

# Analysis of art hoppe's article how to stay alive

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How To Stay Alive Art Hoppe's essay How to Stay Alive comments on the culture that has grown up around the concept of staying healthy. Of course, this is an important concept in a world where obesity, heart disease, and other illnesses are often caused by unhealthy eating and living habits. However it is very easy to take this idea too far and in this essay Hoppe uses satire to show that within the culture that places high value on staying healthy, there is a subset of people that take the concept to ridiculous extremes. Given the fact that the diet industry, for example, is a multi-billion dollar one despite increasing volumes of evidence that diets simply don't work, this is a very valid concept. The main point of Hoppe's essay is that paying attention to diets and exercise is indeed healthy, but taking it to extremes can take a lot of the fun and joy out of life. Or, to put it another way, a person who lives this way might live longer, but are they really alive, or are they just existing

The subject of the essay, Snadley Klabberhorn, starts out in a reasonable manner, giving up smoking and drinking, which is perfectly reasonable. However, he then stops drinking soda and milk, and gives up eating meat and dairy products in favor of a diet of raw fish. He gives up TV and sex, and does nothing but jog for entertainment until he discovers that this too is "dangerous" and spends the rest of his life alone in a bomb shelter reading the Reader's Digest, which is quite possibly one of the safest and staid publications in the world. At the same time, Snadley finds that his life is becoming less and less enjoyable, with nothing and nobody in it. Art Hoppe uses a satirical and humorous tone in writing this essay to highlight the increasingly bizarre behavior of the subject.

Art Hoppe makes language choices which underline the point of the essay.  
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For example, at the beginning of the piece, Snadley Klabberhorn says "nothing beats being alive". By the end of his life, he is saying "nothing's more important than being alive". This is a subtle change, but it is a telling one - Snadley has gone from saying nothing is better than being alive to saying nothing is more important than being alive. In eliminating many of the things that make life fun, Snadley has found that he isn't really living any more - life is no longer "peachy" when there is nothing in it but the fear of dying.

Another technique used to underline the absurdity of Snadley's behavior is the contrast of the degree of danger of the illnesses that concern him, the likelihood there is of them occurring, and the decreasing quality of Snadley's life as he gives up everything in it. For example at the beginning of the piece, Snadley gives up smoking, which is absolutely reasonable, because it causes lung cancer and emphysema, which are both very unpleasant ways to die. However by the end of the piece, Stanley is living in a bomb shelter in case a meteor falls on the earth, having previously given up jogging outdoors to avoid being bitten by dogs. These are both very unlikely things to occur, and it is clearly ridiculous to live life avoiding such things.

Art Hoppe's article is a warning on the dangers of taking life and health too seriously. In his use of language, tone, and contrast, he humorously and very clearly points out that living a long life is not necessarily to be prized above everything else.