

How to Live



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Armed with recent medical evidence that supports the cliché that older people are, indeed, wiser, Alford sets off to interview people over 70 - some famous (Phyllis Diller, Harold Bloom, Edward Albee), some accomplished (the world's most-quoted author, a woman who walked across the country at age 89 in support of campaign finance reform), some unusual (a pastor who thinks napping is a form of prayer, a retired aerospace engineer who eats food out of the garbage.) Early on in the process, Alford interviews his 79 year-old mother and step-father, and inadvertently changes the course of their 36 year-long union. Part family memoir, part Studs Terkel, How To Live considers some unusual sources - deathbed confessions, late-in-life journals - to deliver a highly optimistic look at our dying days. By showing that life after 70 is the fulfilment of, not the end to, life's questions and trials, How to Live delivers that most unexpected punch: it makes you actually 'want to get old'.

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