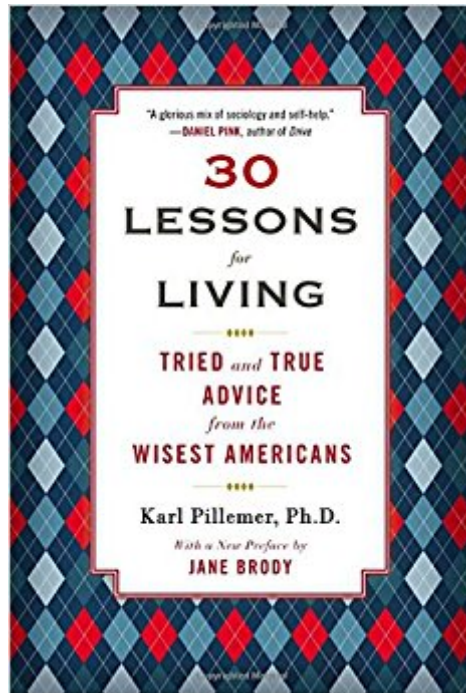


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# 30 Lessons For Living: Tried And True Advice From The Wisest Americans



## Synopsis

“Heartfelt and ever-endearing” —equal parts information and inspiration. This is a book to keep by your bedside and return to often.

•Amy Dickinson, nationally syndicated advice columnist "Ask Amy"

More than one thousand extraordinary Americans share their stories and the wisdom they have gained on living, loving, and finding happiness. After a chance encounter with an extraordinary ninety-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 sixty-five 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Skillfully weaves a prevailing theme (e.g., parenting, aging fearlessly) with self-disclosing statements from interviewees to create a compelling, inspirational book."

•Library Journal (starred review; one of the Top Self-Help Books of 2011)

"Thank you, Dr. Pillemer, for gathering all this wisdom in one book before it is lost. I can't imagine anyone whose life will not be

enriched by this book." — Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* "The 'Wisest Americans' have a lot to teach the rest of us. Some of this advice is refreshing common sense. Much of it is truly surprising. It is always heartfelt and ever-endearing - equal parts information and inspiration. This is a book to keep by your bedside and return to often."

— Amy Dickinson, nationally syndicated advice columnist "Ask Amy" "This is a fabulous book! Karl Pillemer has done an incredible job of bringing together the collective wisdom of hundreds of Americans into an entertaining, thought provoking, and practical book. Give it a read. You will find yourself getting out of bed in the morning with new enthusiasm."

— Matthew Kelly, author of *The Rhythm of Life* and *Off Balance* "An absolute gem! Thank you Karl Pillemer for taking the time to collect such a valuable trove of wisdom, and for sharing it with us in such a readable book. It's one that I'll recommend often. All of it is wonderful, but I particularly appreciated the lessons on honesty and saying yes to opportunities. Read this book - you'll get more out of life and have fewer regrets."

— Hal Urban, author of *Life's Greatest Lessons* "If you want to hear the wisdom of the aged, this easy-to-read book, based on years of penetrating interviews by a prominent sociologist, tells you what they have learned about love, work, marriage, and parenting."

— Howard S. Friedman, Ph.D. & Leslie R. Martin, Ph.D., authors of *The Longevity Project* "For five years, Karl Pillemer sat down with more than 1,000 older Americans-most of them between the ages of 70 and 100-to talk about lessons for living well. In the resulting book, *30 Lessons for Living: Tried and True Advice From the Wisest Americans*,... Pillemer, a gerontologist at Cornell, has culled 30 life lessons from his "experts," ranging from the practical to the profound. How to raise children? How to think about dying? Think of this book as 1,000 borrowed grandparents weighing in on life's various challenges. A salty pragmatism runs throughout."

— The Daily Beast

Karl Pillemer, PhD, is the founder and director of the Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging, a center that works to increase public awareness of aging research. Dr. Pillemer has authored more than one hundred scientific publications, and has spoken widely throughout the world on issues of successful aging, family relationships, and elder care.

The books can at time be redundant but from what I have read so far, I want to keep reading because every time I have to put it down I feel a little more enlightened and inspired. I don't know if it is life changing but I have always had an appreciation for the words and life experience of my elders having worked at an assisted living residence as my first job after high school through

college. Possibly my favorite job prior to the one I have now. The people you meet truly touch your life and that's what I like about this book, it feels like words from someone you know and admire. It gives you hope to know that there are people out there who have gone through worse than anyone I know and they have come out happy and fulfilled with life. That is what I am looking forward to. I hope to make the time I have in this life count and leave some wisdom and goodness behind.

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.

Great premise for a book. I'm so glad this was written. I enjoyed it and gave a copy to my mother, who is 90 years old, and she too is enjoying it very much. The responses are broken down so that they can be digested as a self-help book - that's not what I enjoyed most about it. I enjoyed this as a collection of reflections, selected from hundreds, of people who find themselves content at the end of their days, and had certainty about what parts of their lives were feel their lives were and were not well-lived. Though I would like to have heard more of those voices, and less of Dr. Pillemer's voice, I recommend this book to anyone at any age. It makes me wonder what my generation, particularly my peers who grew up as children of divorces and so were working on their relationships from a different point of reference than most of the experts in this book, will have to say about our relationships and marriages, and the kind of advice we'll give about to the next generation about love when we're in our 80's and upwards. I hope someone will follow in Dr. Karl A. Pillemer's path, and keep this wonderful work up. Enjoy!

This book stands out from the other personal growth books. Rather than anecdotal or theoretical, the 30 lessons presented are based on academic life-course interviews with 1000 elders. This is a

tremendous feat, with years of interviewer training, subject recruitment, interviewing, and coding. After that come the identification of themes, then the writing. After I finished the book I bought 2 more copies to share, and my partner bought the audio version. He said that listening to the book was extremely soothing and helped to frame his perspective on the day as he drove to work through Boston traffic. In fact, he was listening to the book when someone pulled out and hit his car, doing major damage. In the context of what he had been listening to, this was such a minor event, and his interaction with the other driver, the tow truck, etc were totally calm and just a wrinkle in his day. One comment is that it doesn't capture gay lifecourse experience. I lent this to a gay friend of mine and he could not get into it because of that. In the beginning of the book, to his credit, Pillemer states that the book doesn't delve into diverse experience, but rather focuses on commonalities and repeated themes between the interviewees. I bought 30 lessons for Loving... lets see how many copies I buy to share after reading

it.[http://www..com/30-Lessons-Loving-Americans-Relationships/dp/1594631549/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1433933477&sr=8-1&keywords=30+lessons+for+loving](http://www..com/30-Lessons-Loving-Americans-Relationships/dp/1594631549/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1433933477&sr=8-1&keywords=30+lessons+for+loving)

I learned a lot from this book, and it has changed my mind about a few things, as well as solidifying my ideas for other things. For many other things, I begin with the goal in mind. The advice from the "Experts" in this book has created a much more solid goal in my mind of who I want to be in my mature age. That sets the stage for personal growth and development now! I loved this book.

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