Average Dad Series Almanac

Series Outline

Adam is a man who wishes to grow into the role of responsible, attentive father, devoted employee, and regular utiliser of confident eye contact.

He hopes to find a new career after a long bout of unemployment, mend bridges with his frosty mother in law, and regain the respect of his wife, who has taken on the sole burden of supporting the family with full time work.

At least, he hopes to want those things very soon.

He had kind of just assumed the pieces would fall into place once the baby was present. That instinct people talk about. It should kick in, he reasoned, at least by the time the second one arrived.

But subtle are the motivational tendrils that bind Adam—the best mate still living with his parents and siblings at 30, a very comforting weed habit, with harder substances always at arm's reach; no real career prospects or willingness to engage, and the meta awareness that he can skate by in life doing just enough, which felt at first like freedom, but increasingly is its own kind of purgatory.

Adam's enthusiasm and attention are poured into a creative side project that may help him begin to remedy the situation long term, but he has the foreboding sense of his emotional and financial runway evaporating, with no safety net or backup plan, and a forced dissonance necessary to tune it all out—ever present, crushing in at the edges of his once blissful existence.

First Season

Episode 1

We meet Adam, who is, as the title states, about to become a fairly average dad. He sneaks off to the balcony for a quick cone while his pregnant wife Harmony gets ready for work, encouraging him to look for work.

Adam plays soccer with his best friend Pete, who probes him about the changes he will need to make when the baby arrives. Adam foresees them as fairly minimal, cosmetic tweaks to his lifestyle.

A montage spanning four years and two kids brings us back to a similar scene: Adam sneaking out for a cone, gaslighting his wife to avoid any hard questions about the ongoing job search, then tooling around on his phone while he should be getting the eldest ready for kinder.

Adam stumbles through the morning routine and an unpleasant encounter with the kinder teacher, doing his best to care for the baby until his mother in law, Helen—who has no gear other than being an icy bitch—arrives to take over.

Adam sneaks out with his laptop and some joints to work on a project that he codes at a picnic table in a nearby park.

Later, he shows Pete the changes he made to the video game they're working on together, getting some encouraging feedback.

Returning home later that night, Adam hears his kids playing before bed, but heads begrudgingly to the balcony for another cone, sadly aware of the choice but almost powerless not to make it.

Episode 2

Adam attempts to go a whole day without smoking weed when he lands a job interview at 4:20 in the afternoon.

His anxiety is primed not only by the scarcity of such an opportunity, but the fact that the role is with a game studio he wants to work for.

Facing a gauntlet of everyday challenges that align to amplify his stress, Adam gives into temptation only ten minutes before leaving the house, scattering his interview plan to the wind.

Certain that he's already bombed, the interaction goes surprisingly well, leaving him with the hypothesis that his stoned self may in fact be his best self after all, when the studio call with a job offer.

Episode 3

Adam joins an established game studio as a junior coder, struggling to fit in socially and logistically, while keeping up his weed intake throughout the day with complete stealth.

A lunchtime faux pas in the ladies' bathroom sees him fired before his first day is up.

Attempting at first to keep this hidden from his family, it's revealed to them in a humiliating manner that immediately lowers everyone's opinion of him, including his own.

Episode 4

After being fired from his new job, Adam falls into a depressive funk that requires real mental gymnastics to go on ignoring.

Harmony and Helen lose faith in his ability to earn entirely, telling him that realistically, they will have to put the house up for sale, and downsize.

Adam and Pete begin user testing their game with an assortment of degenerate acquaintances.

Episode 5

Distracted by lengthy stretches of progress coding the game, Adam unintentionally begins to explore brief flirtations with sobriety, discovering an unfamiliar feeling—being high on life, and the glowing satisfaction that comes with a handful of small wins.

He's immediately suspicious of the sensation, unable to believe that "high on life" is a real thing, incensed by people who falsely claim it exists to manipulate cooler people into not enjoying drugs, and writing off the idea as placebo effect.

The productivity gaps are fleeting however, and old habits drag him back into familiar patterns.

Episode 6

Adam quits weed intentionally, throwing away his stash after releasing an early beta of the game to intermediate praise.

Snapping at the smallest things, walking around in a constant foul mood, he determines that weed's real benefit has been sparing everyone around him the displeasure of his true resting state as a raging asshole.

Depressed, angry, and even less functional than before, Adam wrestles with the decision to reach out to his dealer.

Episode 7

Adam relapses as players begin to break the game, complaining loudly with harsh criticism directed at Adam personally online.

Helen tells Adam that she doubts he and Harmony will end up living in the same home once the house sells, implying there's extended family pressure to separate.

In a dark moment, Adam asks Pete if he should just disappear for a while, suggesting that he thinks about going on a long walk sometimes, and wonders if everyone he knows would be better off if he kept going.

Episode 8

After Adam and Pete cause a disturbance late at night, Harmony begins to freeze him out entirely, disengaging from him emotionally, clearly going through the motions now.

Feeling that his marriage is on thin ice, Adam leaves the house for a walk, disappearing for several days while hiking the national park near his home.

In the midst of the wilderness he sees a series of signs that feel laid out exclusively for his benefit by a force he can't name.

Episode 9

Adam seeks counselling for his underlying issues, cycling through a range of different therapeutic disciplines before finding his first actionable piece of advice from a member of an obscure church.

Episode 10

With sales of his game barely trickling in and negative user sentiment increasing, Adam begins taking inventory of the things he owns that he can sell.

Having gone through a fairly pedestrian long dark night of the soul, he doubles down on his belief that the update he's currently working on will resolve all issues with the game, and turn the tide on his life's direction.

He has an honest conversation with Harmony, acknowledging his many fuck ups while laying out the next steps he intends to take.

Although she softens somewhat, her uncertainty, and his, leave the matter on something of a cliffhanger.

Second season

After 3 months completely sober, Adam has begun to string a few successes together, with both a full time job and his side project game beginning to find an audience.

When he finds out his boss is a prolific stealth drug taker during work hours, Adam begins to partake again, slipping here and there, keeping up the appearance of success while resuming daily weed smoking and other harder drugs, along with regular work-related drinking sessions—subscribing to a new philosophy of balance through variety (ie uppers in the AM to get out there and crush it, downers in the evening to steer it into a controlled descent).

Moving into an office space with Pete—to produce the next phase of their now successful game—compounds the triggers and enablement, resulting in tension at home with Harmony, and his trademark less than attentive fathering, along with a decent amount of personal embarrassments and unfortunately worded emails slipping past the keeper.

After an indiscretion with a colleague while drinking, Harmony moves in with her mother, leaving Adam alone to look after the kids while their relationship status remains ambiguous.

Third season

Adam begins the long slow process of evaluating what's important, and putting the pieces back together in the right order.

He's surprised to discover that the things that once escaped his attention, or were annoyances, now really matter, and the vices he thought he wanted, when viewed in the hard light of day, exist in his mind like some childhood fantasy of eating birthday cake for every meal.

As this new mindset solidifies, everything really does click for the first time, shifting perspective on the mental journey, reframing it from a gruelling slog to effortless, instinctive action.

His mistakes and lessons learned grow to be more universal insights into how to live well, moving beyond the cartoonish string of fairly obvious cause and effect blunders in which he once seemed destined to remain hamster wheeling.