

365

WAYS TO

HAVE A
GOOD DAY

A DAY-BY-DAY
GUIDE TO
LIVING YOUR
BEST LIFE

THE 21 DAY EDIT

IAN
SANDERS

HOW ARE THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS LOOKING FOR YOU?

PRETTY MUCH THE SAME AS LAST YEAR?

OR ARE YOU READY FOR BETTER?

365 Ways to Have a Good Day is a full year's worth of daily inspiration, tools, habits, actions, and rituals that will help you live your best life, true to you.

A tried-and-tested collection of ideas and stories to get you looking at life differently, to trigger the changes you need to make in order to have more good days.

And if *365* feels overwhelming, here is a taster. A 21 Day Edit full of stories, ideas and hacks to tune you up and get you raring to embrace life with renewed energy.

It's not the full *365* experience, but if this inspires you over the next three weeks, we know you won't look back.

So let's jump right in.

It's day 1.



JOHN
MURRAY
LEARNING

Day 1

THINK LIKE A CHEF

A good day is not something that's set in stone.

It's going to change. As you change.

So think like a chef. Experiment in your kitchen, grab ingredients and throw them in the pot. Taste and add seasoning. Before serving up a tasty and healthy 'good day' dish.

Try things. See what works. Play with the suggestions in this book and discover what brings you results or just makes you feel better.

We all have our unique ways of operating in the world. What I identify as a good day won't necessarily be the same for you.

It's up to you to decide those ingredients you'd like to flavour your life.

Day 2

DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND TRUE

I guess most of us will have moments in life when we feel lost, where we don't know where to go next.

It can be an unsettling feeling.

But perhaps you can take comfort from knowing that feeling lost is part of being human.

My friend Jerry Colonna has a lovely take on it.

He asks, what if being lost is part of the path? What if feeling lost, directionless and uncertain of the progress is an indicator of growth?

In his book *Reboot! Leadership and the Art of Growing Up*, Jerry suggests giving up the need for measurable progress. Instead, he says, focus on doing what is right and true each day. This way, you'd live in congruence with your truest self, where the meaning of your life was a function of the meaning of each day. And each day, an expression of your life.

I think that's beautiful.

Doing what is 'right and true' each day. What does that look like for you?

Day 3

FEED YOUR HUNGER FOR CHANGE

I know myself, I know what I wanted—this is what my friend Sejal told me about relocating to Barcelona. For the creative brand consultant, leaving San Francisco for a new life in Spain was about making time for, and designing a life around, the things she feels are important.

She and her partner sought somewhere more affordable, where they could enjoy a good quality of life, work less and where she could immerse herself more fully in her art practice, something she'd longed to do since leaving art school.

When she told people she was moving to Barcelona, she'd sometimes hear back 'Oh, I'd love to do that too, but...' and there'd be a reason why they couldn't.

We all have 'buts', Sejal told me. What it comes down to is really tuning in to that desire for change. So she became intentional about it, and focused on ways to make it happen.

Day 4

FOCUS ON QUALITY NOT QUANTITY OF HOURS

Thinking is hard, the Do Lectures and Hiut Denim co-founder David Hiatt told me, but scrolling is easy.

We can easily spend hours scrolling our phones, but how to get focused on the work that matters? David thinks that most people have it the wrong way round—we obsess about managing our time, whereas we should really be focusing on managing our energy, how to get in the optimum state.

David told me he aims to get the important stuff done in two hours in the morning, when he's working alone on his farm. And then when his energy wanes he'll walk down the hill to the Hiut Denim factory and spend the afternoon with his team.

David's always looking at quality—not quantity—of hours.

Day 5

GET YOUR FINGERS TATTOOED

Imagine if your younger self could take steps to make sure your older self wouldn't go off track.

That's Ian Rogers' story. In his early twenties Ian got a tattoo. It stretches across his right hand and onto his fingers.

Ian started his career building a website for the Beastie Boys while he was a teenager. He went on to work in senior roles at Apple Music and the luxury brand group LVMH. He's currently with French fintech startup Ledger.

He said it was as if his younger self was trying to protect his older self: that wherever he worked it wouldn't matter if he had tattoos on his fingers.

I love it. It's like his tattoo is a compass. It makes sure he chooses the right path in life.

What stamp can you put on your life to make sure you're on the right path?

Day 6

NOTICE NEW THINGS ON OLD WALKS

A Mexican restaurant in the Mission District.

Plant pots outside a front door in Potrero Hill.

Stunning architecture in Noe Valley.

These are some of the images of San Francisco that my friend Karen Wickre—who we met in Idea #94—has been sharing on Instagram along with the hashtag #dailywalk.

When lockdown hit in March 2020, a dear friend of Karen's was dying from pancreatic cancer. Karen decided a good way to keep vigil was to take a photograph on her daily walks and send those to him. Barry was a great *flâneur*. The two friends used to take long walks together, talking about everything from politics to relationships.

After Barry passed away, Karen decided to continue taking her photos on her daily walks with her dog Zuzu. Each time she aimed to see something new, or something old in a fresh way. Maintaining her creative Instagram habit helps her tune into what she's drawn to, and to keep an eye out for things she's not noticed before. It keeps her walking on through the city, and remembering her friend and how much she enjoyed their time together.

Day 7

TUNE IN TO TWO-INCH EVENTS

When the co-founder of the animation company Pixar, Ed Catmull, was a child, his family was in a car accident on a winding canyon road. Two inches to the left and the car would have gone over the cliff. Two inches —no Ed. No Pixar!

Just think. No *Toy Story*, no *Inside Out*, no *Up*!

In his book *Creativity Inc*, Ed describes this as a two-inch moment.

Let's tune into those events where you are two inches from misadventure and two inches from opportunity. So many of the trajectories in my life have been that close. Two inches from an *Aaagh*. But also two inches from a *Wooaah!*

On a Sunday evening in August 2003, the very last day of my ten-day internet dating trial subscription, I decided to check the dating website one final time. I guess it was one of those moments when I nearly didn't bother (definitely two inches either way).

The site suggested I was a good match with 'Zoë from Streatham'.

I clicked on her.

She's my wife.

Day 8

ASK IS IT A 'HELL YEAH!'?

I have this question from author Derek Sivers pinned above my desk.

'Is it a Hell Yeah?'

It's a fantastic filter for where to put my attention.

Should I go for a swim on the beach? Hell Yeah!

Should I take on that project from Sally? Hell Yeah!

Should I write this book? Hell Yeah!

And if I need to make a decision in my personal or business life and it's not a Hell Yeah!, I seriously question whether I say yes to it or not.

Day 9

KEEP YOUR LIGHTBULB SHINING BRIGHT

There's a bar I used to go to near Oxford Circus called The Social. The bare lightbulbs that hung over each table were controlled by your own dimmer switch, so you could turn the intensity up or down.

When you do work that fuels you, in line with your passions, the brilliance of your lightbulb increases. And when you put your attention on things that aren't you —projects or people that aren't right for you—the light diminishes.

Your lightbulb is the signal for the things in life that lift you and bring you joy.

Recognizing that signal helps you make the right choices about what you do and how you spend your time.

When does your lightbulb burn brightly, and when is it dimmed? What are the things or people that light you up? And what are those that take you away from you? Because when it dims, your presence in the world is dulled too. And people aren't able to see the true, illuminated you.

Day 10

KNOW THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Yinka Ilori—the artist famous for his brightly coloured furniture designs and street hoardings—posted a pair of photographs on Instagram. The first photograph was of a name badge from the time he worked on the tills at Marks & Spencer. The accompanying text said during that time he used to dream he'd become a full-time artist with his own team and studio.

In the second photograph is a huge billboard of his work from the present day. In large, colourful letters is the slogan: 'If you can dream then anything is possible.' Yinka achieved his dream. He worked at Marks & Spencer for six years yet kept focused on what he truly wanted.

Your dream might be a long shot, but having it is the first stage to making it happen.

Day 11

SET UP A POP-UP ADVICE BOOTH IN THE PARK

Every Friday Matthew Stillman used to take the subway from his home in Harlem, New York, down to Union Square and set up a table, two chairs and a sign inviting people to come and discuss whatever's on their mind. He started the experiment after completing a course on how to think creatively.

Matthew did this for ten years, listening to thousands of New Yorkers that included a gang member on the run to a woman having an affair.

Over a New York coffee, Matthew told me that having spent an entire day sitting outside, everything feels slower. Just sitting there in Union Square, counterintuitively to how we usually spend our days, he says, gave him almost a post-meditative, semi-hypnotic state. In the same way his presence was beneficial to others, it was beneficial to himself too.

As creative projects go, this was pretty intense, but it shows you how being there for others can help yourself too.

Day 12

WEAR YOUR RED SNEAKERS

A few years ago Professor Francesca Gino, author of Rebel Talent, decided to conduct an experiment in the executive education classes she was teaching at Harvard Business School.

With one group of students, she wore her dark blue Hugo Boss suit, a white silk blouse and dress shoes. For the next group, she slipped off her leather shoes and laced up a pair of red Converse sneakers.

There was a big difference between the two classes that day.

In the red-sneakers class the students were more attentive and thoughtful, and they laughed more. Part of the difference, she realized, was the effect the sneakers had on her – she felt more confident and more poised when leading discussions. At the end of the class, she gave out a short survey. The students rated her as having greater status when she wore the red shoes.

So what would you wear to bring yourself more confidence?

Day 13

FIND SOMEONE YOU CAN BE ALL OF YOU WITH

It was a rare night away from the children, the chance for my wife and I to wander around a city and take time to be.

‘Do you know why you’re my best friend?’ I asked Zoë as we sat up in the window in Strangers coffee shop in Norwich.

‘Because with you, I can be all of me.’

I see it like a pie chart. Some people in your life only get to see a selection of the slices in your pie chart. With my wife Zoë, she gets all of my slices.

She lets me be me.

Why does it matter? When you can reveal all 360 degrees of yourself—those interests, talents, passions, values and traits—you are you in all your complicated glory, the good bits as well as the flaws.

To have someone that accepts all of that is freeing.

Day 14

FIND CALM IN THE STRESS

Millions of people use his app everyday.

But Calm.com only came into being because its co-founder—Michael Acton Smith—was having a difficult time with stress.

Over a pot of tea on the roof of Shoreditch House, Michael told me his philosophy: that life is short and wonderful, so we need to make the most of it. He wants to squeeze as much juice out of it as he can.

But he found if you squeeze too much juice, it can be problematic.

Back in the early 2010s he was getting off on the adrenaline rush of being an entrepreneur, putting in 14 to 16 hour days, working weekends.

A turning point came in 2014 when he decided to go on holiday by himself for the first time. His mind for once was away from the office and work. He instead read up on mindfulness and meditation. A lightbulb went on. During this week of downtime he discovered how meditation is a kind of superpower, a smart way of looking after our minds.

Had he not given himself time off, Calm.com might not have launched. Good ideas happen when you step back to take a breath, not wringing every minute out of every day.

Day 15

JUST HAVE A DAY

My focus on having a good day is not about airbrushing out the bad days. Everyone has bad days.

Sometimes life can feel challenging, overwhelming, un navigable. Looking too far ahead is like being on a ship at sea when you can't see what's over the horizon. And at times like those I've found it's better just to take life day-by-day. Just to focus on the here and now.

And to acknowledge how you're feeling rather than fight it.

Emily's my therapist friend (we met her in Idea #26). When we talked about the notion of a 'good day', she challenged me on it. She wondered whether a good day—a whole, well-rounded, fulfilling day—might have to have elements of contrast in order for us to notice the good bits.

Light complements shade. This interrelationship of lows and highs makes up the human condition. How can you know you're in the light, if you've not experienced the dark? That messy array of feelings gives life meaning.

So if you can't have a good day, perhaps just have a day.

Day 16

GO FOR A SWIM IN A BOBBLE HAT

They're doing it every winter from Helsinki to Ireland. Some wearing wetsuits, others in regular swimsuits and woolly hats.

It was a bitterly cold February morning. As I walked the dog on my local beach there were three women out in the estuary in bobble hats, bouncing about in the sea. 'That was fun!' one of them exclaimed as she waded out, her body a shrimp-pink from the icy water.

In his book *The Other Side of Happiness* Brock Bastian recalls a study by one of his Phd students in which she surveyed 200 swimmers who took part in a Winter Solstice swim in Tasmania. The student, Laura Ferris, asked participants to rate how painful and how pleasurable they found it.

On average, they rated pain as 4.15 out of 7. They also found it highly pleasurable, rating 6.13 out of 7.

So the pleasure outweighed the pain.

Day 17

SIT UP AT THE BAR

I'm sitting up at a tapas bar in Bermondsey, south-east London, talking to Miguel. It's his first job in London and he's only been working here six weeks. The smell of the tortilla is making him homesick. It reminds him of his grandmother's cooking back in Spain. She makes a really good tortilla, he says, the best there is.

I only know these details because of where I choose to sit—at what I think is the best seat: up at the bar.

These are only the kind of conversations you can have whilst a barista is fixing a coffee, or a barman is polishing glasses. You can introduce yourself. You can take time with each other.

If I've a choice, I'll always take a seat at the bar.

Day 18

GO OUTSIDE THE MATRIX

There are so many days I live ‘in the matrix’ of daily life, Bree Groff told me. And to have a good day she needs at least one moment outside of that.

Bree is a partner at SYPartners, the US transformation consulting firm, and lives in Tribeca, Manhattan.

She explains that so many days are packed with the usual ingredients of a busy executive who’s also a parent of young children. A fast shower, making school lunch, meeting after meeting, remembering to make a dentist appointment, a bit of TV and sleep.

That’s why she needs at least one moment out of the matrix.

It could be a few minutes being amused by the birds playing tag outside her apartment window. Or a phone call with her parents. Or the delight of adding a square of chocolate to her afternoon coffee.

Those moments remind her not only that life is short but that the world is a beautiful place.

Day 19

IN A CRISIS LOOK FOR GROWTH

For a few Fridays in April and May 2020, my wife and I tuned in, along with hundreds of others around the world, to 'This Human Moment'. It was a weekly online series live-streamed by Keith Yamashita from his home in California to help us through the crises we were experiencing: COVID-19 and ensuing economic fallout, plus the social upheaval triggered by the death of George Floyd.

This Human Moment was pinned on the idea that out of such difficulty we can strive for personal renewal and development, that we can experience 'post-traumatic growth'. Adversity can be a springboard to better things.

Keith was the perfect host. He's a business leader who suffered a devastating stroke at the age of 51. He's written of how it robbed him of his abilities he took for granted, being unable to work for seven months. But he realized that his stroke was a rare opportunity for renewal. Keith saw that there might possibly be a different kind of flourishing to be had on the other side.

So when challenged by a traumatic event or unexpected crisis, can we too look for post-traumatic growth and renewal?

Day 20

DANCE YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

When Peter Lovatt, the psychologist who studies dance and human movement, was diagnosed with bowel cancer, his doctor told him he'd need to be as fit and strong as possible as he prepared for surgery. Peter knows that a post-operative outcome can be influenced by physical fitness. So he danced daily to get fitter and stronger, both physically and mentally.

Of course it was a worrying time, and he admitted that at times his thoughts went to the worst-case scenario. Peter told me that his daily dance gave him 30 minutes of freedom from these thoughts. He'd turn the music up loud, get lost in the rhythm and escape those concerns that played on his mind.

I'm glad to say Peter got the all-clear. He used dance at every stage of the bowel cancer journey, from diagnosis, through treatment, rehab and recovery. Peter said it saved his body and his mind.

Day 21

END THE DAY WITH A 'FEIERABEND'

Are we working from home? Or living at work? It's a conundrum many of us wrestle with—when to down tools and turn our surroundings back into homes again. With this in mind, it's good to 'bookend' the working day and create boundaries.

The Germans have a word for marking the moment when you switch off at work for the day: the *Feierabend*. It's a celebration that your work is done and is often accompanied by a German beer.

Often during the week I'll head out for a short walk with the dog, to clear my head and get back into dad and husband mode. On Fridays I'll go for a German version when I'll snap the top off a beer, crank up the music and celebrate the end of the week. It's often harder to delineate work from home, requiring you to be more intentional to shift your mindset.

What would work for you? Ten minutes' meditation? Lighting a candle? Even reading a fiction book for a few minutes?

PHEW.

FEEL THE DIFFERENCE?

In the book you'll discover surprising insights from psychologists, business leaders, entrepreneurs and designers. You'll explore the benefits of *Feierabends* and Laughies. You'll learn habit-forming strategies, pick up helpful hacks, and uncover tips for lasting change—all brought to life through real examples and thought-provoking stories that will get you looking at life differently.



365 Ways to Have a Good Day focuses on the small stuff you can do every day to make life better. Because when you get the little things right, the big things follow.

**IT'S TIME TO SEIZE THE DAY.
ALL 365 OF THEM.**

Buy or pre-order it now in print or ebook from your favourite bookstore following the links on the John Murray Press [website](#).

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Ian Sanders has built an unconventional career out of following his curiosity and sharing what he's learned along the way.

This journey of discovery has opened all kinds of unexpected doors including working for BBC local radio while still a teenager; launching a marketing business by accident and running ad campaigns for Benetton; writing about work and business for The

Financial Times; training BBC journalists about storytelling; working backstage for the digital media team at The World Economic Forum in Davos; giving talks at various events including South By South West Interactive in Austin, Texas and The Do Lectures; running workshops for organisations such as General Assembly, Ericsson and Microsoft; leading urban-walk coaching sessions; being managing director of a radio studio business; and co-managing a band.

Throughout his professional life, Ian has experimented with life-enhancing habits and hacks. It's resulted in two decades' worth of conversations, detours and journals. A self-confessed 'work-in-progress' Ian's always been open about his own struggles and difficult days, and his decision to build more good ones. And now, whether it's working with teams in global organisations or with a founder who's just getting started, Ian aims to spark change. With *365 Ways to Have a Good Day*, he hopes to inspire people to spark change in their own lives, and to get more out of every day.

Ian lives in Leigh-on-Sea with his wife, two teenage sons and their border terrier and can often be found swimming in the sea. This is his fifth book.