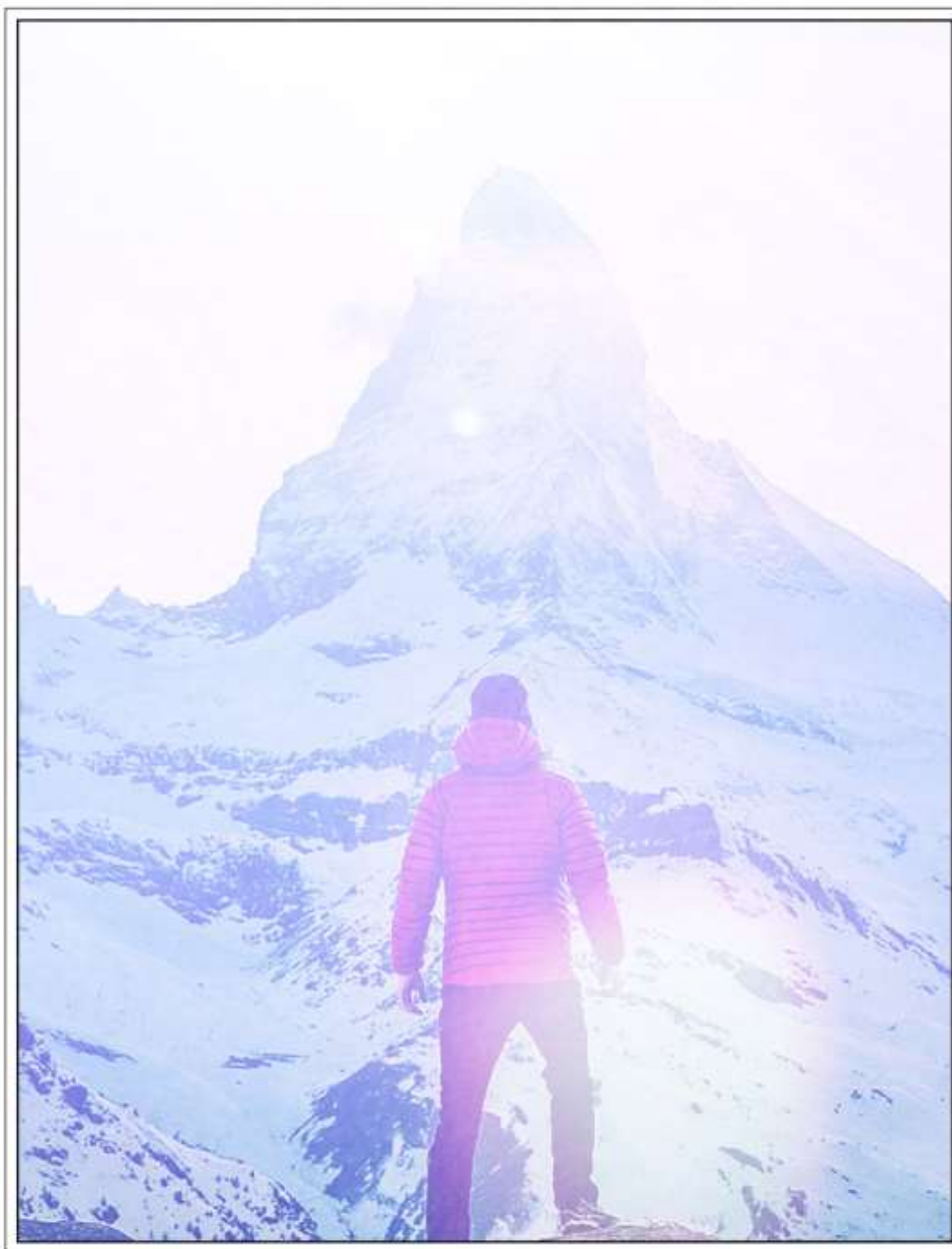


5 BASIC GUIDELINES FOR A SMART APPROACH TO **THE BIG QUESTIONS OF LIFE**

(INSTEAD OF A DUMB ONE)



from your friends at

LIVE REAL .com

PUBLISHED BY:

LiveReal.com

8601 Lincoln Blvd
Suite 180 #572
Los Angeles, CA 90045

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5 BASIC GUIDELINES FOR A SMART APPROACH TO THE BIG QUESTIONS OF LIFE (INSTEAD OF A DUMB ONE)

So, if you're asking Big Questions about life...

("Big Questions" such as What's it all about? What are we doing here? What's the point of it all? Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? How should I live? What the heck is going on? Etc.)

...well, those are good questions.

And if you're looking for a smart way to approach these, well, congratulations. You're already way ahead of the game.

Here are a few basic guidelines that we recommend for approaching these in a way that's...well, smart. (Way better than the dumb way.)

1) Seek the truth. Not validation.

Many folks do the "my worldview can beat up your worldview" thing. Meaning, typically, they identify with a tribe (ideology, philosophy, school of thought, etc). Then they work to prove that *their* worldview is correct and the others' are wrong. Not smart.

The smarter route – in our humble view – isn't to seek validation for a particular worldview, tribe, ideology, etc. It's to *find the truth*. Period. No matter where the chips fall. Whether it's flattering or not. Whether it's comfortable or not. (Heck, even Captain America discovered that his tribe wasn't exactly perfect. (Winter Soldier, anyone?)) Nietzsche said it well: "A very popular error: having the courage of one's convictions; rather it is a matter of having the courage for an *attack* on one's convictions." Not easy. But smart.

2) Know that there's a lot about life that we just truly *don't know*.

A popular idea in modern psychology is called the "Dunning-Kruger effect." The basic idea: folks who don't really know much *think* they know a lot, while folks who actually *do* know a lot admit that they *don't really know much*. This applies – in full – to The Big Questions of life. And even to knowing yourself.

This gets touted as cutting-edge science. But it's actually a restatement of something somebody discovered thousands of years ago. (It's Socrates. He was declared the wisest man in man in Greece. But he said "I know that I know nothing." Which meant he knew more than most.)

This isn't meant to discourage anyone, or to say that the effort to wise up about life is useless. It isn't. It's a simple recognition that there's room for humility in all this. (It's the opposite of, and antidote to, hubris.) A helpful assumption to carry through all this: *there's a lot to learn*.

3) Don't learn from your mistakes. Learn from *others* folks' mistakes.

Reinventing the wheel is the norm in these realms. (One example above.)

If you're serious about wanting to become a decent artist, taking a few art classes isn't a terrible idea. If you want to be a doctor, well, medical school probably isn't a *total* waste of time. If you want to be an engineer, seriously – no need to reinvent the wheel. So...why should it be any different with Big Questions about life?

Many folks struggle with questions and problems about life, and approach these things as if they're exploring realms that have never been explored before. They start *from scratch*. Making it much, *much* harder than it needs to be.

But it's almost guaranteed that you aren't the first person on the planet to wrestle with certain problems. In fact, it's highly likely that some of the smartest and most insightful folks throughout history have struggled with them, too. Sometimes they've even spent major portions of their lives working on them. And they've shared what they've learned.

Building from what they've already figured out can sometimes save you *years* of working on your own. Learning from your own mistakes is expensive and sometimes highly unpleasant. Learning from others? Cheaper, faster, and much less painful.

4) Trust yourself.

No one else can see from behind your eyes, experience life from inside your skin, view the world having gone through the exact experiences you've had in life. You have a front-row-center seat to the game of your life that nobody else – *nobody* else – has. You know certain things that nobody else has known, and never will know. As Descartes and others figured out, at least one thing you can be certain of in this world, at least in some respects, is – you guessed it – *yourself*.

5) Distrust yourself.

Someone who asks Big Questions about life is something like an existential detective. They're working to solve a mystery. But (spoiler alert!) the leaders of the investigation *can't be trusted*. Why? Because they were completely involved in that mystery from the very beginning. (This time...it's *personal!*) The more clues you unravel, the more they all somehow, seem to point back to...*you*. So...OK, then. Trust no one. *Including yourself*.

That's it.

Hopefully you've found a few of these tips helpful.

In our experience, if you follow these basic guidelines, well, you'll be better off than if you ignore them.

We might be wrong, of course. Which brings us to our next point.

LiveReal is a place where folks seek truth about The Big Stuff in life, pretty humbly (most of the time), where we gather and learn what other folks have said about this stuff, where we try to figure out how to both trust and distrust themselves (in the right ways)...all in a search for answers to existential riddles.

(In other words, we try to apply Guidelines 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, in an effort to get more legitimate clarity about all this stuff.)

So if you're interested in this kind of thing, well, we are too.

Feel free to come hang out sometime. We're friendly, we share our coffee and cupcakes, we practice good hygiene (umm, *most* of the time, anyway), and we really like exploring this stuff.

Hope to see you around.

Until then,

Peace to the Wanderer.

All the best and warm regards,

The folks at LiveReal