

Guidebook to Personal LifeLook®

How to check your psychological age,
test the real significance of your life events,
better understand yourself, and
map out your future life in NEW, more meaningful ways
using the computer software
created by Aleksandr Kronik, Ph.D., Sc.D.,
with Alexey Pajitnov and Boris Levin in 1991
and brought to America in 1999.



LifeLook.Net
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From the book, *Causometry: Methods of Self-Knowledge, Psychodiagnostics and Psychotherapy*,
by A.Kronik & R. Akhmerov (Moscow, Russia: Smysl, 2003). Translated and adopted with permission.

Contents

What can you expect in private dialogue with LifeLook? → Page 3

- 1 In Five-year periods: check your psychological age → 3
- 2 Events: start a voyage in your past and journey to your future → 4
- 3 Dates: compose your timeline → 6
- 4 Spheres: define your priorities → 6
- 5 Colors: express your feelings → 7
- 6 Goals: audit your intentions → 7
- 7 Minutes: measure the speed of your psychological time → 8
- 8 Causes: search your own karma → 9
- 9 Significance: find how wise you are → 10
- 10 LifeMap: reveal the plot of your life → 10
- 11 Personality portrait: know yourself or change yourself → 11
- 12 Further opportunities: look at someone else's life → 17

Publications → 19

What can you expect in your private dialogue with LifeLook?

First of all,
find time, place and a computer
so that nobody will disturb
your recollections and dreams
for about two hours.

You are to go through
nine biographic self-analysis procedures:
Five-year Periods,
 Events,
 Dates,
 Spheres,
 Emotions,
 Goals,
 Minute,
 Causes,
 Significances.

After this, you will be able
to make a psychological voyage over your life map,
to more precisely determine the role of each event,
to look at your personality portrait and even
discover some change opportunities in it.

1. In Five-year periods: check your psychological age

To begin with,
you will have to set the date of "today",
the date of your birthday and
the age you hope you will live to,
then evaluate different periods as regards their
saturation with events of importance to you.
As a result, something will appear on the screen that
resembles a mountain landscape with peaks, canyons and valleys.
"Life is a mountain..." - said de Maupassant.
Every day a person should climb the mountain of
his/herself and survey their countryside (Kahlil Gibran).

This simple biographic test is rather reliable for measuring
your psychological age at the moment.
What is the psychological age?
This is an index of how young, mature or old your soul is;
by most people, it differs
from the calendar, social or even biological age.

To determine the psychological age,
 the program first calculates an index of your life expectations
 that have come true (0 to 100 per cent).
 If you can't remember anything important in your past
 and expect a lot from the future, it's close to zero.
 Many events in the past
 and nothing in your future account for 100 %.

Now, the psychological age (PA) can be determined
 using the formula: $PA = L \times R$,
 where L is the index your subjective longevity,
 and R is the index of your subjective life realization.

So with a high rate of projects implemented and with a long life ahead
 you can find yourself older than you may expect.
 This is, in brief, the simple idea behind the equation of psychological age.
 Be alert, while evaluating the five-year periods.
 Don't be lazy to think about the future!

Thus, you have admired the "mountain landscape" and
 discovered your psychological age.
 A footstep in your momentary state of mind is made.

2. Events: start a voyage in your past and journey to your future

Imagine all your life as a whole entity.
 From birth to death (even children do so.)
 You may go beyond these conventional limits if
 an afterlife beckons you.
 Fancy you are creating a film about yourself
 and need to track down the main frames (events)
 of your past, present and future (yes, future also!).

Events may be any changes in your inner and outer world:
 natural disasters and political reforms,
 personal flights and falls,
 loves and disappointments,
 losses and discoveries,
 meetings and partings,
 illnesses and recoveries,
 academic/sport achievements,
 travels,
 successes and failures of friends, children, relatives...
 and their influences on you.
 Any change in life is an event.
 Let us agree: when we say "event"

we shall always imply a particular change
 which occurs at a point in time,
 so that it is possible to approximate its date.
 There are also longer stages in life,
 but for LifeLook, an "event" will be either the beginning,
 or the end, or the culmination.
 For example, not "education at a college" (a rather long stage),
 but "entering a college", "graduating from it"
 or something from the student life
 that has "really stuck in your memory"
 will be considered events.

Write down titles for events on the cards that appear on the screen;
 do it in any succession as they cross your mind.
 Call them whatever you like,
 the main thing is that they are to be clear for you and not very long.
 You will input a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 21 events.
 The more you input, the more reliable the conclusions of LifeLook are.

15 and 21 are not accidental numbers and no tribute to passion for cards.
 Experiments show that less than 15 events
 is insufficient to construct a complete enough picture of your life-span.
 On the other hand,
 the number of significant events is limited
 and their composition surely changes over time:
 events that appear important now may sink in memory later on.
 It turns out that an average of 21 events
 will stay among the "selected",
 i.e. among the most important events for several years.
 The remainder give way to new events, feelings and plans.

It is interesting, that
 medieval icon-painters appear to have known it without any calculations.
 When depicting the life-span of a saint,
 they restricted themselves in most cases
 to fifteen-twenty episodes from his/her holy life.
 This program follows the example of the old masters.

Although we are not saints, each one of us can succeed
 in identifying 21 events in our lives. Find them without fail,
 let it be as little as 15 and as insignificant as these may seem.
 Later, perhaps, something more important (or new) may come to
 your mind that has been accidentally forgotten.
 If by that time you have used all the cards,
 you will have to sacrifice a former event,
 i.e. delete the old title and write a new one.

3. Dates: compose your timeline

Put the date on each card and do it with maximum accuracy (year, season or month, date, if possible).

When the event has already occurred, try to remember exactly when it happened.

If it is a future event, indicate its supposed date.

You say it is difficult?

Imagine that this event will occur all the same, whether you wish it or not.

Now try to guess: when exactly?

Type in years and dates using number keys, select seasons and months with the cursor.

By the way, the winter starts with January and February only in the LifeLook calendar as December rests with the prior year in order not to confuse successive years.

You may notice that some card still refers to a stage, not event.

Think once more what is more important: the beginning, the end or the culmination, and indicate a more concrete date.

Specify the name of the event at the same time.

Be careful, check the event sequence.

The frames of the future film about you must appear in the real or the most probable chronological order.

4. Spheres: define your priorities

Please lift a little the curtain of mystery covering the symbols of events.

LifeLook has respect for personal secrets and doesn't demand excess frankness.

You will only have to attribute different events to the seven spheres offered for selection:

experience with nature,
 social & political life,
 work & business life,
 family life,
 inner life,
 health,
 leisure

(an event may simultaneously refer to several spheres, but, please, don't forget to specify the main one).

The program will form a preliminary opinion of you and organize a subsequent dialogue more efficiently.

5. Colors: express your feelings

Let us color the events.

From the palette offered on the screen you need to select the color you associate with the event. The film becomes a color one, like your life.

Indicate the colors you like most.

LifeLook will determine your attitude to the events and tell it to you later.

6. Goals: audit your intentions

The hero of our imaginary film is yourself.

LifeLook helps understand your goals in life.

A goal is the thing you wish (wished) to achieve or avoid, to bring nearer or postpone by undertaking an action (event).

The goals and the results do not always coincide.

The simplest example of their difference is:

you go to buy a box of matches and suddenly meet a good friend there.

Certainly, you met because of the visit to the shop, but you went to the shop not to see your friend.

On the screen the situation will look as follows:

----- I went shopping -----	----- I went shopping -----
> definitely in order to bring about probably in order to bring about possibly in order to bring about independent of possibly in order to avoid probably in order to avoid definitely in order to avoid -----	definitely in order to bring about probably in order to bring about possibly in order to bring about > independent of possibly in order to avoid probably in order to avoid definitely in order to avoid -----
I have bought matches -----	meeting my friend -----

The cursor (>) denotes the presence of an objective connection in the first case and the lack of such in the second.

True, some people happen to go shopping
in order to seek for an opportunity to make an acquaintance.
In this case, one will have to select
one of the lines containing the word "achieve".

Thus, think of your goals attentively.
Different pairs of events will appear on the screen;
you will have to note, if one of them is a goal of the other.
Some events may happen to have no goals
(not everything occurs for some purpose in life).
There happen, however,
to be subconscious, half-forgotten goals,
which, for some reasons,
you would not like to speak about even to yourself.
You have a chance to have a more mature look at your life.

The program offers a short and a full procedure of goal analysis.
In the short variant you only need to analyze
the most probable goal-related pairs of events given by LifeLook.
The program sorts them out judging their relative significance
(the order of card creation and evaluation of five-year periods they belong to).
LifeLook considers as highly significant the relations
between very significant events, close by dates and spheres of life.

The short, introductory procedure completed,
you may start the full goal analysis.
You will only need enough time and patience,
as the number of possible combinations can be impressive,
especially if you made more than 15 event cards.
An expert biographer will work his way through,
but for a casual talk with LifeLook it's not really necessary.

7. Minutes: measure the speed of your psychological time

In order to let your eyes rest a little and
to distract you from serious reflections,
LifeLook will propose an exercise in time estimation.

This will not only be an interesting, but
also a useful thing to do.
You may become too keen on it,
so we advise you not to turn
a minute of relaxation into an hour of entertainment.

8. Causes: search your own karma

The goals are already known, but
the plot of the film is unclear yet.
Why have these or those events occurred?
What favored them and what hindered them?
Why did they happen?

The goal of an event is always ahead of it,
in the future with respect to the event;
the cause is behind it, in the past.
Causes may be any earlier events,
owing to or in spite of (in defiance of) which
this particular event takes place.
It is difficult to list all the causes even for one event,
but some of them may happen to occur on your list.

As before,
different pairs of events will appear on the screen;
you will have to unravel the threads of causes and consequences
by selecting with the cursor the most true,
from your point of view,
statement on the nature of their connection.
Take, for example, the familiar pair
(let's imagine that you've promised not to see that friend any more):

----- meeting my friend -----	----- meeting my friend -----
definitely because of probably because of possibly because of independent of possibly despite of probably despite of > definitely despite of	> definitely because of probably because of possibly because of independent of possibly despite of probably despite of definitely despite of
----- my promise -----	----- I went shopping -----

The relations are obvious here.
But it may be more complicated when you shuffle the events of your real life.
When you feel one event helps or hinders another,
do indicate this.

9. Significance: find how wise are you

Now, at last, you will be able
to know the value (significance) of each event.
You will evaluate events by significance, and
LifeLook will tell you its opinion of how realistic your evaluations are
and why you may sometimes make mistakes.
How does the program know this?
- From an analysis of your previous answers.

To obtain the real value of a particular event
LifeLook has calculated the number of
its causal and goal-oriented connections.
Psychological studies have shown:
the number of interconnections with other events reflect
how intimately it is intertwined with the life substance,
how important it is.

In everyday life, it may be difficult to
realize all the existing connections:
part of them are not actual,
others undesirable and
some too weak to pay attention to them.
Various psychological barriers and defenses
often lead to peculiar illusions:
we make a mountain out of a molehill,
consider really significant events to be trifles of life.
If you want a sober look at the reality devoid of illusion,
see what you get in LifeLook's charts.

10. LifeMap: reveal the plot of your life

The LifeMap drawn by LifeLook is
a graphic representation of the events and their interconnections.
By the colors it is easy to see the relation between
the psychological past (blue lines of recollections),
present (red lines of feelings), and
future (green lines of expectations).

For a person familiar with mathematics,
LifeMap is a graph.
The vertices (events) lie along the following coordinate axes:
the vertical line is the significance of an event and
the horizontal one, the age when it occurred or is expected.

When an event has occurred before the birthday date (these things do happen!)

or is expected after the supposed maximum age (such things also happen!), then it lies a little to the left or to the right of the horizontal axis.

Events are connected with lines, each line represent a connection: of achievement or evasion, of positive or negative consequences.

For a person familiar with psychology, LifeMap shows a plot of your life.

By talking with LifeLook you became not only the hero of your psychologic film, but also its scriptwriter.

The script is finished for now.

It is time to see the episodes of the film, i.e.

to make a trip from the "long ago" to the "not very soon".

LifeLook will be your guide in the journey.

You will learn what significance every event plays in your script:

when the morning of your life starts,

the afternoon comes and the night falls.

Be prepared for surprises:

the clock of your life and the calendar do not always coincide.

11. Personality portrait: know yourself or change yourself

In the conclusion you will receive

a text with a description of your personal characteristics.

LifeLook will reveal your of the psychological age,

determine the scale of your intentions,

your attitude toward life difficulties,

sense of reality,

emotional sensitivity,

satisfaction with life,

desire and ability to plan life,

self-confidence,

your general human type and lifestyle, and

will also tell you what has changed in your character recently

and what is about to change in the near future.

Descriptions are based on 35 basic calculated in different procedures indices.

Their combinations provide hundreds of portraits, one of them will be yours.

Let's consider briefly the meaning of main characteristics

and the possibility of psychological auto correction.

It can be done after getting familiar with the portrait

by calling the necessary procedures anew.

Of course, self-improvement comes after a honest self-analysis

(just as it is better to smooth your hair while looking at yourself in the mirror.)

Subjective life realization and age

The first thing to be said in your portrait is the implementation of your life intentions, 0 to 100 per cent, i.e. the index of your subjective live realization. The last thing is the psychological age (we have already discussed it in the description of the Five-year periods).

When your subjective realization and psychological age seems too high, it is wise to revise the evaluations of the five-year periods: to find bolder prospects or, alas, to evaluate your past more moderately. In any case, you will get a chance to become younger.

Those who wish to become more mature will, however, have to extract a more valuable experience from the past; if it doesn't work, you can only moderate your dreams. This is the price for being adult.

Age correction will remain only a curious "mind aerobic", if you don't add new important events of the future (when wishing to become younger) or the past (when wishing to become more mature) to your modified evaluations.

At least go to LifeLook's "information on events", write down titles for the new events (use blank cards or less important ones), think over their dates, spheres and colors. And if you reanalyze your goals and causes of your new events, well, then your efforts will bear fruit without fail: your LifeMap will change and your psychological age will essentially change with it.

Strategic thinking

LifeLook will reveal many other things between the lines on implementation and age. First, it will determine you as a strategist, tactician or a person preoccupied with the current situation.

The concept is based on the life intention's scale, which is proportional to the time terms of the goals, causes and sequences you are able to trace, and your confidence in revealing dependencies between different life events. Each of the types, i.e. a strategist, a tactician and a situationist,

has its benefits and disadvantages.

At the same time, studies show that people with large-scale intentions have a more responsible attitude to the past and the future, find their vocation quicker and more accurately.

Therefore,

look for a fulcrum in a more distant past or future when the life seems to lose its sense for you.

Go to LifeLook's "information on events", replace insignificant events by deeper recollections and more distant expectations.

Turn to the procedures' "causes" and "goals" then, look for your new sources and prospects more confidently.

For sure you will find

that not all the fruits of your glorious deeds have ripened yet;

there is energy and audacity to begin

a project which may take more than a life to implement.

(And if the life turns out to be enough?

A strategist has more than one life, you know.)

And after that, follow Dr. Hans Selye's rule:

"Aim at the highest goal accessible for you and do not enter a struggle for trifles."

Difficulties

LifeLook recognizes your problems by the words "despite" and "avoid" that you have used in analyzing causes and goals.

The number of negative connections in the total sum states how easy or difficult your life actually is.

There are people ascetically seeking difficulties; such is their temperament.

But if you feel an excess of difficulties,

try to train yourself at least not to focus on them.

Returning to "goals" and "causes" procedures will help you.

Try to use the words "maybe, despite" or "maybe, evade"

instead of "surely/most likely, despite", "surely/most likely, evade"

where it doesn't essentially change the sense of your answers.

And sometimes,

it is worth not trying to evade the unavoidable at all

and to note the independence of the events

that appeared to hinder each other.

There is another way to withstand difficulties:

maybe, you are not using all the available resources and

will notice new means to achieve your goals and new favorable conditions, if you ponder it better.

Besides, is it worth doubting,

"When am I going to achieve something"?

It is better to say "most likely" or even "surely" instead of "maybe to achieve" with more confidence.

If this training helps you modify the respective traits on your portrait, it may also help you make your real life easier.

Sense of reality

The following fragment of the portrait characterizes your sense of reality in evaluating the significance of events. Your evaluations may be close to the real status of events, independent or even contradict it.

Personal characteristics, such as independence, conformity, acceptance of reality or a powerful psychological defense stated in different statements correspond to these variants.

Improve your sense of reality by going through the "significances" procedure once more.

The developers of the program nicknamed this procedure "sage", since it teaches you to be real in evaluating achievements and failures.

Emotions and satisfaction

The conclusions about emotional sensitivity, optimism and pessimism are drawn on the basis of color preferences and the way different events are colored.

If you prefer to see events in extreme colors (very pleasant or very unpleasant for you), LifeLook will note that you are rather emotional.

Your optimism status depends on how often you color events in pleasant colors. The same idea is behind the conclusions about your emotional attitude to different events.

Pay attention to the opinion of LifeLook; it reflects the feelings you are sometimes not aware of. As a result of a successful biographic self-analysis, these feelings often become better, so go back to "colors" once more and color everything as if it were for the first time.

Even without changing events, you will find more bright feelings and satisfaction with life.

Desire and ability to plan. Confidence

Your desire and ability to plan life is easy to determine by comparing the results of the goal analysis and the causes analysis. Your persistence is reflected by the words "achieve" and "evade".

If your friends say you are too practical-minded, we recommend you try to mention the words "achieve" and "evade" not so often in your next talk with LifeLook or to smooth them (use the terms "most likely" and "maybe" instead of "surely" where it doesn't infringe your principles).

If you notice that you are "going with the stream", look once again (more attentively and confidently) for goals among the events available.

There are mistakes in any plans:
the assumed assistants sometimes create obstacles in achieving the preplanned;
different ways of avoiding troubles may even bring them closer
(for example, sporting exercises for preventing diseases are fraught with serious injuries themselves).
To reveal such mistakes, the program compares the goals and means with the consequences assumed by you and the causes of different events. After that, it will tell you whether you are selecting the means for achieving your life goals well or not. Surely, to err is human. But when there are many mistakes, it makes sense to slightly correct your statements in the procedures "causes" and "goals".

The more categorical you are in these statements, considering events to be "surely" connected or not connected with each other, the more confident you look on your portrait. To be tolerant to "most likely" and "maybe" means to become softer.

Human type. Lifestyle

We are all Homo sapiens according to Linnaeus. LifeLook has respect of the opinion of not only this famous scientist, but also those thinkers who defined man as

Homo politicus, Homo faber, Homo ludens, Homo patient, Homo liber...

Following this tradition,
the program contains typology of:
public-oriented person,
nature-oriented person,
work-oriented person,
domestic person,
inwardly-oriented person,
health-oriented person,
leisure-oriented person.

The type you belong to depends on what spheres
are most saturated with significant events and connections.
People of one type live as if in the same World,
the same Home, the same life space.

But their lifestyles may differ essentially:
everybody has his own way to happiness.

The program describes lifestyle with the following coordinates:
contemplative - active, ascetic - hedonistic.
There are a total of 13 principal styles,
which are determined correlating diverse connections between events.
Psychologically, every connection is
your unique response to basic questions:
How do I improve? How do I get know to myself?
How can I know the world around me, and then use it to my benefit?

Your Type and Style are fundamental personality characteristics
which are difficult to change without betraying yourself and
which, therefore, need no correction.
If somebody is not pleased with them,
you may increase the distance in communication with the person
instead of breaking your personality.

Dynamics and forecast

Your general characteristics will be
supplemented with conclusions about the features that tend to change.

LifeLook analyses the distinguishing features of three moments in your life:
the current moment,
the nearest past (before the last past event was implemented) and
the nearest future (after an assumed implementation of the first future event).

The program compares the respective indices at present, in the nearest past and the nearest future and tells you how your character has changed since the last event and how it may change after the next event.

12. Further opportunities: look at someone else's life

The main purpose of LifeLook is to help you in psychological analysis of your private life. In addition, the program may be of use in analyzing life lines of other people.

It is an interesting but not a simple task to comprehend the life of a husband or wife, children, friends, parents, partners, political figures and other famous people...

To do it, you will have to transform yourself mentally into another person and have a talk with LifeLook as if it were him. We are sure you will make many discoveries although you will see how incomplete your notions are of even the people closest to you. Such an experience will surely make you more attentive to them.

The program may also become a good assistant for those having a profession that demands deep penetration in the life story and life prospects of other people, i.e. for a teacher, an historian, a reporter, a lawyer, a writer, and a psychotherapist.

We hope that, besides the casual curiosity and the professional interest of a specialist, LifeLook will satisfy creative demands of a playwright, a producer, an actor who have to invent and play lives of invented characters. The program transforms from a "mirror of time" into a specific "biography designer."

Here is an example of how Peter Stormare, a Swedish actor, performer of Hamlet at the Royal Dramatic Theater by Ingmar Bergman, used it.

When the theater was on tour in Moscow, Russia, Dr. A. Kronik addressed Mr. Stormare with

a proposal to analyze Hamlet's life using the program.
 Peter was very kind and spent two hours talking to LifeLook.
 Dr. Kronik invited Mr. Stormare to his office,
 and the actor proceeded to interact using
 the LifeLook computer program in the persona of Hamlet.

We wished to understand what had been the psychological background
 against which the father's death befell Hamlet.
 So Peter Stormare was asked to recreate Hamlet's inner life
 and intentions a month before the tragic events begin:
 the King is alive and the Prince exercises his usual lifestyle.

In Bergman and Stormare's interpretation,
 Hamlet did not live in Shakespearean times at all, rather,
 the setting was laid in times preceding World War I.
 Stormare's Hamlet meditates on his past and future,
 finds 15 most important events, discovers their causes, goals;
 in a word, he works with LifeLook.
 He sees his own life as follows.

Hamlet became aware of the gift of God,
 which was one of the two most valuable events,
 at the age of 11, half a year before his sister died.
 At the age of 17, he fell in love for the first time and
 at the age of 20 he left home with feelings far from being pleasant.
 In May 1908, at the age of 26, he wrote his first book
 and in July got married.

Hamlet is thirty years old.
 What does he expect?
 What presentiments does he have?

The picture of the nearest future is rather gloomy:
 his father's death in a year,
 Hamlet's divorce in two years, war in four years.
 After that murky period,
 by the age of 34, Hamlet hopes to meet the mother of his future son.
 At the age of 37 he is glad to devote himself to creative work in literature,
 at 42, he intends to become a member of the Academy.
 By all appearances, it is the peak of his creative abilities,
 After that only his diseased eyes and mother's death are left for him.

Such are Hamlet's intentions and
 the state of his spirit on the verge of tragic changes.
 It seems that he goes to meet them.
 We shall not go deep into the analysis of his complicated fate.

Now, with LifeLook at your disposal,
you can try any role yourself and
and better understand people you care about.

Publications

The ideas behind LifeLook were described in the following publications:

- 1984 Golovakha E.I, Kronik A.A.
Psychological time of personality.
Kiev, Ukraine: Naukova dumka.
In Russian.
- 1991 Kronik A.A., Levin B.M., Pajitnov A.L.
LifeLine®: The biographical tests and meditations.
Moscow, Russia: ParaGraph.
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- 1993 Kronik A. A. (Editor and contributing author.)
LifeLine® and others new methods of life course psychology.
Moscow: Russia: Progress.
In Russian.
- 1999 Kronik A.A., Akhmerov R.A., Speckhard A.
Trauma and disaster as life disrupters:
A model of computer-assisted psychotherapy
applied to adolescent victims of the Chernobyl disaster.
In: Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, Vol. 30, No. 6.
- 2003 Kronik A.A., Akhmerov R.A.
Causometry: Methods of self-knowledge,
psychodiagnostics and psychotherapy.
Moscow, Russia: Smysl.
In Russian.