

Reading One's Obituary

In the book *Is It Real When It Doesn't Work?*, Doug Murren and Barb Shurin tell a story that prompts serious reflection on life.

Toward the end of the 19th century, Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel awoke one morning to read his own obituary in the local newspaper. The account said this: "Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, who died yesterday, devised a way for more people to be killed in a war than ever before, and he died a very rich man."

Actually, it was Alfred's older brother who had died; a newspaper reporter had bungled the epitaph.



But the published article had a profound effect on Nobel. He decided he wanted to be known for something other than developing the means to kill efficiently and for amassing a fortune in the process. So he initiated the Nobel Prize, the award for scientists and writers who foster peace.

Nobel said, "Every man ought to have the chance to correct his epitaph in midstream and write a new one."

Nobel's story and his comment affirm this truth: Few things will change us as much as looking at our life as though it is finished.

– Beecher Hunter