

# Between Eternities

Is what we are yearning for already inside of us?

By [Toinette Lippe](#)

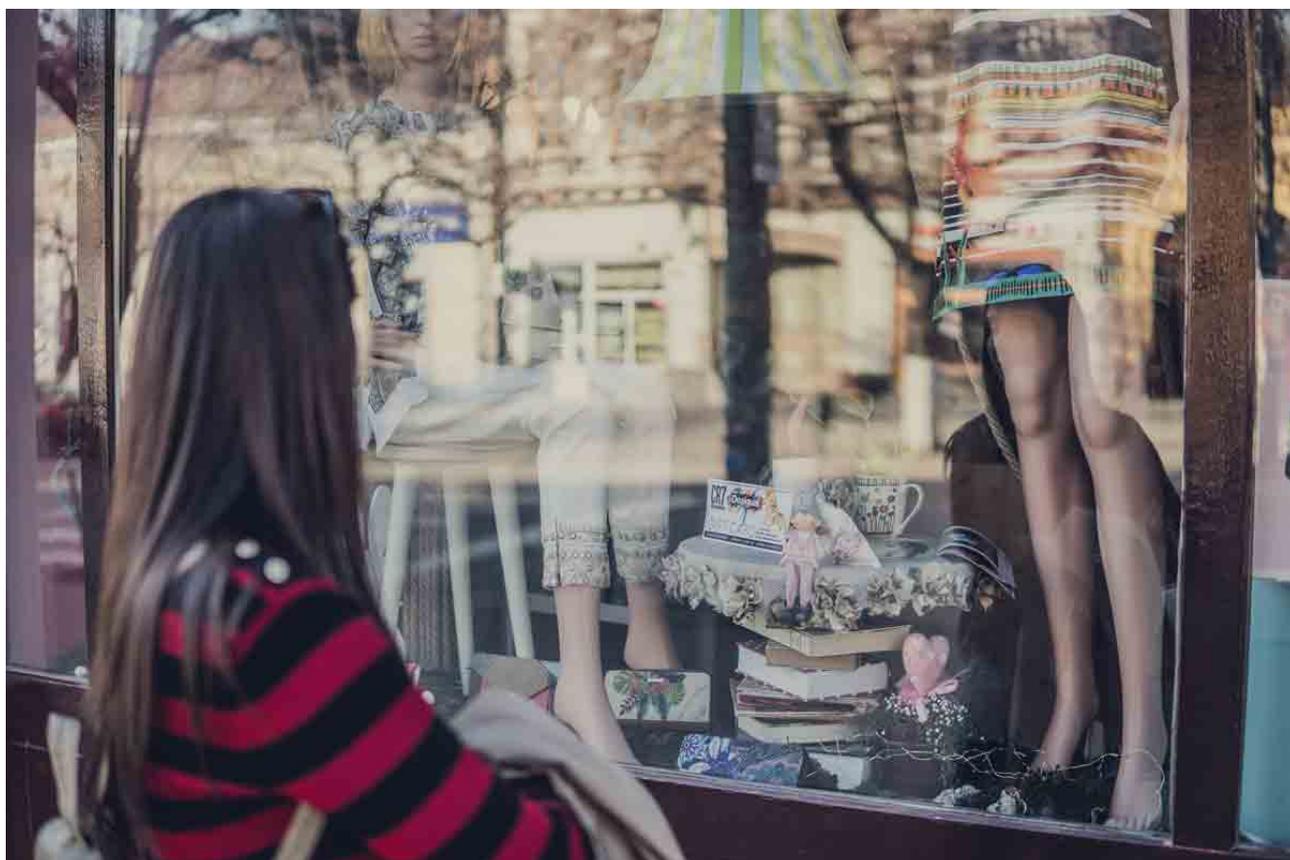


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The whole question of why our lives seem so unsatisfying needs close examination. Why is it that our experiences or possessions never seem to bring us lasting happiness or completion? We always want something more, and it is always eluding us. Not only do we want to hold on to what we already have but we also want to acquire as much more as we can. I think of possessions as possessing me rather than vice-versa. If you own something, then you are responsible for taking care of it and are continually worrying that it might get harmed or you might lose it.

We try to fill the vacuum that we believe to be inside us, but we need to remember that we didn't come into this life to [shop](#), to chalk up experiences, to amass objects we can't take with us when we go, or even to make a lot of money.

The freedom we are all seeking is freedom from the fear of losing what we believe we own.

In truth, it is not the number and diversity of our possessions that is the problem but our [attachment](#) to them. When the attachment grows thin and the filament breaks, then we discover that we do not really want so much anymore. What we need to relinquish, therefore, is our attachment to possessions and experiences, not the things themselves.

The freedom we are all seeking is freedom from the fear of losing what we believe we own. Among the notes I have kept over the years is a small scrap of paper on which I typed out a passage from a book by Robert Pilpel entitled [Between Eternities](#). It speaks with extraordinary clarity on this whole matter:

*You wonder about the next life because this life's not enough for you. And this life's not enough for you because you're not living it but thinking about it.*

*I thought that there had to be more to life than being alive and I resolved never to be satisfied with my existence until that something more, whatever it was, had been savoured to the full. I felt, moreover, that once my great goal had been achieved I would be prepared to die. . . .*

*Why are we afraid of death? Surely it is not because the process of dying is painful—because the process of living is infinitely more so. And we don't fear living—at least, not as much as we fear dying. We are afraid to die because we are not ready. Does death stand for our final failure to achieve the unattainable? And if it does, what then does the unattainable stand for? Would I want it so much if I knew what it was?*

When I think back to what I believed would be the most memorable moments in my life—confirmation, the first time I made love, my [wedding ceremony](#), the birth of my son—I remember that each time I had expected to feel different in some way. I anticipated that something in me would be transformed forever. But nothing like that ever happened, and the next day it was always recognisably the same me who woke up in the morning. Why is it that we yearn to be more or other than we are? It so rarely occurs to us that what we are looking for may be—indeed, always is—already within us, simply undiscovered.

*[Toinette Lippe](#) is reprint rights director of Alfred A. Knopf Inc. and editorial director of Bell Tower, a new imprint of Harmony Books, New York.*

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