

Introduction

November 23, 1999.

That date should have been on my tombstone, as it was the day my life ended. That's right—I died. I was just twenty-eight years old. I shouldn't be here.

It was a Tuesday, two days before Thanksgiving, when I took our dog to the groomer. While waiting in line to drop off Scooby, I began to have an asthma attack. When I got to my car, I grabbed my inhaler and wasn't getting relief. I drove home and was gasping for air as I went through my garage and into my house. I said out loud, "Jesus, help me, Jesus."

I was shaking as I grabbed my nebulizer machine and filled the mouthpiece with the liquid medication.

I called out to my thirteen-year-old daughter, Kristy, who was on a Thanksgiving break from school, to call 911. I was still not getting relief. I was scared and desperate to breathe. The paramedics arrived and gave me a mask to put over my nose and mouth. In just seconds, I blacked out and was unconscious. I remember images of my life passing before me. Then, I had the thought, "I am going to die, and there's nothing I can do about it."

I don't remember the ride in the ambulance or being in the emergency room. All I know is that when I had the thought,

“I am going to die, and there’s nothing I can do about it,” a fantastic thing happened. At that moment, I coded, and my spirit left my body. Spoiler alert: I was resuscitated. That’s when everything changed for me. Don’t worry; I continue sharing the details of what happened with me on November 23, 1999, including my afterlife experience, in chapter 10. After this experience, I was different. I saw life for what it is. A gift. A gift I take for granted too often, as if I will always be here, alive. Since that day, I have developed this framework for my life that I call **Priority Living**.

What is shared in these pages is not theory, but what I have been applying to my life for decades. It’s personal to me. But now I want to share my journey and mindset—life hacks, if you will—with you. May I ask you: Are you desiring to get more out of life? Are you exhausted? Are you in the middle of a crisis or a transition of some type? Job loss? Breakup or divorce? Burnout? Unfulfilled? Looking for meaning in life? This book is specifically for the person at a stage in life where you are looking for answers. Looking for direction. Looking for a path to guide you to a more fulfilled life. I am not sure what led someone to tell you about this book or why you would order it or pick it up. I do believe it’s because you, like me, desire more out of life.

You don’t have to have a near-death experience to press the reset button on your life or decide to make some course correction to a more rewarding existence. Now is your time! This book will guide you. Caution: This is not a book to “do” these seven pillars so that you will be “successful” or wealthy or arrive at some utopia. Instead, these pillars have helped give me guardrails to an intentional way of living. I am still focusing on being intentional, realizing I will never arrive, and neither will

you. We can simply be aware that living a life called Priority Living gives us clarity and fulfilment. Too many people are going through the motions of life as described next . . .

After a restless night with not enough sleep, the alarm clock summons you to start the day. It's the start of another series of hours you spend awake before you lay your head on the pillow again.

What awaits you? What will you encounter today, both planned and unplanned? What emotions will you experience? Whom will you interact with today? Will there be a moment you will never forget today? Maybe something so positive or unexpected that you will never forget something you see or hear today? Or maybe today will be just another day. That's right. Just. Another. Day.

Another day that starts with you hitting snooze on your alarm before you start scrolling on your little screen. Staggering out of bed to the bathroom, scrolling on your little screen some more, and then, a cup of coffee. A moment of delight with your coffee before you are off to your scheduled events. You drive to work to look at a medium-size screen for eight hours and meetings. So many meetings, while your to-do list seems to be growing, not shrinking. After work, juggling the kids' schedules, paying the bills, figuring out what's for dinner, fitting in some exercise, drinking from the fire hydrant of problems blasting in your face. You gather in the evening to relax with others to watch your big screen while everyone also has their little screen in their hands and faces. You are four feet apart from the ones you love, and you know they love you, yet you feel four thousand miles apart. You are lonely, even in the room with others.

Your day is a continual bombardment of emails, social media, trying to figure out AI, your hybrid work environment, the twenty-four-hour news cycle, and never-ending demands that you add to the to-do list for another day. No wonder your chest is tight and you can't breathe at times. This is your life. Well, this is just a Tuesday. Now you know why you are so exhausted. Is this how life is supposed to be?

Time is the ultimate limited resource. Everyone has the same "time budget": 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, giving 8,760 hours each year of our lives.

We spend most of our time working and sleeping. Going to work and sleeping take 80 to 90 percent of the 1,440 minutes daily. William Penn said, "Time is what we want most, but what we use worst."

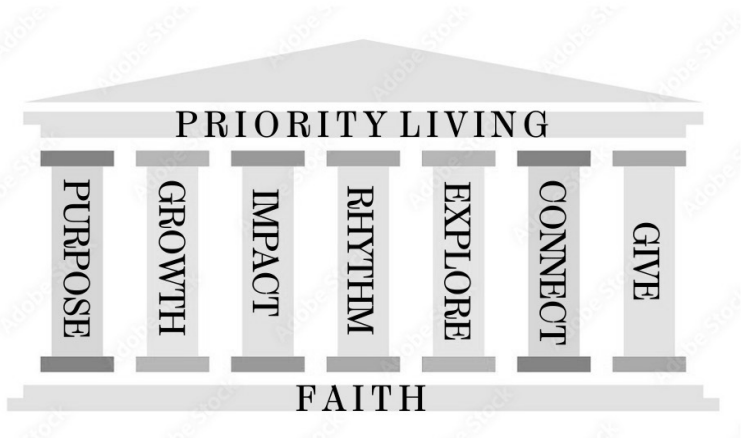
According to [statista.com](https://www.statista.com) and a study by Aaron O'Neil published in February 2023, the average lifespan projected for an American born in 2020 is 76.98 years.¹ These numbers tell us that you and I have a limited number of hours and years in our lives. We'd better make them count.

So, my friend, may I ask again: Do you desire to get more out of your life? I have been given a second chance every day since November 23, 1999. Therefore, for twenty-five years at the time of writing this book, I have determined to live intentionally of Priority Living. I focus on seven pillars that I am about to share with you. You can live them too.

After all, how we spend our days becomes how we spend our lives. I want you to think about that. Are you okay with how you are spending your days? Are you okay with your life being a culmination of how you spend your days? The good news is you have the choice to stay the same or make a change.

You can go all in on yourself and live a life called Priority Living.

Don't settle for the way things are and repeat living just another day for the rest of your life. Get off the hamster wheel of life and live life purposefully, making an impact and being ready to leave a legacy. No regrets.



These seven pillars we will unpack to your better life are:

1. Purpose
2. Growth
3. Impact
4. Rhythm
5. Explore
6. Connect
7. Give

This book is designed to be experienced and applied to your life. So, at the ends of the chapters, I have included questions for you to ponder and discuss with friends or small groups or even consider journaling your answers.

There is a QR code on the next page for you to scan with the camera on your phone or tablet with additional content.

This is a personal development book. I feel it is important to state that I am a person of faith. Please know that when I share about my Christian faith and experiences, I am sharing what has been beneficial for me. I value and respect you, regardless of what you believe.

A fundamental truth is that we have no guarantee of tomorrow. Yet if you wake up and live another day, month, year, or even decade, why would you want to exist and get by? Don't you want to make your one life count? If you just thought *yes* to that question, this book is for you. These pages are filled with purposeful, passionate living. I want to inspire you to live your best life now and give you practical steps to do so.

Thank you for trusting me to be your guide to Priority Living. Your life is about to change for the better. Buckle up. Let's dive into discovering your purpose.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What changes have you identified you need to address in your life?
2. What obstacles (or excuses) are keeping you from making those changes?
3. What specific action steps are you willing to take now?
4. With whom will you share the change(s) you are going to make and ask for their support?