

Especially at First



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Long ago I consulted with a psychologist to help me work through a personal issue and over the course of several months we got to know each other quite well, as is always the case in effective personal counseling. At the conclusion of our work I asked him to talk about the impression he had formed of me, and to share any insights he thought might be helpful or interesting. In response to this invitation I received a great deal of useful feedback, but he began by saying “You are an interesting guy and all sorts of people are going to be attracted to you, *especially at first.*”

As with several of the important insights I have received about myself over the years, I was initially offended and eventually enlightened. Since I was only about 40 at the time, I was just beginning to realize that I had grown tired of what I had genuinely experienced as a stimulating and successful career. On reflection, my black Cadillacs with the gold kits no longer thrilled, satisfied or interested me as they once had; nor did the big house, the lavish lifestyle, my half-baked philosophy, my marriage or many other things in which I had invested much importance and attachment. Everyone is familiar with this precursor to the midlife crisis, which reveals a profound insight about human nature. We can get used to anything and everything can get boring, even a complex and deeply engaging thing like a career, a philosophy, an intimate relationship or a personality.

The successful resolution of a midlife crisis, which can occur at any age, requires either the abandonment or reinvigoration of whatever it is that we have become jaded about, as well as the cultivation of new attachments so that our attention and worldview are once again dominated by an exhilarating sense of novelty, surprise and discovery; *especially at first*. Indefinite satisfaction and enthusiastic engagement are possible only once we accept the fact that we can never nail our lives down. The process of triage, reinvention and renewal must be ongoing. Trust me. Call me.

Relief, Recovery, Resolution

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