
Chris McCandless And The Meaning Of Living Deliberately

Living deliberately means to live to your standards, to act studiously being aware of everything your actions may cause, and live strategically. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I will prepare and someday my chance will come." You must always be prepared for anything that could happen. "Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself." – Eleanor Roosevelt. You should always learn from others' mistakes and experiences to better yourself. My goal in life is to learn from other's mistakes and to always be prepared.

In the book, Chris McCandless went into the wilderness with the bare minimum of supplies. "Alex's backpack looked as though it weighed only twenty-five or thirty pounds, which struck Gallien — an accomplished hunter and woodsman — as an improbably light load for a stay of several months in the back-country". An accomplished hunter said it himself that he had very little supplies to what one would usually carry for the time he would be staying in Alaska wilderness. He was not prepared for his trip which later caused him to lose his life and with the supplies he had, they were inadequate for the trip. Chris was not living deliberately as he wasn't being strategic, he brought less than the minimum it would take for him to survive in the wilderness. "Alex's cheap leather hiking boots were neither waterproof nor well insulated. His rifle was only .22 caliber, a bore too small to rely on if he expected to kill large animals like moose and caribou, which he would have to eat if he hoped to remain very long in the country". He had no way to survive correctly and his attire was not suited for the harsh weather conditions of Alaska. His feet would have frozen in his boots as they were not supposed to be used in Alaska. The gun he brought would have been useless against the bigger animals in the country. He also did not bring much of the essential things needed to live, food. "Alex admitted that the only food in his pack was a ten-pound bag of rice". He only brought rice to him as rations for his trip while the gear he brought was not enough to get him decent food to survive for the entire trip which led to him dying of starvation. The food was an inadequate amount for what he was planning to do. A 10-pound bag of rice would not last that long

While he did get some advice, he did not get it from the right people as he got advice from hunters in a different state for his trip to Alaska. "Alaskan hunters know that the easiest way to preserve meat in the bush is to slice it into thin strips and then air-dry it on a makeshift rack. But McCandless, in his naivete, relied on the advice of hunters he'd consulted in South Dakota". South Dakota is a completely different environment than Alaska as it does not have the snowy forests that Alaska has. He should have known this but he disregarded the fact which led to him losing the moose he killed. He also ignored some of the advice he got and while he was an avid reader of books, he did not read the books that would have let him survive in Alaska. "McCandless is, finally, just a pale 20th-century burlesque of London's protagonist, who

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freezes because he ignores advice and commits bigtime hubris)... His ignorance, which could have been cured by a USGS quadrant and a Boy Scout manual, is what killed him". He could have survived if he had read some survival guides that would have been pretty easy to have gotten or if he had asked advice to any hunters who have hunted in Alaska before as he would have gotten advice from those who are familiar with what to do and the terrain that he would have found himself in. If he had researched this, he would have been able to survive out in the wilderness as he would have been able to gain some of the much-needed skills to live in Alaska. While he did have an edible plants guide, it was not very useful in Alaska even though it allowed him to live for more time

When Chris was dying of starvation, he only put out a note taped on the front of the bus he was staying at to show that he was dying. He could have done many other things, but he only put a note which could have taken forever to find or even have flown off if there had been a storm in the area. "The door was ajar, and taped to it was a disquieting note. Handwritten in neat block letters...". He could have made a fire to have sent out signals that he was there or many other things. He decided to stay at the bus to slowly die rather than trying to do more to stop it. He wasn't prepared for what he was going to be facing in the wilderness and he died because of it. The note proved that he was not prepared for his adventure and that he should have taken more care of what was going to happen on the trip.

He did not learn from many others who have made the same mistakes like Charles McCunn who brought more than enough items to stay on his trip but he forgot to arrange for transportation back to his city so he died out there because he did not read his license correctly which would have let him correctly signal the plane passing him overhead that he would need help. Like McCandles, McCunn also had an oversight which would eventually lead to his death just like McCandles lead to his. "McCunn looked on the back of his hunting license and understood why. Printed on the little square of paper were drawings of emergency hand signals for communicating with aircraft from the ground". If he read that before he would have known the proper way to signal the plane that he needed help so he would have been able to leave with his life intact.

Chris was also very set in his ways by not allowing anyone to give him gifts that could have helped him on his trip. "Burrell also got McCandles to accept some long underwear and other warm clothing she thought he'd need in Alaska. "He eventually took it to shut me up," she laughs, "but the day after he left, I found most of it in the van". He did not really let people give him charity and when they did, he would always argue heavily against them giving it to him. Some people had to lie to him to let him let them give them rides or gifts. Whenever he was offered money, he got really offended to the people offering it to him. If he accepted the gifts that he declined, he would have been better prepared for what was going to happen on his Alaska trip. One of the people he met offered to get him better gear for his trip but he declined

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and went into the wilderness with a gun that was not a high enough caliber to kill some of the animals he would have to kill to survive.

He gave his money away to charity which was good for those the charity benefited he didn't have any money himself, so he lost some money he could have used to better stock himself up. He burnt the cash that was in his wallet, left his car inside a river, and gave away most of his possessions so he could live what he says is living deliberately. "Shortly thereafter, he donated the balance of his bank account to OXFAM, loaded up his car, and vanished from their lives". He left his cash to a charity which while noble was stupid as it left nothing for him to use in case of emergencies. He had no way to get better gear for his trip and no way to get things he would need in emergencies. He had supplies that were not suited to his location and refused help from others wishing to get him better supplies which caused his downfall. He did not think of everything that he would need causing him to not have any money to get what he requires

When Chris left his family didn't know a thing that was happening as he made sure they wouldn't know that he had left on his journey to Alaska. "Chris had instructed the post office to hold them until August 1, apparently so we wouldn't know anything was up". He cut himself off from his family without telling them of his plans making them worry for him when he was drifting around the country. When they realized he was gone it had been five weeks already so they could not find him. He had done this before going on trips by himself but this one was the last one that he had.

Living deliberately is to live to your ideals but to go about it doing it smartly. While McCandles lived to his on ideals, he did not go about it intelligently which caused his numerous lack of successes eventually leading to his death. To me living deliberately is to live by looking at the past to not repeat the mistakes of others and to always be prepared for everything that could happen. McCandles was not prepared for what he was going to face as he went out with barely any supplies and the supplies that he did bring were inadequate for the Alaskan wilderness. He got advice from the wrong people not using his common sense to differentiate between hunting in South Dakota and hunting in Alaska. Instead of doing anything else he put a note at the door of the bus he was residing in that he was dying hoping for someone to come even though he could have done numerous amounts of things to do. Many people have made the same mistakes as him before and after his time. He could have investigated this to find out what not to do. His story was also publicized so quite a few people should have known the mistakes he made but did the same thing. He was very stubborn in not letting anyone give him charity throughout his trip and if they did, he would usually return it to them. The money he did have at the start of the trip he gave away and burned instead of using it to get better supplies so he would have been more prepared. He had left without telling his family anything making him seem immature as he had stopped talking to them earlier for something his father had done in his youth. Chris McCandles did not live deliberately but instead lived foolishly by rejecting those

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who wanted to help him or doing actual research on the wilderness himself. To live deliberately you have to have your ideas of what you should do but you must do it astutely to make sure that you have no problems with what is happening.

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