

How to

GROW THE FUCK UP :

A Guide
by Josh Edward



STEP 1

GET RID OF THIS PAMPHLET



Or, at the very least, disregard its contents. There is no reason any serious person should have to consult the dubious ethical preoccupations of a privileged, sanctimonious man-child when assessing their own competency as an adult. This pamphlet is little more than the latest entry in a protracted series of elaborate self-justifications its creator has fashioned in service to his own barely tenable status as an artist.

If, for whatever reason, that kind of thing amuses you, well, I applaud your taste. And, if you happen to find this in any way, I don't know—edifying?—even better. Proceed with dignity, my friend.



STEP 2



GO TO SLEEP

The defining feature of adulthood is the assumption of responsibility, and if we are to believe W.B. Yeats, "In dreams begins responsibility"; therefore, get some rest, because sleep is about more than just feeling good in the morning. Now, you might say, "That's an awfully convoluted interpretation of what at least appears to be a fairly straightforward remark on the importance of following one's own intuition," to such a reasonable response I might in turn respond by referencing step one. But if you'll indulge me a bit here, I believe that dreams have a more practical function than we're often willing to recognize them for.



The unconscious world reveals to us anxieties and desires that we might not have been able to readily identify in waking life. If we are wise, we might use this knowledge to address these concerns as they manifest themselves in our day-to-day lives. I'm not saying you have to take notes or anything. Just get some sleep, and your mind will do the rest.

STEP 3



FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

This probably seems like the most difficult part, but if you followed steps one and two, this task should be a bit easier to perform. And if you slept well, you should also now be better prepared—physically, mentally, and spiritually—to meet the demands that this and each subsequent task will surely present you with. But let's be honest. You probably already knew what you needed to do before you even thought to pick up this pamphlet. You might even be using this pamphlet to procrastinate doing that clearly more important thing. In any event, there's not much I can do to help you here. The only method at my disposal, if I wish to remain an honest guide, is to encourage. Look within yourself, and I assure you that soon enough you will understand what must be done.



STEP 4

DO THE DAMNED THING!!!



Okay, now that you know what you need to do, do it. Like, immediately. Put down the pamphlet, forget about all this, and do the damned thing.

Now!
You idiot!

STEP 5

REALIZE THAT IT WASN'T ENOUGH

In the fading afterglow of your recent achievement, you must eventually understand that still more must be done. Not right away, surely; nevertheless, over the course of time, responsibilities will continue to arise which, in order to remain an adult, you must also meet.

Life is quite relentless, it would seem; likewise are the demands of adulthood.

STEP 6

REFLECT ON YOUR LIFE

So much of adulthood is spent handling one responsibility after another that it is easy to lose track of why you are handling any of them at all. Indeed, you might even wonder what value there is in being an adult in the first place. Such thoughts and concerns are completely natural and entirely valid; in fact, you should ask yourself “why?”



There are answers I could offer, such as that it is perforce detrimental to yourself and your society to continue to rely on others to do things you might just as well have done yourself. But these kinds of explanations can only go so far; you must look at the specifics of your own life: your religion, your family, your community. Because it is in these things that you will find the real answers. So take some time and reflect.

STEP 7

LOOK AT THE PEOPLE



In the stores, in the streets, in the schools, in the subways – there are people everywhere, and every one of them needs somebody. Of course you can't know all of them, and certainly you can't be there for all of them. But it is now up to you to look outward and see the dazzling potentiality in every human life. Many purportedly grown people are resolved to concern themselves with only their most immediate surroundings and connections, at the expense of whomever else might be so unfortunate as to inhabit the same planet as them.



These people are not adults but mere children, and it is through the necessarily self-absorbed perspective of a child that they arrive at this resolve. As an adult you must understand that every human life is valuable, no matter how many apparent inconveniences this understanding may present you with. The sooner you realize this, the sooner you will find your own life has been enriched by the notion.

STEP 8

GET REJECTED

Don't expect, on the other hand, to receive any great reward for your consideration. You are owed some dignity: sure; you are owed some respect: sure. But no person is obligated to appease your desires simply because you've proven yourself capable of basic human decency. And there's no better way to learn this fact than by getting rejected. Don't worry about finding someone to do it; there are doubtless a great many people, belonging to every gender and race, who want absolutely nothing to do with you. The good news here is that every person who has ever lived has been rejected (the vast majority of them with relative frequency), and the older you get, the easier it is to deal with.



STEP 9

REALIZE THAT NOTHING YOU DO WILL EVER BE ENOUGH

In surveying the steps you have thus far taken toward becoming an adult, you may find yourself overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the undertaking. The fifth step in particular may stand out upon further examination. This is of course because you won't always be able to meet each of the many demands adulthood will press upon you. In fact you will fail rather often, especially at the beginning. And even if you are more successful than not, there will always be more responsibilities awaiting you, more opportunities for failure. The suffering this knowledge—namely, the knowledge of your own inability to live up to the ideals you and your society have cultivated—will surely induce is perhaps the most excruciating side effect of adulthood.



If you aren't careful you may end up converting your preoccupation with this inability into pathology (actually, this is more or less the definition Freud has provided us for neurosis). However, there is a way out of this cycle: acceptance. Every person is flawed; you are no exception. You must now learn to accept this. Probably you will need to continue to learn. Cry sometimes if you need to. And when you are done, go out and face it again.

STEP 10

INVITE SOME FRIENDS OVER

Hopefully I'm not the only friend you have. I am a mere sheet of paper, after all. And as much comfort and guidance as I'd like to provide, I could never fill the role that other human beings must have in your life. That's why the final step is to spend some quality time with these other people. Even if you really do suppose yourself to have no friends, I assure you that you are simply not paying enough attention. Any person who opens their heart will find that there's always someone around who'd like to know them. But how much easier it is to speak of open-heartedness than to embody it! To make a real friend—to show another person love—you must remove whatever prejudice, whatever insecurity you might have that would prevent you from doing so in the first place. And though this will sometimes prove to be a laborious task indeed, what pleasure, what joy awaits you on the other side! So make some food, put on some music, and get a party going. A person's relationships with others are the building blocks of their civilization, so why not build yours on a foundation of love?



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