

CHRIS'LL DEAL WITH IT

episode notes




EP 53 - A Finality Mentality

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Prioritizing Brilliance: Navigating a World of Incredible Ideas with Author Chris Kreuter

Join us on Coldplay Culture for an enlightening conversation with Chris Kreuter, a visionary in the fields of technology and innovation. In this episode, we tackle the challenge of having an abundance of incredible ideas and the crucial task of prioritizing them. Chris imparts his

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvF0hHd1VDY>



I've been a regular guest on the Code Play Culture podcast. On a recent episode about navigating ideas, around the 39 minute mark, we touched on what it means to consider our current work the last time we would get to create.

On today show, I want to unpack this mentality of "This is the last...".

In the context of the show, I explained the logic I use when deciding to write a book. Writing a book is a large, multi-year journey. With the ever-present uncertainty life offers, I consider that the book I'm currently writing will be my last. My intent is ensure it's the best thing I'll ever write. A project that I pour my best efforts and ideas into. If life gives me the opportunity to write another book, make another podcast, design another game, or do something new, then I'll happily engage with that opportunity and give it the best I've got to give.

But this mentality isn't just about creating art. Consider if:

- This is the last podcast I'll get to produce
- This is the last opportunity you'll get to pitch your product
- This is the last day before a life-changing event
- This is the last impression you'll have on someone
- This is the last workout before your strength will be called upon
- This is the last time you'll enjoy a favorite game
- This is the last time you'll spend time with a loved one
- This is the last day of your life

Contemplating death and finality can feel morbid. This isn't intended to evoke the concept of *memento mori*, Latin for 'remember you must die'. It's not the kind of thinking one can (or should) do on a daily basis for everything we do. I don't brush my teeth every morning thinking, '*This is the last time I'll brush my teeth.*' Although once in a while it might be helpful to bring my full attention to the act of brushing my teeth?

Rather, be aware of the reality of potential finality when going into a project, task, or interaction with someone. It can deepen our connection to the work, the action, the moment. Help us to recognize the importance of the present moment. Sharpen our convictions and our focus.

Our time and opportunities in this life are finite. We need to fully engage with our work and the people we get to share life with. Consider someone important in your life that you don't see on a regular basis. A relative, close friend, or mentor:

- How often do you get to see them?
- When was the last time you saw them?
- How did your interaction with them go?
- Did you make the most of the opportunity?
- Have any regrets about things said (or not said)?
- Were you fully present?

It's easy to lean into the idea that there will be more time. More opportunities and joy to be shared and experienced. Sure we have the benefits of technology to keep in touch via phones, video chats, and e-mails. But how often will you physically be in the same place? How aware, how present are you in those

moments? Going into them with a finality mentality can help us make the most of the chances we get. It helps us not take an opportunity for granted.

Every moment is the last time you exist in your current form. The person you'll be tomorrow will be different: Shaped by the efforts and memories that came before. Life changes. Life evolves. There is a finality to the current you. Same goes for everyone else. Life happens to all of us, and affects everyone differently. It can affect the frequency you'll have to see someone or work on a project. The mental and physical strength we're able to bring in the opportunity may change. Things can change in subtle or drastic ways that are unpredictable.

Having kids is an example from my own life. I miss the frequent opportunities I had to sit around a table playing multi-hour strategy games like *Through The Ages* while catching up with close friends. But I've happily traded those frequent nights out for fatherhood. Even though this means I see these friends far less, and it takes far more effort and planning to get together. Sure we can play that same game on our devices, taking asynchronous turns over the course of a weekend. But it's nowhere near the same thing. Maintaining awareness of this reality helps me make the most of the opportunities I get to see them.

Same goes with creative work: The next book I write may be completely unexpected by the current me. This podcast episode was unexpected, inspired by a conversation that went in an unexpected direction. Things in our lives and environments will change, for good or bad, impacting what and how we create and interact. My skills will continue to improve. My ideas continue to broaden and deepen. My words able to express clearer and with greater impact.

Right now requires my focus. I try to consistently remind myself that what I'm making now matters most. Who I'll see and interact with today deserves the best and most present me possible.

Episode 53 Quote

Let's cap this episode off with a quote from the Stoic philosopher Seneca:

Let us prepare our minds as if we'd come to the very end of life. Let us postpone nothing. Let us balance life's books each day. . . . The one who puts the finishing touches on their life each day is never short of time.