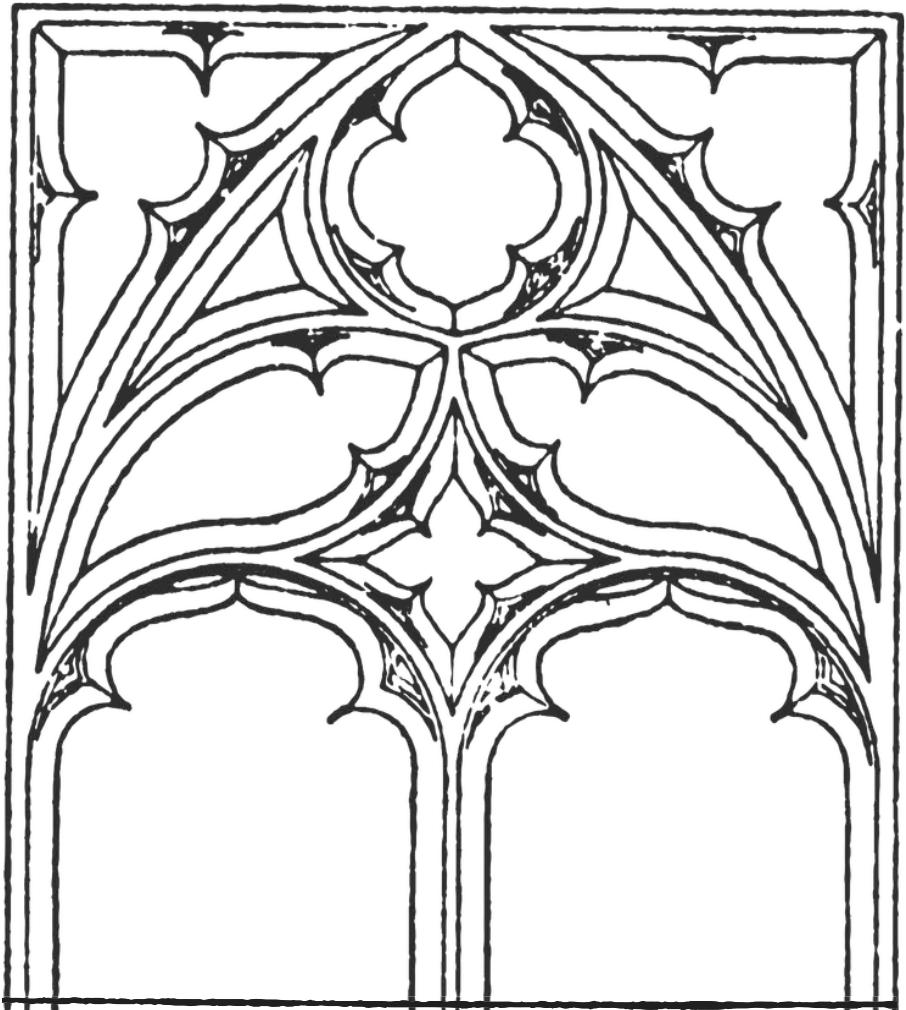


IDE QUESTS

A guide and journal for more adventure and new experiences



Text & Design:	Nienke Brouwer
Illustrations:	Canva
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The side quests in this book are undertaken at your own risk.

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Introduction

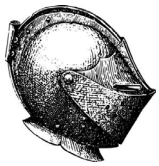
Before you set out on your adventure, you will first learn where side quests come from and what they look like in our daily lives. After that, we will look at what habits are and why it is good to step out of them every now and then. Finally, we will discuss the side quests in this book, and you will learn how to find your own side quests and how to complete them well and safely.

Life in a video game



The word **quest**[1] comes from the Old French word *queste*, which means "search". This in turn comes from the Latin word *quaerere*, which means "to seek". From the end of the 14th century, the word quest was used for a knight's adventurous search.

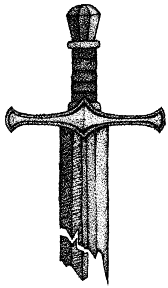
Today, you come across the word a lot in the world of video games, especially in adventure games where you explore a large open world. There are two kinds of quests:



The **main quest** is the most important mission in a video game. It consists of several connected tasks that you need to complete to finish the storyline of the game. This is the main goal you aim for while playing.

Side quests are the shorter, optional missions in the game that are not needed to complete the main story. However, they do make the game more fun and adventurous, and they help your character grow.

The main quest in our lives



In real life, each of us has our own main quests that we try to complete. Because we all have different values and interests, these can vary quite a lot from person to person. Still, there is a theory about which needs we all try to fulfil:

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs[2] is a model that shows the needs of human beings. According to Maslow, the most basic needs usually come first and have to be met before we can focus on the needs above them.

1. Physiological needs
The need for air, food and water, sleep, shelter and sex.

2. Safety needs
The need for safety, a stable living environment, financial security and good health.

3. Social needs
The need for contact with others, love, friendship, family and belonging.

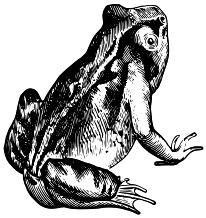
4. Esteem needs
The need for recognition and appreciation from others, status, self-esteem and self-respect.

5. Self-actualisation
Needs such as personal growth, learning, creativity and reaching your full potential.

How these needs are fulfilled is different for everyone. We all lead unique lives: we live in different places, have different kinds of relationships with the people around us and do different kinds of work to earn a living.

The main quests of real life are the most important goals you pursue.

What are the most important goals (main quests) in your life?



Habits make life easier

To fulfil the main quests in your life, you have to carry out a lot of other supporting tasks. On their own, these tasks may not mean very much, but they are necessary to complete the bigger missions in life. To get to your job or studies, for example, you also have to do smaller tasks, such as having breakfast, getting dressed and brushing your teeth.

A lot of these necessary supporting tasks are part of your daily routine and are repeated so often that you no longer need to actively think about all of them. Your brain takes advantage of this by turning these tasks into habits.

A **habit** is behaviour in which your brain no longer has to think consciously, but can act automatically. This saves a lot of effort and energy, so your brain can focus on other, more important things. This mechanism makes your life a lot easier and is essential for keeping your daily life manageable.[3],[4]

Just imagine how much effort it would take if you had to concentrate fully every day on putting on your shoes, thinking about the route to the supermarket or unlocking your phone. Luckily, you do these things almost automatically.



What tasks do you do almost every day? And which of these do you do (almost) automatically, without thinking about it?



Habituation makes life monotonous

So your brain makes achieving your main quest easier by automating recurring tasks. Although this mechanism is super helpful, it also has a downside.

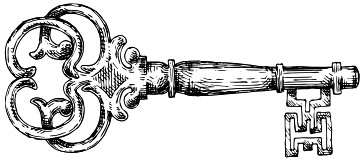
Part of developing habits is habituation. **Habituation** is the brain's reduced response to a stimulus that is repeated often.
Because a situation has happened so many times before, your brain no longer expects it to bring anything new, interesting or important.
You become less alert, and because your brain processes fewer stimuli, your inspiration and creativity are reduced.[5] [6],



Even though you are probably doing what is good for you and the main quest in your life, it can feel like something is missing. Life becomes more and more monotonous when every day looks like the one before. You get bored, uninspired and you start longing for something new.

Everyone can experience this feeling from time to time, but if you feel stuck in the same routines for a longer period of time and it makes you unhappy, you might have ended up in a rut.[7]

Going on side quests is a good way to counter these feelings, because they help you bring more adventure and inspiration back into your life.



Side quests in real life

Just like in a video game, side quests in real life are activities that do not directly contribute to the main quests of your life. These side missions are not required, and you choose them purely for fun or to discover something new. They can give your day an unexpected twist, and sometimes even your life, which keeps things exciting.

A side quest can be anything. It can be a small activity that you weave into your normal daily routine, such as taking a different route home. It can also be something you take some time for at home, such as trying out a new recipe. It can be something more adventurous that takes you out of the house, for example searching for all the works of art in your neighbourhood. And it can even be a bigger journey that takes you away from your usual surroundings for a while, for example exploring a new city or country.

Because side quests do not have to have anything to do with what you normally do, they can feel a bit random. Still, a side quest is something different from a random distraction. You often look for distractions so that you do not have to feel anything for a while. You try to escape from what you do not feel like doing at that moment by not being present. A side quest, on the other hand, is something you choose consciously. You actually want to experience something, to live and to be present in the moment.



Just like a knight on his quest, you do not know beforehand what you will discover on a side quest. This can make it quite scary to step out of your comfort zone. Still, it is definitely worth giving it a try.