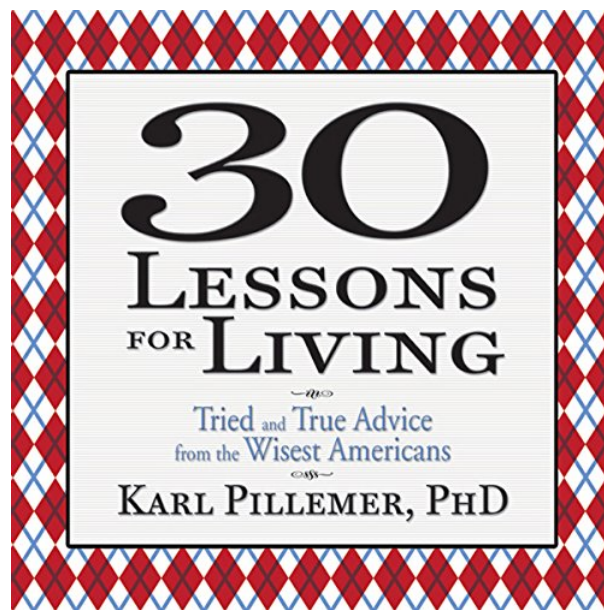
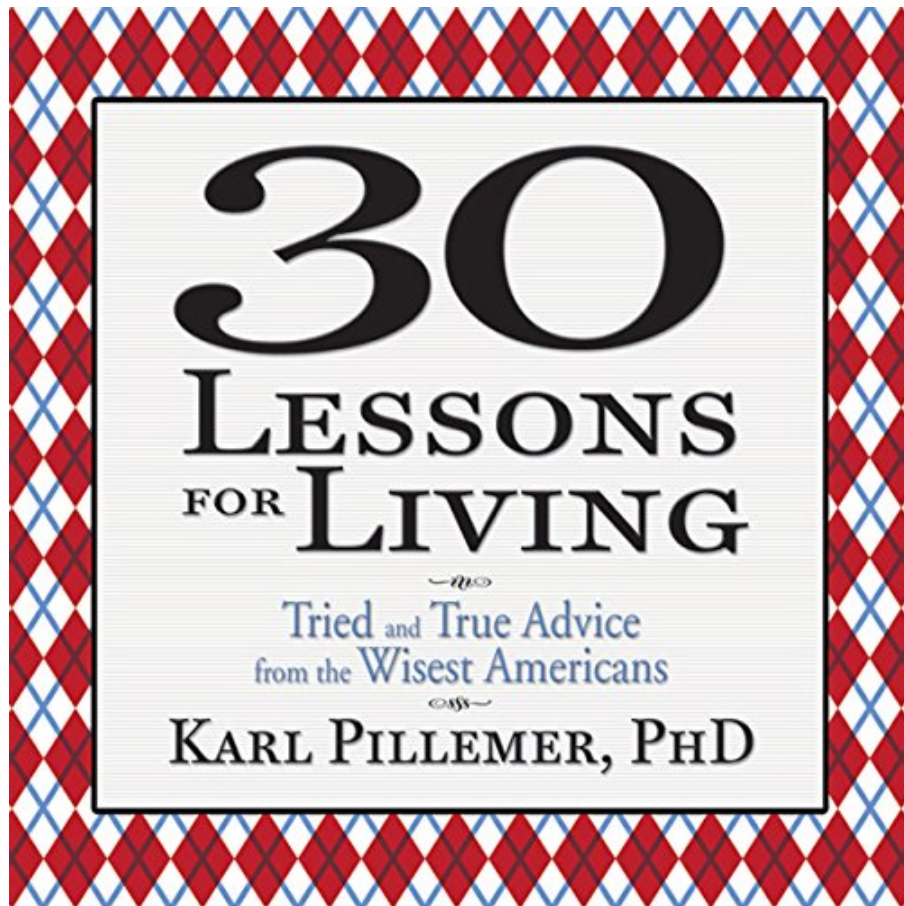


**30 LESSONS FOR LIVING: TRIED AND TRUE
ADVICE FROM THE WISEST AMERICANS
BY KARL PILLEMER PH.D.**



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30 LESSONS FOR LIVING: TRIED AND TRUE ADVICE FROM THE WISEST AMERICANS BY KARL PILLEMER PH.D. PDF

More than 1,000 extraordinary Americans share their stories and the wisdom they have gained on living, loving, and finding happiness. After a chance encounter with an extraordinary 90-year-old woman, renowned gerontologist Karl Pillemer began to wonder what older people know about life that the rest of us don't. His quest led him to interview more than one thousand Americans over the age of 65 to seek their counsel on all the big issues- children, marriage, money, career, aging. Their moving stories and uncompromisingly honest answers often surprised him. And he found that he consistently heard advice that pointed to these thirty lessons for living. Here he weaves their personal recollections of difficulties overcome and lives well lived into a timeless book filled with the hard-won advice these older Americans wish someone had given them when they were young. Like *This I Believe*, *StoryCorps's Listening Is an Act of Love*, and *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *30 Lessons for Living* is a book to keep and to give. Offering clear advice toward a more fulfilling life, it is as useful as it is inspiring.

- Sales Rank: #51642 in Audible
- Published on: 2011-12-12
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 498 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

132 of 133 people found the following review helpful.

Profound life lessons

By JD312

Steeped in the wisdom of America's elders, *30 Lessons for Living* has an undeniable power to influence the way we think and the choices we make. Karl Pillemer, the author and a professor of gerontology at Cornell, spent five years interviewing a diverse cross-section of over 1,000 senior members of our society to elicit their life advice. He reverently calls this group "the experts," perhaps for many reasons, but essentially because they have done something the rest of us haven't--they have lived into their eighties, nineties, and beyond, and are able to reflect on their nearly complete lifetimes with unique hindsight. [It's also no small thing that the experts have lived through everything their readers have... plus World War II and the Great Depression.]

As a liberal artist in my mid-thirties, I have to admit that while I was curious to see what the experts had to say, I was initially skeptical of how relevant I might find their advice to my own life. I suspected it might be outdated, preachy, too conservative for my taste, or too generic. On the contrary, I found the experts' words - as well as Pillemer's insightful synthesis - profound and often very moving. The book is a compelling, potent collection of guidance for how to live a meaningful life that's attuned to what really matters. The tone is never self-righteous. In fact, some of the most poignant advice stems from things the experts felt they got wrong, regrets they had, realizations in their final years about what was actually important. It's incredibly

life-affirming to read about their successes as well as the lessons they learned through mistakes.

Pillemer organizes the book into six themes, including marriage, careers and happiness. Within each theme, he distills the experts' most recurrent comments into five pieces of advice. Each chapter ends with a "refrigerator list" of thematically organized advice that I know I will revisit in an ongoing way. One of the topics I found most interesting was "Lessons for a Lifetime of Parenting," for its discerning look at the impact higher life expectancy has had on adult relationships between parents and children. Our current elders are experiencing the upper end of this evolutionary fact without having had a clear model as children.

While the experts' individual anecdotes are affecting, the volume and reinforcement of similar messages over time underscore collective learning. It's startling to quantify that this book contains 80,000 years of life experience. The experts' words repeatedly got under my skin, and have already prompted shifts in my thinking and behavior. While change can often be easier said than done, I think it would be impossible to read this book without engaging in personal reflection, analysis, and consideration of some deeply challenging questions: Does your life reflect the advice of the experts? What can you do to live a life without regret? How do you want to look back on your life? Are you spending this finite time well? In one of my favorite lines, the author depicts the experts' perspective: "Looking at how younger people squander time, they are like members of a desert tribe staring in dismay at our profligate use of water." I welcomed the big-picture inquiry in the context of a culture increasingly fueled by instant gratification.

Pillemer strikes an impressive balance between showcasing the experts' anecdotes and weaving an accessible, often personal narrative. I appreciate the author's connections to his own life as a thinker, husband, father, and member of society doing as we all are - ageing.

Pillemer doesn't dwell on the ways in which our society neglects elders and their experiences, but the novelty of his study is a testament to our oversight and a reminder of the imminent loss of this valuable resource. On one level, this book provides advice for living; on another, it illustrates how simple and worthwhile it is to tap into such a goldmine. All it takes is an interest in asking questions, a willingness to listen, and an openness to our basic human connection despite pre-conceived notions of the gaps. In addition to the advice I absorbed through the lessons, I have an intensely renewed perspective on the "experts," not only those featured in the book, but those in my own life whose experiences and insights are more relatable than I imagined.

81 of 83 people found the following review helpful.

Life is short...

By D. Kanigan

At 20, I wouldn't have read it. I was in a hurry - learning, climbing. Mortality? Huh? At 30, it's family, career and it's obligations - no time to contemplate. Little time to read. At 40, I'm beginning to settle, mind is opening - I might have given this book a glance. But I'm wary. At x0, (I can't believe it or say it or type it). Where did the years go? My eyes are WIDE OPEN. I'm locked in on this book. Not sure how I tripped into the book. (Coincidence? Deepak Sharma would say Not.) I read an Amazon review where the reviewer described the book as "Profound." Really? How many top-10-list self-help books have I read? Not sure I can recall one lesson from these books. I was skeptical. (Highly). And I was wrong. (Again)

There is an estimated \$1 billion spent each year on self-improvements books in the U.S. And more advice columns, television experts, and websites - all preaching advice of one sort or another. Yet none of them speak from experience of having lived and learned. Karl Pillemer, the author and a gerontologist at Cornell, interviewed more than 1,000 older Americans between the ages of 70 to 100 in search of lessons for living. He spent over 5 years on the project and summarized his findings in this book. Lessons range from:

* Lessons for a Happy Marriage (Marry Someone a Lot Like You; Friendship is Important; Don't Keep Score; Talk to Each Other; Commit to Marriage not just your Partner)

* Lessons for a Successful and Fulfilling Career (Seek Intrinsic Rewards, not financial ones; Don't give up looking for a job you love; Make the Most of a Bad Job, Emotional Intelligence Trumps all; Everyone needs autonomy)

* Lessons for Parenting (It's all about time; It's normal to have favorites but don't show it; Don't Hit Your Kids; Avoid A Rift At All Costs; Take A Lifelong View of Relationships with Children)

* Lessons For Aging Fearlessly and Well (Being Old is Much Better than you think; Act Now Like You will need your body for 100 years; Don't Worry About Dying; Stay Connected to others; Plan ahead where you will live)

* Lessons For Living a Life Without Regrets (Always be honest; Say Yes to Opportunities; Travel More; Choose a Mate with Extreme Care; Say It Now before it is too late)

* Lessons for Living Like an Expert (Choose Happiness; Time is of the Essence; Happiness is a Choice, not a condition; Time Spent Worrying is Wasted; Think Small; Have Faith; Live by the Golden Rule)

I was deeply moved by this book. I found myself being pulled along - with skepticism being stripped down to bare bones of belief as I turned the pages. He's on to something. The power of this book is in the stories and the anecdotes of the "experts" (the term he uses to describe the elders who are interviewed for his research). The voices of experts are calm...peaceful...learned...zen-like. The author weaves lessons and stories gently throughout - - a slow moving stream making its way south.

Highly Recommended.

56 of 58 people found the following review helpful.

Advice from the wise

By William J. Demo

30 Lessons for Living is a book to be savored. Written by Karl Pillemer, gerontologist and researcher at Cornell University, it is a product of the author's Legacy Project, a series of surveys and interviews conducted of those over 65, the "experts" on living to whom the book is dedicated. The purpose of the research is to identify the keys to the good life that those of a certain age have managed to uncover.

The book is broken down into several major themes having to do with such things as marriage, parenting, careers, health, and most generally how to achieve happiness. The lessons presented, with some exceptions--it's normal to have a favorite child--are not exactly earth-shattering. But the beauty of the book comes from the diversity of voices and individual expression that refract and enrich the observations from people who are remarkably aware and self-reflective.

Unfortunately, for stylistic reasons and because--at their age they know better--the thoughts and advice given here will be lost on youth. But for those who, like this writer, are on the cusp of seniorhood, the insights on lives well-lived are both instructive and heartening. This is a very good book for an individual reader contemplating life's "golden" years, even better if it can be shared across generations.

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