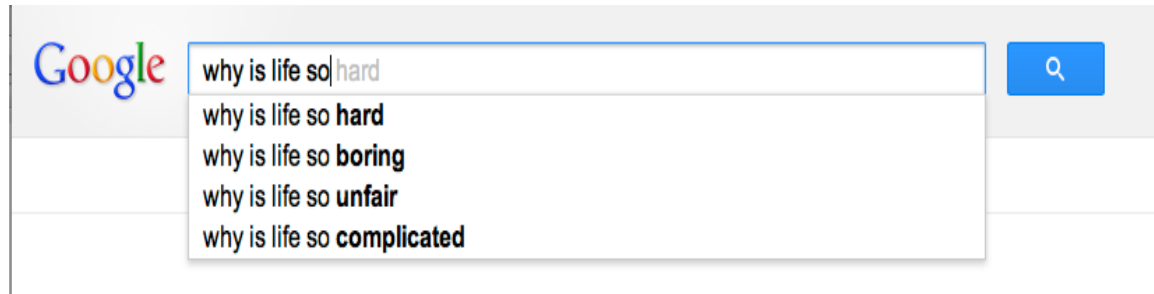


When you type in the phrase “why is life so” in Google search these are the suggestions you will receive:



Life is often perceived as such an intimidating place because as humans, we are inherently vulnerable beings. Existing in such a vast and expansive universe is scary, complicated, hard, and everything in between.

In the grand scheme of things, we are so very small, in a largely unknown place. The longer we continue to live on this planet, in this universe, the more we begin to realize the true reality of the situation. Time is precious and our lifetime is one of mortality; simply meaning that each moment we have in life is completely unique and unpredictable. Knowing this, how can we find a sense of sanity and comfort in our day to day lives?

### **We're All Gonna Die**

*Death*, nearly impossible to discuss without sounding like a sentimental nut case, is a harsh reality that most people choose to ignore as much as possible. A possibility that is actually more than just that; it's a guarantee. Sometimes a doctor can offer a prediction; maybe he'll give you 2 or 3 weeks. But he *really* doesn't know. Ultimately, our lives are finite and our deaths are unpredictable.

Do you remember the first time you got news that someone you truly loved had died? Maybe you felt instantly nauseated, maybe you had no words, maybe you cried, but maybe you laughed. Laughing is a common reaction to news of tragedy. Unexplainable and strange, laughter is nonetheless a valid reaction that your body produces uncontrollably. You may feel wrong for doing so, as you see nothing obviously funny about the current situation. But maybe your body is on to something. When you take a step back from the immediate rush of sadness, and look at the reality of the situation with no personal emotion attached, you might begin to see that it *is* funny. Not necessarily funny as in *hahaha*, but funny as in peculiar and absurd.

### **Waiting for [Something]**

Sometimes we like to believe that our lives are a continuous narrative. A story of sorts: with a beginning middle and end, plot twists and triumphs alike. As Kurt Vonnegut wrote in his novel, *Cat's Cradle*, "God never wrote a good play in His life." Meaning that, if we do consider our lives to be individual “shows” and “plays,”

and God himself is the “director,” he sure did do a poor job due to the continuum of tragedy and anxiety we face day after day. Life is unpredictable and scattered and so often confusing, it would make a horrible play. Life is simply too unpredictable to and fragile be intentional.

The idea of life being unplanned and totally at random is much believed by the Absurdist movement. A movement which embraced spontaneity of life and made a point not to dwell too hard on the “meaning” of things. They believed that because we have freedom to do as we please and our lives were not planned out by an author, nothing ever really happens the way it's "supposed to." There is no “supposed to;” things just happen. Nothing is a plot device and there is no logical reasoning.

The 1953 French play, *Waiting for Godot*, written by Samuel Beckett, is an absurdist play about two men who are waiting for a character who never shows up. While waiting, they sleep, think, sing, trade hats and consider suicide. Nothing really “happens” in the plot. Just as in life, things don’t always have a particularly satisfying or nice way of working out. We simply touch a few things, love a few people, wait a few years and die once.

### **Eating Cheerios and Feelin’ like a Baby**

Knowing that life is grounded in so much uncertainty and fragility may make you want to never leave the comfort of your own bed in the morning. On the contrary, it may give you such anxiety that you can’t seem to sit still, feeling rushed and like there just isn’t enough time in the day. Maybe you feel a sense of nothingness or emptiness, or nostalgia for time you know you can never get back. You are not contemplating death, or the present life you are living. You are looking at the past, all the moments your memory was able to hang on to. How time can seem to move both fast and slow amazes you and often stops you in your tracks.

*You are sitting on a couch listening to traffic sounds and birds and other reliable things. And you feel like there is something you are supposed to be doing but it hasn’t been brought to your direct attention so you keep sitting. You feel comfortable, but not comfortable enough to stay. You get up to make a bowl of Cheerios. You open the fridge and there is only soymilk. You think that is stupid, not because you don’t like soymilk, but mainly because it is not milk at all. Yet everyone in the world fully accepts calling it milk. You think about other things that people fully accept as something they are not and it puzzles you. You sit back down on the couch with your bowl of Cheerios and fake milk. They make you feel very small, like a baby. You visualize the word “baby” on a big neon sign. You remember that you will never be a baby ever again. You ask yourself how you could ever forget something like that. And in order to never forget it again you write it on a piece of paper and stick it on the fridge. So now, whenever you open the fridge for something like box wine or fake milk, you will remember that your baby days are over and for the most part you feel okay about that but parts of you feel a little sad. You want to ask everyone on earth if they feel the same way, mostly okay but a little sad. You think that if you are ever going to truly do that, you should probably get started while your knees are still young. But instead, you continue to eat Cheerios with fake milk while listening to reliable sounds on a couch*

*while feeling okay but a little sad about most everything in the world but mainly about the fact that you will never be a baby ever again.*

### **Laugh it Off**

So, why is life so hard? So fragile? So unfair? These questions are as simple as they are unanswerable. And if you actually make that Google search happen, you will find close to 2,000,000,000 results from people all around the world chiming in with their own opinions. Scrolling through the first few links, it is easy to see that no one has a solid answer.

We spend each day getting lost in our work and our love. We wait in line or wait for phone calls or wait for the oven timer. When we step back and view our troubles and victories from a different perspective, it is easy to see that we take everything more seriously than is ultimately needed.

I have come to the conclusion that there is no mysterious, unknown force, tripping us as we walk down the street, spilling hot soup into our laps, or uniting us with our "soul mate." All events, all things, all people, living or dead, are purely by chance. We are meaningless and walking blindly. And if thought about at the right time, in the right lighting with the right cup of coffee, that can make us feel hopeful, rather than hopeless. Hopeful because we know for a fact that life *is* hard and it *is* complicated and one day we *will* die. Hopeful because we don't have all the answers and we know we never will. And maybe that seems sad most of the time, and maybe I can't tell you exactly why it is *okay* that life is all these contradicting things. But think about this: We are spinning at 47,000 miles per hour, suspended, and surrounded by nothing and everything at once. It's no wonder we are struggling each day. Struggling to find our balance in the morning or to stay awake at work. It is insane and nearly nonsensical. Sometimes the only thing to do is laugh.

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