

# How to Live

by Mary Campbell



1. Everybody — people who don't even *know* you — wants to tell you how to live. Some of the stuff is useful and necessary, like YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE YOUR BABY A BATH EVERY DAY, and those little fluorescent lamps

last forever, but you can't just throw them in the trash when they DO burn out. Some of it will "resonate" with you, as meditation did for me. But all the advice about spirituality, about exercise, about diet, about environmental responsibility, and so forth, can make you crazy. And they keep changing it.

*Omigosh, how many grams of protein have I had today? Oh, hey, this is Alaskan Salmon, is that the poison kind with mercury? Were the salmon humanely treated? Shit, I don't have time to go to the gym. Coffee and red wine are chock full of antioxidants? Who knew? I'm supposed to do my laundry at night? Is this my day to water the grass? Probably shouldn't even HAVE grass....* **RELAX.**



The way I see it, we have as many lifetimes as we need to get it right.

2. **KEEP AN OPEN MIND.** How do you know there's no such thing as a leprechaun?
3. **WRITE DOWN YOUR WILD IDEAS,** your bursts of inspiration. You'll think of a thousand reasons why they won't work, and you'll discard them... at your peril. They're like geysers: They come from the depths. They're your Self talking to your self. So keep track of them, even if you're not ready to act on them.
4. **COLLECT SOMETHING,** like coins or stamps or antique butter chips (little tiny plates for pats of butter), or colored bottles. See, it's fun and you meet interesting people, but the best thing is that your friends and family will know what to get you for Christmas and your birthday.
5. **WRITE NOTES, REAL ONES, ON PAPER,** or send cards, whatever, in the actual U.S. mail. It might seem quaint, but it's a thoughtful going-out-of-your-way sort of thing... a mitzvah, if you will. (By the by, I sell GREAT cards

for all occasions, including packs of Random Cards of Kindness, at [http://www.lifeispoetry.net/.](http://www.lifeispoetry.net/))

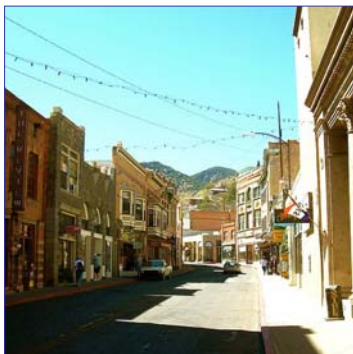
6. **LIGHTEN UP, IN EVERY WAY.**

Bring light into your environment — physically, mentally, whatever lifts your spirit: music, flowers, bright prints in pretty frames, lace curtains, whimsical lamps, people who make you laugh. The flip side is, don't let negative people come in and steal your joy. I allow people with problems ten minutes to vent, and that's it. Any more than that contaminates your space, and you have to have a priest or shaman or somebody come in and expel the negativity and do a house blessing.



7. This is important, and it will serve you well: **BECOME AN EXPERT IN SOMETHING OR**

**SOMEONE:** Jesse Owens, protein in human nutrition, the Isle of Man, the reign of King Henry VIII, making your own “green” housekeeping products, growing tomatoes, U.S. vice presidents, reiki – whatever turns you on. That woman wrote an entire best-selling book about commas, for heaven's sake. I, personally, am an expert on so many things that it's unmanageable. I need to sharpen my focus and hone my expertise on, say, mindfulness meditation *or* the use of the em dash. The point is, the object of your expertise is its own little universe, and if you study it to frigging DEATH you will become not only smart but wise. The other point is, it's satisfying and energizing to keep learning new stuff. And finally, the main point is, it's a good way to market your “brand,” personally or professionally. You can write articles or books,



*Main Street, Bisbee, Arizona*

speak at the Kiwanis luncheon, teach at a community college, put up an authoritative website or blog, sell stuff... the possibilities are virtually endless.

8. **TAKE THE SCENIC ROUTE,** but join AAA first.

9. (Optional) **MOVE TO BISBEE, ARIZONA.** Population, about six thousand. It's one of those arty towns where antique stores and

taverns and galleries abound. It's also the county seat of Cochise County. Bisbee is actually built into the side of a mountain, so it's charmingly hilly. Only 82 miles from Tucson, Bisbee boasts a much milder climate because of the elevation. Mexico is a stone's throw from Bisbee.

*Bisbee was founded as a [copper](#), [gold](#), and [silver](#) mining town in 1880, and named in honor of Judge DeWitt Bisbee, one of the financial backers of the adjacent [Copper Queen Mine](#).... In the May-June 2000 issue of [Modern Maturity](#), the [AARP](#) highlighted the what they called the most 'alive' places to retire in the U.S. Bisbee was a runner-up as one of the "quirkiest" towns in America... Bisbee is noted for its "gay friendliness".... —[Wikipedia](#)*

10. (Optional) **LET'S GET THE PAPER COMPANIES TO STOP BLEACHING EVERYTHING.** Why bleach *toilet paper*, for example? It's just going to get yucky. The same with napkins, paper towels, and so forth. It's an absolutely unnecessary and environmentally harmful practice, and we should start an Internet campaign via e-mail, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc., to get consumers to start demanding unbleached household paper products, as of today.

