

onefuture®

The implicit obligation to be awesome

WE CAN IDENTIFY AN INNATE OBLIGATION TO ASPIRE TO AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

Grey Lindley



Wait!
Don't panic.
No obligation here!
No one has to do anything!
JUST CALM DOWN!!!

If one understands the extraordinary context of one's life, and if one understands that we have the ability to adapt and change the way we live, and one has the freedom to do so - any individual has an option to identify an innate obligation to aspire to an extraordinary life.



Reasons to live with gratitude

WARNING : Excessive use of the word 'awesome'!

I do appreciate it's a slightly silly word, which I why I'm using it so much. Otherwise this could be quite a morose article. By 'awesomeness' I mean real genuine authentic awesomeness - not fake American TV muscles, guns and explosions, teenager awesomeness - though I'll understand if you're not really sure of the difference.

I think a primary reason one could find one wished to aspire to genuine



awesomeness is out of a deep sense of gratitude for being alive, and having the tremendous luck of being born human. Being human means we get to know how lucky we are whilst also having the option to deliberately make good on that luck. This kind of gratitude is such a simple and personal thing I think you either have it or you don't. If you're not sure where you stand, here are some reasons why you might feel thankful and lucky to be alive...

a) The Universe is Awesome

The ~13.67 billion year developmental trajectory of the cosmos and all of the spectacular results we know of is, quite simply, awesome. All of time and space is pretty impressive. Galaxies are pretty neat. It doesn't wobble (much) and atoms don't spontaneously dissolve at room temperatures. That's cool, too.

It's also beautiful. By 'awesome', in this instance, as well as it's stunning scientific reality, I also mean it's stupendously amazing awe-inspiring breathtaking splendiferousness - however that may appear or be to you. Also, the understanding that one has the capacity to understand and consider that one understands that it is awesome, is also a part of the total awesomeness. In other words, it's extra awesome 'cause we know that we know it's awesome.

b) All history is your history

We tend not to think of history as having much to do with us but it has absolutely everything to do with every one of us. We also tend to think 'history' refers to human history - but our story really starts at least where we know the universe to have started: at the Big Bang.

Every single speck of you was present in one form or another in that original moment - probably in the form of pure energy. That's where you come from. Take your own body for instance: All the matter in your hands was

present in the form of pure energy in that explosive elemental beginning. The subatomic particles that make up all the atoms in your hand condensed out of a plasma a few hundred thousand years after the big bang. All of the complex molecules in your hand are made from atoms - many of which were probably given birth to in ancient supernovae as a long dead stars ended their lives during the earlier stellar ecology of our cosmos.

A human adult body contains between 5 and 100 trillion living animal cells, all descendant cells from the very first living organisms ~4 billion years ago. Because you are made of so many of them, there's only an infinitesimally (!) small probability that none of the atoms in your body right now weren't at one point part of an ammonite, a dinosaur, or the earliest humans. That's a true fact. We are descendants of the first animals that appeared around 640 million years ago, and the first mammals that turned up around 200 million years ago.

The modern version of our species has been around for about 200,000 years. We tend not to think of distant human history as having much to do with us either, but it has absolutely everything to do with every one of us. What we normally associate as other people's stories and histories is almost always actually our very own personal story. From survival bands to tribes to empires, through revolutions and renaissances, thousands of generations of people struggling to live well as best they could in their current circumstances, over thousands of years - is all one great ancient story that resulted in *you*. You are the living breathing walking talking result of all of that history - and you are aware of it. You are its' success, and you have the option to live in the context of that knowledge.

c) The ability to consciously evolve

The fact that we can evolve our personal and collective culture means there is an inherent option for general greatness always available. ^[NOTE 1]



Unlike most other animals, life for Humans need not be a random series of interactions driven only or mainly by our genetics. Our lives can be a series of conscious and moral choices that make us and everyone else better and better and better and better.

Simply said, I think, once contemplated, the option to deliberately, conscientiously, develop and grow, means by default we have the option to become great. That result is available to us. It seems to me, in the face of this simple fact, any other option is a lesser option. This is how one can arrive at the sense of obligation: why choose a lesser option when you don't have to? An intrinsic/implicit/derived autonomously generated obligation to be awesome can be found in deciding that it's a no brainer to strive for anything less than realising one's greatest potential.

We are incredibly lucky to have this ability. The ultimate expression of appreciation for it is to use it.

Also

Also, I would like to assume you are safe, well fed, loved, part of a family, a community, and free with a life full of opportunities. These are things to be grateful for. I hope you have many other things in your life to be grateful for. ^[NOTE 2]

//

Response-ability is a capacity, not a burden. It's something that one does have to aspire to - to take. It's optionally the great adventure of being an adult.



What is awesomeness?

I mean, who knows. I just made all this up! Clearly it's an absolutely huge and debatable topic. I don't think it would be fair to drag you through all this without having a crack at it, so...

One simple way of thinking about it could be this: You aspiring to live to your greatest potential. Greatest potential would mean: greatest capacity, greatest maturity, greatest response-ability.

I love the term *response-ability*:

Response-ability is literally your ability to respond - to respond to the events and happenings in your life. So response-ability is seen as a capaci-

ty, not a burden.

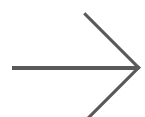
I think it follows that to develop response-ability requires the development of a great, big heart, an authentic, independent, moral character, and a strong well educated mind. It's something that one has to aspire to, to take. It's optionally the great adventure of being an adult. I know from personal experience there is a great thrill here, in deciding to become response-able and asking the question: What are the limits to how response-able I can become?

Another approach might be by being *most ecological*. By ecological I mean *most related*. That can be culturally and humanly as much as environmentally - the quality and depth of relatedness being what makes 'most ecological' awesome.

Either way, I believe being awesome means one is constantly growing and developing throughout one's lifetime. It means creatively developing your own personal version of probably the greatest and most undiscussed art forms of all time - the living of a Human life.

Also, I really believe, no matter what your circumstances, in every moment of one's life, there is an optimal response that can be chosen. The more we find it or the closer we are to it, the more awesome we probably are.

So, maybe awesomeness is you aspiring to your greatest and most authentically creative and ecological response-ability?



//

A personal sense of obligation to live greatly... is the expression of a deep sense of gratitude for being this aware, this awake. Gratitude for being born this lucky: Human in this extraordinary cosmos.



The implicit obligation to be awesome

The basis of an intrinsic or implicit obligation to be awesome is based upon our decision to be so obligated. Again, as described previously, that decision can be bolstered by a deep appreciation of our extraordinary circumstances, including: a) The universe is magnificent, b) We are the current success and creators at the cutting edge of/innovators/champions of it's/all history, c) We have the ability to choose what we do and evolve individually and collectively. Also hopefully you have many things in your personal life to be deeply grateful for. Those things mean something: we are very very very very very very very very very very very very very very very lucky.

Living a life out of a personal sense of obligation to live greatly, is living a



life of gratitude - a life lived in deference for the miracle, and the awareness of the miracle, that one is alive. It's a desire to make good on one's extraordinary luck. It is the expression of a deep sense of gratitude for being this aware, this awake and this lucky: Human in this extraordinary cosmos. The extraordinary fact of our existence just as it is doesn't demand a response, but if you do truly think it's magnificent or profound - it seems to me an upstanding response is more desirable than no response - the more upstanding the better. If the most upstanding response is the best response - what would the bestest, most upstanding response be? Well, it would be awesome, of course.

This outlook really is between you and everything else - a very personal decision. The obligation to be awesome is implicitly suggested, but always, it can only be chosen - chosen by a magnanimous heart and a mature mind. The sense of obligation is implicit only to those who decide it is apparent. There otherwise is no obligation. Until that moment it quite simply doesn't exist. It's a personal understanding and a personal decision to respond. There are no rules here - no dogma for the masses - this is an optional, invisible obligation to the self initiated.

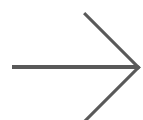
Once this position is taken, it can become the locus of your entire existence. A simple outlook, but foundational, immutable, passionate, forever incomplete and profoundly exciting. By default aspiring to anything less than your greatest potential - which in short order usually translates to a passion for *our* greatest potential - simply becomes unsatisfying.

The implicit obligation to be awesome is a viewpoint generated by a mature, independent, contemplative individual. I find this an extraordinary thing - it can't come from anywhere else. It is only available to such individuals, making it an elusive and otherwise invisible mode. An obligation

and a way of living that is only there if one sees that it is, decides that it is - not based upon any books or dogma, but one's own perception, understanding and emotional intelligence.

Critically, I think this individual and subjective basis for a mature appraisal of life is the way of the future of things. David Hume famously pointed out we can't get 'ought' from 'is'. That is, we can't be provided any moral view or rational prediction from the mere presence of say, a tree. Just because the tree is there doesn't actually predict anything, or provide us with a path of action. This is in essence true but at the same time I disagree. We are part of this cosmos and we add something to it - we add our unique and subjective appraisals of everything. We add to the tree. We can appreciate it and say it's beautiful, extraordinary, profound and meaningful - meaningful because we decided so. The tree can't do that.

There seems to be a general impetus to seek meaning and purpose in life by looking for it somewhere beyond ourselves ^[NOTE 3] - but Humans and all other self reflective organisms have something essential to add to this cosmos: our capacity for a profoundly intelligent subjective appraisal. It's a critical addition. In the same way atoms add matter, we add perception consciousness and morality. I believe we should all champion this capacity and not shy away from the implications of embracing it.



NOTES

Note 1

There's a lot of discussion about this these days! Do we really have a capacity for free will? Yes of course we do, don't be silly. If you're not sure, pay attention to many of the choices you make and how you make them.

Note 2

I think this type of contemplation requires that one has fulfilled the more basic needs of existence. If one is fleeing a violent regime or struggling to raise a family in poverty, or suffering from inequality and prejudice that must be fought and challenged, this type of thinking isn't really an easy option, and really, if you are, it sounds like you have plenty of other more important things to be worrying about. This is really a format of contemplation (and hopefully action) for those living in a stable affluent safe free liberal cultural climate. In that light, I think of this as a post-survival, post-subsistence style morality. In other words this is a mode of contemplation and action for those who no longer have to fundamentally worry about the critical problems of surviving and just getting by. It's a value for those free to investigate and innovate their human being.

Note 3

On a slightly separate point: I think the famous question: "What is the meaning of life?" is a very not good question. I've never been quite sure if it's a joke question or not - though people seem to take it seriously. For a start it assumes that there *is* a meaning of life or in life, and it also assumes that whatever it is, there is only one of them, which just confuses things up front. It also doesn't define its' terms. I mean, what does it mean by "life"? For this little foray I'll assume "life" means creation, the universe and everything.

So, to start this questioning process again: in my opinion, a better first question is: "*Is there meaning in life, the universe and everything?*". The fact of the matter is, no matter what anyone says and no matter what evidence is provided to you, *you are the only one who can answer that question for yourself*. So if you decide there is meaning in life, then, for you, there is. Now the question "What is the meaning of life?" makes no sense (it never did). The correct questions is "What, for you, is the meaning in life?" or "What do you find meaningful in life?".

One Future is devoted to facilitating an integrated, sustainable, ecologically passionate, 21st century renaissance in global culture and values.



Ecology

How can humanity meaningfully co-exist with the rest of life on Earth?
One Future endeavours to foster ecological perspectives that facilitate sustainable culture passionate about the beauty of the planet we share.



Culture

In what ways are people innovating human being now?
One Future endeavours to provide a platform featuring new ways of thriving in the 21st century



Perspective

New ideas, new ways of looking at, and engaging with life are at the very heart of innovative and vibrant human being in the 21st century. At One Future, we consider how we can live extraordinary lives, by discussing inspiring ideas and perspectives.

Find us online at onefuture.org

One Future is a registered trademark. © One Future Media Ltd 2016. All Rights Reserved.

