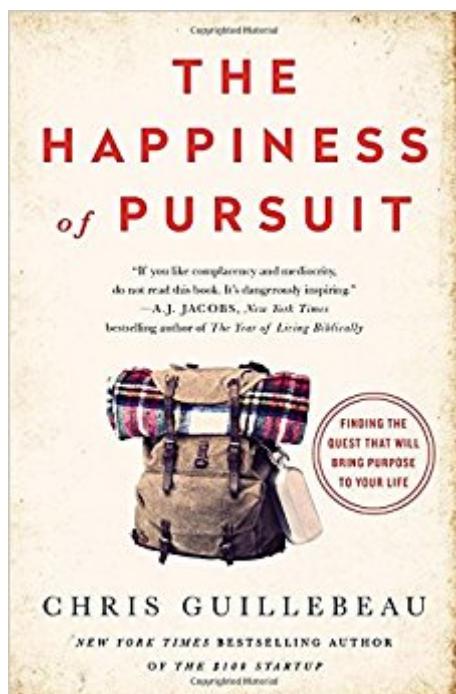


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The Happiness Of Pursuit: Finding The Quest That Will Bring Purpose To Your Life



Synopsis

A remarkable book that will both guide and inspire, *The Happiness of Pursuit* reveals how anyone can bring meaning into their life by undertaking a quest. When he set out to visit all of the planet's countries by age thirty-five, compulsive goal seeker Chris Guillebeau never imagined that his journey's biggest revelation would be how many people like himself exist--each pursuing a challenging quest. And, interestingly, these quests aren't just travel-oriented. On the contrary, they're as diverse as humanity itself. Some involve exploration; others the pursuit of athletic or artistic excellence; still others a battle against injustice or poverty or threats to the environment. Everywhere that Chris visited he found ordinary people working toward extraordinary goals, making daily down payments on their dream. The more Chris spoke with these strivers--including a suburban mom pursuing a wildly ambitious culinary project, a DJ producing the world's largest symphony, a young widower completing the tasks his wife would never accomplish, a teenager crossing an entire ocean alone, and scores of others writing themselves into the record books--the more he began to appreciate the direct link between questing and long-term happiness--how going after something in a methodical way enriches our lives. He was compelled to complete a comprehensive study of the phenomenon and extract the best advice. In *The Happiness of Pursuit* he draws on interviews with hundreds of questers, revealing their secret motivations, their selection criteria, the role played by friends and family, their tricks for solving logistics, and the importance of documentation. Equally fascinating is Chris' examination of questing's other side, including questers' acute awareness of mortality, their struggle against monotony, and their wistful feelings once a quest has succeeded. What happens after the summit is climbed, the painting hung, the endurance record broken, the "at risk" community saved? A book that challenges each of us to take control--to make our lives be about something while at the same time remaining clear-eyed about the commitment--*The Happiness of Pursuit* will inspire readers of every age and aspiration. It's a playbook for making your life count.

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Customer Reviews

A Q&A with Author Chris Guillebeau What do you mean in your book by questing? Questing refers to the pursuit of a long-term challenge or adventure with a series of intermediate steps. The *questers* I write about are focused on a specific goal, often to the exclusion of all others. They devote years toward the journey, inevitably finding themselves changed along the way. What is a quest? Is it just a long trip or athletic pursuit? A quest has a few specific characteristics: a clear goal, a real challenge, and a set of milestones along the way. Interestingly, while a quest is often an extended physical journey—like visiting every country in the world or circumnavigating the oceans in a small sailboat—there are many other kinds of quests as well. Over several years of research, I met activists, academics, artists, and others who chose to spend long amounts of time on something that mattered to them. I was interested in why they undertook such a mission, and what happened to them as they drew closer to their goal. How long did it take to visit every country in the world? Start to finish, it took eleven years. However, I didn't really begin the quest aspect of traveling until after I'd been to the first forty or fifty countries. From there, I set a goal of visiting one-hundred countries. As I approached the first one-hundred, I decided to attempt the challenging of visiting all of them. This led to a five-year process of traveling 300,000+ miles a year, constantly learning about the world and figuring out logistics as I went along. I also visited many of the same countries over and over as I traveled to locations further afield. How do questers decide on what to pursue and what to avoid? If you're going to pursue a quest, you should choose something you're really excited about. My quest was to visit every country in the world, mostly because I loved travel and enjoyed combining it with the structure of goal-setting. Others focus on their own hobbies or passions, turning them into the long-term pursuits: to knit 10,000 hats, to walk across America, to become a real-life ninja, and so on. It also helps if there's a deeper purpose to your quest. Many of the people I talked to for the book felt a sense of calling or mission, even if they weren't religious. They were compelled; they simply had to pursue the quest. They knew if

they didn't, they would always regret it. What role do family and friends play in questers pursuing their dreams? A complicated one. In many cases, family and friends provided critical support for the questers. In some cases, though, family and friends "just didn't understand." In these cases it was usually important for the quester to establish an outside support group as they progressed along their way. Is it important to document a quest? One of the key themes of quests is that they must be measurable. They must have an end goal—you have to be able to say, "This is what I'm working toward and I'll complete it when x happens." Documenting the steps along the way provides tremendous momentum, since you can see how far they've come and how far still remains. In my case I used a Wikipedia article that contained a list of every country. I copied it into Evernote and whenever I visited a new country, I'd place a big X beside it. As the years went by, the number of Xs grew until there were only a few places I hadn't visited. Finally, I was able to visit those places as well. Just having that file gave me a sense of urgency as I made my plans and set out on another Round-the-World trip or 30-hour series of flights. What happens to someone after they've completed the quest or achieved their goal? Most of the time there's a feeling of accomplishment combined with a sense of melancholy or even alienation. Quests are complicated! Very often, much of the identity of the quester lies in the quest itself. The best path forward is usually to take some time to reflect on the journey. Then whenever the time is right—you'll need a new quest. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Chris Guillebeau is a rare combination of sage and adventurer, and *The Happiness of Pursuit* is both a distillation of his wisdom and a demonstration of his—and others'—passion for the questing life. The passion Chris chronicles is infectious, and it becomes even more so as we read about life-focusing action delivering deep meaning. Even if you prefer never to leave your armchair, this book will inspire you to take a beautiful voyage—one that can be either physical or mental as you chase the thrill of steady accomplishment.

Susan Cain, Quiet Revolution co-founder and New York Times bestselling author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* "If you like complacency and mediocrity, do not read this book. It's dangerously inspiring. It will make you want to do amazing things with your life. You may not end up visiting every country on Earth or directing a global protest from the top of a tree (I certainly won't), but Chris made me want to dive into an adventure. *The Happiness of Pursuit* is a how-to guide for avoiding a boring life."

A.J. Jacobs, New York Times bestselling author of *The Know-It-All* and *The*

Year of Living Biblically \rightarrow "The Happiness of Pursuit is smart, honest, and dangerous. Why dangerous? Because it is as practical as it is inspiring. \rightarrow You won't just be daydreaming about your quest -- you'll be packing for it! \rightarrow •Brené Brown, Ph.D., LMSW, author of the #1 New York Times bestseller \rightarrow Daring Greatly \rightarrow "It's not easy to dream big \rightarrow and it's not easy to turn that dream into reality. The brilliant Chris Guillebeau provides the essential blueprint for those of us for whom the happiness of pursuit \rightarrow such as Chris' successful quest to visit every country in the world \rightarrow is a key part of the pursuit of happiness. \rightarrow •Gretchen Rubin, New York Times bestselling author of The Happiness Project \rightarrow "The incredible quests Chris Guillebeau explores in The Happiness of Pursuit, including his own to visit every country, left me feeling exhausted. Of course, as a person who works from home, I limit my quests most days to taking a shower. Bottom line: these stories are inspiring--and very, very entertaining. \rightarrow •Joel Stein, columnist, Time magazine and author of Man Made: A Stupid Quest for Masculinity \rightarrow "Passion is the quickest route to joy -- the kind that gets your heart beating and your soul smiling. It involves committing to something bigger than yourself, taking risks, trusting; there \rightarrow is no passion in your comfort zone. Guillebeau's route to happiness is taking on a quest -- something that will get you up in the morning, impatient to begin your day. His stories, biographies, observations, and personal insights will get you thinking about a greater purpose. And there \rightarrow a lot of how-to in here. If you \rightarrow ever been wondering \rightarrow what it \rightarrow is all about? \rightarrow this book could change your life. \rightarrow • Rita Golden Gelman, author of Tales of a Female Nomad, Living at Large in the World \rightarrow "When a quest is a journey or a sought-after goal, it can be satisfying, fun, even paradigm-shifting. But when a quest begins with an inner yearning and transforms into a calling, it becomes medicine for the soul, and \rightarrow this changes \rightarrow everything. \rightarrow The Happiness of Pursuit \rightarrow is an invitation to listen to the part of oneself that craves purpose. \rightarrow It says. "Hey! Wake up! Your unique adventure awaits you." \rightarrow •Lissa Rankin, MD, New York Times bestselling author of \rightarrow Mind Over Medicine

Chris G. created a well rounded book that will influence all that read it. The book is about creating and going on quests. The author takes the audience through the stages of a quest while seamlessly intertwining details of his own and other's quests to provide examples and demonstrate the highs and lows that can come along during a quest. Reading through these stories is both entertaining and inspiring. The author also spends time helping the audience to design their own quest. This book shifted how I looked at some of my goals and how taking a quest of my own could be impactful.

not only to myself but others.

Good enough! Too much jumping around for me, but generally interesting and a light read that could either motivate or depress you about your small life.

I tell people about this book at least a few times per month. As I was about to leave on my quest, this book helped inspire me to be fearless. By telling great stories, giving clear examples, and highlighting the lessons in each chapter, Chris Guillebeau introduces us to just some of the Questers who walk their own path and inspire others with their story. A must read for anyone who has that idea they can't get out of their head.

Must-read book for those that want to be on their own and start a lifestyle business. That was one of the books that prompted me to start my blog FourWeekMBA.com!

Fun book, makes you rethink your own happiness.

According to this delightful journey, we have options to live life doing more than 9 to 5 until retirement. Most people never consider, or quickly dismiss. Chris followed his own path, and on the way discovered a great deal more about life and opportunity. This shared knowledge can prompt us into positive action.

Read this book and watch *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* while you plan on travelling the world and seeking adventure. *The Happiness of Pursuit* is about following whatever crazy dream you have you as Kevin Smith calls it "Chasing Whimsies". It goes back and forth between stories of people Chris has interviewed that have travelled the world bird-watching or ultra-marathon running and himself travelling to every single country. Life is compared to *Super Mario Bros.* early on with the need for an actual goal in life.

There's a lot I wanted to like in Chris Guillebeau's new book— *The Happiness of Pursuit: Finding the Quest That Will Bring Purpose to Your Life*. The author advocates that each of us should pursue what we really want to do, rather than doing what is expected of us. He casts this in light of finding your quest. He also finds a number of individuals doing interesting things with their lives and writes about them. Unfortunately Guillebeau's approach is superficial and quickly becomes formulaic. His

interviews seem to consist of a short talk in a coffee shop or over the phone, or a quick email exchange. I never felt like he really found out why people are doing these interesting things, or what the pros/cons of their experiences were. This applies to the author's own quest as well. As you'll read about (repeatedly) in the book, he visited every country in the world over a 10-year period. That's quite an accomplishment! Unfortunately, the reader never finds out why he did this or what he got out of the experience, except for learning how to wait in airports. The book ends with three curious appendices. The first is a four-page summary of the main lessons from the book. The second is a list of the 54 people he discusses in the book. And the third is a list of quests with suggestions about how to "dumb down" each quest into something easy to do - suggestions that seem to violate the fundamental premise of the book. Frankly, you can read the appendices and get most of the value from the book. Again, this is a great idea for a book and I hope the author has a chance to pursue it in a deeper and more satisfying way in his next book.

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