

Midlife Epiphany versus Midlife Crisis

Early on I described this concept to an editor, not as part of my book but only to support it in a letter. Her reply, in eloquent British terminology was that "I was hiding my light under a bushel." I love that comment and have since lifted the bushel to shine the light on the "Midlife Epiphany." To understand it, we first take a quick look at the phenomenon we all know as a Midlife Crisis. In my words it is...

"Midlife Crisis" You look in the mirror after a significant portion of your adult life has passed, and the mirror and what it reflects have been clear for some time. What you see there is someone acting out a life that is incongruent with, even in denial of his or her internal beliefs about who he or she really is. The crisis becomes evident in behavior changes that are a radical departure from the past.

My experience, and I hope yours too, is the opposite.

"Midlife Epiphany" You look in the mirror after a significant portion of your adult life has passed, and the mirror is just starting to clear. What you see now is the person you really are. Taking ownership of previously latent talents provides a pleasant affirmation of the personal developments taking place, along with the knowledge that your future behavior will yield the greatest possible returns in satisfaction.

What is relevant here is that the midlife crisis builds through thoughts that finally manifest themselves in action. The "Midlife Epiphany" works in the reverse manner. It builds itself through actions that provide deeper meaning through thought.

It is reflecting on actions and events that lead you to draw the correct line between them. Finding that trend line is the epiphany. Following that trend line provides your fulfillment.