



**Let's take a
moment for
you.**

**HOLSTEE
GUIDE**



One can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself.
- Leonardo Da Vinci

PART 1: GETTING STARTED

Many moons ago, we sat down on the steps of Union Square in New York City to reflect on what it meant for us to live a more meaningful life. The result was the Holstee Manifesto, which lays out our definition of success in non-financial terms.

This guide is designed to take you through a similar reflection process. Everyone is different, so we invite you to carve out some time to reflect on what living a more meaningful life means for you. Let's start with an icebreaker to get the juices flowing:

What advice have you received that shaped your life?

Why did this advice resonate with you?

PART 2: BEGIN WITH THE END

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure – these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart. – Steve Jobs

We'll begin by thinking about the end (☹️ we know, a bit morbid, but we promise it'll be worth it).

Author and New York Times contributor David Brooks distinguishes between what he calls “resume virtues” and “eulogy virtues” in his viral TED Talk.

The resume virtues are, well, the ones you might put on your resume – the skills you bring to the marketplace, the strengths you have as an employee, awards you've won, where you went to school. These are often driven by extrinsic motivators, or the desire to gain credibility or approval from the outside world. Research shows that it is these intrinsic virtues that actually leads to sustained happiness.

Eulogy virtues, on the other hand, are the virtues that you will be remembered for. For Brooks, these virtues answer the questions: **“Who are you, in your depth? What is the nature of your relationships? Are you bold, loving, dependable, consistent?”** Eulogy virtues tend to stem from intrinsic motivators – the desire to do something because it brings us fulfillment or because it aligns with our own virtues for being a good person. It is the difference between creating art for art's sake versus doing it for fame or wealth.

As weird as it might feel, take a moment and think ahead to your own funeral. What do you hope will be said about you in your eulogy?

What five “eulogy virtues” do you want to be remembered for?

1

2

3

4

5

PART 3: LIVING WITH ARETE

Arete – from ancient Greek ἀρετή – the act of living up to your fullest potential in all that is important to you.

The ancient Greeks used the word *arete* to describe that which exists in its ideal form. Anything could have *arete* – whether a person or a piece of pottery – as long as it was living up to its unique potential. *Arete* was not a single ideal that all men and women were to strive towards, but rather the values and actions that reflected an individual at his or her truest and best self.

Why do we bring this up? We all have the power to live with *arete* in a way that reflects our distinct values. But it will only happen if we are intentional about it.

For the “eulogy virtues” you listed earlier, what would you need to do differently in order to live out those virtues now?

Try and word your goal positively, as something to strive towards rather than avoid.

EXAMPLE

Virtue: Courage

How you would live this virtue

now: I will stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult.



Health psychologist and TED speaker Kelly McGonigal says, “Any sort of avoidance is going to trigger inhibition systems, whereas positive goals are going to trigger approach and reward motivation.” So, when writing your answers, use positive sentence structures (“I will reach my daily goals”) rather than negative ones (“I will stop procrastinating”).

Virtue 1:

How you would live this virtue now:

Virtue 2:

How you would live this virtue now:

Virtue 3:

How you would live this virtue now:

Virtue 4:

How you would live this virtue now:

Virtue 5:

How you would live this virtue now:

PART 4: TURNING INTENTION INTO ACTION

When we sat down to write the Holstee Manifesto, we went through a similar reflection process. We set out to redefine success on our own terms, in a way that would remind us to pursue *arete* each and every day. We wrote boldly, because we figured we'd need strong words to give us a kick-in-the-bum if we ever started to lose focus. The Manifesto is our interpretation of what the ancient Greeks called *eudaimonia*, or "the good life." And it continues to serve as the north star in our journey to live with *arete* in our own lives.

Research from University of Missouri psychologist Laura King reveals that writing down your life goals can lead to a significant increase in subjective well-being.

Take your answers from Part 2 and the introduction question and rephrase them as strong, action-oriented reminders to yourself.

This will be your personal manifesto. Feel free to pull out your colored pens and get creative. This is about you, and it should represent you!



Wow! You made it. We hope you're feeling pretty great right now.

Maybe a sense of balance – a combination of ambition, excitement, nervousness, and accomplishment. And probably some other emotions too. Soak em up! You are bound for greatness. Love, Holstee.



'Happiness' is being engaged in the work that you do. In the creative work that you do. In the meaningful and deep conversations you have with others. It means to be active in your life, and not a passive consumer. It means to create. It means to push your boundaries, and liberate yourself from the opinions of others and society.

– Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

This kit is inspired by our readings from David Brooks, Steve Jobs, Laura King, Pia Aravena, Tal Ben-Shahar, Massimo Pigliucci and Stoic Philosophy. For further reading and curated resources from them and on this topic, check out holstee.com/welcome.