

THE  
AVANT - GARDE  
LIFE



**EVERYTHING THAT YOUR  
PARENTS TOLD YOU NOT TO DO:**

**DISREGARDING SOCIETY IN A QUEST FOR  
SUSTAINABLE ADVENTURE.**

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Please note: if this is the first page you are viewing, you have missed the contents and the cover. Rewind a little!

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The views and opinions expressed in these pages are solely my own. The individuals featured in these pages, consented to answering questions and being featured in the content without endorsing any of the material. If you don't agree with it, your qualms are with me, not them.

The Avant-Garde Life  
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[www.GreatBigScaryWorld.com](http://www.GreatBigScaryWorld.com)

First published 2013.  
This (second) edition published 2015.

**Avant-Garde** (adj.) Favouring or introducing new or experimental ideas and methods.

**Avant-Gardian** (n.) An individual who engages in a new or experimental lifestyle and remains indifferent to conventional rules dictated by society.

The Avant-Garde Life refers to a new or experimental lifestyle in which one chooses not to conform to conventional rules of society and instead, remains indifferent to them. In particular, this manifesto addresses the concept of adventure by travelling the world on a long-term basis. It has been written for individuals who are already contemplating making this jump, but are lacking sufficient courage to embark upon their journey. If you desire to find the inspiration or the reassurance that this dream is possible, these pages have been made for you.

## Preface to 2015 Edition

The Avant-Garde Life has always been, and will always be, available to download for free. Due to the number of people taking an interest in this idea since posting it online in 2013, I have decided to make some minor changes and release this second, 2015 edition. It is now available in multiple languages, translated by kind individuals who wanted to spread the message to people in their home countries.

I wrote *The Avant-Garde Life* in 2013 while living in Istanbul. It was a turbulent time because I had just been on the best adventure of my life, but was thoroughly unhappy living in Istanbul. For six months before arriving in Istanbul, I had been hitchhiking around Europe and learning to love life. I didn't know what to do with all these positive feelings about living a life free of obligation and I tried to condense them into a few pages that would help others to feel the same. *The Avant-Garde Life* is what I was left with. At times it is overbearing and pushy, but I have chosen to leave it as it is because to rewrite it now would be to start from scratch and write something entirely different. This edition contains many corrections, as well as interviews with Jodi of Legal Nomads and Leah of The Vegetarian Traveller (which were not in the original publication). It also offers a chapter at the end that shows how these words have affected my own life.

After reading *The Avant-Garde Life*, one of the most commonly asked questions that I get asked is 'How did you start?' or 'How can I start?' As we only know our own lives and should only advise ourselves, I can only answer for myself and I always have the same answer: 'It's a long story - a story of 120,000 words - and if you really want to know, please read [The Boy Who Was Afraid of the World](#).' This book is the story of how and why I ended up quitting my life to hitchhike through Europe and what the journey meant for me, a fearful individual.

Shortly after writing this manifesto, I decided to follow my own advice and left Istanbul, embarking on the incredible roller-coaster that has filled the past couple of years. I couldn't possibly imagine living any other way.

So please, take these words with a pinch of salt and use only what you find applicable to your own life, but know this: I do not regret the many decisions to change my life in the ways described over the following pages. How have I changed my life? I'll tell you at the end.

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## Introduction

- Welcome -

“May your journey be long, winding, and unknown. The explorer who walks no marked path, knows not the limit of how far he can go.”

## What is This Manifesto?

This Manifesto relates to the practical application of engaging upon an avant-garde life of adventure in which an individual elects to adopt travel as a way of life for an extended period of time. It addresses the problems one may encounter when choosing to escape from society and how the lifestyle may be sustained for an indefinite period of time, if that is the desire of the individual.

This is not about taking extended holidays, regularly flying abroad on business, or multiple RTW (round the world) trips. The ideas encapsulated in these pages relate to a continuous quest for adventure as a sustainable way of life. By escaping obligations to return to a fixed location at regular intervals, individuals no longer adhere to conventional society. By choosing this way of life, one becomes free of location in a unique way of living that is neither permanent nor temporary. It simply is.

An avant-garde life is not limited to a life of travelling the world. Instead, the phrase embodies the idea of engaging upon a life that favours new and experimental ways of living, thus sustainable travel is a vehicle to facilitate this. By remaining indifferent to conventional rules dictated by society, an avant-gardian is no more or less than a person who engages in this new and experimental lifestyle. Instead of living the life that they are 'supposed to live,' they live an existence on their own terms. Instead of following the crowd, doing as others do, and observing the rules, they will be walking an untrodden path that may or may not overlap with conventional society. The 'rules' are undefined, unwritten, and incapable of existence by their very definition.

The raison d'être of these pages is to inspire and reassure you that this untrodden path in life is attainable. If you stop reading now, there are only two ideas that you should take with you.

1. Anything is possible: If you can dream it, it can be done.
2. Walk the untrodden path: There are no rules to life and every choice that you make should be your own.

While the term travel is used extensively throughout this manifesto, it is interchangeable with the concept of adventure. Adventure relates to unusual and exciting experiences that are indiscriminate to location. Cooking a new dish or trying painting for the first time are both adventures. The purpose of this life, is not to travel for the sake of travelling. Rather, it concerns the search for new experiences and the simple joy that they bring. The resulting heightened levels of pleasure and happiness form the drive that make this life so appealing.

As these words took form, I asked myself what the primary purpose of this manifesto was. The purpose is to define what it is that [GreatBigScaryWorld.com](http://GreatBigScaryWorld.com) is about and in doing so, help others to discover if this life is for them. This is not a life for everyone, but it is a life that is available to everyone if they want it. This is the idea that I want to share above all others. By breaking everything down into manageable pieces, you can overcome the mental barriers that may currently be stopping you from engaging in such a life.

These pages are not a work of art. Nor are they beautifully written. They are an honest account of one individual's hopes, dreams, and beliefs. An individual who, despite everything in this great big world, is hoping, chasing, and trying to live a life that asks for something much, much more. I have taken inspiration from many people around the world and some of them have been kind enough to contribute a few words of inspiration to this manifesto. If you can connect with any of the following thoughts on some infinitely tiny level, we will share this inspiration and walk the journey together. We will never walk alone.

## Who is This For?

Be sure of this. What you are about to read, is not for everybody. In fact, it is not for most people. If you are happy to live life in one place while adhering to conventional society, this is not for you. There is nothing wrong with being content to live a comfortable life, but if this is you, you will simply find that these pages are too far displaced from your own reality to gain anything useful from them. These words are for the people who find themselves asking what more there must be to life. The individuals who want their life to change, but don't yet have the courage to make that change. 'The dreamers,' if you will.

If you are a dreamer, but lack the courage to make the jump, these words are intended for you and you alone. This life is not a holiday and it does not fall into your lap. It takes a fair amount of work and a whole lot more desire. However, if you want it enough, it is very much possible.

Because the outcome is so favourable, many people around the world are now choosing to engage in similarly experimental ways of life. Instead of following a routine in which one knows what will happen each day, life itself becomes a great adventure. If you feel that there is something more to life and a great big world for you to explore, you might, just maybe, be the right sort of person to make it happen.

To begin with, we'll complete a self-assessment of your suitability for this reading material by answering four simple questions. Take a piece of paper and a pen. Or ask to borrow a pen and use a napkin if you're in a coffee shop. It doesn't matter if you have to write on the back of your hand or scribble your answers with a crayon. What matters is writing down honest answers to the following questions.

Question 1, yes or no: In ten years time, if you have made no changes to your current life, do you think that it will have taken you in a direction that will be making you happy and fulfilled?

Question 2: If you had \$50 billion, how would you live your life on a day-to-day basis?

Question 3: When you wake up each morning, do you look forward to the day that awaits you?

Question 4: If you could wake up in 5 different places for the next 5 days, where would you choose to wake up?

You should now have a little scrawl of answers that could help to shape your life. If you read the questions without writing down answers, STOP! Write down your answers so that you know what they are. Sometimes we don't know ourselves as well as we think we do. When this is done, you may proceed.

We'll think now about what these answers mean to us.

Question one, in essence, asks you if you are currently living the life that you want to live. If you answered yes, great. I am truly happy for you and you should continue on this path. Maybe even [send me a message](#) to let me know what it is that you're doing because I love to hear from people who are happy in life. However, if you answered no, it means that you are on a path that will never make you happy. Whether or not you desire to search for adventure, if you are on a path that cannot make you happy, it means that you need to make a change in your life. Religious arguments aside, you only have one life to live, so why waste it doing something that is anything less than wonderful?

Question two addresses the financial constraints of money. I am not an anarchist and I do not promote the downfall of society or abandonment of currency. However, the pursuit of wealth over the pursuit of happiness is a dangerous path similar to accidentally accepting a mint ice cream. Sure it looks delicious and pistachio-ey at first, but by the time you have a taste, you realise that it tastes like mouth-wash and that you have made a terrible mistake. You can't give back an ice cream you've already licked because you've already committed to it. The saving grace about mistakenly accepting a mint ice cream, is that when the ice cream is gone, the issue is over. When you are on a continual pursuit of wealth however, there is no end date. It is only when people remove the issue of money from their lives that they start to think about what it is that they really want to do with their lives. These aims do not need to be world changing. They need only provide happiness and fulfilment to the individual with whom they are associated.

By removing the need for a job, the answer to question two tells you what you want to do in life. Bill Gates does not choose to give his fortune away because he doesn't want the money. He gives it away because he has enough and he realises that there are greater desires in life than accumulating possessions. By bypassing the excessive money accumulation process and taking no more than you need, you too can work on realising your dreams. You do not need to first accumulate billions of dollars in order to do this. Please note: I have the utmost respect for Bill Gates and believe that he has made, and continues to make, truly wonderful contributions to the world that benefit both him and others around him. I am not talking about Microsoft.

Question three asks if you are happy. If you are happy, you will wake up with a zest for life in anticipation of the day to come. Happiness is an incalculable sum of people, places, and experiences in your life. It encompasses everything. By this definition, other than health, what more is there to life than happiness? If you are not happy, you do not love your life. If you do not love your life, you must change it for the love of yourself and the people that care about you.

Question four relates to travel. If you have answers for this question that take you outside of your current home, then you desire some form of travel. If you found it difficult

to answer such a question because of the infinite number of choices, your desire to travel the world may be insatiable. Alternatively, you may have no answers for question four because you live in the best place in the world. If this is the case, I recommend that you stay there and keep it a secret because this is not a common feeling. If you tell everybody about this wonderful place that cures you of a desire to travel the world, everybody else will come running and ruin it for you.

I hope these four questions hope to offer you a little insight into your life. If you said no to questions one and three, it's time to make a change, whatever that may be. Do not be afraid of being alone. Or of living the wrong life in the past. There are many others who feel just the same as you do. Realising that you need to make a change, puts you one step ahead of the others. The next step is accepting that you need to make this change. Only then can you take action to cure yourself.

When you make this change, you must make it in such a way that helps you start working towards your idea from question two. Your dream. If this dream is heavily location dependent, you need to go to the appropriate place and hunt it down. Chase it, grab it, keep hold of it. Whatever it takes.

Most probably, it isn't location dependent or at least not restricted to one single place in the world. If this is the case, it offers you flexibility. You are free to move around the world in order to better facilitate your dream chasing. You might even get the opportunity to visit and live in some of the places from your list in question four.

If this seems impossible right now, don't worry. The following pages are intended to prove otherwise. Logically, we will reason everything out and when you still aren't sure, I'll offer you insights into the lives of individuals who have overcome the same barriers that you are currently facing. These individuals are the lamp carriers in life; the people who walk ahead of us and show us the way.

As this is the end of the discussion about whether these pages can benefit you, you may have now decided that you are not well suited to the content. If this isn't for you, fare thee well. Keep loving your life and pass this on to someone who needs it more than you.

## **Ingredients**

There are only two parts to this document. It's that simple.

Part one is entitled Disregarding Society. As you have already expressed an interest in making a change to your life, this section deals with the problems that you might encounter and how you should overcome them. The majority of these problems exist only in your head.

Part two is entitled A Quest for Sustainable Adventure. It talks about how to ensure that your new way of life is sustainable for as long as you want it to be. This section focuses largely upon the physical problem of funding your chosen lifestyle.

### **What Do I Want From You in Return?**

Know that as you read these pages, every individual that you will ever encounter, is the same as you. They each have hopes and dreams. They bleed and breathe, laugh and cry. We are no more or less special than one another. If one brave person can achieve a level of greatness, so too can you.

I want you to live a life that makes you happy and free. The world needs more happiness.

If you know others who would benefit from this message, share it with them.

## What You Should Know

Before you begin, there are several things that you should know.

**There are no rules.** Make it up as you muddle along. Take inspiration from others, but embark upon your own journey in your own unique way. Knock down every preconception that you have and start building from the ground up. Whatever people tell you, take it with a pinch of salt. Life has no perfect answers.

**Only you can make this happen.** These pages will give you a push and a kick to help get you out of the door by offering you stories of others who have journeyed ahead of you, but only you can really make this happen. You have to want it enough, to make it a reality.

**Do not travel for the sake of travel.** Travel for the love of adventure. If you travel for the sake of travel, simply to say that you went to a place, you will not enjoy what you are doing. This life is not a race or a competition. You do not have to visit every country in the world to live a life of adventure. Nor do you have to tell everyone about it. This journey through life is for you and you alone.

**This is not a journey for everyone.** Not everybody wants to live a life in which they travel the world extensively. Do not expect everyone to want this life and do not try to make people jealous of your own life when you start realising your dreams. Do what you do, and let them do as they do. This way, we can all be happy.

**Don't forget to visit the people you care about most.** Returning home to visit people is a desire, not a need. By committing to a life of adventure, it does not mean that you cannot return to familiarity. Regularly returning to a place in which you grew up in order to visit friends and family should be held at the top of your priorities. In fact, staying there for a while is a great thing to do as long as it is what you want to be doing. If it is your own choice and you are not forced to return for work or other obligations, you are still free.

**Money is relative.** You do not need a lot. Money is one of the biggest stumbling points when people think about 'following their dreams.' If you are privileged to have a lot of it, make the most of the opportunity that you have been given. These pages show you that rather than focusing all of your energies upon working hard to save money and obtain a secure pension plan, you can simply bypass the excessive earning and take only what you need in order to achieve happiness. If the whole world thought in this way, there would be enough of everything to go around for everyone.

**The world is not such a scary place.** When you turn off the news and walk out into the world, you will discover that the world is in fact, made up of a huge collection of individuals, no different from you or the people that you know. Many of these will become your new friends and you will wonder why you ever worried at all. Give the world a chance before you judge it.

**A life of freedom, is a life free of obligation.** To be free does not mean to do nothing. You need only do what you want to do. This could (and should) mean that you are in fact busier than ever before.

**Today is a good day.** If this is the life that you want, you are never too late to embark upon this journey. Making the jump at either 17 or 70 years old is no better or worse than the other. Once again, there are no rules.

**This is not easy.** There are barriers to overcome and social stigma to crush. You will face an uphill battle and you will need the desire to carry on in the face of adversity. This transition, like many things in life, takes hard work and determination. But know this. When you overcome your barriers and you break free from society to live the life that you want to live, you will never look back in regret. You will have put your mind and your heart into achieving something that is worth fighting for. If something is worth fighting for, fight hard.

**I am on the same journey.** This is a path that never ends. We might not be physically close, but somewhere out in the world, we'll be meandering through the same world together. One of the greatest comforts in life, is knowing that we are all alone, together.

**I think avant-garde sounds pretentious too.** I used this term with good reason. Shortly, I will explain why.

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