

Harold Kushner,  
When All You've Ever  
Wanted Isn't Enough  
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WHEN ALL YOU'VE EVER WANTED ISN'T ENOUGH

I no longer need to leave my mark on people. I can look forward to the last act of my life, however long or short it may be, in the knowledge that I have finally figured out who I am and how to handle life. I walk unafraid through the valley of the shadow, not only because God is with me now but because He has guided me to this point.

There is no way to prevent dying. But the cure for the fear of death is to make sure that you have lived.

In the previous chapter, we saw Ecclesiastes come to the same conclusion that Senator Tsongas did. A life of meaning is achieved not by a few great, immortal deeds but by a lot of little ones. The challenge is not to rise above the level of everyday life by some superhuman effort. The challenge is to find something truly human to do every day of our lives. When you realize that you do not have time for everything, when you find out that trying to cram everything into a twenty-four-hour day leaves you tired, leaves the things you do incomplete and half-baked, and leaves the people you share life with feeling that you never stop moving long enough for them to get to know you, what are the nonnegotiable elements of your life? What are the things you absolutely must have and do so that you can feel that you have lived your life and not wasted it? In our explorations of Ecclesiastes and of our own lives, we have identified three things:

Belong to people.

Accept pain as part of your life.

Know that you have made a difference.

We need to belong intimately to a few people who are permanent elements in our lives. Having a lot of casual acquaintances to talk sports or recipes with is no substi-