

A curved staircase with a brass handrail is shown against a solid orange background. The stairs are light-colored and lead downwards from the top left towards the bottom right. The handrail is polished and reflects light.

# 50 Life Lessons in 50 Years

**By  
Karl  
Bastian**

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**9 - 19 - 2019**

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Hello friends,

9-19-2019

I turned 50 today. I'm as old as Red Robin, Cracker Barrel, Tic-Tacs, Scooby-doo, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, The GAP, Wendy's, Sesame Street, The Brady Bunch and even the Internet. I celebrated by enjoying some down time in the mountains with my family.

I decided to write out fifty lessons I have learned over the past fifty years. At first, I thought it would be hard to come up with fifty. In the end, I had to wrestle with which to delete.

Some of these will be familiar – but I hope some will catch you by surprise and perhaps give you pause to consider them. Many of these were learned the hard way! Perhaps your learning can be easier by reading this!

The sources for these are Scripture, my parents, friends, teachers, colleagues, and likely famous people I've either read or heard speak. I claim no originality to any of them, even as half of them are likely my unique way of expressing what I've learned. Any credit due goes solely to my God and Savior from whom all Truth originates. I apologize to anyone I may be quoting that I don't know the original source. All I can say is thanks for being a positive influence in my life, your wisdom lives on in me!

I hope you are challenged! I look forward to your feedback and even hearing from you what lessons *you've* learned in life! This list is far from complete. *The learning continues!*

# 50 Life Lessons Learned in 50 Years

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*God placed me on earth to accomplish a set number of things. Right now, I am so far behind, I will never die.*

*- Calvin and Hobbes*

## 50 Life Lessons Learned in 50 Years

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**1** Always assume the best. The most unlikely explanation could be true. If not, you've shown the same grace God has shown you.

**2** When you are upset, always start by asking questions. You may learn something before you say something you'll regret. Remember, even a fool appears wise when he holds his tongue.

**3** You can always postpone a bad decision. If it's a good decision, it will still be good tomorrow. Sleep on it.

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**4** Don't avoid criticism, seek it out. If a critic is 98% wrong, learn from the 2%.

**5** Don't neglect to remember, thank and publicly acknowledge those who have helped you.

**6** When you mess up, fess up. Own it, make right what you can, then move on and leave it behind. Don't let it define your future.

**7** Time Management is a myth. You can't manage time. You can only spend it. Spend it wisely.

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**8** Always take the high road. Its lonely, but you'll go farther in life.

**9** Be the first to forgive. Even if you are the only one to do so.

Unforgiveness is a poison you prepare for someone else and take yourself. Likewise, bitterness is anger in a crock pot. Turn it off or you'll get burned.

**10** If you have a choice between buying a thing or buying an experience, always choose the experience.

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**11** No matter what you say, no matter what you do, God loves you.

**12** Dismiss people's first reaction. Literally treat it like it didn't happen. The tendency is to allow it to escalate things. Give them grace and time. Even if they don't apologize, they will notice you gave them a do-over.

**13** People don't remember what you said, they remember how you made them feel.

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**14** Perception is reality. When you are criticized and you feel the accusation is unfair - rather than being defensive, consider how they got that perception. You may be in the right but giving a wrong impression. Listen, learn and grow.

**15** Do unto others as you would have them do to you. (Yeah, stole that from Jesus, but if you follow that, you'll pretty much follow everything else in the Bible.)

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**16** NOW is what matters most. The past is behind you. It can't be changed. The future is uncertain; it can't be known. Live in the moment. Life is a gift - that's why it is called the Present.

**17** The day after tomorrow is the third day of the rest of your life. In other words, every new day offers a new opportunity and a new beginning. Begin today what you'd like to benefit from tomorrow.

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**18** The most powerful word that can change your life is: Initiative. It is *"Seeing what needs to be done and doing it without being asked."* Initiative will bring you success in all areas of life and can even change the world. It is an endangered character trait. The few who have it excel in life.

**19** Don't waste time thinking or talking about people who have hurt you. They aren't thinking about you. Don't give them rent-free space in your heart or mind.

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**20** Of all the paths you take in life, make sure some of them are dirt.

**21** Don't waste time comparing yourself to others. They aren't you and they'd be lousy at it anyway. Only you can be you.

**22** Become an expert on something. Then use your knowledge to help others.

**23** Make the hard call. The easy call only makes what needs to be done eventually even harder.

## 50 Life Lessons Learned in 50 Years

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**24** Don't blame others for problems in your life. There is always a change you can make to improve things. The answer may be difficult, but that doesn't mean it isn't simple.

**25** Do difficult things. No one ever changed the world doing what is easy. We remember those who did what was previously considered impossible.

**26** Be generous. You can never out-give God. He supplies generous people with what they need.

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**27** Take regular extended breaks from social media. No one will notice you're gone, and everything will still be there when you get back. Whatever you missed you can live without.

**28** Learn to solve the Rubik's Cube. You'll enjoy the accomplishment, learn a lot about problem solving in real life and as a bonus, everyone will think you're super smart.

## **50 Life Lessons Learned in 50 Years**

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**29** You can't do everything, go everywhere or know everything - so be selective and determined. Whatever you choose, go all out.

**30** Share the spotlight. When you find yourself in the spotlight use the opportunity to make others shine.

**31** The formula for leadership:

I do.            You watch.

I do.            You help.

You do.        I help.

You do.        I watch.

## **50 Life Lessons Learned in 50 Years**

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**32** Don't let your job become your identity. Your identity is first. You are a forgiven and loved child of God. Then, if you are married, you are a husband or wife, and if you have kids you are a Mom or Dad. That is your identity. Anything else is what you do, not who are you.

**33** Everyone is going through something. Keep that in mind. Especially when someone is grumpy, short, rude or otherwise out of sorts.

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**34** Don't make time for your family. Make time for work. Your family is your life. You can't please everyone. So please the people who matter most.

**35** Be thankful for failure. It's the best teacher. Everyone fails. What you do next is what matters.

**36** You can't experience the forgiveness of others until you forgive yourself. Forgiveness is not dependent on someone being sorry. It is a free gift you give.

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**37** Texts are for quick communication. E-mail is for detailed communication. Anything tricky or risky - pick up the phone. Always resolve conflict in person.

**38** People live in one of two tents. Content or Discontent. Only in one will you find happiness.

**39** Reach out, reach out and touch someone. (AT&T) Make someone smile. Every day. Make people your priority.

## **50 Life Lessons Learned in 50 Years**

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**40** Imitation is the highest form of flattery. When people copy you, rejoice. Your influence is spreading. You don't need credit because whatever you offered was a gift from God to begin with. Celebrate His success through you.

**41** Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. — James, the brother of Jesus

**42** If you aren't sure if you should do or say something - trust yourself. You are probably right.

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**43** Keep your promises, even when it's hard. When you overcommit - stick it out but learn from it and make changes that will impact the near future.

**44** The Secret to Success: Be F.A.T.  
- Faithful, Available and Teachable

**45** Recreation is more than just fun, it is what re-creates you. Intentionally plan into your life what re-creates YOU and fiercely defend it.

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**46** Its OK to write a long stinging defensive emotional letter. As long as you don't send it. It'll help you remember the chain of events and organize your thoughts, but it won't help things. Admire just how well written and witty your letter is, and then throw it out.

**47 Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.** You are a human-being not a human-doing. Master the art of margin.

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**48** The best way to outthink someone is to make them think that you think that they'll think that you're not really thinking what you are trying to get them to think you think.

**49** Morning person? Night person? Spontaneous or Structured? It doesn't matter. You can't change the way God wired you. Embrace it and make it work for you.

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**50** There are three types of people in the world: Those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who say, "What just happened?" Make something happen every day. Big or little doesn't matter, forward momentum is the key.

(There are three other types of people in the world. Neat people who like things neat. Messy people who like things messy. And messy people who like things neat. I am cursed to be the third.)

***Thanks for reading!***

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I am so grateful for you! Whether we are related or are friends from ministry in church or the broader ministry community, or have some other connection, I am so thankful for all the encouragement, support and friendship that I enjoy from each and every one who logs on to Kidology.org, chats on Facebook, texts, tweets or adds a little heart on Instagram. While we can't all meet in person, the Hope we enjoy assures us that we'll have all of eternity to catch up! In the meantime, we do our best to live for God and lead others to Him. Become a collector of wisdom!

***Because Jesus Loves YOU,***

Pastor Karl Bastian

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Let's keep in touch:

## WEBSITES:

[Kidology.org](http://Kidology.org)

[Kidologist.com](http://Kidologist.com)

[ToyboxTales.com](http://ToyboxTales.com)

[YosemiteSummit.org](http://YosemiteSummit.org)

[BethedadToday.com](http://BethedadToday.com)



## SOCIAL MEDIA:

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**BIO** *(In case somehow you got a copy of this and have no idea who Karl is!)*

*Karl Bastian has over twenty-five years of experience as a full time children's pastor in large, small, and mobile churches. He is the founder of Kidology.org, one of the first and still leading Internet destinations for those who minister to children. He is the host of KidminTalk.com a popular children's ministry podcast and widely known as the creator of ToyBoxTales.com. He is a prolific writer of training resources, books, magazine articles and is the author of DiscipleTown, the children's church curriculum from DiscipleLand.com. Karl has a Bible Theology degree from Moody Bible Institute and a Masters in Children's Ministry from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Named by Children's Ministry Magazine as one of the top twenty influencers in children's ministry in the past twenty years, Karl is a trainer and encourager at conferences around the world, but his favorite place to be is in front of kids creatively teaching them the Bible and training them to serve God. In his workshops, video training or one on one coaching Karl brings the joy of children's ministry to life and with it, creative and practical ideas and principles that will recharge your ministry. For men in ministry, Karl created an annual retreat in Yosemite National Park to provide a time of renewal and refreshment for children's pastors in need of a fresh connection with God. Learn more at [Yosemitesummit.org](http://Yosemitesummit.org)*

***Karl's life mission is the Reach and Teach as many children as possible with the Good News of God's Love and in the process to Enlist, Equip and Encourage others to do the same.***

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*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.*

*Theodore Roosevelt*