



**"...fascinating and
powerful."**

– John Gray, Ph.D.,
author of *Men Are From Mars,*
Women Are From Venus

Nice Start

Questions Only You Can Answer
to Create the Life Only You Can Live

MARK CHUSSIL

What's In It for You

Do people learn from experience?

Sivasailam Thiagarajan (a.k.a. Thiagi) says no, people don't learn from experience. If they did, why would we keep making the same mistakes?

People learn, Thiagi says, by reflecting on experience.

You have experience. I hope the questions in *Nice Start* help you reflect on your experience constructively and help you create consciously the life you want. Some of the questions are cheeky, some are thought-provoking, and some are bold. I intend them also to be gentle, and I find they have nuance and depth when I ponder them. Which I continue to do, because we keep discovering as long as we keep looking.

You'll find 4 sections in *Nice Start*.

Yourself. This section is all about you. Well, the whole book is. More precisely, *Yourself* is about who you are and who you want to be.

Others. The world is made up mostly of people other than you. How are others different from you, and the same as you? How do those differences and similarities affect your relationships with them? *Others* is about you and them.

Perspectives. Thinking the good old way won't bring you somewhere new. *Perspectives* is about being amused, surprised, shocked, excited, and encouraged by thinking differently. *Perspectives* is about beliefs.

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Dreams. What do you dream about when you're awake? What do you want, and how will you make your dreams come true? *Dreams* is about today and tomorrow.

Another version of "what's in it for you" is "what will you get out of it." I don't know for sure what that will be; you're the one doing the getting, not me. (Was *Gone With The Wind* a love story, a war story, or an historical story? Whatever you say.) That said, here are some possibilities.

Do you wonder why people sometimes seem so ornery? You'll find explorations that may help you understand them better. (That doesn't mean you have to agree with them.) *Doing Good*, *Irrational*, *The Battle of the Sexists*, and *They* are a few of those explorations.

Do you struggle to figure out what you really want? Explorations that will interest you include *Your Joy*, *Success*, *Being Marlon Brando*, *What's the Problem?*, and *One-Way Trip*.

Are you vaguely disenchanted with life and wonder whether there's more? Look at explorations such as *That's Life*, *The Briefcase*, *Huntington Hartford*, *Be Free From*, and *Alive*.

Are you vaguely, or not so vaguely, disenchanted with how the world works? These explorations may help you perceive it differently and might even inspire you to help improve the world: *Prisons*, *Senator*, *Progress*, *Charisma*, and *Utopia*.

"And now a lot of words from our sponsor." What are we teaching, what are we absorbing? Although there is no escape from the commercial and cultural messages around us, that doesn't mean we have to

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soak them up uncritically. Look at School Today, Music, Man Loses in Casino!, Great Truths, and Believing.

Neither this book nor your life is about being grimly serious and scrunched-up proper. Have some fun! Take these explorations, please: Smile, Laugh, Acts of Kindness, and Thankful.

But wait, there's more! There are 58 explorations in *Nice Start*, and I mentioned only 28 of them. And you can ignore how I bunched them together. Go ahead, have fun with an exploration I lumped with disenchantment.

Something in *Nice Start* will save you some time or help you avoid some anguish. Something in it will help you smile or feel less alone. Something will trigger an idea, a passion, or a direction. Something will make sense, or different sense, a year from now. Something will delight you as "nice start" delighted me.

So, what's in *Nice Start* for you? Whatever you put in it. Enjoy it, and best wishes to you.

The brain can change, and that means that we can change...

If the will is there, the potential is immense.

Sharon Begley (?)

Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart.

Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)

Dreams

Huntington Hartford

On May 20, 2008, a man named Huntington Hartford died. His death made page one of that day's Wall Street Journal:

"Died: Huntington Hartford, 97, A&P supermarket heir who depleted a fortune chasing his dreams, in the Bahamas."

The New York Times said:*

"Huntington Hartford, who inherited a fortune from the A. & P. grocery business and lost most of it chasing his dreams as an entrepreneur, arts patron and man of leisure, died Monday at his home in Lyford Cay in the Bahamas. He was 97."

"Depleted" a fortune... "lost" most of it... "chasing" his dreams. The Times said, "He inherited an estimated \$90 million and lost an estimated \$80 million of it." Doing the math... he wasn't exactly destitute, with \$10 million left.

Certainly Mr. Hartford was lucky to have had enough money to do as he wished. Was he a failure, though, as "depleted," "lost," and "chasing" suggest? Why didn't the Journal and the Times congratulate him posthumously for "spending" his fortune "living" his dreams?

* www.nytimes.com/2008/05/20/arts/design/20hartford.html.

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Explorations

Would Huntington Hartford's life have been better if he had not "lost" so much money? If so, why is it bad to "lose" money?

Is it "better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all"?

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Or is it better to give up and do something else?

How would you recommend that your friends and loved ones live their lives? Do you use the same recommendation for your life?

*There is no comparison between that which is lost
by not succeeding and that lost by not trying.*

Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

*To most Americans the worst errors are financial
and in that respect I have been Horatio Alger in reverse.*

Huntington Hartford (1911-2008)

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