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A WEBSITE SERVING AS AN ARCHIVE OF MY
DIFFERENT ADVENTURES ON PLANET EARTH...



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An Ordinary Man

I met a nice man the other day. I meet lots of nice people. This man was quite ordinary. He had a family. He had a wife and 2 sons. One of his sons was 7 years old, and had a terrible disease that would cut his life short. He would be lucky to live out his teens.

The emotions I felt when talking with this man were so strong, I nearly cried just conversing with him. The strength it must take to live life knowing that no matter what you do, you will witness the death of your child is something I will never know, and I doubt I have that strength.

I asked him how he dealt with this, and he said "you have no choice, you deal with it." I don't know if this is true. I've run away from obligations, as have plenty of people I know. I've made lots of mistakes in my life. We all have. But, the attitude this man displayed, and the obvious love he had for his child left me in awe.

When we parted, I didn't want to say goodbye. I wanted to help him. I wanted to save his child. I wanted to tell him everything would be fine. But, I don't have that power, and he knows the truth. He knows that there is no hope. He knows he has to cherish every moment.

I don't believe in god. I don't believe things always happen for a reason. I don't know why this kind of thing happens. I do know that I have more respect for the way this man is dealing with his situation than I do for most of the people I have met in my life.

I really wish there was a happy ending to this story, but there won't be.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Church Wasn't so Bad

For most kids having to go to church on Sunday is a chore. For me, it was never a chore, because it always meant having lunch at grandma's house. Grandma was a large woman of Polish descent who could cook like nobody's business. If I close my eyes, I can still smell the pierogi, golabki, and kielbasa that always greeted one's nostrils when entering.

The ritual was to walk to my grandparents house, smell that food, have a sip of grandpa's beer, and go to church. I really never paid much attention to what was happening during the mass. I was an altar boy for a number of years, but I was more focused on getting back to grandma's for that delicious food and more beer. I distinctly remember one Sunday when the four of us kids were in the front row of the church, horsing around, not paying attention, when suddenly, it was obvious we had missed the cue to sit. I could feel every eye in the place staring at us as we continued to elbow each other and laugh quietly, while the priest just looked at us with disdain.

Being Catholic did have some advantages. I used to steal candy from the store across from the church, then go in and confess, so it was ok.

I really do miss those days. I miss grandma's delicious food, grandpa's sneaking of the beer and teaching me to play poker, aunt Betty's record collection (These Boots are Made For Walking was always on), and getting loose change to go get a treat at the corner shop when it was time to go home.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Another Defining Moment in My Adolescence

When I was 11 I had a paper route. My family wasn't well to do, and I liked to buy stuff, so this is what I did. One very cold winter's morning I picked up my bundle of papers, carried them onto the porch, folded and rubber banded them, as one does. Nothing special happened that morning. No dogs attacked me, no birds tried to swoop me, I didn't dodge any cars. I finished my appointed rounds, and went to school. I was a normal, socially adjusted, young boy with a bit of a cheek, and life was good. Until I reported to my home room that morning.

The cold can mess with your sense of smell. As I began to warm, it became apparent that my jacket stunk. In hindsight, it's obvious what happened. I had picked up the bundle of papers, and a cat had sprayed them. That spray had transferred onto my jacket and the smell permeated the classroom.

My teacher, let's call her Ms. Caring, a nearly retired woman noticed the odor. I'm sure if she gave a shit, she would have called me up quietly, whispered in my ear, and suggested I go and change. Unfortunately, she took a different tact. She loudly told me that I stunk, and needed to bathe and wash my clothes. I really didn't like her before this event, but this was too much. I instantly tried to defend myself verbally, ignoring the laughter and howls of my classmates. We wound up in a screaming match, and I threw a book at her.

This was another defining moment in my adolescence. I got in a lot of trouble over the next couple of years.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Seeing Your Parents in a Different Light

I hadn't seen my family for a few years. I'd moved away young, and never really came home again. When I was in my late 20's I went home for a family gathering. It was at my sister's home. I hadn't seen my folks in years, and I was happy to hear they had both quit smoking. When I got there, I decided I wanted to do something with my dad, since we hadn't been on great terms.

Dad loved the ponies, so I took him to the track. We had no sooner left my sister's home when he said pull in over there, and pointed to the 7-11. I pulled in and he said, go get me a pack of smokes. I said, "I thought you quit?" He said, "Don't tell your mother, it will kill her." I went and got him his smokes. He smoked unfiltered Pall Malls and he finished that entire pack in less than half a day. We had a great day. He hadn't been to the track in years, and he saw heaps of old friends, and had a ball.

When we got back to my sister's house, I was busting to go pee. I raced in, only to find the bathroom occupied. I waited a few minutes, and when the door opened, a small wall of smoke came out, followed by my mother. I looked at her, and said, "I thought you quit?" She said, "I tried. Don't tell your father, it will kill him."

I'll never forget that day. That was the day I realized my parents were just people like everyone else. They were acting like kids, trying to fool each other. Sadly, they both died of cancer later in life. I guess, even without telling each other, it killed them.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

What Would You Think If I Sang Out of Tune?

When I was in 6th grade, I was in the choir at school. I was a soprano. I had been singing all my life, this was my 3rd year singing in school, and I just loved it. This all changed when my voice changed. I'll never forget the music teacher listening to us all sing, and saying, "Hold it, hold on, what's that?", and walking right towards me. She said everyone else be quiet, you sing. So, I sang. And then I could hear it. The sound of a former soprano whose voice had dropped 3 octaves overnight, and was still changing. I sounded like a wounded wombat calling out for help. She asked me to sing a bit more. I declined.

To say I was embarrassed would be an understatement. If there had been a rock nearby, I would have crawled under it. I was asked to leave. Not that I had to be asked, I wanted to leave. I could hear the other kids whispering and laughing. I can still hear them. To this day, I don't sing in public. The occasional karaoke when drunk, and to my wife, because she loves me unconditionally, and doesn't judge.

I guess the point is, sometimes things change for kids. Sometimes they don't even notice. If you're an adult dealing with kids, don't embarrass them. They never forget that feeling. If you're a kid going through change (how did you wind up reading this?), I hope you're strong enough, and have the support necessary to deal with it.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Procrastinating

All the jokes have been done. The word play has become monotonous. Yet, I still procrastinate.

I make lists of things I need to do or want to accomplish. I have the best of intentions. This weekend I was going to wash the car, mow the lawn, eat healthier, write some comedy, and tidy the house. I did none of these things.

Tomorrow, I will make a new list, and cross virtually nothing off of it. Why?

Because that's who I am. I am a procrastinator. I am good at it.

By way of example, I'll explain why I didn't wash the car. Well, let me go back a step. Let's start with eating healthier. The reason I had take away today was because I had so many things on my list, I didn't want to waste time cooking food, so I just grabbed some KFC. I'm not sure if there's some sort of chemical in this greasified chicken, but within an hour of eating, I took a nap. When I woke up, I had to check Facebook to see what people were doing. Then I was hungry again, and I ate a bag of Doritos.

I did a load of wash. I had to. I had no clean work shirts otherwise. I went to mow the lawn, remembered the whipa snippa didn't work, and thought why mow if you can't get the weeds and edges. So, I took another nap.

When I woke up, I started thinking about how much I procrastinate, and decided to clean the house.

I'll do that when I'm done writing this. Unless it's too late.

I'll probably explain why I didn't wash the car in my next story. I better go hang out the wash.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Troubled Thoughts

Here are some thoughts. They are scattered and my ideas seem drowned in this sea of words I type. Politics is bullshit. We are all screwed. People are so seduced by their 9-5 lifestyle they are afraid to rock the boat. No one is happy, but most are not unhappy enough to do anything about it. The only ones happy are the companies that pull the strings on the puppets they have purchased.

How do we deal with this unhappiness? We anaesthetize ourselves with mindless sitcoms, reality tv, sports, junk food, and the like. I am as guilty as the next person.

Why then do I bother to write these words? Are they a message to myself to get off my ass and act on my beliefs? A message to others to do it for me? A self indulgent need to be heard?

I don't like the direction that democracy is headed. I don't like that fear is used to pass laws that inhibit rights. I don't want to live in a police state where the terrorized become the terrorists. I don't want to be spied on. I don't want to be threatened for a lack of loyalty to a government whose only loyalty is to the corporations it serves.

The use of nationalism by those in power to cement the loyalty of it's citizens, no matter what actions they take, in the name of protecting their citizens is a powerful weapon and one that is so subtly administered we rarely notice the message we are being brainwashed with.

I hope it's not too late to change this course, but I fear it may be.

Have a nice day. Watch some television.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

How Not to Quit Your Job

When I tried to quit my job at a call centre for a bank, it didn't work. I had only been working there a few months, and had already taken a week off for a family reunion. I was offered a chance to go to Hawaii for 2 weeks, and get paid well for just a few hours of work. Well, not really work, juggling. I knew they wouldn't let me off, so I found another job to start when I returned. I went to the call centre and told my boss I was quitting. She ushered me into her office, and asked why. I said I had found another job, working in a bank branch. She asked how much more they were going to pay me. In reality, I was taking a pay cut, but I told her \$1.50 more an hour. She said she didn't want me to quit, that I was in line for a promotion, and to hang on, she wanted to go talk to her boss.

I sat there for about 10 minutes, and when she came back, she said they were prepared to offer me more than the branch job, plus a promotion. I said that's nice, but since I had secured this other job, I had arranged to go to Hawaii for 2 weeks, and couldn't change those plans.

She excused herself, and when she came back a few minutes later, I had secured a pay increase, a promotion, and 2 weeks paid holidays, which I hadn't earned yet.

To this day, I'm sure that there is no way this would have happened, if I had tried to manipulate the situation. I'm still not sure how it happened. But, sometimes quitting is the best way to get ahead.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

No Heroin

Despite everything bad that's ever happened in my life I've never used heroin. I'm pretty proud of this. When I got cut from the basketball team in grade 7, I smoked pot, but no heroin. When my first marriage ended, I snorted some cocaine, but no heroin. When I got fired from my job driving a forklift, I tripped on LSD for about a year, but no heroin.

I know this sounds like I'm bragging, but I guess my point is, some people are weak and don't know where to draw the line. Not me. Heroin was that line. I have never crossed it.

I hope enough people like this story and give it a good rating. If not, I'm afraid it might be the straw that breaks the camels back, and makes me cross the heroin line.

No pressure people. Just like the story, and everyone will be fine.

If not, I'll end up a junkie, and will rob your house. The choice is yours.

In Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Bad Massage

Have you ever had a bad massage? Not one that didn't have a happy ending, but one where the masseuse didn't have any skills. I had one today. I know I'm not a handsome, young man, but it felt like the person applying the oil to my body was repulsed at the thought of touching someone of my age and body shape. It felt like she would rather be anywhere else, doing anything else than to have to massage me. She asked if the pressure was alright, and I said she could press harder on my lower back and hamstrings and to concentrate there. I don't think she listened, as she barely touched those areas, and instead spent time working on my neck and shoulders. I think this may have been because these areas have less body fat than the areas I needed work on. I know this is a first world problem, but, hell, if you're going to get paid to give a massage, at least listen to the client, don't act repulsed, and take a course, so you know what the hell you are doing. I guess what I'm trying to say is, I wasted \$60, didn't get any muscular relief, and now know how people with leprosy felt during the dark ages.

In Australia

Why is the website called bytestories.com?

This is a place for "byte-sized" stories and there is a 1500 character (about 250 words) limit for two main reasons. Firstly, we want you to know that "War and Peace" isn't required to leave your mark. Secondly, it takes about 2 minutes to read each story meaning you can head here whenever you want a quick (and entertaining) read.

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