



caceroloza



caceroloza

the existential pots and pans of 2011

banged together by Don Shewey

ABANDONMENT ACTING ADULT AGING ART
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DEATH DESTINY DREAMS
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MORALISM MUSIC
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PEOPLE-PLEASING PERFECTIONISM
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READING
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STORYTELLING
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TRAUMA TRY
UNIQUE UNQUENCHABLE
VEGETABLE VEGETARIAN VIRUS VOICE
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WRITING
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YOUTH
ZEN

ABANDONMENT

It is only in the state of complete abandonment and loneliness that we experience the helpful powers of our own natures...*Child* means evolving toward independence. This requires detachment from origins. So abandonment is a necessary condition.

-- C. G. Jung

ACTING

In *Coming Up Roses*, an indie feature premiering at the Woodstock Film Festival in September, [Bernadette Peters] plays a former musical actress, the disturbed mother of two girls who find that singing show tunes to lift the spirits doesn't always work. "Yes, another light part," Peters says, sounding mystified, or amused, by her choice. "And do you know what I had to do one day? I had to find a way to hit my 15-year-old daughter." (The actress playing the role was 19.) "I mean really smack her around. I've never hit anyone in my life! After I did it, I felt like I was having a heart attack for a week." For a second it seems she may have one again, but instead the moment resolves in a giggle. "Isn't it a strange profession? When you have to look for something like that within yourself, it's scary. And what's also scary," she adds, touching the moon at her throat, "is that you find it."

-- Jesse Green, *New York* magazine



ADULT

Change the locus of trust from others to oneself. As an adult you are not looking for someone you can trust absolutely. You acknowledge the margins of human failing and let go of expecting security. You then trust *yourself* to be able to receive love and handle hurt, to receive trustworthiness and handle betrayal, to receive intimacy and handle rejection.

-- David Richo, *How to Be an Adult: A Handbook on Psychological and Spiritual Integration*

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M LAW

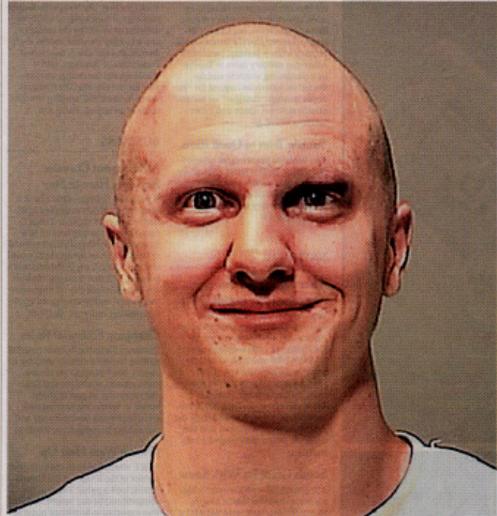
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In Arizona Court, Suspect Waives Bail



Jared L. Loughner after his arrest in Saturday's shooting rampage. He appeared in court Monday.

RULED 'A DANGER'

Lawyer Signals Intent to Seek Judge From Out of State

By MARC LACEY

PHOENIX — Jared L. Loughner, his head shaved bare and his hands and feet in restraints, was led Monday into a federal courtroom, where he agreed not to contest his continued imprisonment but offered no hint of how he would respond to the murder and attempted murder charges linking him to the Tucson shootings that left six dead and 14 injured.

"Yes, I am Jared Lee Loughner," he told Magistrate Judge Lawrence G. Anderson, staring blankly ahead with his lawyer, Judy Clarke, a veteran public defender, at his side. The defendant, a 22-year-old college dropout, was wide-eyed and had a wound to his right temple. At the defense table, his eyes darted back and forth and his mouth curled up at one point into a quick smile.

Ms. Clarke signaled that she intended to push for the case to be handled by an out-of-state judge, since one of the victims her client is accused of killing was Judge John M. Roll of Federal District Court in Tucson. Already, all the federal judges in Tucson have recused themselves. As some of Judge Roll's friends and colleagues looked on, Ms. Clarke said she had "great concern" about any Arizona judges or prosecutors handling the case.

Mr. Loughner (pronounced LOF-ner) faces two federal murder charges and three attempted murder charges in an attack that prosecutors described as an attempt to assassinate Representa-

In Giffords's District, a Long History of Tension

This article was reported by Sam Dunick, Katharine Q. Seelye and Adam Nagourney and written by Mr. Nagourney.

Area Deeply Divided Over Immigration and Health Care

ing point, a time when a cloud of unease settled over Ms. Giffords and her staff. She and aides began expressing worry about what they saw as an escalation of threats after a

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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AGING

Among the San Bushmen of southern Africa...the hunt for game with poison-tipped arrows depends on moving rapidly across the veld... When men become too old to participate in the hunt, they become the makers of the arrows – and tradition ascribes to the arrow maker the primary credit for the kill.... Similarly, only when women are too old for childbearing are they permitted to become shamanic healers, a translation of the love and care they have given their children to the health of the wider community. In both cases, an appropriately limited effort is recognized as having a profound value.

-- Mary Catherine Bateson

ART

The public make use of the classics of a country as a means of checking the progress of Art. They degrade the classics into authorities. They use them as bludgeons for preventing the free expression of Beauty in new forms. They are always asking a writer why he does not write like somebody else, or a painter why he does not paint like somebody else, quite oblivious of the fact that if either of them did anything of the kind he would cease to be an artist. A fresh mode of Beauty is absolutely distasteful to them, and whenever it appears they get so angry and bewildered that they always use two stupid expressions—one is that the work of art is grossly unintelligible; the other, that the work of art is grossly immoral. What they mean by these words seems to me to be this. When they say a work is grossly unintelligible, they mean that the artist has said or made a beautiful thing that is new; when they describe a work as grossly immoral, they mean that the artist has said or made a beautiful thing that is true.

-- Oscar Wilde, “The Soul of Man Under Socialism”

Every grain of experience is food for the greedy growing soul of the artist.

-- Anthony Burgess

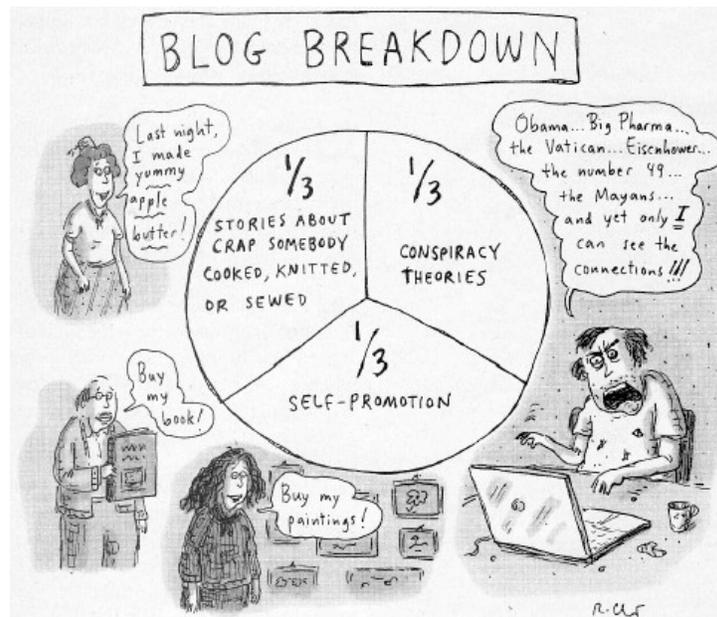


BICYCLE

Any tips for New Yorkers who have just started bike commuting?

Pretend you're invisible. Think of cars and buses as big, awkward animals that don't mean any harm but have limited brainpower and eyesight. Watch out for car doors heedlessly opening – I don't know if there are statistics on what causes accidents involving bicycles, but getting doored is the main thing I worry about. Be nice to pedestrians. They are not the enemy. If you startle one, make eye contact and apologize profusely. Take your time – it's safer, and you won't get all sweaty. Your ears are your radar dishes; they help you “see” what's out of your field of vision. So: no iPods, please, and for God's sake no cellphones.

-- Hendrik Hertzberg, interviewed in *Transportation Alternatives*



BRAIN

Q: What do you consider to be significant with regard to the latest discoveries about the brain?

For one, we know a lot more about what happens when people are upset – how we get emotionally hijacked by our upsets. A part of the brain called the amygdala developed as an alarm bell; it's looking for negative information. That was very useful when we evolved – paying attention to avoid lethal threats – but we now know that the amygdala tends to overreact.

When people are stressed, the hormone cortisol is released, which sensitizes the amygdala, and so it makes that alarm bell even louder. This undermines another part of the brain called the hippocampus, which both forms new memories and puts the brakes on the amygdala. So chronic stress has this really nasty one-two punch: one, it jacks up the alarm bell, and two, it weakens the brakes on the alarm.

Q: Okay, there's a part of my brain that's biased toward negativity. So if I'm being paranoid for no reason, how can I work with my brain to shift toward a more balanced view?

I'll mention two methods in summary. First, research has shown that when you put words to your feelings, when you just label them, that does two things. One, it stimulates activity in what's called the prefrontal cortex – the very front part of your brain – and second, it lowers activity in the amygdala alarm circuit. The simple act of naming to yourself what you're feeling as you're feeling it helps to dampen this overreaction.

The other method is based on science's new understanding of how memory is actually formed. The brain is so fast and it has so many neurons that it can afford to rebuild a memory from scratch each time it brings it up. We can use this knowledge in a very practical way. When something painful is in awareness, if you also bring to mind positive information – especially positive feelings that are really felt and intense – you gradually infuse that negative experience with positive associations when it goes back into storage. And so the next time it comes up, it'll bring a little bit of that positive tinge with it. It won't change overnight; you need to stick with it. But over time, you can gradually help yourself from the inside out to shift your interior landscape.

Q: What have we learned about the brains of those who meditate?

Well, the studies are in their infancy, but basically the more you meditate, the better the effect. One of the major findings is that meditation thickens gray matter. You want more gray matter because that means more connections between neurons – which increases your functionality and performance in that part of your brain. When you meditate you stimulate and therefore strengthen the part of your brain that deals with increasing positive emotions and regulating negative emotions. This illustrates the general point that by using your mind in a targeted way, you can build up the circuits that you want to build up, and you can control the circuits you want to control. Science is beginning to identify those targets; it's not perfect yet, but already there's a lot of promise here.

-- Sounds True interview with Rick Hanson, author of *The Enlightened Brain*



BULLIES

[substitute “bully” for “mountain lion”]

If you encounter a mountain lion:

- Don't approach it.
- Never turn and run.
- Face the lion and stand upright.
- Try to make yourself look as big as possible.
- Some ways of looking bigger is [*sic*] to open your jacket, hold up your pack or bicycle.
- Throw rocks or sticks at the lion. Yell and make lots of noise.
- But if you are ever attacked, your best chance is to stay on your feet and fight back. These tactics will usually convince the lion that you are not prey and make it run away.
- Leave the animal an avenue of escape.
- Report any mountain lion observations.

-- Poe Ballantine, “Guidelines for Mountain-Lion Safety”

CACEROLOZA

In May, the Chilean government approved the construction of five huge dams in the area of southern Chile that inspired Yvon Chouinard to name our company Patagonia. Mass protests were organized shortly after the announcement of the decision, and we joined them in solidarity by gathering at our Ventura headquarters for a *caceroloza*, a form of protest used in Chile and other Spanish-speaking countries where citizens bang pots and pans in loud opposition.

-- Tim Davis



CHANGE

Never depend upon institutions or government to solve any problem. All social movements are founded by, guided by, motivated and seen through by the passion of individuals.

-- Margaret Mead

YOU NEVER CHANGE
THINGS BY **FIGHTING**
THE EXISTING
REALITY. TO CHANGE
SOMETHING, BUILD
A **NEW MODEL**
THAT MAKES THE
EXISTING MODEL
OBSOLETE
- BUCKMINSTER FULLER

CHILDREN

Nothing has a stronger influence...on their children than the unlived life of the parents.

-- Carl G. Jung

CONFLICT

The style of addressing, processing, and resolving conflicts may be different for men than for women, so that even couples who have committed to all three may not really agree on what they have committed to. For men addressing may mean stating the problem now, getting straight to the point, getting directly to the bottom line. Similarly, processing may mean solving it now, and resolving it may mean forgetting it and going on. When quick resolution is the main priority, we may discount others' feelings.

For women, on the other hand, addressing may mean talking and talking until we know what we are talking about. This involves going around and around the issue, not as a means of avoidance but as a way of giving it our attention. Processing for women means feeling into both this and past issues. It also means having feelings heard and appreciated. As for resolution, it may easily follow from a sense of being heard and cared about, from being mirrored with love. Thus, problem solving may be the lowest priority for women, mirrored feelings the highest.

-- David Richo, *How to Be an Adult in Relationships*

COURAGE

Common experience shows how much more rare is moral courage than physical bravery. A thousand men will march to the mouth of the cannon where one man will dare espouse an unpopular cause.

-- Clarence Darrow

I am more afraid of an army of one hundred sheep led by a lion than of an army of one hundred lions led by a sheep.

-- Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord



CRAZY

The definition of "crazy" in show business is a woman who keeps talking even after no one wants to fuck her anymore.

-- Tina Fey

CRITICISM

Keep a strict eye on eulogistic and dyslogistic adjectives – they should diagnose (not merely blame) and distinguish (not merely praise).

-- C. S. Lewis

CYNICISM

Cynicism is a detour from the road of life, a sidetrack that opens onto the highway of nihilism. In order to avoid it, we must act through the ideals that are the core of our life.

-- Michael Meade, interviewed in *The Sun*

DEATH

“End of Days”

Almost always with cats, the end comes creeping over the two of you— she stops eating, his back legs no longer support him, she leans to your hand and purrs but cannot rise—sometimes a whimper of pain although they are stoic. They see death clearly though hooded eyes.

Then there is the long weepy trip to the vet, the carrier no longer necessary, the last time in your lap. The injection is quick. Simply they stop breathing in your arms. You bring them home to bury in the flower garden, planting a bush over a deep grave.

That is how I would like to cease, held in a lover's arms and quickly fading to black like an old-fashioned movie embrace. I hate the white silent scream of hospitals, the whine of pain like air-conditioning's hum. I want to click the off switch. And if I can no longer choose

I want someone who loves me there, not a doctor with forty patients and his morality to keep me sort of, kind of alive or sort of undead. Why are we more rational and kinder to our pets than to ourselves or our parents? Death is not the worst thing; denying it can be.

-- Marge Piercy



DESTINY

It is natural for us to wish that God had designed for us a less glorious and less arduous destiny: but then we are wishing not for more love but for less: When we want to be other than the thing God wants us to be, we must be wanting what, in fact, will not make us happy. These Divine demands which sound to our natural ears most like those of a despot and least like those of a lover, in fact marshal us where we should want to go if we knew what we wanted.

-- C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

DREAMS

“What did you dream last night?” should be the first question we ask each other in the morning, instead of “What’s on the news?” or “What’s for breakfast?” or “What do you have to do today?” If we wake up to the radio, we are immediately invaded by the culture’s idea of what is important, but our dreams are the real breaking news.

-- Marc Ian Barasch, interview by Barbara Platek in *The Sun*

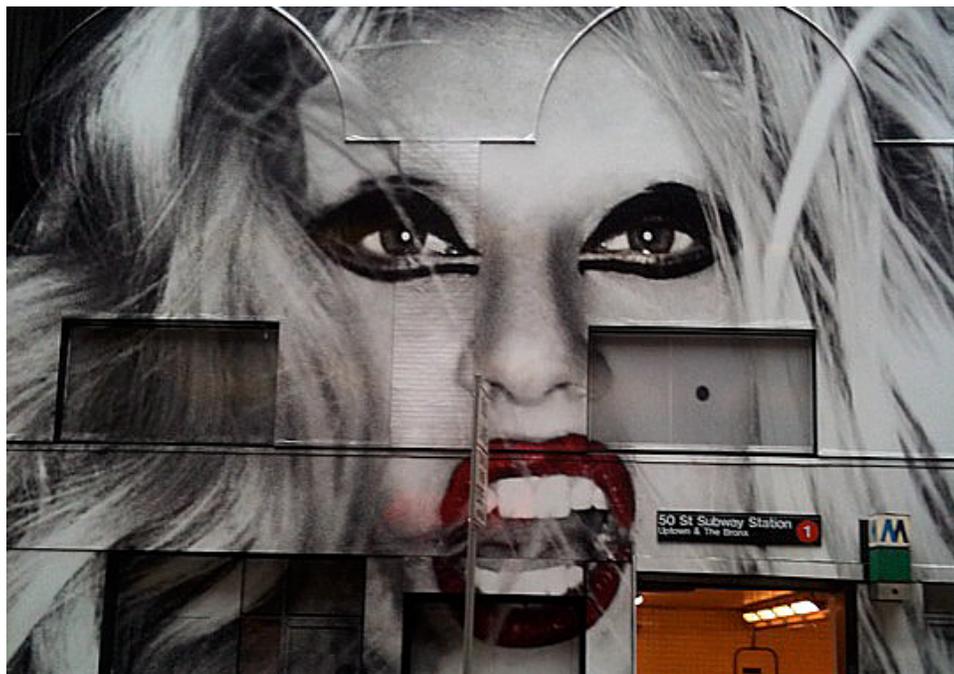
You said, “They’re harmless dreamers and they’re loved by the people.” “What,” I asked you, “is harmless about a dreamer, and what,” I asked you, “is harmless about the love of the people? Revolution only needs good dreamers who remember their dreams.”

-- Tennessee Williams

ENVIRONMENT

I don't want to talk about me, of course, but it seems as though far too much attention has been lavished on you lately — that your greed and vanities and quest for self-fulfillment have been catered to far too much. You just want and want and want. You believe in yourself excessively. You don't believe in Nature anymore. It's too isolated from you. You've abstracted it. It's so messy and damaged and sad. Your eyes glaze as you travel life's highway past all the crushed animals and the Big Gulp cups. ... You must change.

-- Joy Williams, *Ill Nature*



EQUANIMITY

The wisdom of equanimity, imbued with generosity, sees all situations as ornaments of being.

-- Trungpa Rinpoche

EXISTENTIAL TRUTH

It's easy to be generous when you're on a roll
It's hard to be grateful when you're out of control
And love is gone...

-- Paul Simon, "Love and Hard Times"



FASTING

There's hidden sweetness in the stomach's emptiness.
We are lutes, no more, no less. If the soundbox
is stuffed full of anything, no music.
If the brain and belly are burning clean
with fasting, every moment a new song comes out of the fire.
The fog clears, and new energy makes you
run up the steps in front of you.
Be emptier and cry like reed instruments cry.
Emptier, write secrets with the reed pen.
When you're full of food and drink, Satan sits
where your spirit should, an ugly metal statue
in place of the Kaaba. When you fast,
good habits gather like friends who want to help.
Fasting is Solomon's ring. Don't give it
to some illusion and lose your power,
but even if you have, if you've lost all will and control,
they come back when you fast, like soldiers appearing
out of the ground, pennants flying above them.
A table descends to your tents,
Jesus' table.
Expect to see it, when you fast, this table
spread with other food, better than the broth of cabbages.

-- Rumi (translated by Coleman Barks)

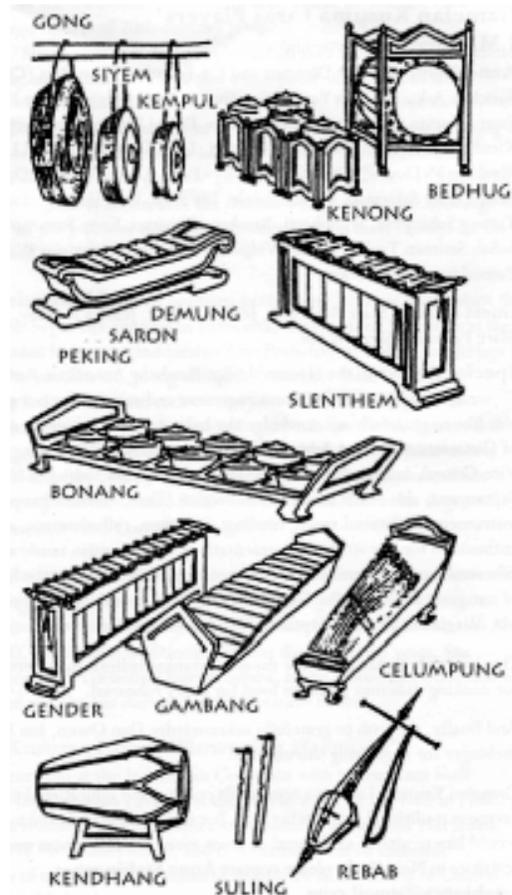
FOLK-SINGERS

When Kate was sixteen years old she let it be known in no uncertain terms that she wanted a mandolin for Christmas. Our mother, who was slaving away at a part-time job, decided that this Christmas she would buy watches for her two younger daughters. When Kate saw her little present under the tree, she knew right away it was not a mandolin and she threw it across the room. Anna was happy with her watch. Our grandfather, who witnessed this scene, decided to make up for Kate's unhappiness and searched through the catalogue for a mandolin. When he couldn't find one, he opted for a guitar. Mother said, "Make that two, dad, I don't want Anna making a scene." Our father, silent up until this point, asked what was wrong with the fine old 1910 Gibson arch-top that was hanging on the wall, and she replied that's precisely what was wrong: it was old – and broken. "Remember, Frank? Kate hit Anna over the head with it."

A couple of weeks later, the big flat cardboard boxes arrived at our house. Mother and grandfather were beaming in anticipation of the expression of joy that would soon spread across her daughters' faces upon seeing the guitars for the first time. Father knew better and left the room. We opened, we saw, we screamed – "Yuck! They're Western guitars with f-holes! And they're cheap! Just look at the strings: they're steel and they're two inches from the fretboard!" Kate picked up her new guitar and was about to throw it across the room when Anna stopped her and suggested instead that they go down to the local pawnshop and trade them in for two Goyas with nylon strings. We did and thus we became folk singers.

-- Kate and Anna McGarrigle, Montreal, 1993

GAMELAN



GIVING AND RECEIVING

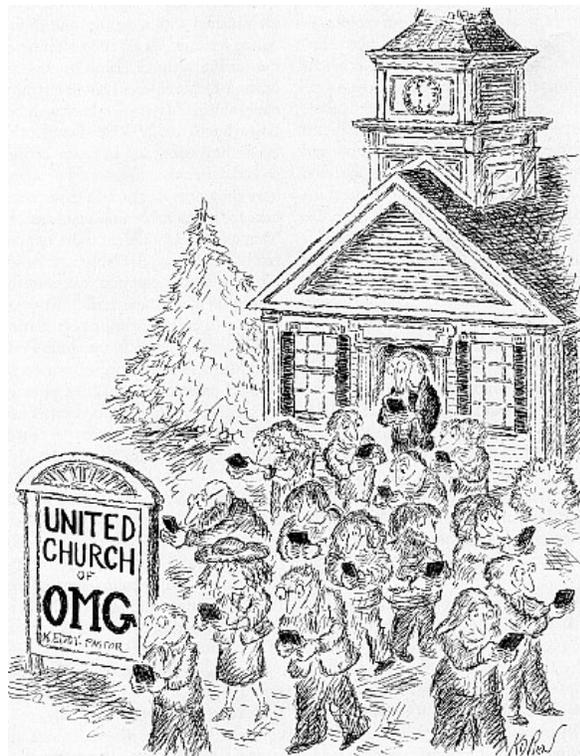
How exactly do we give and receive? The first way is a simple/difficult technique: Ask for what you want and listen to your partner. Asking for what you want combines the most crucial elements of intimacy. It gives the other the gift of knowing you, your needs, and your vulnerability. It also means receiving the other's free response. Both are risky, and therefore both make you more mature. You learn to let go of your insistence on a yes, to be vulnerable to a no, and to accept a no without feeling the need to punish.

To listen intimately to a partner asking for what he wants is to pick up on the feeling and need beneath the request. It is to appreciate where the request came from. It is to feel compassion for any pain that may lurk in the request. It is to give the other credit for risking rejection or misunderstanding. We hear with our ears; we listen with our intuition and our heart. Giving and receiving entail the ability to accommodate the full spectrum of a partner's fears and foibles and to distinguish between needs we can and cannot expect to see fulfilled.

A second way intimate adults give and receive is through mutually chosen sex and playfulness: You make love when both of you want it, not when one of you push the other into it. You can be intimate without having to be sexual. You know how to have fun together. You play without hurting each other, without engaging in sarcasm or ridicule, without laughing at each other's shortcomings.

Finally, we give and receive by granting equality, freedom from hierarchy, to our partner and ourselves. Only the healthy ego, and not another person, is meant to preside over your life. In true intimacy, partners have an equal voice in decision making. One partner does not insist on dominating the other.

-- David Richo, *How to Be an Adult in Relationships*



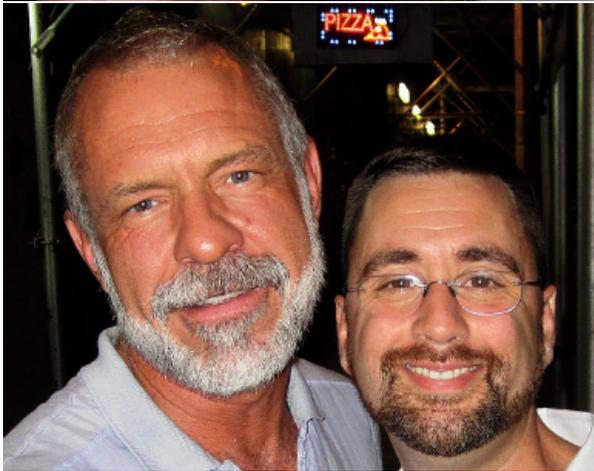
GOD

God is a metaphor for that which transcends all levels of intellectual thought. It's as simple as that.

-- Joseph Campbell







GUILT

Guilt is not a feeling but a belief or judgment. Appropriate guilt is a judgment that is self-confronting and leads to resolution. Neurotic guilt is a judgment that is self-defeating and leads to unproductive pain. Appropriate guilt is resolved in reconciliation and restitution. Neurotic guilt seeks to be resolved by punishment. In appropriate guilt there is accountability. In neurotic guilt there is blame. In short, appropriate guilt is an adult response; neurotic guilt is the response of a scared child within us....

In every experience of neurotic guilt, there is something we are refusing to acknowledge.

1) A Disguise for Fear: Guilt that holds us back from acting can be a disguise for the fear of assertiveness. Guilt that follows a strong choice can be a fear of loss of love or of approval. We may fear the consequences of not being liked or of our losing control when we have strayed too far from an inhibition. The prior guilt can paralyze us and we then remain stuck or passive. The consequent guilt makes us ashamed and frightened of reprisals or of being known (or of knowing ourselves) in a new way.

2. A Downplay of Responsibility: Guilt after acting or after the omission of an act can be a way of minimizing the power of the choice we have made. We are less responsible if we judge ourselves guilty because then our whole self was not committed. Paradoxically, guilt thus lets us off the hook and creates a false sense of righteousness.

3. A Mask for Anger: Guilt can mean justifiable anger that we believe it is unsafe or wrong to feel or to express.

4. A Dodge of Truth: Guilt is sometimes used to avoid an unacceptable truth.

It is impossible to eliminate neurotic guilt entirely. Allow this guilt to be in your mind but no longer let it lead you to act or not to act. Make choices *with* guilt, not because of it. Simply notice what your guilt may be covering up. Is it a mask for fear, refusal to take responsibility, anger, denial of a truth, etc.? Then each time you experience neurotic guilt you acknowledge it as a signal of some avoidance. The guilt then dissipates enough so that you can address the authentic excitement and feeling underlying it. The guilt becomes what it always was: a concept not a precept, a belief not a verdict, a thought not a reality.

Fear is blocked excitement; anger is ignited excitement; guilt is mistaken excitement.

-- David Richo



HERO'S JOURNEY

The hero's journey involves pain and forces you to shift from a focus on ego to a focus on facing the risks of life.

-- David Richo



HIGH STANDARDS

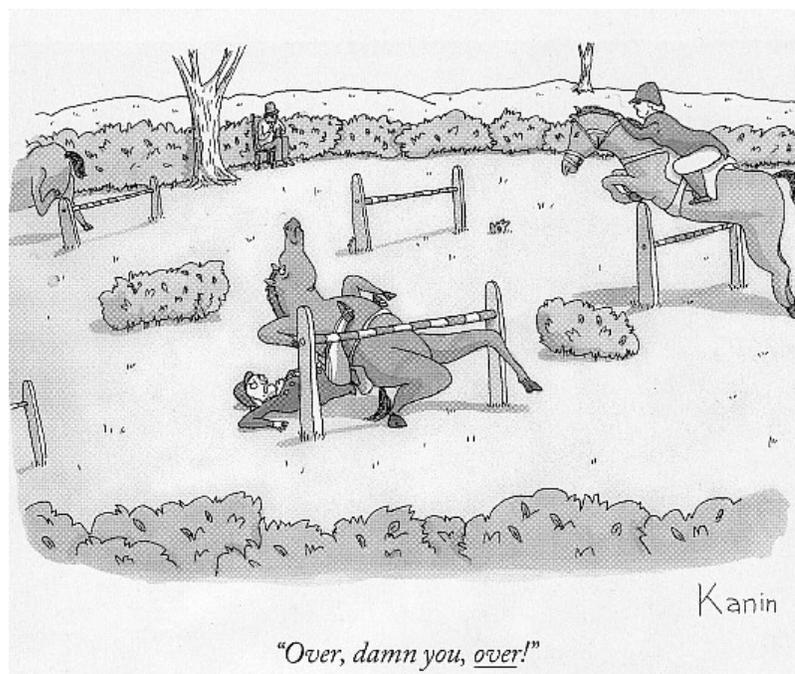
The girl of my dreams is probably God.

-- Of Montreal, "She's a Rejecter"

HIPSTERS

Nobody ever self-identifies as a hipster, *ever*. Yet there seem to be tons of them. Who are they? They're "them," of course, but actually they are us. And we hate them/us. Still, we like having the health-food place around the corner and the new boutique down the street. But "Die, hipster scum" is never far from our lips. A more appropriate slogan, however, might be "Save the neighborhood – kill yourself!"

-- Andrew Boyd, "I Got Off the Beaten Path (But So Did Everyone Else)"



HOPE

If hope doesn't include a plan for change, it is actually hopelessness and avoidance of change. What we do not change, we choose.

-- David Richo

Hope, in this deep and profound sense, is not the same thing as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for success, but rather, an ability to work for something because it is good.

-- Vaclav Havel

HYGIENE

Filthy fingernails have always been a favorite fashion accessory of mine. Especially when you place your hands in the prayer position. Matter of fact, I urge all my followers to forgo nail polish permanently and replace it with expertly applied soot. The nonexistent gods above will ignore our prayers better this way. Germs, at least in small doses, are good for you. Aren't all vaccinations filled with a tiny bit of the diseases they are designed to prevent? I'm always mystified to see grown men scrubbing their hands as if they are about to perform open-heart surgery after urinating in New Jersey Turnpike rest stop bathrooms. Did they piss all over their hands at the urinal? Didn't they already wash their penises that morning in the shower? How does your unit get dirty by aiming a stream of urine into the proper receptacle? These germ freaks will get sick, I guarantee you. They'll be so healthy they'll get old and die of "nothing." Avoid them! Run from the overly clean before they infect you!

-- John Waters, *Role Models*



I

When I see I am nothing, that is wisdom. When I see I am everything, that is love. My life is a movement between these two.

-- Nisargadatta Maharaj

IDENTITY

Identity germinates from humiliation's soil. Humiliation isn't merely the basement of a personality, or the scum pile on the stairway down. Humiliation is the earlier event that paves the way for "self" to know it exists.

-- Wayne Koestenbaum



ILLUSIONS

We would rather be ruined
than changed
We would rather die in our dread
Than climb the cross of the moment
And let our illusions die.

-- W. H. Auden

IMAGINARY FRIENDS

It was sometime in the first few weeks of the ordeal [of her nine-month-old sister's treatment for a brain tumor] that [three-year-old] Ella began talking about her imaginary brother. Suddenly, in the onslaught of her words, we would discern stories about a brother, who was sometimes a year old, sometimes in high school, and occasionally traveled, for some obscure reason, to Seattle or California, only to return to Chicago to be featured in yet another adventurous monologue of Ella's.

It is not unusual, of course, for children of Ella's age to have imaginary friends or siblings. The creation of an imaginary character is related, I believe, to the explosion of linguistic abilities that occurs between the ages of two and four, and rapidly creates an excess of language, which the child may not have enough experience to match. She has to construct imaginary narratives in order to try out the words that she suddenly possesses. Ella now knew the word "California," for instance, but she had no experience that was in any way related to it; nor could she conceptualize it in its abstract aspect – in its *California-ness*. Hence, her imaginary brother had to be deployed to the sunny state, which allowed Ella to talk at length as if she knew California. The words demanded the story.

At the same time, the surge in language at this age creates a distinction between exteriority and interiority; the child's interiority is now expressible and thus possible to externalize; the world doubles. Ella could now talk about what was here and about what was elsewhere; language had made *here* and *elsewhere* continuous and simultaneous. Once, during dinner, I asked Ella what her brother was doing at that very moment. He was in her room, she said matter-of-factly, throwing a tantrum.

At first, her brother had no name. When asked what he was called, Ella responded "Googoo Gaga," which was the nonsensical sound that Malcolm, her five-year-old favorite cousin, made when he didn't know the word for something. Since Charlie Mingus is practically a deity in our household, we suggested the name Mingus to Ella, and Mingus her brother became. Soon after that, Malcolm gave Ella an inflatable doll of a space alien, which she subsequently elected to embody the existentially slippery Mingus. Though Ella often played with her blown-up brother, the alien's physical presence was not always required for her to issue pseudoparental orders to Mingus or to tell a story of his escapades. While our world was being reduced to the claustrophobic size of ceaseless dread, Ella's was expanding.

-- Aleksandar Hemon, "The Aquarium"



INDIVIDUAL

The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.

-- Friedrich Nietzsche

I am not eccentric. It's just that I am more alive than most people. I am an unpopular electric eel set in a pond of goldfish.

-- Dame Edith Sitwell



"Why is everyone's valuable input so stupid?"

INFORMATION

Information systems need to have information in order to run, but information underrepresents reality.

-- Jaron Lanier, *You Are Not a Gadget*

INITIATION

Here's the dilemma: people can't initiate themselves. The only way I can reveal myself to myself is if someone else is protecting, supporting, and challenging me. The person who's undergoing the initiation has to feel safe enough to let go and challenged enough not to stay still. When the function of the ego, which is to protect the self, is taken over by others, we can go into a deep descent and find elements of our own soul. If I try to initiate myself, I'm either going to make the temperature too hot, so to speak, or too cold. Initiation needs caring others who know what temperature is right for me. This is a real problem in a culture that thinks, *I'm going to do it all myself*.

Something else you need is nature. In traditional cultures initiations don't happen in the village. They happen in wilderness. Initiation is going to bring out your nature, which is connected to greater nature. But you also have to be connected to a living, meaningful community. It all has to come together. Mass culture often sets the individual against the community, because the community doesn't acknowledge the uniqueness of each person's soul. Instead of the community versus the individual, the goal of initiation is to get individuals involved in the community in a way that's meaningful to them and inspiring to others.

-- Michael Meade, interviewed in *The Sun*



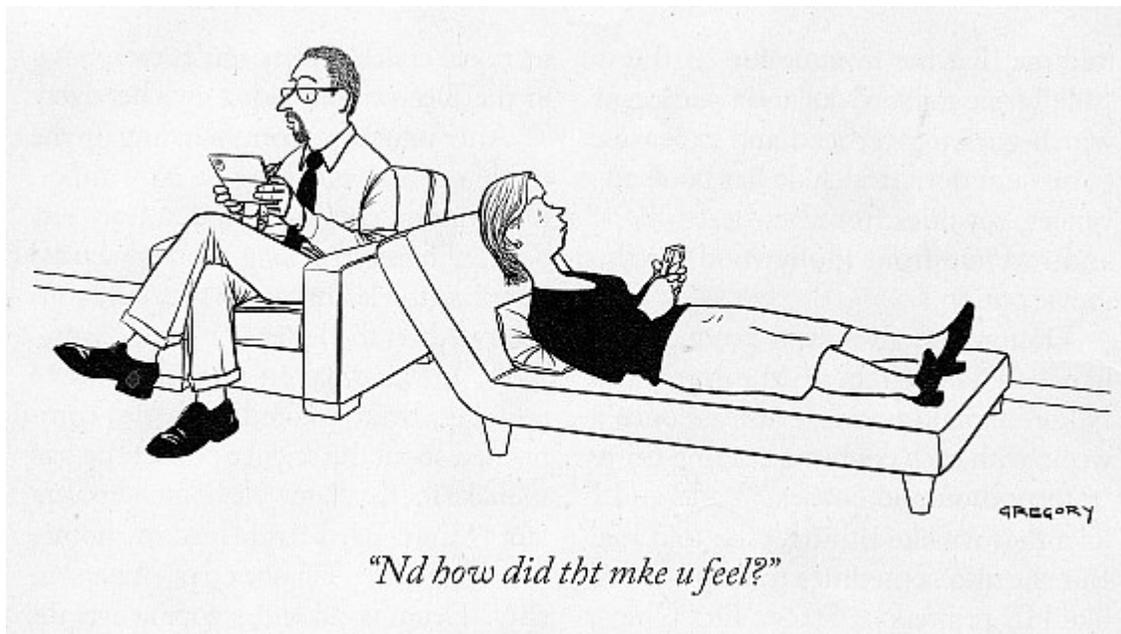


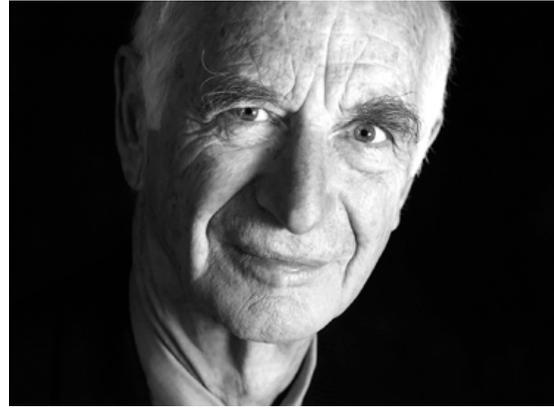
INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

Integrative medicine looks at the whole person, because patients are more than physical bodies. To understand health and illness you've got to look at the mental and emotional and spiritual dimensions, not to mention the person's involvement in a community. If you pay attention only to the physical body, you limit your interventions to those that are often the most expensive and the most potentially harmful.

Integrative medicine focuses on preventing disease and promoting health. Conventional medicine has failed us here, and that is one cause of the healthcare crisis. We are too occupied with managing cases of established diseases, most of which are lifestyle related and preventable. The essence of prevention is not colonoscopies and mammograms; it is understanding how our life choices reduce or increase the risk of disease. As a society we need to be helping people make better choices.

-- Dr. Andrew Weil, interviewed in *The Sun*





JAMES HILLMAN

Mediocrity is no answer to violence. In fact, it probably invites violence. At least the mediocre and the violent appear together as in the old Western movies--the ruffian outlaw band shooting up main street and the little white church with the little white schoolteacher wringing her hands. To cool violence you need rhythm, humor, tempering; you need dance and rhetoric. Not therapeutic understanding.

*

If therapy imagines its task to be that of helping people cope (and not protest), to adapt (and not rebel), to normalize their oddity, and to accept themselves "and work within your situation; make it work for you" (rather than refuse the unacceptable), then therapy is collaborating with what the state wants: docile plebes. Coping simply equals compliance.

*

To what does the soul turn that has no therapists to visit? It takes its trouble to the trees, to the riverbank, to an animal companion, on an aimless walk through the city streets, a long watch of the night sky. Just stare out the window or boil water for a cup of tea. We breathe, expand, and let go, and something comes in from elsewhere. The daimon in the heart seems quietly pleased, preferring melancholy to desperation. It's in touch.

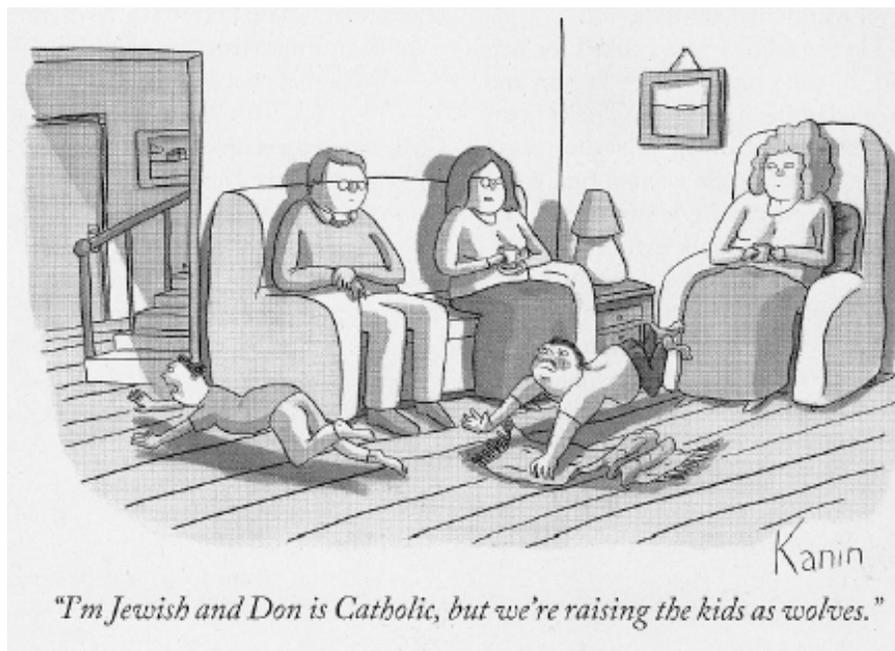
*

The world is run as much by folly as by wisdom, as much by order as by chaos, but--and this "but" is huge--these accidents may still intend something interesting.

*

Loving in safety is the smaller part of loving.

KIDS



LA MAMA



She went about as far as you can go in refusing to draw a line between the personal and the professional. There was a way she wanted to live, and there were people she liked to be with. She didn't even like some of the funny activities that her favorite people enjoyed so much. She liked them. She created a beautiful nest, beautifully decorated with straw, worms and trinkets, and certain lucky people got to lie around in it.

-- Wallace Shawn

LANDSCAPE

Isn't it plain the sheets of moss, except that
they have no tongues, could lecture
all day if they wanted about

spiritual patience? Isn't it clear
the black oaks along the path are standing
as though they were the most fragile of flowers?

Every morning I walk like this around
the pond, thinking: if the doors to my heart
ever close, I'm as good as dead.

Every morning, so far, I'm alive. And now
the crows break off from the rest of the darkness
and burst up into the sky – as though

all night they had thought of what they would like
their lives to be, and imagined
their strong, thick wings.

-- Mary Oliver

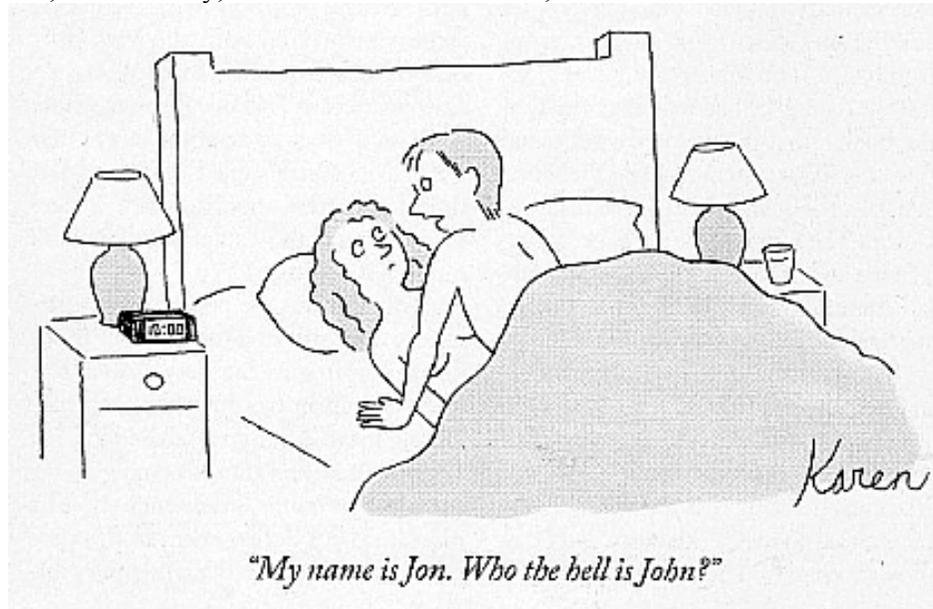


LANGUAGE

Street prostitution as practiced in Bonn, once the capital of West Germany and a town better known for sleepiness than sexiness, would be unfamiliar to many people outside Germany for its unusual degree of organization and institutionalization. The women wait for customers on a stretch of the Immenburgstrasse in a largely industrial part of the city. In addition to the Siemens-built meter machine, which cost \$11,575 including installation, the city has built special wooden garages nearby where customers can park their cars and have sex.

“They are called, in fairest and finest administrative High German, ‘performance areas,’ but I believe the Italian prime minister would say ‘bunga bunga,’ ” said Monika Frömbgen, a spokeswoman for the city.

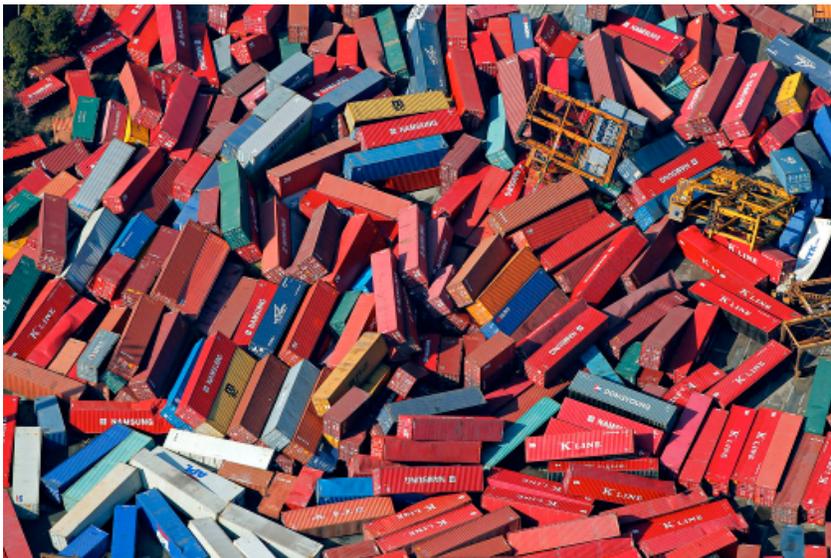
-- Nicholas Kulish, “In Germany, Sex Workers Feed a Meter,” *New York Times*



LOSS

Everything is meant to be lost, that the soul may stand in unhampered nothingness.

-- Meister Eckhart



aftermath of the March 2011 tsunami in Japan

LOVE

Love is experienced differently by each of us, but for most of us five aspects of love stand out. We feel loved when we receive attention, acceptance, appreciation, and affection, and when we are allowed the freedom to live in accord with our own deepest needs and wishes. These “five A’s” meet us in different guises throughout life’s journey. In childhood, we need these five A’s to develop self-esteem and a healthy ego. They are building blocks of identity, of a coherent human personality. Human experience has a striking and reliable harmony: what we need for the building of a self is also precisely what we need for happiness in our adult love relationships. Intimacy, at its best, means giving and receiving the five A’s, the joys and wealth of relationship. These five elements or aspects of love also describe our destiny of service to the world as mature spiritual beings. Great spiritual exemplars such as Jesus or Buddha can be seen as beings who offer this fivefold love to all of us. Through our spiritual practice we come to know a power greater than our ego, and that power nourishes us by granting us the graces of attention, acceptance, appreciation, affection, and allowing.

There are also five major mental habits that interrupt authentic, unconditional presence and may cause others to feel unloved. They are: fear, desire that the other person fulfill our wishes, judgment, control, and illusion. These mindsets are like bullies who enter unbidden and intrude upon our pure experience of the present.

When we come *to* others with the five A’s, we are profoundly present and closeness happens. When we come *at* others with the five mindsets, we are caught in a personal agenda and distance happens. The commitment to intimacy is a journey from the ego’s favorite resorts to the paradise of mindful love.

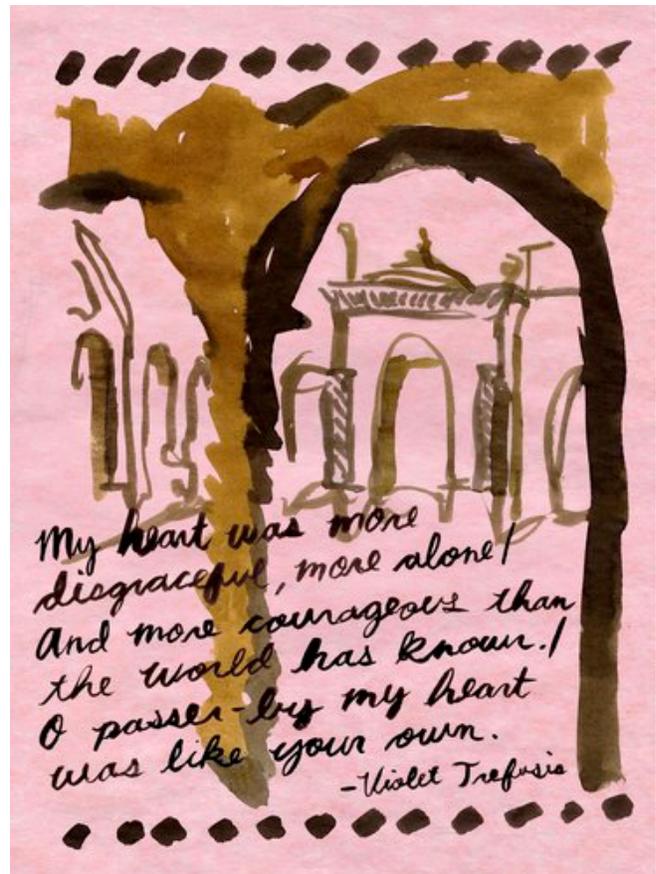
-- David Richo

“Adults all have a love tank. If you feel loved by your spouse, the whole world is right. If the love tank is empty, the whole world can begin to look dark.” The problem: individuals fill their tanks in different ways. To illustrate, [Southern Baptist minister and author Gary Chapman] told the crowd a story of a couple on the verge of divorce who came to see him. The man was dumbfounded. He cooked dinner every night for his wife; afterward he washed the dishes and took out the trash. “I don’t know what else to do,” the man said. “But she still tells me she doesn’t feel loved.” The woman agreed. “He does all those things,” she said. Then she burst into tears. “But Dr. Chapman, we never talk. We haven’t talked in 30 years.” In Dr. Chapman’s analysis, each one spoke a different love language: he liked to perform acts of service for his wife, while she was seeking quality time from him.

“Each of us has a primary love language,” Dr. Chapman said, and often secondary or tertiary ones. To help identify your language, he recommended focusing on the way you most frequently express love. What you give is often what you crave. Challenges in relationships arise because people tend to be attracted to their opposites, he said. “In a marriage, almost never do a husband and wife have the same language. The key is we have to learn to speak the language of the other person.”

He eventually labeled these different ways of expressing love “the five love languages”: words of affirmation; gifts; acts of service; quality time; and physical touch.

-- Bruce Feiler, “A Sermon to Save Marriages,” *New York Times*





LUCRETIUS

The stuff of the universe, Lucretius proposed, is an infinite number of atoms moving randomly through space, like dust motes in a sunbeam, colliding, hooking together, forming complex structures, breaking apart again, in a ceaseless process of creation and destruction. There is no escape from this process. When we look up at the night sky and marvel at the numberless stars, we are not seeing the handiwork of the gods or a crystalline sphere. We are seeing the same material world of which we are a part and from whose elements we were made. There is no master plan, no divine architect, no intelligent design. Nature restlessly experiments, and we are simply one among the innumerable results: “We are all sprung from celestial seed; all have the same father, from whom our fostering mother earth receives liquid drops of water, and then teeming brings forth bright corn and luxuriant trees and the race of mankind, brings forth all the generations of wild beasts, providing food with which all nourish their bodies and lead a sweet life and get their offspring.”

All things, including the species to which we belong, have evolved over vast stretches of time. The evolution is random, though in the case of living organisms it involves a principle of natural selection. That is, species that are suited to survive and to reproduce successfully endure, at least for a time; those which are not so well suited die off quickly. Other species existed and vanished before we came onto the scene; our kind, too, will vanish one day. Nothing – from our own species to the sun – lasts forever. Only the atoms are immortal.

In a universe so constituted, Lucretius argued, it is absurd to think that the earth and its inhabitants occupy a central place, or that the world was purpose-built to accommodate human beings... There is no reason to set humans apart from other animals, no hope of bribing or appeasing the gods, no place for religious fanaticism, no call for ascetic self-denial, no justification for dreams of limitless power or perfect security, no rationale for wars of conquest or self-aggrandizement, no possibility of triumphing over nature. Instead, he wrote, human beings should conquer their fears, accept the fact that they themselves and all the things they encounter are transitory, and embrace the beauty and the pleasure of the world.

-- Stephen Greenblatt in *The New Yorker*

MARGARET SANGER

The first birth-control clinic in the United States opened on October 16, 1916, on Amboy Street in Brooklyn. There were two rooms, and three employees: Ethel Byrne, a nurse; Fania Mindell, a receptionist who was fluent in Yiddish; and Byrne's sister, Margaret Sanger, a thirty-seven-year-old nurse and mother... Between 1912 and 1913, Sanger wrote a twelve-part series for *The Call*, the socialist daily, titled "What Every Girl Should Know." Because any discussion of venereal matters violated the Comstock law, Sanger's final essay, "Some Consequences of Ignorance and Silence," was banned on the ground of obscenity. By way of protest, *The Call* ran, in place of the essay, an announcement: "What Every Girl Should Know' – NOTHING!"...

In 1914, Sanger began publishing *The Woman Rebel*, an eight-page feminist monthly, in which she coined the term "birth control"... [The following year she rented a storefront and opened the birth control clinic that eventually became Planned Parenthood.] Nine days later, an undercover policewoman came, posing as a mother of two who couldn't afford any more children. Mindell sold her a copy of "What Every Girl Should Know." Byrne discussed contraception with her. The next day, the police arrived, arrested Sanger, confiscated an examination table, and shut down the clinic...

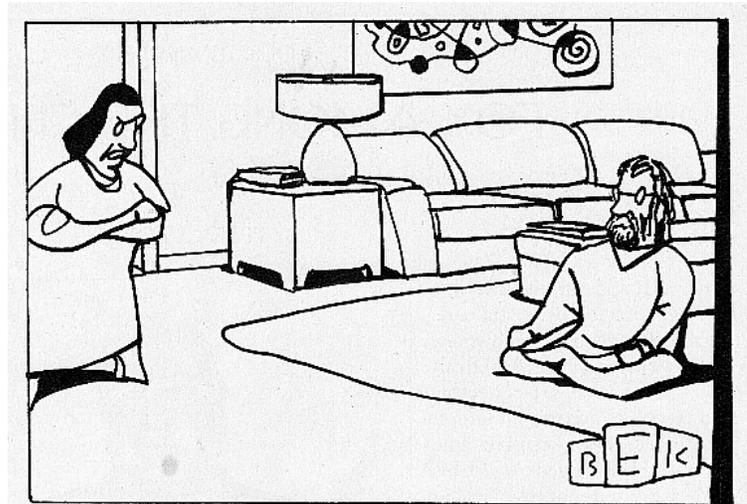
At Sanger's trial, during which the judge waved a cervical cap from the bench, Sanger hoped to argue that the law preventing the distribution of contraception was unconstitutional; exposing women, against their will, to the danger of dying in childbirth violated a woman's right to life. But the judge ruled that no woman had "the right to copulate with a feeling of security that there will be no resulting conception." In other words, if a woman wasn't willing to die in childbirth, she shouldn't have sex. Sanger went to Queens County Penitentiary. She was sentenced to thirty days.

-- Jill Lepore, "Birthright: what's next for Planned Parenthood?," *The New Yorker*





UNLESS THE MOMENT IS UNPLEASANT,
IN WHICH CASE I WILL EAT A COOKIE.



"Can you be in the moment later?"

MEDITATION

Meditation provides a break from concentration on goals. In meditation we get in touch with that place in ourselves where we are perfect *without having to do anything*. The opposite of this is being attached to planning, analyzing, controlling, and trying to make things come out our way. Instead, we can simply accept our present situation and honor it as perfect. This opens us and change happens naturally.

We do not meditate to become serene, but only to be here now. Serenity and centeredness happen as we let go of everything that prevents us from being here now – e.g., thoughts, wishes, expectations, attachments.

Sitting meditation is usually done cross-legged or on a chair with back straight, head erect, hands on thighs or knees, breathing naturally and evenly, with mouth closed and eyes open. Keep your eyes open fosters being here now rather than shutting out present reality. Do not stare at the floor; simply see it without concentrating on it. In fact, do not concentrate on anything, only maintain awareness of your breathing.

Do not try to get rid of thoughts or treat them as distractions. Let your thoughts pass *through* your mind without holding on to any one of them. Simply observe them without judgment or attachment, as if they were part of a movie.

This is actually a way of practicing for life: you do not have to be caught up in the drama in your head. You can be the watcher within who sees with full awareness but without anxiety or self-reproach. You can let what occurs inform you rather than overwhelm you.

When you notice yourself drifting with your thoughts, label it "thinking" and return to awareness of your breathing. In this way you remind yourself that you can choose to leave your personal storyline and come back to the here and now.

Meditation thus empowers you to acknowledge your present predicament as a light on the next step of your path and so to get on with your life. This is how the present is perfect.

-- David Richo



MONASTERIES

You cannot come upon the ruins of the old great monasteries of England, beside their waters, in some lovely valley, now remote, without feeling that here is one of the choice spots of the earth, where the spirit dwelt. To me it is so important to remember that when Rome collapsed, when the great Roman Empire fell into smoking ruins, and bears roamed in the streets of Lyon and wolves howled in the deserted streets of Rome, and Europe really was a dark ruin, then, it was not in castles or manors or cottages that life remained vivid. Then those whose souls were still alive withdrew together and gradually built monasteries, and these monasteries and convents, little communities of quiet labour and courage, isolated, helpless, and yet never overcome in a world flooded with devastation, these alone kept the human spirit from disintegration, from going quite dark, in the Dark Ages. These men made the Church, which again made Europe, inspiring the martial faith of the Middle Ages.

-- D. H. Lawrence

MORALISM

As critic and moralist, Matthew Arnold attacked the philistinism of the British middle class of his time, upholding rather severe, even dismaying standards of intellectual rigor and moral seriousness. Shortly after his death Robert Louis Stevenson remarked, "Poor Matt. He's gone to Heaven, no doubt – but he won't like God."

-- *The Little, Brown Book of Anecdotes*



MUSIC

We are only saved by music from being overwhelmed by nonsense.

-- Alice Playten

That's the problem with singing in rock music, the sincere school of criticism, the need for everything to have to have personal meaning and emotion, that the psychological intention of the singer is the most important thing. I would love to see critics write about what the drummer is doing as though it is as important as what the singer is singing, which it usually is. It's at least as significant as the lyrics to a song how one chord becomes another. You can view the rock song through the prism of the words, but you can also view it through lots of other prisms.

-- Brian Eno

NARCISSISM

It is too simple to think of the narcissist as someone in love with himself. One can detest oneself intimately and still be a narcissist. Mailer on Henry Miller: “The narcissist suffers from too much inner dialogue. The eye of one’s consciousness is forever looking at one’s own action... The narcissist is not self-absorbed as much as one self-absorbed in studying the other. The narcissist is the scientist and the experiment in one... It is not love of the self but dread of the world outside the self which is the seed of narcissism.” I recognize this in myself; the less confident I am, the more intense my narcissism becomes.

-- Kenneth Tynan, *Diaries*

OCCUPY WALL STREET

We the people of the global Occupy movement embody and enact a deep democratic awakening with genuine joy and fierce determination. Our movement—leaderless and leaderful—is a soulful expression of a moral outrage at the ugly corporate greed that pushes our society and world to the brink of catastrophe. We are aware that our actions have inaugurated a radical enlightenment in a moment of undeniable distrust and disgust with oligarchic economies, corrupt politicians, arbitrary rule of law and corporate media weapons of mass distraction. And we intend to sustain our momentum by nurturing our bonds of trust, fortifying our bodies, hearts and minds and sticking together through hell or high water in order to create a better world through a deep democratic revolution.

We refuse to be mere echoes of the vicious lies that support an illegitimate status quo. Our deep democratic awakening takes the form of we everyday people raising our individual and collective voices to tell the painful truths about unjust systems and unfair structures that yield unnecessary social misery. The past thirty years of a top-down, one-sided class war on precious poor and working people—with the greatest transfer of wealth from bottom to top in human history—have taught us that we either fight together in the name of truth and justice or we lose our livelihoods and sacred honor. In this sense, the movement is already victorious: our organizing and mobilizing have shifted public discourses toward truth and justice—towards a focus on corporate greed, wealth inequality, escalating poverty, obscene levels of unemployment, the role of big money in politics, and abusive military and police power. But we have work ahead of us yet.

The full-scale bankruptcy of the neoliberal order—of deregulated markets, unaccountable oligarchs, bribed politicians—is now an established fact of life and history. Its age is coming to an end. Our deep democratic enlightenment must break us out of our narrow intellectual frameworks and our parochial cultural habitus. Like the inventors of jazz, we must be open-minded, flexible, fluid, inclusive, transparent, courageous, self-critical, compassionate and visionary. We must recast old notions of empire, class, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and nature into new ways of thinking and being. Our movement is a precious, sublime, messy and funky form of incubation. Again like jazz, we must embody and enact a loving embrace of the art of our collaborative creations. We must embody a universal embrace of all those in the human family, and sentient beings, and consolidate an unstoppable fortitude in the face of systems of oppression and structures of domination. We will suffer, shudder and struggle together with smiles on our faces and a love supreme in our souls. Just as justice is what love looks like in public and tenderness is what love feels like in private, deep democratic revolution is what justice looks like in practice.



Revolution may scare some people because of its connotation of violence. And this is understandable in light of many past revolutions, such as the American revolutions against monarchy in 1776 or against slavery in 1861. But the revolution in our time—against oligarchy and plutocracy—need not be an ugly and violent one. The rich legacies of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, and recent revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, have taught us that we can deal with our social catastrophes with social compassion and that we can transform unjust societies with courageous visions and nonviolent strategies. If we equip ourselves with truthful systemic analyses of power in our minds, moral commitments of steel in our backs and a genuine joy in serving others in our hearts, then our dream of a nascent justice spread across the globe may be no mere illusion.

We are prisoners of a blood-stained, tear-soaked hope. This means we are free to imagine and create a more deeply democratic world than we have yet witnessed in history.

-- Cornel West



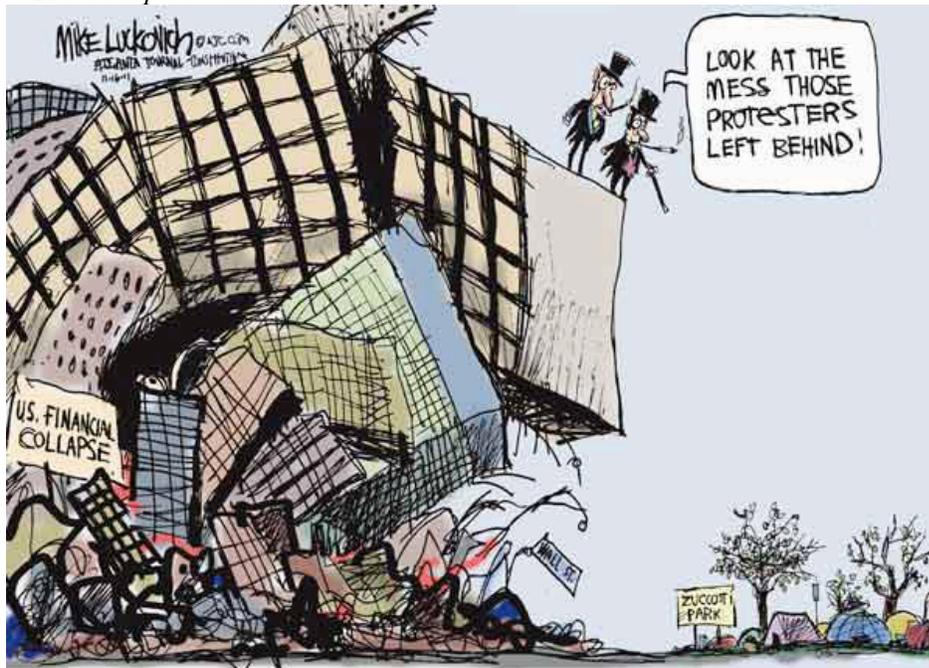
The 1% is just beginning to understand that the reason Occupy Wall Street makes no demands is because we aren't talking to them. The 99% are speaking and listening to each other. 4,167 people have been arrested since the occupations began; millions more are reimagining the world we want to live in.

Police forces have been deployed by Republican and Democratic politicians alike to break a movement that was first ignored and then mocked in what passes for the news. It's not just America. This is a living democratic movement that is global in scale and growing in real time. That this beautiful thing is met with state violence says everything we need to know about the perpetrators. It also means we're on to something. Their attacks are based on an understanding of power that's dying, if not already dead.

Mubarak is Berlusconi is Bloomberg is Quan is Walker is pepper spray is broken politics bound to the past and we make no demands of them because free people constitute governments, not the other way around.

We don't know how this is going to end, but the beginning is near.

-- *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*



They tell you we are dreamers. The true dreamers are those who think things can go on indefinitely the way they are. We are not dreamers. We are awakening from a dream which is turning into a nightmare. We are not destroying anything. We are only witnessing how the system is destroying itself. To be engaged in fighting for freedom, you have first to free yourself from the chains of ruling ideology. When you criticize capitalism, don't allow yourself to be blackmailed that you are against democracy. The change is possible.

-- Slavoj Žižek



PAIN

Pain is weakness leaving the body.

-- US Marine Corps saying

PEOPLE-PLEASING

I tried so hard to please that I never realized no one was watching.

-- Mark Nepo, *The Book of Awakening*

I was part of that strange race of people aptly described as spending their lives doing things they detest to make money they don't want to buy things they don't need to impress people they dislike.

-- Emile Henry Gauvreau

In "Generation Why?" a social-networking jeremiad published in *The New York Review of Books* last year, Zadie Smith reduces the motivations of the Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to one: he wants to be liked. She writes, "For our self-conscious generation (and in this, I and Zuckerberg, and everyone raised on TV in the Eighties and Nineties, share a single soul), not being liked is as bad as it gets. Intolerable to be thought of badly for a minute, even for a moment." Even if you reject, as I do, the universality of her diagnosis, Smith has pinpointed the reason so much of what passes for intellectual debate nowadays is obscured behind a veneer of folksiness and sincerity and is characterized by an unwillingness to be pinned down. Where the craving for admiration and approval predominates, intellectual rigor cannot thrive, if it survives at all.

-- Maud Newton, *New York Times Magazine*

You wouldn't worry so much about what others think of you if you realized how seldom they do.

-- Eleanor Roosevelt

PERFECTIONISM

We know we are not integrating the full spectrum of our feelings when we keep reducing them all to a single judgment. For example, "I am emotionally stuck," may also mean: "I am depressed and grieving and self-pitying and refusing to self-activate." Or "I am a loving father" may need to be expanded to "I am a loving father in many ways and there are also times when I am controlling and put my own expectations ahead of my children's needs."

Noticing when we disregard the full spectrum of our feelings and behavior and then acknowledging our missing predicates may enrich our sense of our own depth! "From now on, every time I judge myself (or others), I will use the technique of adding four more adjectives that are also somehow true!"

Acknowledge openly to others that sometimes you succeed and sometimes you fail; sometimes you come through for them and sometimes you let them down. You offer to come through for someone just one more time than you let someone down. You offer not perfection but commitment to make amends for failures, to make restitution for losses. This is a *flexible* (and therefore adult) presentation of your self. It preserves you from the expectation by others that you can be counted on absolutely, or the verdict of others that you be discounted absolutely. "To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often," as Cardinal Newman so wisely remarked. It would be a great violation of humanness to be rigidly perfect in conduct. The repressive vigilance such white-knuckling requires does not signify an achievement but a self-defacement.

-- David Richo, *How to Be an Adult*

PERSUASION

What other skills do peace activists need besides the ability to remain calm?

We need training in how to be persuasive and in understanding other people's worldviews, because if you attack someone's worldview, they are likely to react as if you are attacking them physically. It's part of who they are... The difference between manipulation and persuasion is that manipulation uses fear, which clouds the mind. It's difficult to think clearly when you're afraid. Persuasion appeals to people's reason, understanding, compassion, and conscience. If I'm trying to persuade you, I want you to be calm, rational. I want to give you all the evidence so that you can make the right decision.

-- Paul Chappell, interviewed in *The Sun*

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is like trying to open a safe with a combination lock: each little adjustment of the dials seems to achieve nothing, only when everything is in place does the door open.

-- Ludwig Wittgenstein

PLACEBO

I'm all for placebos. The fact that many people with mild to moderate depression respond to them is a good sign. To me the placebo effect is the meat of medicine: the patients heal themselves. That is the response you want to elicit. Instead of always trying to rule out placebo effects, we should be trying to encourage them. They are pure healing from within. Getting the maximum placebo response with the minimum intervention is the art of medicine, which is distinct from the science. But doctors are uncomfortable talking about placebos, because they think they involve deception. The word comes up most often in the question "How do you know that's not just a placebo effect?" The key word here is *just*.

There is an assignment I have given to many medical students and doctors in our trainings. Pick up any publication of a randomized controlled trial of a drug and turn to the table summarizing the results. In the control (i.e., placebo) group you'll always find a few subjects who showed all of the results produced in the experimental group, which received the drug being tested. To me this is the single most important finding of sixty years of randomized controlled drug testing. It means that any effect you can produce in the human organism through a pharmacological intervention can also be produced, at least some of the time, purely by the mind. That is phenomenal. We should be investigating that mind mechanism with all our ability so that we can take greater advantage of it to treat disease and stimulate healing. Let the brain centers and neurochemical pathways that control immune function and other physiological functions do the work.

-- Dr. Andrew Weil, interviewed in *The Sun*



PLEASURE

“The Word”

Down near the bottom
of the crossed-out list
of things you have to do today,

between "green thread"
and "broccoli," you find
that you have penciled "sunlight."

Resting on the page, the word
is beautiful. It touches you
as if you had a friend

and sunlight were a present
he had sent from someplace distant
as this morning—to cheer you up,

and to remind you that,
among your duties, pleasure
is a thing

that also needs accomplishing.
Do you remember?
that time and light are kinds

of love, and love
is no less practical
than a coffee grinder

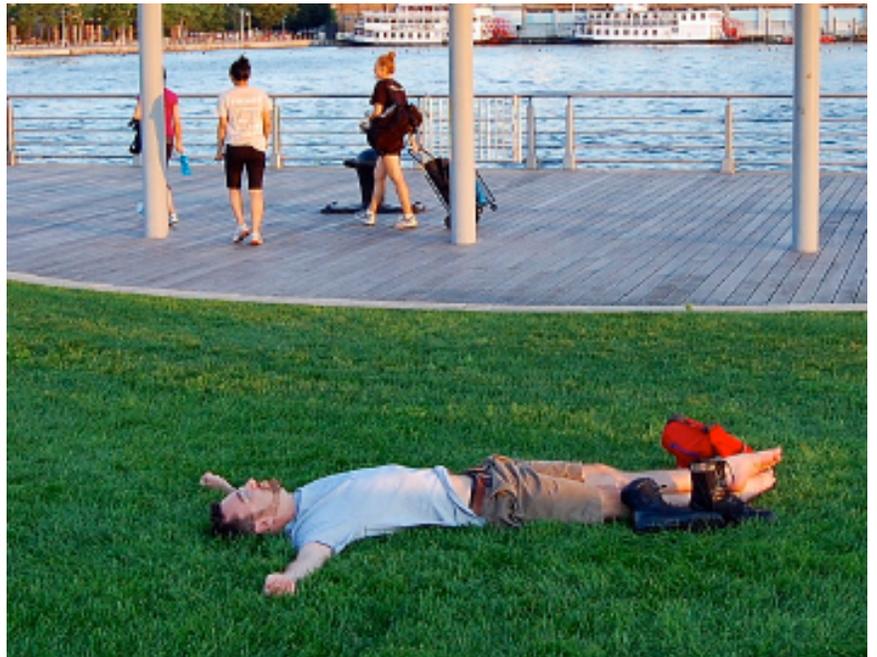
or a safe spare tire?
Tomorrow you may be utterly
without a clue,

but today you get a telegram
from the heart in exile,
proclaiming that the kingdom

still exists,
the king and queen alive,
still speaking to their children,

—to any one among them
who can find the time
to sit out in the sun and listen.

-- Tony Hoagland



POETRY

Writing poetry is like watching television. There's always *something* on.

-- John Ashbery

The first study of the man who wishes to be a poet is complete knowledge of himself. He searches his mind, inspects it, tries out and learns to use it.

-- Arthur Rimbaud

PRAYER

“A Prayer for the Self”

Who am I worthless that You spent such pains
and take my pains again?
I do not understand; but I believe.
Jonquils respond with wit to the teasing breeze.

Induct me down my secrets. Stiffen this heart
to stand their horrifying cries, O cushion
the first the second shocks, will to a halt
in mid-air there demons who would be at me.

May fade before, sweet morning on sweet morning,
I wake my dreams, my fan-mail go astray,
and do me little goods I have not thought of,
ingenious & beneficial Father.

Ease in their passing my beloved friends,
all others too I have cared for in a travelling life,
anyone anywhere indeed. Lift up
sober toward truth a scared self-estimate.

-- John Berryman

I once tried to pray away the gay. But sometimes a houseguest just won't leave.

-- Frank Bruni

Q&A

I read that you donned a prosthesis for your one-woman show “Man to Man,” in which you played both husband and wife.

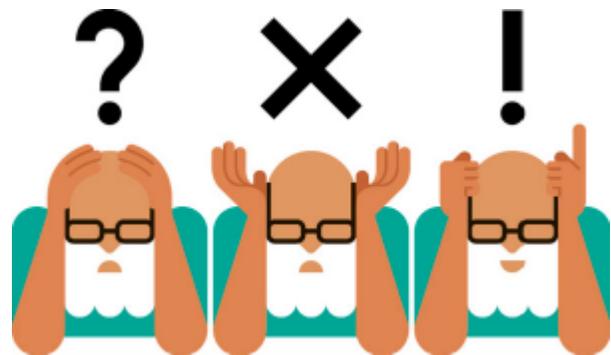
Actually it was a balled pair of socks, but the idea of it morphing in legend into a penis prosthetic is fantastic, and we should leave it right there.

-- Tilda Swinton, interviewed by Andrew Goldman in the *NY Times Magazine*

How can Obama be the president you want him to be when he's facing this Republican Congress?

I'll put it this way, brother: You've got to be a thermostat rather than a thermometer. A thermostat shapes the climate of opinion; a thermometer just reflects it. If you're just going to reflect it and run by the polls, then you're not going to be a transformative president. Lincoln was a thermostat. Johnson and F.D.R., too.

-- Cornel West, *ibid.*



READING

"Bookmobile"

I spend part of my childhood waiting for the Sterns County Bookmobile. When it comes to town, it makes a U-turn in front of the grade school and glides into its place under the elms.

It is a natural wonder of late afternoon. I try to imagine Dante, William Faulkner, and Emily Dickinson traveling down a double lane highway together, country-western on the radio.

Even when it arrives, I have to wait. The librarian is busy, getting out the inky pad and the lined cards. I pace back and forth in the line, hungry for the fresh bread of the page,

because I need something that will tell me what I am; I want to catch a book, clear as a one-way ticket, to Paris, to London, to anywhere.

-- Joyce Sutphen

You should never just read for "enjoyment." Read to make yourself smarter! Less judgmental. More apt to understand your friends' insane behavior, or better yet, your own. Pick "hard books." Ones you have to concentrate on while reading. And for God's sake, don't let me ever hear you say, "I can't read fiction. I only have time for the truth." Fiction is the truth, fool! Ever hear of "literature"? That means fiction, too, stupid.

-- John Waters, *Role Models*

SELF-ESTEEM

These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are...there is no time for them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson





SEX

I'm gonna be real, because I'm sick of being typical.

Lately I've been seeing this guy Luke and we've started doing some new stuff in bed. A few times we just decided to jerk off together. At first I wasn't sure if that would be enough for me, you know, but we really got into it.

We were laying with, kind of, one arm around the other's shoulder and we both really got off on watching each other. We've done massages, which is great. A couple of times we tried talking dirty and that was cool too. Just the other night I used a can of whipped cream and it was one of the best times we've had together.

I'm not saying I don't still like the usual stuff. I can't even say I'm always safe with it, or that I'll ever be safe with it 100% of the time. I don't use condoms for giving head but for fucking yeah. Well, at least most of the time, yeah. I'm not perfect, but I know what I want. I'm trying to be open-minded, try new things and still have fun. If you're feeling weird about using condoms, do something where you don't need to. It's been great to have some safer sex that's actually sexy.

All I'm saying is it doesn't have to be the same old thing every time, you know? I mean, since when did being gay become typical? I refuse to be typical. I refuse to let sex get routine.

For me, being gay is about being yourself, and not being defined by any stereotypes, and not being tied down. Unless that's your thing, of course.

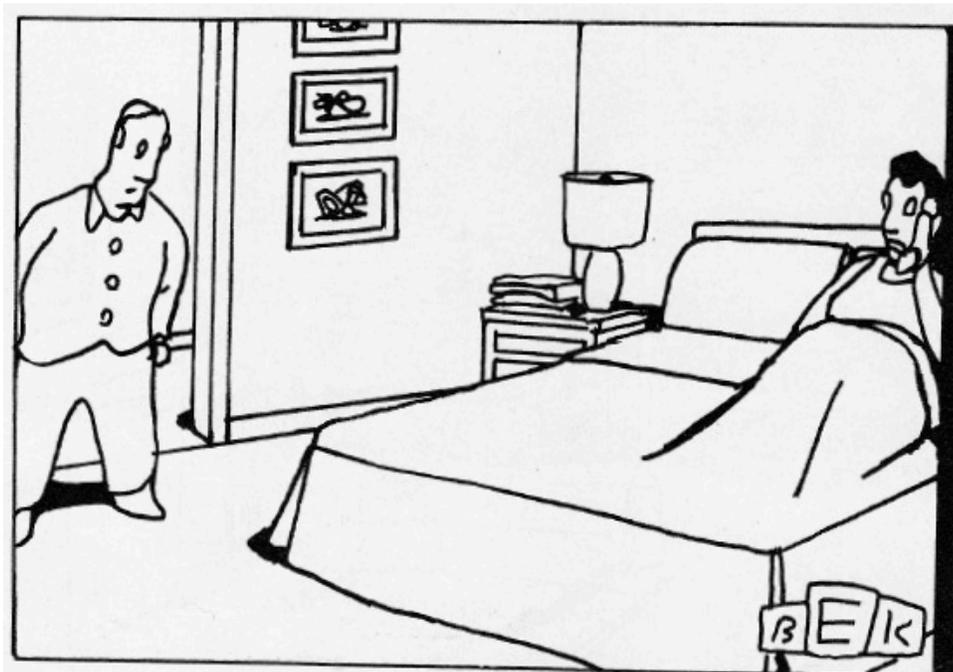
-- *Get Real Philly: Stories from Real Men, About Real Lives*



“10 Slow Sex Tips”

- 1. Go slower than you would imagine.** Then go even slower. In slow sex, there is no minimum speed limit. We promise, if you want to rev things up--try slowing down.
- 2. Play with peaking.** Orgasm has its ups and downs. Get to know both and enjoy a whole new kind of ride.
- 3. Increase attention rather than pressure.** If you want to get more out of sex, expand your range beyond "harder and faster." Increase attention along the way. Try this on for size: What does it feel like to focus on your partner's collar bone 5 minutes straight?
- 4. Stay connected.** Fantasy can be fun, but it often leaves your partner behind. Stay connected physically and emotionally. Sex will get much more satisfying for you both.
- 5. Speak your sensations.** Communication is the easiest way to increase intimacy. Discover how sexy "simple" can be. Reveal to your partner what you feel in your body right now. Your sensation will increase the more you do.
- 6. Safeport your partner.** Pave the way for deeper sensation. Tell your partner what you are going to do before you do it.
- 7. Ask for what you want.** Don't dumb down your desires. Even if your partner says no, you increase intimacy and connection when you are honest.
- 8. Say the thing you don't want them to know.** Taboo is sexy. You don't have to act on it, but why keep that sensation to yourself?
- 9. Do it for your own pleasure.** Especially when you are in "giving" mode. The better it feels to you, the better it will feel to your partner. Touch them so that it feels good to you.
- 10. Do it now.** Why wait? Ask for the sex you want, right now, today.

-- Nicole Daedone, *Slow Sex*



“I’ll call you tomorrow—I have to go freeze at William’s touch now.”

SHADOW

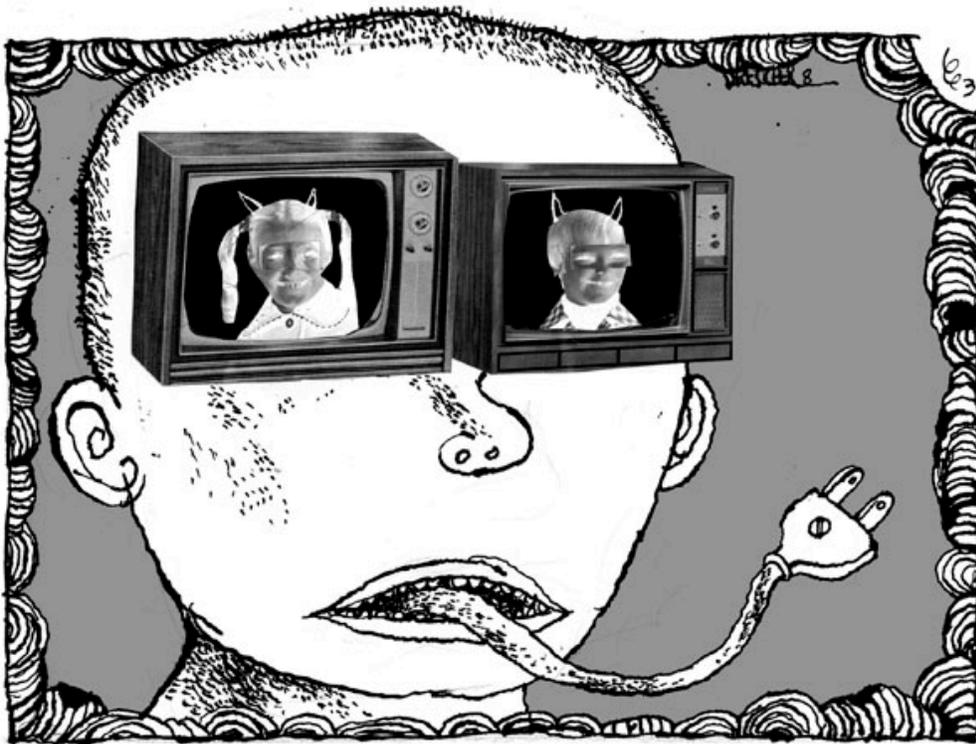
Darkness and upheaval always precede an expansion of consciousness.

-- Carl Jung

SLEEP

I am concerned about how poorly people sleep in our culture. The use of medications is at an all-time high, and these drugs do not reproduce natural sleep. Most of them suppress dreaming. One detrimental influence on our sleep is our ability to light up the night, which is a significant change in our environment over the past hundred years. There's a body of literature suggesting that exposure to light at night, even briefly, greatly increases cancer risk, especially risk of breast cancer in women. Women who are blind from birth have very low rates of breast cancer. Women who work night shifts have high rates of breast cancer. I tell people it is best to sleep in complete darkness, and if you have to get up in the middle of the night, don't turn on the light, or else use a red Christmas-tree bulb, because it appears that light at the red end of the spectrum is safest.

-- Dr. Andrew Weil, interviewed in *The Sun*



SPACE

You know what space is. There is space in this room. The distance between here and your hostel, between the bridge and your home, between this bank of the river and the other – all that is space. Now, is there also space in your mind? Or is it so crowded that there is no space in it at all? If your mind has space, then in that space there is silence – and from that silence everything else comes, for then you can listen, you can pay attention without resistance. That is why it is very important to have space in the mind. If the mind is not overcrowded, not ceaselessly occupied, then it can listen to that dog barking, to the sound of a train crossing the distant bridge, and also be fully aware of what is being said by a person talking here. Then the mind is a living thing. It is not dead.

-- J. Krishnamurti

STORYTELLING

After September 11, 2001, Asne Seierstad spent six weeks in rural parts of Afghanistan with the commandos of the Northern Alliance, traveling on the back of trucks and in military vehicles, and sleeping on stone floors and in mud huts. She rode into Kabul with the Northern Alliance in November 2001. She found a great bookstore, a place owned by an elegant, gray-haired, Afghan man who was well-educated and loved to talk about politics and writing. After weeks spent in the war-torn countryside, "among gunpowder and rubble, where conversations centered on the tactics of war and military advance," she said, "it was refreshing to leaf through books and talk about literature and history." So she stopped by that bookshop often to peruse the books and to chat with the owner, a man so passionate about books that he'd hid them from police to prevent them from being burned during different sieges — and had gone to prison.

The bookstore owner invited her to a meal with his family. She said, "The atmosphere was unrestrained, a huge contrast to the simple meals with the commandos in the mountains. ... When I left I said to myself this is Afghanistan. How interesting it would be to write a book about this family." She visited him the next day to tell him about her idea of writing a book about his family. She asked if she could live with him and his family, and follow them around, in order to write this book. He agreed, and she moved in with his extended family in February 2002. She stayed for three months.

The book she wrote about his family, *The Bookseller of Kabul*, was a huge success. *The New York Times* called it "the most intimate description of an Afghan household ever produced by a Western journalist." It became an international best-seller, translated into 30 languages, the subject of rave reviews and a book club favorite.

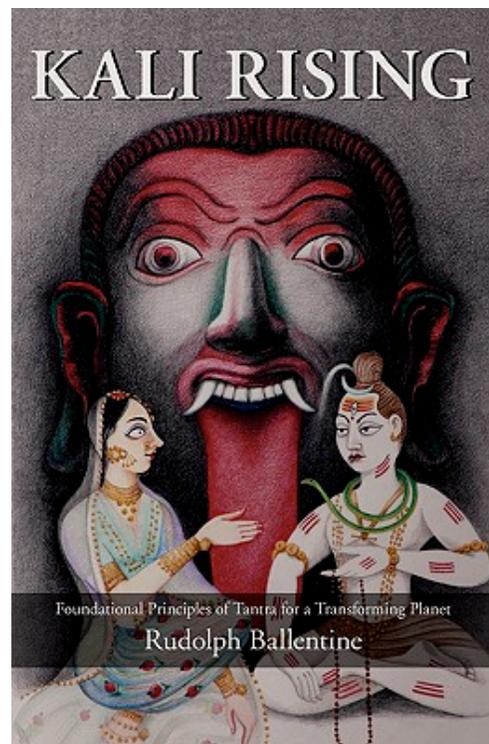
But the thinly disguised bookseller of Kabul, Shah Mohammed Rais — "Sultan Khan" in the book — was not happy about the way he had been portrayed, and flew to Norway to launch his own publicity campaign. He wrote his own book, called *Once Upon a Time There Was a Bookseller in Kabul* (2007). It's about how two Norwegian trolls visit Afghanistan with preconceived notions, and then abuse his family's hospitality in order to frame a colorful, detail-oriented portrait to fit those preconceived notions.

-- The Writer's Almanac

TANTRA

Tantra is an embodied spirituality. Embodiment means integrating the teachings, the techniques, the explorations and experiments into your total physical/mental/emotional and spiritual being. If the way you live, the space you create, your relationship to your food and where it comes from, your use of the earth's resources, your relationship to Gaia who feeds and clothes and shelters you — and whose fluids run through your veins — are all unconscious, indifferent, and damaging to the web of life of which you are a part, then that's not embodied. It doesn't matter that you breathe when you're having sex, or that you say a mantra sometimes. It doesn't add up to Tantra. Tantra is about the integration of the whole, the conscious weaving together of the fabric of life.

-- Rudy Ballentine, *Kali Rising*



TELEVISION

Television, the talking furniture we look to as a cure for loneliness, is not expected to surprise.

-- John Leonard

THIS IS YOUR LIFE.
DO WHAT YOU LOVE,
AND DO IT OFTEN.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE SOMETHING, CHANGE IT.
IF YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR JOB, QUIT.
IF YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME, STOP WATCHING TV.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE, STOP;
THEY WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU WHEN YOU
START DOING THINGS YOU LOVE.

STOP OVER ANALYZING, ALL EMOTIONS ARE BEAUTIFUL.
WHEN YOU EAT, APPRECIATE
LIFE IS SIMPLE. EVERY LAST BITE.

OPEN YOUR MIND, ARMS, AND HEART TO NEW THINGS
AND PEOPLE, WE ARE UNITED IN OUR DIFFERENCES.
ASK THE NEXT PERSON YOU SEE WHAT THEIR PASSION IS,
AND SHARE YOUR INSPIRING DREAM WITH THEM.

TRAVEL OFTEN; GETTING LOST WILL
HELP YOU FIND YOURSELF.
SOME OPPORTUNITIES ONLY COME ONCE, SEIZE THEM.

LIFE IS ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU MEET, AND
THE THINGS YOU CREATE WITH THEM
SO GO OUT AND START CREATING.

LIFE IS SHORT. LIVE YOUR DREAM,
AND WEAR
YOUR PASSION.

THEATER

Having last night seen Ariane Mnouchkine's breathtaking company in *1789* at the Round House, I attend a discussion of the production with Mnouchkine, Arnold Wesker and Jonathan Miller. Wesker views the show darkly, saying that collective authorship can lead to "group hysteria" and in any case must always lack the "focus" that a single writer can bring to bear on events. I rise to say that it is precisely that single focus that has led to the state of drama today – too many private plays about private middle-class people. When such authors attempt historical subjects, they always see them through the eyes of *individuals* (usually prominent or powerful figures). Collective authorship, on the other hand, dispenses with individual psychology and is thus uniquely fitted to present the movements of masses, classes and social groups. Mnouchkine's company, for instance, uses five or six different *actors* to play Louis XVI in various different guises and situations; so that it's impossible for us to identify with him. Arnold, I fear, is still enslaved to the idea of a play as the private property of the author – a strange bourgeois hangover. Mnouchkine points out that she was not allowed to register the play with the Société des Auteurs as the joint work of Le Theatre du Soleil: it *had* to be attributed to one named person. Thus does the law carry out its appointed duty to keep property private.

-- Kenneth Tynan diary entry, 17 October 1971

The straight realistic play with its genuine frigidaire and authentic ice-cubes, its characters that speak exactly as its audience speaks, corresponds to the academic landscape and has the same virtue of a photographic likeness. Everyone should know nowadays the unimportance of the photographic in art: that truth, life, or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or suggest, in essence, only through transformation, through changing into other forms than those which were merely present in appearance. These remarks are not meant as a preface only to this particular play. They have to do with a conception of a new, plastic theatre which must take the place of the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions if the theatre is to resume vitality as a part of our culture.

-- Tennessee Williams, production notes for *The Glass Menagerie* (1945)



The Wooster Group's Production of Tennessee Williams' Vieux Carre

It isn't theatre unless...

People walk out. It's the only real live moment in a live event. The people on stage have rehearsed what they're doing, but the person walking out has not.

-- playwright/director Robert O'Hara, interviewed in *American Theatre*

TOUCH

"The tao of touch"

What magic does touch create that we crave it so. That babies do not thrive without it. That the nurse who cuts tough nails and sands calluses on the elderly tells me sometimes men weep as she rubs lotion on their feet.

Yet the touch of a stranger the bumping or predatory thrust in the subway is like a slap. We long for the familiar, the open palm of love, its tender fingers. It is our hands that tamed cats into pets, not our food.

The widow looks in the mirror thinking, no one will ever touch me again, never. Not hold me. Not caress the softness of my breasts, my inner thighs, the swell of my belly. Do I still live if no one knows my body?

We touch each other so many ways, in curiosity, in anger, to command attention, to soothe, to quiet, to rouse, to cure. Touch is our first language and often, our last as the breath ebbs and a hand closes our eyes.

-- Marge Piercy



TRAUMA

Trauma can become a kind of alchemical vessel through which the next stage of life is born. Where fate is concerned, there is no rejecting it, no getting rid of it. You have to go through it and find what is hidden in it.

-- Michael Meade, interviewed in *The Sun*



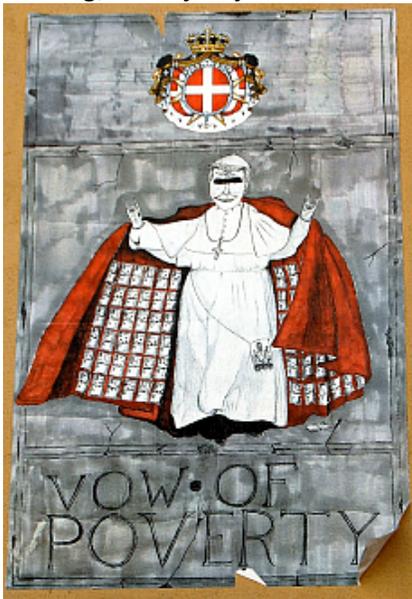
TRY

Trying without doing is wishing rather than choosing. You either have a plan in place or you are choosing not to act. "This being the case, how shall I proceed?" is a Zen saying that shows the automatic, assertive progression from circumstance to action.

-- David Richo

UNIQUE

A traveler who had seen many lands and peoples and several of the earth's continents was asked what quality in men he had discovered everywhere he had gone. He replied, "They have the tendency to laziness." To many it will seem that he ought rather to have said, "They are all timid. They hide themselves behind customs and opinions." In his heart every man knows quite well that, being unique, he will be in the world only once and that no imaginable chance will for a second time gather together into a unity so strangely variegated an assortment as he is: he knows it but he hides it like a bad conscience – why? From fear of his neighbor, who demands conventionality and cloaks himself with it. But what is it that constrains the individual to fear his neighbor, to think and act like a member of a herd, and to have no joy in himself? Modesty, perhaps in a few rare cases. With the great majority it is indolence, inertia; in short, that tendency to laziness of which the traveler spoke. He is right: men are even lazier than they are timid, and fear most of all the inconveniences with which unconditional honesty and nakedness would burden them. Artists alone hate this sluggish promenading in borrowed fashions and appropriated opinions, and they reveal everyone's secret bad conscience, the law that every man is a unique miracle; they dare to show us man as he is, uniquely himself to the very last movement of his muscles; more, that in being thus strictly consistent in uniqueness he is beautiful, and worth regarding, and in no way tedious. When the great thinker despises mankind, he despises its laziness; for it is on account of their laziness that men seem like factory products, things of no consequence and unworthy to be associated with or instructed. The man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily; let him follow his conscience, which calls to him, "Be yourself! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself.



Every youthful soul hears this call day and night, and trembles when he hears it; for the idea of its liberation gives the soul a presentiment of the measure of happiness allotted it from all eternity – a happiness to which it can by no means attain so long as it lies fettered by the chains of fear and convention. And how dismal and senseless life can be without this liberation! There exists no more repulsive and desolate creature in the world than the man who has evaded his genius and who now looks furtively to left and right, behind him and all about him. In the end such a man becomes impossible to get hold of, since he is wholly exterior, without kernel: a tattered, painted bag of clothes; a decked-out ghost that cannot inspire even fear and certainly not pity.

-- Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*

UNQUENCHABLE

Even as, over time, the women's movement broadened and became less radical, less ferocious, [Mary] Daly continued to pace the boundaries, her rage unquenched. She referred to herself as "post-Christian" and as a "radical lesbian feminist." At speaking engagements, she refused to take questions from men, saying it was important for them to understand what it feels like to be voiceless and ignored. "There are and will be those who think I have gone overboard," she wrote in "Outercourse," her 1992 autobiography. "Let them rest assured that this assessment is correct, probably beyond their wildest imaginations, and that I will continue to do so." She was forced to retire from Boston College after, in 1998, a male student threatened to sue over her exclusionary policies, accusing her — with no lost irony — of sexism. It was another victory for the cockocracy, but it gave Daly, at age 70, a new wave of international publicity, a new platform from which to nag at the snools. "What they hate about my classes," she said at the time, "is they teach women not to be afraid."

-- Sara Corbett, *New York Times Magazine*

VEGETABLE

On May 10, 1893, the Supreme Court ruled that the tomato was a vegetable, not a fruit. Their ruling was in light of a 10-year-old piece of legislation called the Tariff Act of 1883, which ruled that a 10 percent tax had to be paid on all imported vegetables. The case, known as *Nix vs. Hedden*, was filed by John Nix and several other tomato importers against Edward Hedden, the Collector of Customs at the Port of New York. The case wound up in the Supreme Court, where Webster's Dictionary was heavily cited. The plaintiffs argued that according to the dictionary definition of fruit — the structure that grows from the flower of the plant and holds the seeds — a tomato was a fruit. They called two witnesses, both of whom heard the definitions of "fruit" and "vegetable" out of the dictionary and were asked whether those definitions were any different in the world of trade and commerce. Both talked for a while but said no, the definitions were no different. The counsel for the plaintiff then read the definition of tomato.

Each side then proceeded to read a series of Webster's Dictionary definitions. The counsel for the defense read "egg plant," "squash," "pepper," and "cucumber" — all of which, like tomato, are fruits in the botanical sense — but which are widely considered vegetables. In response, the counsel for the plaintiff read the definitions of "potato," "turnip," "parsnip," "cauliflower," "cabbage," and "carrot," none of them botanical fruits but all considered vegetables.

Justice Gray delivered the opinion of the Court, and he said: "Botanically speaking, tomatoes are the fruit of a vine, just as are cucumbers, squashes, beans, and peas. But in the common language of the people, whether sellers or consumers of provisions, all these are vegetables which are grown in kitchen gardens, and which, whether eaten cooked or raw, are, like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, cauliflower, cabbage, celery, and lettuce, usually served at dinner in, with, or after the soup, fish, or meats which constitute the principal part of the repast, and not, like fruits generally, as dessert."

Nix v. Hedden has been referenced in numerous cases since, including a 1990 Second Circuit Court of Appeals case about a delay in a tomato shipment. The judge wrote: "In common parlance tomatoes are vegetables, as the Supreme Court observed long ago, see *Nix v. Hedden*, although botanically speaking they are actually a fruit. Regardless of classification, people have been enjoying tomatoes for centuries, even Mr. Pickwick, as Dickens relates, ate his chops in 'tomata' sauce."

The debate has continued, but the problem is that "vegetable" has no actual scientific or botanical definition — it is a culinary term. In 1987, the state of Arkansas designated the Vine Ripe Pink Tomato as their official state fruit and vegetable.

Tomatoes were slow to catch on in the United States — in 1845, the editor of the *Boston Courier* wrote that tomatoes were "the mere fungus of an offensive plant, which one cannot touch without an immediate application of soap and water with an infusion of eau de cologne ... deliver us, O ye caterers of luxuries, ye gods and goddesses of the science of cookery! deliver us from tomatoes!" This opinion was echoed over and over again by journalists, agricultural experts, farmers, and gardeners across the country.

-- The Writer's Almanac



VEGETARIAN

I am a vegetarian. I'm not strict. I eat fish. And duck, but they're nearly fish, aren't they? . . . And pigs, cows, sheep, anything that lives near water. I'm like a postmodern vegetarian. I eat meat ironically.

-- Bill Bailey

Now I can look at you in peace; I don't eat you anymore.

-- Franz Kafka



VIRUS

Like snakes, viruses have a reputation as malevolent, poisonous, and deadly. In fact, most snakes are harmless, and dangerous viruses are rare. In order to inflict serious harm, a virus has to clear several biological hurdles. First, it has to remain unrecognized by the human immune system – to evade any protective antibodies. The virus would also need to make human sick. (Most do not.) Finally, it would have to spread efficiently – for example, through coughing, sneezing, or shaking hands. Many viruses fulfill one of these criteria; some fulfill two; far fewer meet all three.

-- Michael Specter, "The Domsday Strain," in *The New Yorker*

VOICE

Male logic, or a man's voice, tends to be based on terms of autonomy, justice, and rights; whereas women's logic or voice tends to be based on terms of relationship, care, and responsibility. Men tend toward agency; women tend toward communion. Men follow rules; women follow connections. Men look; women touch. Men tend toward individualism, women toward relationship. One of [Carol] Gilligan's favorite stories: A little boy and girl are playing. The boy says, "Let's play pirates!" The girl says, "Let's play like we live next door to each other." Boy: "No, I want to play pirates!" "Okay, you play the pirate who lives next door." . . . Gilligan says that the boys will hurt feelings in order to save the rules; the girls will break the rules in order to save the feelings.

-- Ken Wilber, summarizing Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*

WARDROBE

You don't need fashion designers when you are young. Have faith in your own bad taste. Buy the cheapest thing in your local thrift shop – the clothes that are freshly out of style with even the hippest people a few years older than you. Get on the fashion nerves of your peers, not your parents – that is the key to fashion leadership. Ill-fitting is always stylish. But be more creative – wear your clothes inside out, backward, upside down. Throw bleach in a load of colored laundry. Follow the exact opposite of the dry cleaning instructions inside the clothes that cost the most in your thrift shop. Don't wear jewelry – stick Band-Aids on your wrists or make a necklace out of them. Wear Scotch tape on the side of your face like a bad face-lift attempt. Mismatch your shoes. Best yet, do as Mink Stole used to do: go to the thrift store the day after Halloween, when the children's trick-or-treat costumes are on sale, buy one, and wear it as your uniform of defiance.

-- John Waters, *Role Models*

WEEKEND

“Weekends, Sleeping In”

No jump-starting the day,
no bare feet slapping the floor
to bath and breakfast.

Dozing instead
in the nest
like, I suppose,
a pair of gophers

underground
in fuzz and wood shavings.
One jostles the other
in closed-eye luxury.

We are at last
perhaps
what we are:
uncombed,
unclothed,
mortal.

Pulse
and breath
and dream.

-- Marjorie Saiser



WHY

The only way to live is like the rose, without a Why.

-- Meister Eckart



WIKIPEDIA

The online encyclopedia Wikipedia was launched on January 15, 2001. It was co-founded by Larry Sanger and Jimmy Wales. Sanger was a philosopher who specialized in epistemology, which is the study of knowledge itself — how it works, how we learn, how knowledge is spread and why we believe what we do. Wales was an entrepreneur who started out on a more traditional career path, working at a futures and options trading firm in Chicago, before deciding that the Internet was the way of the future. First Wales created a Web domain called Bomis, catered toward men. There were Web rings like "babe," "sports," and "adult." Bomis didn't really take off, but it did make enough on advertising to fit the bills for Wales' next project, Nupedia.

For Nupedia, Wales recruited Sanger, who was a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy. They were both interested in open-source software, and were excited by the idea of creating an online encyclopedia that anyone could contribute to. They decided that articles would go through a rigorous peer-reviewed process to make sure they were as accurate as those in any other encyclopedia. So they launched Nupedia in March of 2000. Unfortunately, it didn't work very well. Writers would get critiqued so intensely by scholarly reviewers that they were too afraid to write more articles. After six months, only two articles had made it through the peer-review process. Larry Sanger was talking to a programmer, Ben Kovitz, who explained the concept of a wiki and suggested using wiki software for an encyclopedia, so that anyone could write and anyone could edit, making the encyclopedia truly collaborative. Sanger brought the idea to Wales, and they decided to give it a chance. They kept it separate from Nupedia, in case it was a failure. Instead, they called their new venture Wikipedia.

And in almost no time Wikipedia became far more popular than Nupedia. In 2009, the English-language version of Wikipedia hit the 3 million-article mark when someone wrote an article on the Norwegian actress Beate Eriksen. Since then, the number has continued to rise, and there are about 3.5 million articles in English. Overall, there are more than 17 million articles in more than 270 languages.

There are two fundamental rules for anyone who is going to write for Wikipedia. One is that the author must attempt to be neutral in tone. The other is that the author should choose items that they support, not that they want to criticize. Another less-enforced rule is that people aren't supposed to edit entries about themselves — but many do, including Jimmy Wales, who has edited his own entry many times, mostly to downplay the adult content of Bomis and to give himself more credit as the founder of Wikipedia.

A common critique of Wikipedia is that, because anyone can write about anything, the encyclopedia places too much emphasis on fringe items that have cult followings — for example, one journalist pointed out that the entry on Star Wars creatures is one and a half times longer than the entry on World War II; another noticed that the entry for Leonard Nimoy, who played Spock in Star Trek, is longer than the entry for Nobel laureate Toni Morrison. The other major criticism is that Wikipedia is inaccurate, which would make sense since there are no credentials required for writers. However, a study published in *Nature* compared the accuracy of Wikipedia to the online version of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and was surprised to find that the accuracy was comparable — on average, about three errors per *Britannica* item and about four errors per Wikipedia item.

Wikipedia itself is open about its own shortcomings. On its "Researching with Wikipedia" page, it says: "Wikipedia's most dramatic weaknesses are closely associated with its greatest strengths. Wikipedia's radical openness means that any given article may be, at any given moment, in a bad state: for example, it could be in the middle of a large edit or it could have been recently vandalized. While blatant vandalism is usually easily spotted and rapidly corrected, Wikipedia is certainly more subject to subtle vandalism and deliberate factual errors than a typical reference work. Also, much as Wikipedia can rapidly produce articles on timely topics, it is also subject to remarkable oversights and omissions." Other weaknesses, it says, are that articles may be incomplete and that not all contributors cite their sources. Their suggestion is just to do more research: "Keep in mind that an encyclopedia is intended to be a starting point for serious research, not an endpoint. Though many casual inquiries will be satisfied merely by referring to Wikipedia, you will learn more by accessing the print and online resources we reference."

In 2009, an Irish student named Shane Fitzgerald was doing research on the Internet's relationship to globalization. He saw on TV that the French composer Maurice Jarre had died, and he decided it was the perfect opportunity for an experiment. Within 15 minutes, he made up a quote and posted it on Wikipedia's Maurice Jarre page, claiming that the composer had said: "One could say my life itself has been one long soundtrack. Music was my life, music brought me to life, and music is how I will be remembered long after I leave this life. When I die there will be a final waltz playing in my head that only I can hear." Shawn Fitzgerald didn't even provide a fake citation for the quote — he just left it without a citation.

Newspapers had just one day to write an obituary for Jarre, and sure enough, several papers and blogs picked up the fake quote for their obituaries — including The Guardian, one of Britain's most respected newspapers. Wikipedia actually managed to identify the quote as suspicious. It was deleted after Fitzgerald put it up, and when he reposted it, it was deleted in just six minutes. After he reposted it again, it was left up for about a day, and then deleted again. But it was up long enough to make its way into obituaries, and Fitzgerald had to e-mail media outlets and tell them that the quote was fake — he said that otherwise they probably never would have noticed. Only The Guardian publicly admitted its mistake — others just deleted the quote from their obituary. The editor of The Guardian wrote: "The moral of this story is not that journalists should avoid Wikipedia, but that they shouldn't use information they find there if it can't be traced back to a reliable primary source." Maybe most of all, the story shows how freely people turn to Wikipedia as a news source. In 2007, The New York Times reported that since 2004, more than a hundred judicial rulings in this country relied on evidence from Wikipedia. Some of the instances where Wikipedia was used in court included a definition of the Jewish marriage ceremony in a Brooklyn Surrogate Court, an explanation of "jungle juice" for the Supreme Court of Iowa, and an entry on the Department of Homeland Security's threat levels for a case involving antiwar protestors in Georgia's 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

-- The Writer's Almanac

WRITING

Write every day, the muse insists. Don't skip a day no matter how you're feeling, no matter how many wars your country is fighting, no matter how many tornados are heading your way. Crawl into your storm cellar and pick up a pen. If you can't think of anything to say, write the word *God* again and again. If you don't believe in God, write the word *dog*. Everyone believes in dogs.

-- Sy Safransky

(E)XPEDIENCY

The most useful thing about a principle is that it can always be sacrificed to expediency.

-- W. Somerset Maugham



YEAR IN REVIEW

THEATER: Top Ten Productions



1. JERUSALEM – Jez Butterworth’s dense, lyrical, astonishingly original play superbly directed by Ian Rickson, centered on the justly legendary performance of Mark Rylance as half-man half-myth Rooster Byron, with help from a sturdy ensemble cast and production design by the artist known as Ultz.

2. THE SELECT (THE SUN ALSO RISES) – Elevator Repair Service’s adaptation of Ernest Hemingway lived up to the company’s high standard for wit, depth, theatrical liveliness, and tech savvy. Great ensemble performance directed by John Collins, with a special shout

out to lead actors Mike Iveson and Lucy Taylor, supporting performers Kate Scelsa, Susie Sokol, and the amazing Kaneza Schaal, and production designer David Zinn.

3. THE WOOSTER GROUP’S VERSION OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS’ VIEUX CARRE. -- an unlikely match and another beautiful triumph for Elizabeth LeCompte and her brave actors, led this time by Ari Fliakos as the author’s stand-in with all subtext stripped away.

4. THE MOTHERFUCKER WITH THE HAT – Stephen Adly Giurgis’s play kept me laughing really hard at the most heartbreaking scenes, where cruelty and romance kept morphing into one another. Top-notch cast, though for me the revelation was Yul Vazquez as the scene-stealing cousin.

5. OTHER DESERT CITIES – Jon Robin Baitz’s taut play, a showcase for five excellent actors beautifully directed by Joe Mantello (I preferred the Lincoln Center cast with Elizabeth Marvel and Linda Lavin).

6. SLEEP NO MORE – British theater company Punchdrunk’s ambitious mash-up of Shakespeare and Hitchcock made for the year’s single most original theater experience, a dreamscape sprawling over 100 rooms in two adjacent former warehouses in Chelsea.

7. THE ILLUSION – Signature Theater’s Tony Kushner season ended with Michael Mayer’s gem-like staging of this lyrical bit of poetic philosophy featuring memorable performances by Lois Smith, Henry Stram, and Peter Bartlett.

8. BURNING – Thomas Bradshaw’s haunting, provocative play working the raw edges of sex, race, and politics staged with gleeful perversity by Scott Elliott.

9. THE PATSY & JONAS – the incomparable actor and playwright David Greenspan had another banner year with his own play *Go Back to Where You Are* at Playwrights Horizons and this quirky double-bill of solo virtuosity.



10. SPIDER-MAN TURN OFF THE DARK – I saw the final performance that could legitimately be said to reflect the work of Julie Taymor, with its mind-boggling sets by George Tsypin and costumes by Eiko Ishioka, and I thought it was terrific. Sue me.

Runners-up:

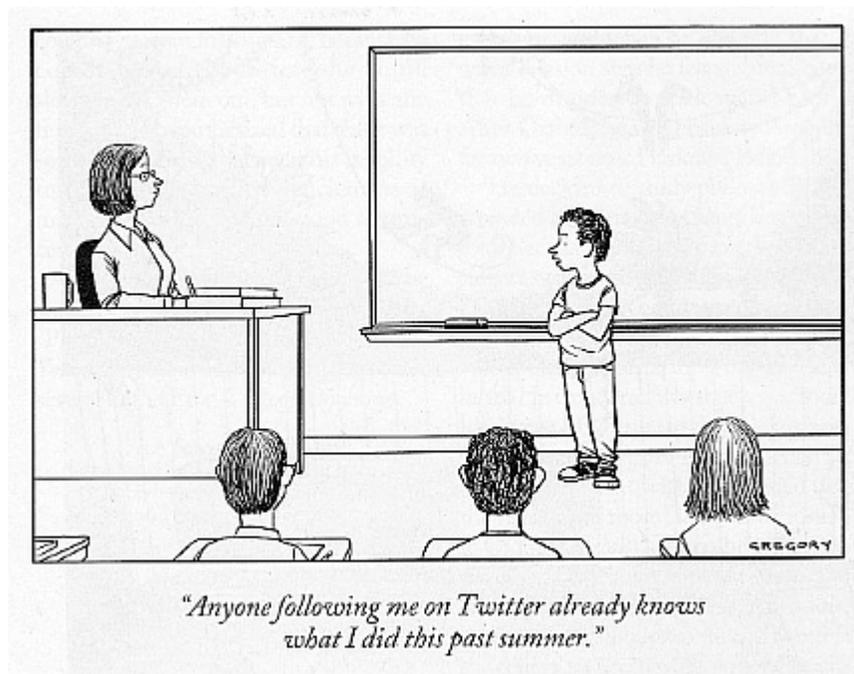


- James Macdonald's production of Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* at BAM, headed by the formidable trio of Alan Rickman, Fiona Shaw, and Lindsay Duncan;
- David Leveaux's smart revival of Tom Stoppard's towering *Arcadia*
- Taylor Mac's collaboration with the Talking Band, *The Walk Across America for Mother Earth* at La Mama, a perfect tribute to the recently departed champion of idealistic experimental theater
- *The Book of Mormon*, thanks to the fearless Trey Parker and Matt Stone and the clever Casey Nickolaw
- Daniel Sullivan's lucid Shakespeare in the Park staging of *All's Well That Ends Well*
- David Lindsay-Abaire's troubling but sticky *Good People* – Frances MacDormand justifiably got the reviews and the awards but let's not forget Patrick Carroll's exquisite supporting performance
- Nina Arianda's scintillating howdy-do in David Ives' *Venus in Fur*

MUSIC:

I listen to pop music all the time every day on my iPod but there are only two albums that I really loved this year: *Bon Iver* by the amazing Justin Vernon aka Bon Iver and *Ritual Union* by the Swedish pop group Little Dragon, led by the sublime Yukimi Nagano.





YOUTH

Even very recently, the elders could say [to the youths]: “You know, I have been young and *you* have never been old.” But today’s young people can reply: “You have never been young in the world I am young in, and you never can be”....This break between generations is wholly new: it is planetary and universal.

-- Margaret Mead

Young men embrace more than they can hold; stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end without consideration of the means; pursue some few principles absurdly; use extreme remedies at first; like an unready horse will neither stop nor turn.

-- Francis Bacon



ZEN

There is a Zen saying: “This being the case, how shall I proceed?” This adult question implies an acceptance of reality as it is or of a partner as she is – that is, mindfully. Alternatives would be “This being the case, how should you proceed” or “I can complain,” or “I expect you to change it” or “I will retaliate.” It is a turning point toward commitment when one partner accepts the other as she is – for example, as a procrastinator – and instead of complaining, looks into himself and asks, “How shall I proceed? Do I wait for her to change, or do I find a way to take care of myself and attend to my concerns using my own resources?” This is not a way of distancing ourselves from her but of taking responsibility for our behavior and predicament. It grants us power because it puts us in touch with our inner authority.

-- David Richo



“I expected it to be awful, but not eternal Zumba.”

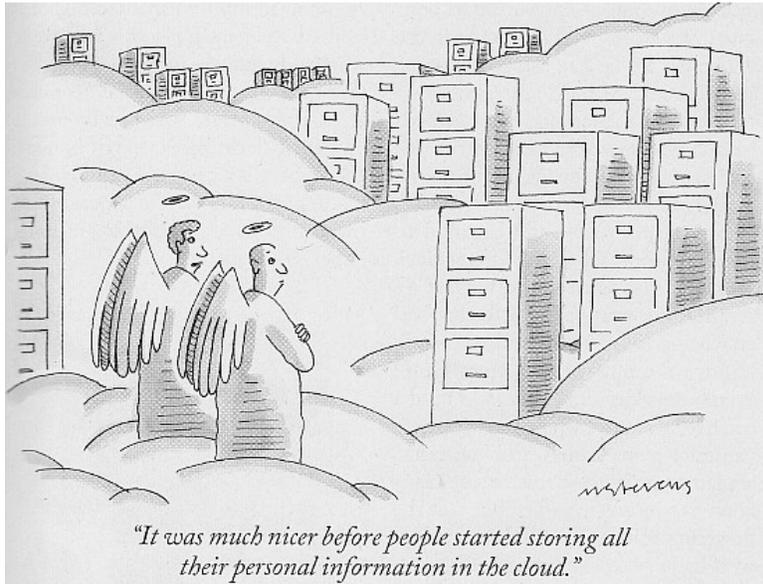




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RIP

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