

The Insider: How will you be remembered?

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As a young reporter at a small-town newspaper, I was occasionally called upon to help families write an obituary for their loved one. I'd often begin by asking, "what's the one thing he loved most?" Responses ranged from "his dog" to "repairing his 1956 Ford Thunderbird."



Reporters at the newspaper were asked to follow a template to keep the printed obituaries uniform. But my questions were an attempt to add some color to an otherwise grim account that read like this: "A native of ? yada yada ? he attended [enter local high school] ? yada yada ? and left behind a family..."

The experience led me to ask, "what will people say about me when I'm gone?"

In this week's Insider, I present the opportunity for each of us to answer that question. Take a day, a week or a month to reflect on your life to date. Use existing obituaries as a guide to create a journalistic account of all that you've done during your years on earth.

This accounting will render one of two outcomes. Ideally, you will find that you've done an honorable amount of [public service](#) and will have lots of great content for the abridged version of your life story. However, some of us will find that we could be doing more to create a legacy that we can be proud of.

If the latter occurs, turn the page to your notebook and begin a make-believe version. Add things that you wish you'd done and use it as motivation to do them.

As you begin making notes, remember to keep an upbeat tone that reflects the way you are today ? alive! After all, isn't that how we want to be remembered?

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