

50 Reasons To Not Suffer

By Tony DiBella

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Introduction

Everyone suffers from time to time. Some people suffer every day. It seems that suffering doesn't discriminate either. It doesn't care about your nationality or your religious beliefs. Suffering affects everyone from all walks of life. So why do we suffer and why is it universal? Well, suffering is simply the result of two things:

1. Not getting what we expected.

2. Not accepting what is.

If you always expect good things to happen to you, you're going to be disappointed, and very often I might add. What we call good and bad are both a part of life, and in order to find any sort of happiness, we have to accept this fact. This is what being an adult is all about; to accept what is and to not pout about it. I'm not saying it's easy, but to be an adult, it has to be done. This may sound like a kick in the proverbial butt, but there are a lot of children in adult bodies on this planet, and those are the people who suffer the most.

To accept 'what is' means to accept everything, no matter what. In fact, to be an adult means to accept everything as it is without complaining about it. Life has so much potential for so many things including great things, horrible things, and everything in between. Yet, we fight the terrible things because they aren't what we wish for in our lives. What I'm saying is you might as well accept those things too because you can't stop bad things from happening. They are a part of life. It's as simple as that. If we could all just accept this one simple fact, we would be so much better off and suffering would be a thing of the past for the most part.

If you are able to accept everything as it is, without judgement, then it would follow that you would not expect only good things to happen to you. You would also understand that bad things are going to happen and you would be okay with this fact. You see, life brings everything to the table, good and bad, and it's only our judgement that makes them as such. So to accept everything as it is means to not judge anything as being good or bad.

Having said this, I'm not saying to be a door mat and take everything lying down. If you don't agree with something, do something about it. However, what I am saying is to accept the fact that these things will happen. Often times, it's out of our control, so why getting worked up about it? When something 'bad' happens, accept it, and if you can, do what you have to do to correct the situation. Isn't it easier to go through life with full acceptance instead of moaning and groaning about the inevitable? Besides that, life is too short to waste it on unnecessary suffering.

As you read through the chapters, try your best to keep an open mind. I don't expect you to agree with everything I have to say, but I might present a topic in a way you may not have thought of before. Look at it this way. If this book can decrease your suffering by at least fifty percent, isn't it worth it to keep an open mind? Believe me; you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. In the end though, it's your life, and I can't make decisions for you. I can only hope you can put aside your judgements long enough to take in the message this book has to offer.

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Let It Rain

It seems that so many people are affected by the weather. It is true that not enough sun can cause depression, and seasonal affective disorder is a reality that many people have to face every year. However, it is also true that people will complain about the slightest bit of rain or snow. It's like living in England and complaining that it rains too much. I live in the Toronto area of Canada, and during the summer, if it isn't thirty degrees Celsius and humid every day, people will

complain and say we had a bad summer. If it rains once a week on top of that, people will say we had a horrible summer. This may seem like an exaggeration, but believe me, it isn't.

For all those people who live in the colder climates, the reality is this. It isn't going to be hot every day, and it is going to rain and snow sometimes. This is just the way it is, and to suffer over it won't make it go away. However, you do have the power to not let it affect you. It is true that Canada's warm weather only visits three, maybe four, months out of the year, so a bad summer can seem like a bad deal. However, the weather is bad only if you judge it as such. If you live in a colder climate, you have to expect some nasty weather throughout the year. If you live in Florida, you have to expect hurricanes. And if you live in Kansas, you have to expect tornados. Even the Caribbean gets its fair share of bad weather. The point is to not make a big deal out of it. If you're really going to let something as silly as the weather affect your mood, what's going to happen when a real tragedy hits home?

The weather is going to affect a lot of things in your life. It's going to rain on your baseball games and your picnics. It may even snow on Halloween (it has happened here). The question is; are you going to let it affect your enjoyment of the day, or are you going to wallow in misery over something you have no control over?

My wife and I had an outdoor wedding in the mountains during late September. It was cold that day and it got pretty windy as soon as the ceremony started. My wife had a sleeveless dress on and she was shivering. I had a jacket on but I could still feel the cold. In spite of all this, we still managed to enjoy the ceremony and we had a pretty good time taking outdoor pictures as well. However I will admit we were glad when we went inside for dinner and cocktails. Weather-wise, it wasn't a perfect day, but to us it was still perfect because it was our wedding day.

Here's something to ponder before we move on. There are people on Earth who live in extreme climates who live very satisfying lives. There are people who live in war-stricken countries who live very satisfying lives. And there are people who live in crime-ridden cities who live very satisfying lives. So the question is, "why can't everyone else be happy when we get a little bit of rain?"

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You're Driving Me Crazy

I think most drivers experience road rage several times in their lifetimes. I see the way people drive and it's more common than you might think. Road rage can happen for a number of reasons, but I think the most common one is where two drivers have different driving styles and one of them doesn't like the way the other one is driving. Let's make up two characters named Joe and Sally. Joe is a really easy going guy and he drives as if it's Sunday, everyday. Sally on the other hand is aggressive and likes to put the pedal to the metal. When Sally finds herself behind Joe, she gets infuriated because he isn't going fast enough. So she passes him while laying on the horn. Is Sally justified in her actions, or is Joe right for driving at a legal speed?

In truth, it doesn't matter who is right and who is wrong. What matters is that everyone has their own driving habits, and not everyone is going to be in a hurry like Sally. The fact is that you can't force people to behave and think the way you do, let alone drive the way you do. Another fact is that we all have to share the road. No one gets special treatment. If you can accept these two simple facts, you will find that your drive will go much smoother and you will be less stressed by the end of it.

There's no sense in raising a finger at someone just because you don't like the way they drive. In fact, they aren't going to change the way they drive regardless of which finger you use. Everyone is different and it would be in our best interest to accept those differences. You can't expect everyone to be just like you, so why make a big deal out of it?

Now you could argue that sometimes you're in a hurry and really need to be somewhere in five minutes. If you slept in and are late for work, that is your own fault. However, if it is a true emergency, you have to keep in mind that driving like a bat out of hell could land you or someone else in the hospital, and then you'll have some real problems on your hands. In the end, you'll regret driving like a maniac and it'll be something you will have to live with for the rest of your life.

Mind you, there are some really bad drivers out there, as well as rude ones. And even though some of them shouldn't have a driver's license, we are still forced to share the road with them. Simple acceptance of the fact that there will always be bad drivers will also make your drive go smoother. So don't expect everyone on the road to obey the rules or drive like you do. You'll only be setting yourself up for disappointment.

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I Hate My Job

Our careers play a big part in our lives, and if we have to do something we don't enjoy, it can be frustrating. Not everyone likes their jobs and not everyone likes to work, and if you fall into this category, you may be one of those who dread going to work every day.

It's not easy going to a job you hate, so it's important to count your blessings and see the good in it. There are a lot of people who don't have work and wish they had any job. Providing for your family is also important and you couldn't do that without a job. Also remember that no matter what you do, you're providing a service that is needed within the community in which you work, and this alone can be satisfying.

You always have options and you can always get into another career. There is always the possibility of going back to school part-time to acquire a diploma in something you would enjoy doing. If you can't afford it, get a loan. Millions of students get loans every year. You may also find that your government provides assistance to those who wish to go back to school. You always have options. It may take time to achieve your goals, but you do have options. Then once you're in a better, perhaps higher paying job, you'll have the opportunity to pay off your loan.

You may even have a set of skills you can use to start your own business. Everyone has skills. You just need to figure out what yours are and use them to your advantage. Even then, a little schooling might be needed, but in the end, it'll be well worth the effort. If you're unsure about what you would be good at, seek the help of a career counsellor who'll be able to help you to figure out your options. Simply having the goal of getting into another career will alleviate much of the suffering because you will have something better to look forward to. Everything you will do from that point on will be a part of improving your life and that can be very exciting.

Do you really want to grunt and complain for another twenty or thirty years before you find any peace? If you do, you really have no one to blame for your situation but yourself. Each one of us creates his own destiny, and ultimately it's on you if you're not satisfied in your career. You

and you alone have the power to make things happen in your favor. And don't be afraid of failure because even some of the most successful people have failed, even several times, before they found success. Everything you do in life is a risk, and it's only with risk that you can reap the rewards of a satisfying career and life.

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I'm Just Not Good Enough

Negative thinking and self-pity are the mother of failure, and believing in yourself is the mother of success. I am absolutely, undoubtedly, convinced that everyone has the ability to make their dreams come true, within reason of course. As soon as you tell yourself that you're not good enough, you've already failed. Case closed. You've defeated yourself before you've even begun. Mind you, there are certain situations where, for some reason that is out of your control, you may not qualify as a good candidate for a certain endeavor. This can be heart-breaking, but it doesn't mean you can't find happiness in something else. For instance, if you want to be a singer and you can't even carry a tune in the shower, you may be in way over your head. So be sure that you have the ability to carry out your goals.

"I'm not good enough" is never an excuse, even if you've always been put down by friends and family. Believing everything everyone tells you is disempowering. They don't know you like you do, and at the end of the day, it is their problem, not yours. People who put others down have their own issues to deal with, and maybe they just don't want you to succeed for personal reasons. The point is to not give away your power to other weaker people. Honestly, people who put others down are weak themselves and no one should ever take them seriously.

You may feel you're not good enough because you've failed in the past. A wise man once told me that success and failure happen in the same place, and it is so true. The moment that brings failure is the same moment that brings success. It can go either way, but by believing in yourself, you increase the possibility of success in that moment. Don't let failure be an excuse. Everyone fails at some point, and if everyone gave up after their first or second failure, this world would be an entirely different world to live in. Our standard of living would be much lower and we wouldn't enjoy the nice things that are available to us.

It can also be discouraging when you've failed on several occasions. However, there is no need to suffer over it. You may have to change your strategy or look into trying different options. As long as you keep trying, the possibility of success is kept alive and the world may become an even better place to live in.

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Pardon Me, I'm Just Rude

I always say, "It takes all kinds to make this world." Everyone is different. This we can all agree on. You also never know what's going on in someone's head or what kind of a day they've had. Maybe they're having a bad week, or a bad life. So when someone is rude or does something that upsets you, keep in mind that you don't know the whole story, and ultimately, it's their problem, not yours.

Why let someone ruin your day because of something they did or said? Is it because we all expect people to treat us nicely? That would be a huge expectation. Not everyone is nice and

not everyone cares about other people's feelings. Some people are just miserable and want everyone else to be miserable too. So it's their problem, not yours.

We might also think that everyone should have the common sense to be nice to people, but that's just an opinion. Every person has the right to legally do exactly as they please, and legally there is nothing we can do to stop them. So we have no control over what other people do, but we have complete control over how we feel about the situation. What it all boils down to is the fact that we feel hurt when someone is rude towards us. If we didn't feel hurt, we wouldn't care. The good news is we don't have to feel bad about it.

When someone is rude, we think about how they didn't meet our expectations. This in turn starts a flow of negative emotions that end up ruining our day. If we would just realize that it's their problem and not ours, we wouldn't mull over it for as long as we do. Even if it seems like it's personal, it isn't. Ultimately, it always has something to do with what's going on inside their head.

Don't make their problem into your problem. If you decide to take revenge to make yourself feel better, then you're turning it into your problem. The adult thing to do is to let it go and let children be children. It's your decision. So the question is, "are you a petulant child, or are you an adult?"

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It's Not In The Budget

With the exception of a handful of people, most people are on a budget, especially those who have a mortgage and car loans to pay off. If you have children, the budget is even tighter. When you're on a budget, it's tough to splurge on a new big screen TV, or new furniture, or updating the kitchen, but this doesn't mean you can't be happy. Material things are nice, but you have to realize they don't bring lasting happiness. Most of the time, the high wears off after a few weeks and you find yourself in search of something new to make you happy again. It's a viscous cycle and most people don't even realize it.

The whole advertising industry is geared towards perpetuating this cycle. The cycle begins with getting bored with your latest purchase and a void is created. The next phase is looking for something to fill that void. Then you pay attention to the ads on TV and they tell you what you need right now to be happy and improve your life. Finally you complete the cycle when you buy the product. Then it starts all over again. Boat loads of money are spent every year on advertising because it works, and it works because you allow it to work. If everyone in the modern world were to make the conscious decision to not pay any attention to the ads, the whole industry would have to change. The point is that you don't have to believe it when the ads tell you that you need a new car or a new television to be happy.

Don't get me wrong, it's nice to have material possessions, to go out to dinner, or to go to the movies, but if you can't afford it, it doesn't mean you have to be miserable. There are people who can't even afford to put good food on the table or pay their hydro bill. Sometimes, you have to put things into perspective and realize exactly how lucky you are. Unfortunately, we live in a world where our hard work isn't always compensated fairly. Sometimes, we have to work two jobs just to make ends meet. But this is a part of living on Earth. This is just the way it is, and to accept this fact means you won't have to suffer over it.

Of course, you always have the option to make a better life for yourself. It may be difficult and it may take years, but it can be done. In the meantime, make the best of what you have. You can be happy spending time with your family and friends. You can go to the beach or for a walk in the park. You can even participate in community events that interest you. Happiness doesn't always mean spending a lot of money.

Ultimately though, true happiness comes from within. I have met people who have a nice house, nice cars in the garage, and nice bank accounts, and some of them are miserable. These are the people who thought spending long hours at the office and making six figures would bring them ultimate happiness. They never realized that true happiness can only come from within, and now they're stuck in their own viscous cycle. Would you want that to happen to you?

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Blame It On The Government

People always blame their problems on the Government. They protest, they petition, and they write letters to the Government in an attempt to get the politicians to do something different. Now, there is nothing wrong with any of these things, but people have to realize that the Government is doing the best they can with the resources they have.

Sometimes, the Government has to make compromises, making one group of people happy while another group feels cheated. This, unfortunately, will never change because everyone is different. Everyone wants different things out of life, everyone has his own point of view, and everyone has her own value system. Currently there are approximately 350 million people in the United States alone. How do you make all of these people happy all of the time? It's practically impossible, is it not?

To make matters worse, people want to pay as few taxes as possible. Well you can't have it both ways. For a Government to function effectively, it must be a well-oiled machine. I'm not saying we should pay more taxes, but if the Government imposes a new tax or increases an existing one, there has to be a good reason for it. Remember that the party in charge wants to stay in power and raising taxes defeats that purpose. So if they do it, they do it because they have to, not because they want to.

I will admit, the Government does make what seem like stupid spending decisions at times, but it's all about keeping people happy, and sometimes they have to pick the lesser of two evils. I would also agree that there are a few public servants who are in it just for themselves, but it's hard to weed out the bad apples. As long as these politicians are doing their jobs, there's nothing anyone can say or do to kick them out. Then there's also the possibility that your favorite party is not in power and it upsets you. Well this will inevitably happen in a democracy. I say, be happy that you have the right to vote if you have that right. There are many people who don't.

So the Government is what it is and that's probably not going to change in our lifetime. We can moan and complain about it all we want, but that never brings change. If there's something that really bothers you, take action and do something about it, but don't sulk about it. If you want to become an active participant, do what you have to to join the Government, but then you're going to realize exactly what a tough job it is and what it really means to bring change to your country or state or city. I think everyone should spend a week with a Government official to realize it's not all fun and games. At the end of the day, we have to make the best of a not-so-perfect situation, and be happy if we live in a country that offers freedom and a good way of life.

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Everyone Has Their Time

The one thing you can be absolutely sure of in life is death, and it's tough when you've lost a loved one. It's natural to feel sad and to mourn for your loss, especially if you lost a child. That would probably be the worst pain imaginable. So I wouldn't tell you to not be sad because that would go against your very nature.

There's nothing inherently wrong with death, and although we may feel bad for the person who passed away, it was a natural event and anything that is natural is okay. You can hate death if you want to, but it won't change the fact that it's going to happen. So why not just accept it? It's okay to be afraid of it, but accept it anyway. Don't feel bad for the person who passed away. Nature took its course and now it's time to move on.

The real suffering begins when we realize what we've lost when our loved one died. They're not around anymore to make us laugh, to share in our happiness, and to give us comfort, but this doesn't have to be the end of our own happiness. What most people don't realize is that they are their own best friend. We constantly rely on others to make us smile, but we never look within to find we had a reason to smile all along. We always look to others for comfort, but we don't realize the friend that has been hiding within all along.

Believe it or not, there really are people who are perfectly happy on their own. I have personally been in a situation where I had to be my own happiness, and I can tell you firsthand it is possible. It does take time to get to this point, but when you do, you'll be in a position to not have to rely on anyone for your own happiness, and it's a great feeling.

Instead of suffering, choose acceptance. Accept death. Embrace it. Warm up to it and become friends with it if you can. Just realize that nothing in life is permanent, even life itself. When the Sun dies, so will every living organism on this planet. Everything in life has a beginning and an end. It's a natural process, and acceptance of this fact will bring some level of comfort to those of you who have always had negative feelings towards death.

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I Was Hoping For A Pony

I think everyone likes gifts. We especially like it when we get exactly what we were hoping for. We also feel let down when we don't. When I was a kid, I wanted a computer for Christmas, and when I got a sweater instead, I cried. But that's a part of growing up. You don't always get what you want.

If you really want something really badly, give hints. However, some people can't take a hint. So make a wish list and give it to your loved ones. Most people aren't mind readers. You have to also consider that maybe your loved ones can't afford to get you what you want. In any case, there's no reason to suffer over this.

As an adult, it doesn't matter to me even if I get nothing. I'm not a kid anymore. I don't rely on anyone to get me what I want. Sure it would be great to open a gift, revealing exactly what I wished for, and I'm always thankful if it isn't. After all, it really is the thought that counts, although I am sure some people would disagree with me, and that's fine.

I just think that gifts are a little too important to people. I think gifts are great for people who don't have a lot of money to buy things for themselves, but if you were rich and you had everything you ever wanted, what would be the point? I suppose even the rich wife would want diamond earrings for her anniversary, but then it's up to the husband to know what her tastes are, and that can be like walking through a mine field. I'm just happy that my wife doesn't care for jewellery. It makes my life so much easier and less expensive.

When it comes to gifts, take it in stride. Remember that not everyone knows what you want, and be thankful no matter what's in the box because the person who bought it probably put a lot of thought into it.

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Fender Benders

When I was a kid, I was riding in the car with my parents, and I remember passing by a minor car accident. One of the cars involved was a really nice sports car, and I remember the poor owner with his hands on his cheeks, saying, "Oh my brand new car!" I remember thinking, what a poor guy. Now that I think back on it, I say, "Get over it!"

Car accidents are a part of life. Everyone makes mistakes and bad judgements on the road, and sometimes it happens. The worst thing that could happen is someone gets seriously injured. The car doesn't matter. Insurance will cover the car. If no one got hurt, then it's not a big deal. Sure it's a hassle when you have to get your car fixed, drive a rental car, go through insurance, and all that jazz. If the car is written off, get another one. There's no need to sulk over it. It's just metal and plastic. The only time I think it would be warranted to feel a little bad about the car is when it was a gift. If it was totalled, well I suppose you'd feel bad about it. But if you're alive to tell the story, I say count your blessings.

I've said it before and I will say it again. Everything you do in life is a risk and there are no exceptions. Even buying a brand new expensive car and putting it on the road is a risk. You're risking damaging the car, and more importantly, you're risking your own safety. This is the reality of the situation and it's so important to accept it as such.

Yes it's true that cars are expensive and it's not always easy to replace one, especially when your insurance company doesn't give you the full value of the car. But this is all a part of life. You have to be an adult about it and put things into perspective. Yes, the car will have to be replaced, but if you died, who would replace you as a husband, or a mother, or a son? The car is meant to serve its purpose until its time comes, and if its time comes prematurely, it's time to say goodbye and move on.

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That Darn Flu Bug

No one likes to get sick. When I get sick, all of a sudden I become a big baby. I just can't function normally when I'm sick. I remember the last time I had the flu was back in 1997. I was bed-ridden for four or five days. I was delirious and I felt like dog crap, but I made the best of it. I read and listened to music to pass the time. I had the flu and there was nothing I could do about it. I simply had to wait for my body to heal itself. What was the point in suffering about it? I figured I might as well make the best of a bad situation and deal with it.

I really hate it when I get a cold because it usually means I can't breathe through my nose. Then I end up having dreams about not being able to breathe, and I really don't get a good night's sleep. It's tough but it's a part of life. Every now and then, you're going to get sick. There isn't much point in complaining about it. You might as well complain that the Sun is too hot or the grass is too green. If it bothers you that much, do something to distract yourself like watching movies or listening to music. Maybe even catch up on your reading. If your spouse is sick too, staying in bed all day might not be such a bad idea (hint, hint). Basically, it doesn't have to be a waste of time.

There are things in life in which we have no control over, and being sick is one of them. Sure it'll keep you from doing your regular activities, but sometimes it's a blessing in disguise. Maybe you've been working too hard lately and you really need the time to stop and reflect on your life. I've always heard that stress causes illness, and although I have no proof of this, I do believe it is true. That's why I think that being sick is like our bodies are trying to tell us something. Take the time to relax and find ways to make life less stressful. While you're sick, if you're lucky, you might find yourself getting a new lease on life.

And if you still think the flu bug is a bad thing, remember this: the Earth gave birth to you just like it gave birth to the bug. You both came from the same place. So deal with it because it's natural and a part of being alive.

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Diagnosis: Hell

Worse than getting the common cold is being diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. I have never been diagnosed as such, but I know someone who was. It was my dad's cousin and he had cancer. I visited him once in the hospital, and from what I saw, I would have to say that this is one situation in which it would be extremely difficult to not suffer. This goes for both the patient as well as the family. Imagine seeing your child or one of your parents in such a state. It wouldn't be easy and it would be hard not to suffer.

I'm not going to tell you to not suffer in a situation like this. Instead, I would recommend that you do your absolute best to stay positive in spite of the suffering. Everything in this world, including the cells in our bodies, respond to positive thoughts and attitudes, and that, along with the therapy, will be your best chance at survival. I'm not saying that everyone can beat cancer, but it would certainly improve your odds if you could stay positive. I'm also not saying it would be easy to stay positive. I'm just saying to do your best, whether you're the patient, a friend, or a family member.

If you do manage to stay positive, you may find that the suffering won't be as intense, especially if you're the family member or friend of the patient. The patient, as positive as he or she may be, may still suffer considerably if there is pain involved. Physical pain is very difficult to overcome and it would be just as difficult to not suffer because of it. My dad's cousin was in a lot of pain and if I was in that situation, I think I would also be suffering. However, I would also do my best to stay positive and I would find ways to lessen the suffering.

Life sometimes gives us some heavy burdens, and it's our job to meet them head on, even when the odds are stacked against us. No one ever said life was supposed to be easy all the time, but we all have the means and the power to deal with it when things get rough.

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Good Ole Pogeey

Being unemployed while actively seeking work is no fun for anyone. What's worse is not being able to find a job before your employment insurance runs out. Sometimes you have to put aside your career goals temporarily in order to take any job just to pay the bills. This is usually what happens during an economic recession. Recessions usually don't last very long though, and before you know it, you'll be back on your feet in your dream job. In the meantime, you have to worry about making ends meet in order to support the family.

Being unemployed certainly is scary, especially when jobs are scarce. The worst case scenario is that you lose your home and are forced to move in with family, if you have family who will take you in. Otherwise you may be looking at renting a cheap basement apartment until you get back on your feet. This is stuff that happens all the time and people usually bounce back. Going through life thinking you'll always be employed and you'll always be able to pay the bills is a little naïve. There are very few jobs that are secure in spite of economic conditions. Therefore, it's highly recommended that you have a backup plan in case things go wrong. You have to be realistic because you owe it to your family.

Life is all about ups and downs. There are good times as well as bad, and such is the case with economics. The economy depends on people to spend their money in order to keep the economy going. If people spend money, businesses prosper and people get to keep their jobs. When people spend less, businesses are forced to downsize in order to stay alive and people lose their jobs. Unfortunately, it isn't a perfect situation, but this is what we have to deal with. Do you still prefer capitalism?

Full acceptance of the reality of the situation will lessen the suffering because you'll know it's a part of life. There are always unemployed people. Even during the good times, there is some level of unemployment. If it happens to you, you'll have every right to be scared, but you'll also be obligated to accept the situation as it is and do what you have to do to pay the bills.

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Home Sweet Home

Losing your home to a fire or a natural disaster can be devastating. I myself have put a lot of hard work into renovating my home and I would be pretty sad if it was destroyed. Would I be upset? Maybe a little, but I would also understand that nothing lasts forever, and sometimes you have to part with the things you love.

Just look at the people who live in tornado or earthquake country. Homes are lost every year in those parts of the world, and when it happens, they pick up the pieces (no pun intended) and rebuild. They understand that there is a good chance of losing their home compared to other parts of the world, and they choose to live there anyway. If they can be at peace with this, then I think anyone can. It's basically about having the right attitude. Some people have it and some people don't, and those who don't will often suffer.

Having the right attitude means to fully accept the fact that even the worst can happen, and that everything will be okay in spite of it. It's also about not taking things so seriously. When tragedy strikes, the people with the right attitude will simply do what they have to do to get

things back to normal and get on with their lives. They won't complain about it. They'll just do what they have to do.

Everything in life is temporary and everything has an expiration date, including our homes. You can't expect anything to last forever. Knowing this and being at peace with it is not only realistic, but also a lot less heart-breaking when disaster strikes.

Of course it's also true that when you lose your home, you're also losing everything in it including items that hold sentimental value for you. But what's worse, losing a diamond necklace your husband gave to you on your birthday, or losing a loved one? Thousands of people around the globe lose loved ones every day and no one is spared from this reality. Basically you need to put things into perspective and realize there are worse things in the world than losing a sentimental item, and the loss of a loved one is just one of them.

You could also lose valuable data on your computer when your home is destroyed. Years of hard work could be lost and you would have to start over again. You could also lose all of your digital photos of your children growing up. What may not be common knowledge is that there are services on the internet that allow you to backup all of your data in cyberspace, and it only costs pennies a day. If you do have invaluable data on your computer, I would highly recommend you use one of these services. For added peace of mind, I would also back up the data on a portable memory stick and keep it with you at all times. Sometimes an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of gold.

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They Took Everything

I know what it's like to have your home robbed. I was much younger when it happened to our family. It made me angry to think that someone went through my personal things just to make a buck. Clothes were thrown everywhere, drawers were opened, things were missing, and the entire house was a mess. It's basically a violation of privacy, but to the thieves, it's nothing personal. They don't know you and they don't care who you are. They're just there to do a job.

There really is no excuse for stealing other people's belongings, but you also need to understand the reasons why they do it. It may be true that some thieves simply don't like to work, but to make a living breaking into people's homes is way too risky and I really doubt anyone can do it for very long before getting caught and going to jail. I think a big reason they do it is for drug money. When people get involved with drugs, they often don't know what they're getting themselves into. In the end, they have to resort to stealing to support their habits. Some people are just down on their luck and they feel forced to steal to support their families. Now I'm not making excuses for these people. I'm just showing you the reality of the situation.

The reality is that we do live in a world where people get involved in drugs, and all drugs affect the makeup of the brain, even to the point that they believe it is okay to steal. I don't think there ever was a cocaine addict who was happy about their addiction. So the problem is they want to get out of it but don't know how. In the meantime, they have to do whatever it takes to support the addiction. Furthermore, there's always unemployment in this world, and some of these people will do whatever it takes to support their families. They may not even think there's anything wrong with what they're doing because the insurance company will pick up the tab. Whatever the reasoning, you can bet they feel justified in their actions.

So the reality is that, for whatever reason, we will always have thieves ready to invade our homes. And right or wrong, you have to accept this fact because it's a part of the society we live in. In fact, burglary is so prolific that alarm companies are making boat loads of money every day. Just look in your local Yellow Pages. If you live in a large city, you'll find dozens of alarm companies ready to take your money.

Burglary is a sad reality, but it's also sad if you're going to suffer for another man's crime. I don't know what the statistics are for burglary, but I would be willing to bet that it will happen to every person at least once in their lifetime. It may not even be a home burglary. Someone could steal your car or your bike. It will happen sooner or later, and it's best to just accept it and get on with your life.

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Gone Forever

Have you ever lost something of real value to you? Maybe it was something sentimental or something that holds fond memories for you. It could even be your wedding ring! Whatever it is, it's always difficult to give up the search and admit you'll have to part with it. It's almost like saying goodbye to an old friend.

As bad as it seems, it's very helpful to put things into perspective. First of all, you have to remember that everything in the world is only temporary. There is not one thing in this world that will last forever. Everything in this world is just an object, and although an object can have sentimental value to you, it's still just an object and objects can be lost or stolen.

In reality, you really can't own anything. Ownership means you will have possession of an object forever, and this is certainly not the case. Everything you 'think' you own is actually borrowed while you're on this planet. In fact, the resources that made up the object were taken from the Earth by a third party who just happens to own some land. That someone then manipulated the resource and turned it into the object you once had in your possession. You only owned the object because someone else allowed it to happen.

Sooner or later, you'll have to part with everything when you pass away. If you can't take it with you, you don't really own it. You may own it legally, but realistically, you don't. So if you don't own something, it's not a part of you. It can temporarily be a part of your life, but that's about it. It's the ego that wants to own things. To the ego, everything is a possession. Even a person can be a possession to the ego, hence the terms, 'my wife,' 'my husband,' and 'my child.'

You can't own anything but you can enjoy it while it's with you. And if you lose it, be happy you once had it. Everything in life comes and goes, and if we can remember this, it won't be so difficult when it goes.

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Go With The Flow

Sometimes it's difficult to deal with what we call negative emotions such as anger, fear, or sadness. At the same time, it's unreasonable to expect to be in high spirits every day, unless you like tipping the bottle to kill the pain. You can't do that for long however or you'll end up having a bigger problem on your hands. Instead, it's important to understand that the brain works in such a way that it's impossible to always be in a good mood. The brain works in

cycles, alternating from positive to negative and back again. It's natural, and you just have to ride it out.

Contrary to popular belief, feeling sad or angry does not equal suffering. The suffering happens because we resist the emotions we don't want. Without resistance, there is no suffering. Period. Try to think of yourself as a tree. You're a tree and the air represents emotions. When the air is calm, the tree is undisturbed and feels great. When it becomes windy, the tree sways with the wind and doesn't feel so great anymore. However, as long as the tree goes with the flow of the wind, it remains unharmed. If any of its branches are to resist the wind, they'll snap off. And if the entire tree resists the wind, it'll be uprooted and killed. I've seen this happen in my own backyard. It was an old tree that had very stiff branches. Eventually a strong wind knocked the tree right over. Note that this would never happen to a blade of grass. Even a 100 mph wind wouldn't hurt a blade of grass because the grass always goes with the flow.

Everyone seems to be against the negative emotions, but they're a part of our very nature. It doesn't mean you have to suffer because of them. It means you should enjoy life in spite of them. Instead of resisting the unwanted emotions, try enjoying them for a change. I know this may sound like an oxymoron, but they're just emotions. They aren't harmful at all, and sometimes they may be telling you something. It's up to you to figure out what it is.

Believe it or not, even people who seem to be happy everyday have their fair share of the blues. They just like to paste a smile on their face for the world to see. It's a façade and everyone uses it, especially in the workplace. We live in a society where it's unacceptable to be in a bad mood. I find it funny how so many people pretend to be happy to make a good impression, but almost everyone else is doing the same. Wouldn't it be nice if we could all just show our true colors without fear of being judged negatively?

So I say to just go with the flow. No matter what you're feeling from moment to moment, just accept it. Believe me; it'll make your day go so much smoother.

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Bad Day At The Office

I'm sure you've had days where nothing seemed to go right. Maybe you screwed something up at work and your boss got on your case. Then your car breaks down on the way home. And to top it all off, you arrive home only to find the mail man playing pin the tail on the donkey with your wife. It isn't a good day and a stiff one is in order. No one ever said life was going to be easy, although life should come with an instruction manual.

No matter what happened during your day, you have to take it in stride and realize it's just one day. You didn't really think life was going to be perfect, did you? Besides, it's not always going to be like this, and before you know it, the day will be over and you'll get to start fresh in the morning.

When I have a bad day, I find it helpful to talk about it with my wife. Just talking about it helps to make it better and it helps me to put things into perspective. You may not be married, but you may have a good friend you can talk to. If you're a loner, you could try keeping a diary. Years ago, I used to keep a diary and it does help to let go of the events of the day. When you're done getting it off your chest, do something you find relaxing. I find cooking a nice dinner with a

glass of wine by my side is very relaxing for me. It can be anything really. Just do what feels good to you.

As adults, we need to accept everything life shoves our way. We have to accept the good with the bad. And just remember one thing. If life was always good, we'd never appreciate it because we'd never have anything to compare it to. Besides, if every day was exactly your definition of the perfect day, life would eventually become boring. So in a sense, even the bad days serve a unique purpose.

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It Didn't Work Out

You did everything right. You ordered the flowers, you secured a DJ, the menu is set, and the groomsmen and bridesmaids look great. It's your wedding day and you want everything to proceed perfectly. It's also an outdoor wedding, and wouldn't you know it, it rains cats and dogs and everything is soaked. The tables and chairs are underneath tents, but the ceremony has to be moved indoors. This is not what you wanted but you can't stop Mother Nature from doing her thing.

When events and trips are planned, people seldom take into account the possibility that something may go wrong. We all like to wear rose-colored glasses and not think about it. I guess it's easier that way, but it's unrealistic. Sure we're heart-broken when things don't work out, but life is sometimes messy, and it's in our best interest to accept this fact. It's also very empowering to see the bright side in a dark situation.

It never fails to amaze me when I see people complain about trivial things such as a rainy day at the baseball game, or the flowers weren't perfect on their wedding day. I think to myself, "It's their wedding day and they can't even enjoy that?" Seriously, if you're going to complain about things not going as planned, your life is going to be a rough ride to say the least. Though I have to admit, there are people who complain about everything and they're never satisfied. Those are the people who always want to speak with the manager. They're also the people who are miserable because life isn't meeting their expectations.

The suffering always takes place when we expect one thing and get another. A wise man once told me to always expect the unexpected and to never expect the expected. These words are so true, and if we could simply keep them in mind as we plan things, we might actually enjoy the day.

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Can't Take It Anymore

I personally believe stress to be the most difficult and life-draining aspect of life. Stress drains us of vital energy and makes us feel lethargic and lazy. What's worse, stress wreaks havoc on the immune system, and the body functions at less than peak performance. Stress is hell, to say the least, but you don't have to suffer because of it.

If you live in the civilized world, you probably enjoy a good standard of living, but it often comes at a price. Maybe you have to drive an hour to work and back home in the middle of rush hour traffic. Maybe you have a great high-paying job, but you have to put in long hours to make that kind of money. Maybe you don't get paid much, but you still have to work hard for the little

money you make, and this can also be quite stressful. Believe it or not, writing a book is sometimes stressful. The point is, you can't avoid stress, at least not in this world.

So if you can't avoid stress, you can either complain about it, which creates even more stress, or you can do something about it. There are many books on the market about how to deal with stress. You can even take a course on reducing stress. My personal favorite stress buster is meditation. It works well for me, but I'm not saying this is what you have to do. Everyone is different and unique, so there is no magic formula that everyone can use. You just have to find something that works well for you.

You always have options. There is no such thing as no way out. There is always a way. You just have to find out what it is. You may need a mentor to help you out, but not to tell you what to do. The purpose of a mentor is to guide you in the right direction. Ultimately though, you have to do the work and it's up to you to make the solution work for you. This is the beauty of being human. Each one of us has the capacity to fix his or her own problems. Help is sometimes needed and we all know when to ask for it. We just have to keep in mind that, at the end of the day, we're responsible for our lives. And this may seem like a harsh thing to say, but only petulant children blame their problems on others.

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Maybe Next Year

Back in the day when I actually had time for hockey, I would be saddened when the Toronto Maple Leafs would lose in the playoffs. Back then, I didn't realize it was a yearly ritual, but I was blinded by my love of the sport. I was never a sports fanatic though, and there are millions of sports fanatics out there who turn sad or depressed when their team loses. I think sports are great when viewed from an entertainment perspective, but you have to remember that every sports franchise is a business first, and the fans come second. Even the players won't play unless they make the right amount of money. Do you really think they would play for the fans alone? Don't kid yourself because it'll probably never happen.

Besides the whole business aspect of the game, you have to realize it is just a game, and to really enjoy the game, you have to go into it with the right attitude. Wouldn't it be better if you watched the game, enjoyed the rivalry, and be happy regardless of who won? And if your favorite team had some great moments, even better! The point is to see it for the pure entertainment value.

The problem with the entertainment value aspect is that there are fans who invest a lot of emotional energy in the game. Being a fan has actually become a part of the fan's personality. In fact, it can become an obsession. Let's take a die-hard fan of the Denver Broncos for instance. He will paint his bedroom or man cave blue and orange, have autographed footballs and helmets, tons of memorabilia, and posters of every Bronco team for the past ten years. I just find it odd that some people are more passionate about sports than let's say religion, or even their kids.

So if the team goes down, the fan takes it personally and feels heart-broken. Basically, the sports fanatic is taking the game way too seriously, almost as if his or her life depended on it. It's just a game, and what's worse is that in the end, only one team can win. If there are thirty teams in the league, the fan almost certainly stands to be heart-broken.

One thing that makes sports so big is it brings people together, which is not a bad thing. The problem is that people use sports as a way of belonging to a group. Everyone wants to be a part of something big, and sports cater perfectly to this desire. So as children, we pick a team we like and we stick with it the rest of our lives. Then it doesn't take long to get sucked into the real game where we party when they win and we cry when they lose.

As adults, we are capable of so much more, and to cry over a game is simply beneath us as the most advanced species on the planet. We would be much better off if we would simply put the game into perspective and see it for what it really is. We owe it to ourselves to be true to ourselves and answer the hard questions concerning why we're so affected by a team that holds so little hope of winning a championship.

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Dad I Need Money

I have a twelve month old baby and we love spending time together. Children generally want to spend time with their parents and they show a lot of love and affection. This of course is true until they hit the teenage years, and then everything changes. Dad isn't good for pidgey-back rides anymore and mom has been reduced to the house chef. What went wrong?

Well nothing really went wrong. It's just a normal part of growing up and parents really shouldn't feel bad about it. If you're a parent, think back to when you started high-school. What were your priorities back then? Was it picnics with mom and dad, or was it partying and hanging out with friends? If you weren't into partying, you were an oddball at best, but most adults would agree that their adolescent years were all about finding out who they were as a person, making friends, learning about love, and a whole lot of other things. It's an exciting time, and you really can't blame your teenage child for wanting these things for him or herself.

After college, they will spend the better part of their lives being responsible adults, holding full-time jobs, taking care of the kids, putting food on the table, and all that good stuff. As teenagers, let them party and do what they have to do. It's a natural part of growing up.

Eventually our kids do come back to us. Once they've become young adults, they realize that family is just as important as friends. However, until that happens, you have to be their best friend, secretly of course. It's important they know that no matter what happens, you'll always be there for them. They need to know they can always come to you for help if and when they need it as they go through the tricky teenage years. You see, the hard part isn't that they've ditched you for their friends. The real hard part is you not knowing for sure they will come to you for help, and not knowing for sure that they know they can. The only thing you can do is drive the point home as often as possible. Then it's up to them if they want to take you up on your offer.

Inevitably our children will make mistakes. No one is perfect and there are few exceptions. However, this is just part of the learning process. For me it will be difficult to simply let my daughter go and allow her to make her mistakes. But as long as she knows she can always come to me or my wife for help, that will be fine. If she knows she can ask her parents for help, it will mean we've done our part and that's the best we could ever hope for. Of course we will worry and this is natural, but our daughter will have to grow up on her own and make her own choices as well as her own mistakes. This is a natural part of human life and it must be accepted as such.

So when my daughter comes to me asking me for twenty bucks and a ride to the mall, I'm just going to smile, knowing she is well on her way to becoming an adult. It may not be an easy smile, but really, what choice will I have?

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My Child Is The Devil

Not everyone gets the pleasure of having a well-behaved child, and some children are just downright nasty. These kids always get themselves into trouble at school, they get into fights, and they're usually in the Principal's office. So what is a parent to do? Well discipline is important but it isn't always enough.

I think it's important to communicate effectively with your children, even if your child is a Saint. I also think it's ineffective to show anger and contempt every time your child acts up. Quite often, it's simply the child's way of trying to get attention, so you have to give them that attention. Use this opportunity to talk to your child and find out what's going on. If all you ever do is punish without following up with a good heart to heart, they're going to get themselves into trouble again. Basically, as parents, we have to break the cycle, and we have to show empathy and let our children know that they can always turn to us when something troubles them. In short, we have to be their best friend.

Just because your child is the devil, it doesn't necessarily mean he or she is going to become a failure in life. Sometimes it's just a phase. I know one such person whom I went to elementary school with. He was the class clown and he was always in the Principal's office. Well he ended up marrying my sister who was always a good girl in school and home. I've never known her to get into trouble. Anyway, today my brother-in-law is a responsible father and husband who makes a great living.

So do you have reason to worry if you have a problem child? I believe it's the parents who don't worry whose children end up in trouble as adults. It's the worry that fuels the drive to find a solution to your child's negative behavior. So a little worrying is warranted. Just remember to show love and support, and to keep the lines of communication open at all times. Plus, a little discipline can go a long way.

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We Don't Approve

As parents, we do what we can to give our children a bright future. Sometimes though, it's out of our control, especially when it comes to their choices in partners. If you don't approve, I suppose you could forbid them from dating this person, whom we'll call Pat, but that never ends well. Your child will resent you for it and they'll date Pat behind your back anyway. So you think your child is making a huge mistake. What do you do?

First off, it's important to understand that you do not know Pat the same way your child does. When two people are together, they get to know each other on the most intimate level. They'll even know things about each other that no one else knows. Not even you! So Pat might seem rough around the edges to you, but to your child, Pat is their soul mate.

Next, you might be fully warranted in your opinion of Pat, and Pat may really be the scum of the Earth, but it doesn't matter. Your child has to make his or her own mistakes. If you've done a

good job of parenting and you're right about Pat, your child will likely come to their senses and ditch Pat by the side of the road.

Finally, everything you do in life is a risk. Even having kids is risky business because there is no guarantee they will grow up to be the person you hope they will become. There is also no guarantee they will make the most ideal choices for themselves, but you have to let them make their own choices. So I suppose you could suffer if things go wrong in their lives, or you could be there for them and help them out if they learned from their mistakes.

Speaking of mistakes, there really is no such thing. In life, there are only experiences, and every experience provides us with a learning opportunity. I myself have made mistakes in my life, and in spite of this, I have a wonderful family and a successful business to top it off. Would I want to go back and correct those mistakes? Not a chance! They've provided me with the perfect foundation upon which I have based my life.

It's also possible that Pat only appears to be a bad choice for your child. It could be that Pat presents himself to people in one way until he gets to know them better. It could just be a mask he wears. The truth is we all wear a mask, and the mask changes depending on who we're with. The point is to give Pat a chance and maybe get to know him or her the way your child does. Sometimes we have to see a person from another person's perspective in order to see what they see. Remember that perception plays a huge role in how we experience the world, and this principle also applies to how we experience another person.

Give Pat a chance. If you did a good job of raising your child, you should have more confidence in their choices in partners. And if the choice really does turn out to be a bad one, just tell your child how you feel, but don't try to break up the relationship. That's something only your child can do, and at the end of the day, your child has to make his or her own choices, good or bad.

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I Love You, But...

No relationship is perfect, but sometimes it's just too much to bear. However, if you truly love your partner, it's worth fighting for. Remember that the basis for every successful romantic relationship is true unconditional love, but even two people who love each other can experience challenges in their relationship. It's my firm belief that if you truly love your partner, there's virtually nothing you cannot overcome, but you need to do the hard work to make the relationship work.

You see, to love someone doesn't mean you love everything about them. When you love someone, you simply love them, no questions asked. It has nothing to do with personality compatibility, and this is why there can be friction, especially when personalities clash. If you're in such a problem relationship, you have to decide if you're willing to fight. No one ever said love was easy, and every couple fights every now and then. You have to expect that, and it's unreasonable to expect your partner to do everything that will make you happy. It just doesn't work that way.

Seeking the help of a counsellor is a great way to make the ride go smoother, and if it still doesn't work out, you can at least say you did everything you could. Communication is obviously important, and ultimately, compromises will have to be made. Each person simply needs to be an adult and do what needs to be done to make the relationship work. Above all,

acceptance of your partner's 'character flaws' is crucial to making it work. And remember that character flaws are only flaws if the partner sees them as such. Everyone has their own idea about what makes a perfect partner, but it's unreasonable to expect perfection.

I have witnessed several romantic relationships where the man and woman fight like cats and dogs almost every day. This is basically due to personalities clashing, but it doesn't mean they don't love each other. It just means they'll not always see eye to eye, and this is perfectly natural. If this situation applies to you, you just need to accept the fact that you won't always agree on everything with your partner and be at peace with this fact.

Remember that you don't choose who you love. Instead it's chosen for you. If you had to make an intellectual decision regarding your choice in a partner, it couldn't be called love. The brain is not capable of love. Instead it's the brain, and specifically the ego, that creates all of the conflict that can tear a relationship apart. It's your job to be aware of this deadly thought process and intervene before an argument begins.

However, if you chose your partner based on an intellectual decision, you won't stand much of a chance and eventually the relationship will end. If this happens, it will be for the best, and hopefully next time you will listen to your heart instead of your head.

So you have to be sure you truly love your partner, and that your 'love' isn't based on personality traits and physical beauty. Over time, personalities change and so do looks. In order for a relationship to work, love has to exist unconditionally or the relationship will be doomed from the start.

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Well You're Not That Hot Either

I recall watching a talk show that discussed the problems between a husband and his wife. The husband complained that his wife had gained a lot of weight since they got married and that he was no longer attracted to her. What was obvious to me was that this marriage was never based on true love. True love would be able to overlook this minor detail. Besides that, people age and sometimes not so gracefully.

You can't expect your spouse to look like they're twenty when they turn forty. Weight gain is especially common as people age, as well as wrinkles, grey hair, and sagging skin. Remember that although your spouse has twenty more years under their belt, so do you. You're not getting any younger you know, and before you know it, you're going to have wrinkles and grey hair too.

If you fell in love with your spouse's physical beauty, you're headed for disappointment. If you're twenty years into your marriage and finding yourself in this situation, you have to consider your options. If you want to stay married, you'll have to accept everything about your spouse. If you can accept the physical imperfections, you'll both be happier. But if you can't, you won't be doing your spouse any favors by staying in the marriage. You'll both be unhappy and this isn't good for anyone.

It's my personal belief that many marriages fail precisely because people get married for the wrong reasons. It's unfortunate, but it is sometimes a part of life. People need to do themselves a favor and learn that a marriage must be based on true unconditional love, and by unconditional, I mean the full acceptance of whatever package your true love comes in. Falling in love with

physical beauty really is a childish thing to do, and it's something that should only happen in high school, if ever. I just find it really surprising that this isn't obvious to more people.

I suppose this is why some men prefer younger women. Why would you want someone half your age unless you're after physical beauty? So if you're forty years old and your partner is twenty, will you dump her when she turns forty? I suppose you wouldn't because there aren't many twenty year old women who would date a sixty year old man. When you turn eighty and your spouse turns sixty, will you still love her if you're only interested in physical beauty? These are the hard questions you have to ask yourself. You owe it to both of you.

The key to happiness in a romantic relationship is pure acceptance. If you can't accept your partner as the years go by, why should he or she accept you? It works both ways and you both have to accept that aging is a part of life, and it's this acceptance that brings lasting happiness.

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Do It Anyway

I suppose it's safe to say that most people don't like doing homework. I know I didn't. Even if you're in college and you're studying what you love, you still have to take electives which have nothing to do with your field of study, and you may not enjoy them. I know I didn't. And instead of doing homework, you'd probably rather be watching TV or playing video games. I know I did.

Homework isn't the most entertaining thing in the world, and the best way to get through it is to stay goal-oriented. By keeping your goal in mind, whether it's to become an engineer or a doctor, homework becomes a means to an end. Your goals give you something to look forward to, and this makes all the hard work seem easier.

You should also consider the consequences of not doing well in school. What if you end up with a low grade point average? It certainly won't look good on your resume, and a high GPA really is something to brag about. You want to give yourself the best shot possible at a bright future. After all, the worst that can happen is you won't end up working in the field you love and you'll have regrets.

There's something else to consider. If you're studying your field of interest, and you aren't enjoying the school work, you're probably in the wrong field. If you really enjoy your major, you should also enjoy most of the related homework. During your first year in college, you should pretty well know if you're going to enjoy working in your chosen field. If you decide you don't like it, you've only lost one year, and you can probably use some of the credits towards another field of study. Losing one or even two years is nothing compared to working a job you don't enjoy for the rest of your life. Once you're out of college, you'll have to work the next forty years or so, so it would be nice if it will be something you'll enjoy doing.

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The Honey-Do List

As you can probably imagine from the title, this chapter is mostly geared towards men, and married men in particular. Picture this. You've had a long stressful week at work and the weekend is finally here. All you want to do is relax, and wouldn't you know it, your wife wants you to do chores around the house. You know, stuff like mowing the lawn, cleaning the gutters,

fixing the shower head, and washing the windows. This is the last thing you wanted, and now you're going to moan and complain about it. And what's worse is your whole weekend is ruined.

I don't mind doing work around the house, but if I had a stressful week at work, I wouldn't want to do more work on the weekend, but it has to be done. It goes hand in hand with home ownership. If you've owned your home for even a couple of years, you will realize that there is always work to be done. Things break, things get dirty, and grass grows non-stop. You can't stop these things from happening, but you can adjust your attitude towards the work that needs to be done. Having made the decision to live in a house quite literally means you've also made the unconscious decision to do all the work that goes with it. Home ownership is great, but it comes at a price.

Sometimes I think I would rather live in a condominium which would give me more time to do the things I love, but then I wouldn't enjoy having a big back yard and a large patio where I can entertain during the summer. And with home ownership, my daughter will have a safe place to play as she grows up. You also have the option of living in an apartment where all of the maintenance is done for you and you don't have to pay condo fees for it. However, you'll also be throwing all of your money towards rent, and after thirty years, you will have nothing to show for it. So there are pros and cons to every living arrangement. You just have to decide what you value the most, what you are willing to live with, and what you absolutely will not do.

It's true I have a lot of grass to mow once a week in the summer, but it's good exercise, so there is some good in it. Besides that, there is some good satisfaction from having done something to improve your home. At the end of the day, you can kick back, have a beer or two, and enjoy the work you've done.

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Two Hours You'll Never Get Back

Have you ever gone to a concert or a movie where the word 'terrible' would be an understatement? It's really saddening when we've looked forward to an event for a long time only to discover it was a waste of time.

I have to say that there are very few movies I've enjoyed in the last few years. I think all the good ideas have been used up, and there isn't a whole lot of creativity left for new movies. Most movies these days are just recycled ideas. If you really think about it, there aren't many more ideas movie makers can use to produce unique movies.

It's also depressing when you've worked hard all week and you've been looking forward to a great concert that turns out to be the most boring one you've ever been to. What can you do? Not every singer has great showmanship. Sure you've wasted a couple hundred hard-earned dollars for one ticket alone, but it's not the end of the world. Everyone spends money on crap at some point in their lives, but that's just a part of life.

My wife once went to a concert she didn't enjoy. It was one of her favorite bands from the eighties and she loved their music, but they had zero showmanship, which might explain why they aren't around anymore.

There's no point in beating yourself up for having wasted time and money. What's done is done. The event may not have been what you expected, but don't sweat it. Life goes on and you have to get on with it.

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Should've Could've Would've

I wonder if there's even one person who doesn't have at least one regret in life. I suppose if you think your life is perfect, you might not feel this way, but I doubt most people think their lives are perfect. Some men wonder if they made the right decision when they broke it off with that girl in college. You might think you made a mistake turning down that job with the largest law firm in town. Where would you be now if your decisions were made differently?

Well, my answer would be that you would be living a different life, but then you would have different regrets. It's like the saying goes, "The grass is always greener on the other side," and it is so true. I'm here to tell you there is no such thing as the perfect life. We will always wonder, "What if." What if I never quit playing guitar? What if I had listened to my father's advice? Well, what if you were to give up the 'what if' game and instead decided to see the perfection in your own life and all of the good things in it?

In my life, there were a series of 'bad choices' and subsequent events that led to the moment in time in which I met my wife. Had I not made the choices I did, I seriously doubt I would have met her. Today my wife and I have a lovely baby girl, and our baby would probably not have been in our lives had I not made the 'mistakes' I made. So yes, I could look back and say I never should have made the choices that I made, but then where would I be today? Would I have been happier? I can't answer that question with any level of certainty. However, I can say that today I am happy with my family, even though other aspects of my life are less than ideal.

This is what it all boils down to. There is no such thing as an imperfect life. That's right, I said imperfect. This may seem difficult to accept, but everyone's life is perfect exactly as it is. Even if your life appears difficult and you wish you had a different one, I can assure you there is no such thing as an ideal life. Even the salespeople who appear on late night infomercials promising you your dream life if you just buy their advice, are basically selling you a way out of the desert when what you really need is bottled water. What's wrong with the desert? It's only our expectations of what life should be that make the desert seem like a bad place to live.

I'm not saying you should stay in a horrible situation that makes life seem unbearable. What I am saying is you can make the best of a difficult situation until you find a different way, if you want to find a different way. Ultimately though, it doesn't matter what condition your life is in. Even the worst situation can become fertilizer for the most promising future. Every situation has the potential to lead you to something different. Maybe better, maybe worse. Then it's up to you to decide which road you want to take.

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Fool's Gold

Everyone, and there are few exceptions, has this idea that having lots of money will bring them happiness and solve all of their problems. Few people truly understand what it takes to earn millions of dollars, and fewer people really know that all that money doesn't amount to eternal happiness.

In my business, I deal with many people who make six figures, and I will tell you, there are very few of them who are actually happy. When I talk to them, they sound depressed, almost as if they wish they weren't in their line of work, and they probably do. The truth is that those jobs that bring in tons of money are the most stressful jobs in the world.

Lawyers make a lot of money, but look at what they have to deal with on a daily basis. It's stressful to say the least. Look at doctors, who have to deal with fifty or more people in one shift. Five years of that and you'll be begging for the pink pill that will make it all go away. Of course, being a doctor or a lawyer can be very rewarding because they help a lot of people every day, but it comes at a high price, and it takes a certain kind of person to do that sort of work. So you may wish you were a surgeon, but you really have to ask yourself if you would be cut out for that kind of work.

There are very few people who make a lot of money and are truly happy. I used to know an accountant who was on salary. He worked for a large accounting firm and he made good money. However, during tax season, he would have to put in long hours and he wouldn't get paid extra for that. It was just part of the job. To top it all off, his daily commute was about an hour, and he had to pay for parking and gas. He would always say that he couldn't wait to retire. Do you really think it's worth living this way?

So maybe you don't make a lot of money. Most people don't. That shouldn't matter if you're happy with most other areas of your life. I would just highly recommend you don't think money is going to solve all of your problems, because quite frankly, it won't. The truth is that if you do make millions, you will find other things to worry about. There will be other aspects of your life that seem less than perfect.

For instance, you may begin to worry that your friends will only like you for your money. Or you might hoard your money for fear of losing it, and this could cause tension in your marriage. This is how the human mind works. The mind is analytical and it fails to see the perfection in life.

The perfect life does not require a lot of money. The perfect life requires peace of mind and an optimistic attitude. However, in reality, your life is already perfect. You simply may have failed to see it that way.

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Ooh, Bad Color

Just because it looks good on paper doesn't mean it's going to look good on your walls, or your car, or even in your hair. I think it's funny, but I'm sure every woman who has ever colored her hair has at least once felt the dread of having to go out in public with an unflattering hair color. It happens, and it happens a lot, but it's not the end of the world.

We put a lot of stock into our appearance, the appearance of our homes, and our cars. We think everyone is watching and judging us based on our appearance, and I can assure you, most people couldn't care less. People are so wrapped up in their own lives; they don't have a second to waste on you or your car. I see many nice cars every day, and I sometimes see women with nice hair, but I couldn't care less. I just don't have the time to stop and admire either of them, and I'm sure most people who lead busy lives feel pretty much the same way.

What it all comes down to is we all care about what others think of us. But it's also true that everyone else is doing the same thing. Everyone is trying to impress everyone else with their nice things. It's all about keeping up with the Joneses. Do you see the absurdity in the situation? If everyone is trying to impress everyone else, who is really winning? Lucky is the person who doesn't feel they need to make changes in order to turn a few heads.

So if so many people care so much about what others think of them, what does that say about their self-esteem? Could we be a population of people who don't think very highly of ourselves? Looking to others for approval is self-defeating because they're doing the same thing. No one wins in this futile game but we never seem to learn.

What I say is, if someone doesn't like you for who you are, that is their problem, not yours. By going to extreme measures to win their approval is a game that never has any winners. Just be yourself, and the friends you will make will be the ones you'll really want in your life.

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Better Luck Next Time

Almost everyone wants to get rich, and people seem to think the lottery is the easiest way to get there. Of course, what people don't realize is the odds of winning the jackpot are astronomically high. What's more, that huge jackpot can only exist if tens of millions of people buy losing tickets.

The whole lottery is built on losers. For it to work, there have to be millions of losers, and only a handful of winners. That's the way the game goes. Then when people lose, they get upset as if they thought they had a good chance at winning. Actually, they do think they have a good chance at winning or they wouldn't play. If people would only realize what the odds are, they wouldn't play as much. It would make a lot more sense to put that money in a high interest savings account. As a matter of fact, you have a better chance of making money in the stock market, even if you know nothing about investing.

Casinos are the same deal. Just look at Las Vegas with all of its fancy buildings and bright lights. Someone has to pay for all of that, and they're banking on the fact that you will put up some of the money, or maybe a lot of it. Las Vegas was built on losers because all of the games are designed to be in the house's favor. You stand little chance of winning, and you would be better off taking in a few shows while you're there.

There is no sense in getting upset over losing money in gambling. You should be upset with yourself in that you allowed yourself to do it, but to be upset over not winning is simply absurd. It's like being upset over the fact that it hasn't rained in the desert for weeks. It doesn't make sense, does it?

I play one lottery twice a week and it only costs me \$208 a year. Most people can stand to lose that much money. It's even cheaper than smoking cigarettes. What you need to do is decide how much money you can stand to lose in one month, and that will be your gambling money. After all, gambling should be viewed as entertainment only because that is really all it's good for. So if you don't have money in the budget for entertainment, you probably shouldn't be playing.

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Bah, Bah, Black Sheep

I'm pretty sure every family has a black sheep. It may be a brother or a cousin, or it could be a distant relative. I suppose it's an unfortunate occurrence but it is a part of life. The black sheep is the person who causes trouble and grief for other family members. They seem to not have any consideration for relatives and they're often selfish. Most people don't like to be around the black sheep because they simply don't want to associate with them. Sometimes though, they're hard to avoid and we end up having to put up with them. So what do you do?

Well first off, it's important to understand that no matter what they do, the trouble-maker actually feels fully justified in his actions. Everyone feels justified in their actions. It's not as if they know they're doing something wrong and on purpose. In their minds, they have done nothing wrong, and when you confront them about what they've done, they will even become defensive and upset because they believe you're the one who is at fault. They will even blame all of their troubles on the other family members.

I know it sounds crazy, and in a sense it is. Just because someone can't be diagnosed with a mental disorder, doesn't mean there isn't something wrong with their brain. Everyone relies on perception to tell them how they should behave. So if perception is distorted, their behavior will also be distorted.

There really is no point in arguing with the black sheep. The best thing to do is to simply ignore them. Eventually they'll end up all alone in the world and they will be forced to wonder if maybe they were the problem all along. If you have no friends and no family member wants to talk to you, you have to wonder where the problem really is. They won't consider the possibility that they're at fault because it hurts the ego to do so. They will never let it go, but you can.

Why let it affect your life? Let them do whatever they want as long as it doesn't cause personal damage, in which case you can sue them. Besides that, their suffering will increase as more family members decide to shun them from their lives. So in reality, they're really digging their own graves.

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Hoodwinked

No one likes to get scammed, especially when it ends up costing time and money. The reality is that there will always be scam artists in this world, and there isn't a whole lot we can do about it. However, with each time you get scammed, you become smarter and you'll know what to look out for in the future. They're all learning experiences.

It's also unfortunate that the people who get scammed the most are the elderly. I suppose it's because they're very trusting and perhaps a little naïve. In reality, anyone who gets scammed is a little bit naïve because it happens to those people who like to think everyone in this world has good intentions. Not everyone has good intentions and there are millions of people who love to make a quick easy buck.

Also, it's often the case that we can't even take any legal recourse against these people because they're usually very careful about the legalities of their actions. They are smart people to say the least, so it's our job to be even smarter. It's about adapting to a sometimes hostile world, and that becomes our best defence. When the world dishes out misfortune and pain, we need to adapt in order to be prepared for the next time it happens. Really, no one has the power to

change the world all by themselves, but we all have the ability to change the way we react to anything that comes our way, and that's where our true power lies.

So it's true you could moan and complain about being hoodwinked, but it already happened and you can't go back to change it. Complaining about it won't bring about any change and you won't learn anything from it this way. It's wiser to simply accept the situation as it is, grow from the experience, and become a smarter and stronger person. If every person did that, the scam artist's days would be numbered. And as the saying goes, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

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I'm Always Right

Have you ever found yourself in an argument in which you were convinced you were right and the other person simply could not see your point of view? No matter what you said, you simply could not find any common ground. Then at the end of it, you felt beat up and battered because it was so important that the other person agreed with you. If you're this type of person, I'm here to tell you that you're fighting a losing battle every time.

It's so important to keep in mind that everyone is different, and most importantly, everyone is entitled to their unique point of view. A person bases his point of view upon his life experiences, his perception of the world, and how his brain is wired. Everyone's brain is wired differently, so two people can experience the same situation and end up telling two different stories about the events that unfolded. Perception really does make up our reality of the world we live in, and no two realities are ever going to be the same.

I think it's great that we're all different, and I believe we should celebrate our differences and be happy that no two people will ever be the same. Instead, we put each other down because of our differences, and this is so far from our potential as human beings. We've mastered technology and space flight, but we still haven't mastered our relationships with each other. If this doesn't sound sad, I don't know what does.

When a person feels the need to be right all the time, it's basically an ego trip. It's the ego that has this need to be on top because that's where the ego draws its power. To be humble and succumb to someone else's point of view is equivalent to stabbing your own ego in the heart. No one wants to do that because it hurts, but it only hurts because most people don't have the self-esteem needed to stay strong in the face of accepting someone else's point of view.

If you're the type of person who feels the need to always be right, you really owe it to yourself to ask yourself, "Why?" Even if you feel the need to be right once in a while, you should ask yourself, "What do I get out of it?" Answer truthfully, what will happen if you admit you're wrong? Are you afraid of being humbled and possibly humiliated? Will being wrong hurt your self-esteem? In reality, the exact opposite is true. The person who is able to be humbled and is not afraid of looking bad in company is actually a very strong person. Think about it. What takes more courage, to show everyone you're right, or to lose an argument in front of others? Mother Teresa was a humble person and one of the strongest people the world has ever known.

Everyone has something to say, just like you do. So if you want to be heard and accepted, you should do the same for others. There is nothing wrong with being wrong, and sometimes an agreement will never be reached because of differing viewpoints. This is natural and there's

nothing wrong with it. You just need to realize when to throw in the towel and be done with the argument.

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Measure Twice, Cut Once

You're building a deck. You have all the lumber you need, your power tools are plugged in, and you're ready to go. Everything proceeds nicely until you realize you've cut all of the floor boards ten inches too short. So, you either make your deck ten inches shorter, or you go out and buy more wood. Either way, you aren't going to be a happy camper, and no matter what you decide, you'll end up beating yourself up for your silly but natural mistake. Maybe you needed to stick to a tight budget and you can't afford to buy more wood, so you have to make the best of what you have, but you aren't going to be happy about it and you'll never forgive yourself.

Look, mistakes happen and no one is perfect. Sure you could have hired a skilled professional to do the job for you, but that would have cost you more money and you wouldn't have gotten the satisfaction of doing it yourself. And even though your deck is shorter than you had hoped for, you can always add onto it when you have more money. There is a bright side to every mistake and nothing is ever lost. You just need to think outside of the rigid box and look for the opportunity to make it right.

Sometimes, mistakes happen at work, and it is someone else's money you've just poured down the drain. This has happened to me, but I had an understanding boss. You may not be so lucky. If it happens once and your boss lets it slide, learn from your mistake and chances are it won't happen again. When there is a lot of money at stake, you always have to be careful. That's part of the job and that's what you are being paid to do. So if you do lose your job over it, you really do have yourself to blame, but you have to remember that you aren't the first or the last person to go through this ordeal.

Remember, this is life, and life is sometimes messy. Everyone has misfortunes and setbacks. It's your job as a responsible adult to pick up the pieces and get your life back on track. This may sound harsh, but it beats kicking yourself for making a mistake and never learning from it. Acceptance is the key here. Once you've accepted your mistake, you can move on and not feel guilty about it. After all, you're only human.

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Disillusionment

Not everyone is as they appear to be. Even our friends can turn around and stab us in the back when we least expect it. If that person was our best friend, it's an even bigger blow. It is an unfortunate reality, but it happens all the time. The problem is you never know what is going on inside someone's head. We are all great actors, so when a friend does us wrong, we are left totally shocked and confused.

I've been back-stabbed by a couple of friends, but I didn't let it bother me. My attitude towards this is that I'm better off without these kinds of people in my life. It's important to weed out the bad apples before they cause a lot of damage.

Sometimes the person who crosses you is your spouse. This can be unbearable, especially if you still love him or her. It's true you will go through a rough period of getting over your spouse, but

in the long run it's for the best. You deserve to be with someone who loves you as much as you love them, so why be in a relationship with someone who doesn't love you back? Eventually, the relationship would have ended anyway, so it's better it happens sooner than later. It's about seeing the positive even in the worst of situations.

Wouldn't it be nice if the bad apples would simply tell us to take a hike instead of causing us trouble? It seldom happens this way. It's almost as if they feel they need to screw us in order to end the relationship, as if this is the better way to go. It doesn't make sense does it? Unfortunately this is the way it usually goes.

The world is full of ill-intentioned people and there is no law against it. You are going to meet a few in your lifetime, so learn the signs to watch out for and use your experiences to catch them before you let these people into your life. Life is sometimes about learning the ropes and rolling with the punches. An adult can do this effectively. So the question is, are you an adult or are you still learning the ropes?

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The Victim

One of the hardest things in the world to get over is being the victim of a crime, especially a violent one. It's also just as easy to blame our aggressors for our problems in life. The hardest thing to do is to take responsibility for the way we feel about the event, but taking responsibility is the adult thing to do.

If the rape victim never took responsibility for her life, she would never come out of it stronger than ever and able to educate the public about sexual abuse. If the handicapped victim never got over the fact that he lost the use of his legs, he would never be an inspiration to the world. It's about rising up from the ashes and being stronger than you've ever been. You owe it to yourself and your family.

Everyone wants to blame everyone else for their problems, as if that's the solution. In reality, it only creates bigger problems. I know a guy who was beat up by a couple of thugs back when he was a teenager. Ever since then, he has had a hate for the world. He used to be a happy kid. Now he's cynical and blames everyone else for his problems. And to top it off, he uses drugs to numb the pain. If this happened to you, is this the way you would want to turn out? It's no way to live your life, but if that's what you choose, you'll have no one to blame but yourself.

As adults, we owe it to ourselves to take full responsibility for our lives, no questions asked, no matter what happened to us. If that means seeking help, then see a qualified therapist. If it means putting your anger aside and seeing the positive in the situation, so be it. Living your life in anger and resentment is no way to live unless you enjoy that sort of thing. Life is too short for that. You have to make the best of what you have, and you can't allow someone else to decide how you're going to feel. That's disempowering. Instead it's empowering to get over it and be happy in spite of what happened.

Of course, this is not to say to just get over it and let bygones be bygones. You press charges if you must and you sue for damages. Our society cannot function properly if crime always went unpunished. And sometimes knowing that the criminal is going to be punished is good enough to make things better, but sometimes it's not enough. Violent crimes often leave victims with post-traumatic stress disorder which requires a good dose of psychotherapy. Basically, I'm

saying to do what you have to do to get over the event. Just don't waste your life away with anger and resentment.

Believe me, I sympathize with victims of violent crimes, but I cannot sympathize with those who let it affect their lives and their happiness. It's time to stop making excuses and live our lives on purpose as responsible adults.

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The Demons That Lurk In The Dark

Do you have a phobia? Many people have phobias and some can be debilitating. Of course, we rarely suffer from phobias because we avoid them at all costs, but what if you can't avoid it? What if you're afraid of the dark? What about brontophobia, which is the fear of thunderstorms? You can't really avoid those can you? Carcinophobia, the fear of cancer, can make you think you have cancer every time a negative bodily symptom appears. Phobias may seem harmless, but they can have very negative effects on a person's life.

If you do have a debilitating phobia, it might help to talk about it with a qualified professional. After all, all phobias are born in the brain, and it's the brain that makes a big deal out of nothing. It might help to keep in mind that it's only the brain that's overreacting, but that may not be enough to face the phobia. Of course all phobias are irrational, but knowing this doesn't really make it easier either because what the person is experiencing seems real. The fear is real, even if it's irrational. The problem is we give into everything the brain tells us. If it tells us something is scary, we believe it. If it tells us something is harmful, we believe it. And really, it's difficult not to.

I for instance have a fear of insects like cockroaches and crickets, and I'm afraid of mice. One time I caught a mouse with a mouse trap, but it was still alive. I didn't want to touch the mouse trap with a live mouse in it but I had to get the mouse out of the house. I used a pair of old tongs pick up the rodent, and once outside, I needed to get it out of the trap and let it go. It was an uncomfortable situation but it had to be done. Sometimes you just need to psyche yourself up and override what the brain is telling you is bad for you. I also used to be afraid of spiders but I got over that one a few years ago when I allowed one to crawl over my hand. It turned out to be nothing, although I'm not sure I would do the same with a tarantula.

What I'm saying is there is always a way out of a phobia. It might mean seeing a therapist or joining a group of people who have the same phobia. Ultimately though, facing it is the best way to dissolve the fear.

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When The Unexpected Happens

Unforeseen events can put a real damper on our day. If that event involves dishing out a lot of money, it's even worse. Anything can happen, from your furnace breaking down to visiting the emergency room. Most people can't afford anything beyond their budget, so these unexpected bills can be a real burden, causing a lot of stress. The news is you can't do anything about these events. They're a part of life, and if you choose to own a house, own a car, and have kids, you will always have them.

This year, my wife and I have been hit with quite a few unexpected bills and it was tough for a few months in a row as we slowly slipped further into debt. At first, I complained about it because it seemed so unfair, but I soon realized I had the power to do something about it. I have a budget laid out for the family and I chose to really pick it apart and see if there was anything we could do without. I did find a few things and I eliminated them. By doing this, I increased the amount of money left over at the end of the month, not including unexpected expenses, and this allowed us to handle those expenses with a little more ease.

The point is you always have options. You can pick up an extra shift every week, or you can get a part-time job until the situation improves. If you smoke, you can quit smoking, and believe me, that alone goes a long way. You can even cut the alcoholic beverages to a minimum. Sometimes you have to make some difficult decisions, but isn't that better than ending up in a homeless shelter? If you weigh your options, you'll often find that the hard decisions are actually the easy ones.

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Not Her Again

You can pick your friends but you can't always pick who you spend your time with. You know who I'm talking about; that friend of a friend named Nancy. You may hate Nancy, but you're stuck spending your Saturday nights with her. You find Nancy to be annoying at best, and worst of all, you have nothing in common with her. I suppose you can voice your opinion in front of everyone, but you might end up losing your friends. So what do you do?

The way I see it, as long as Nancy isn't causing any trouble for you, I don't see why you should do anything. You aren't going to like everyone you meet, and if you spend a lot of your time socializing, you will undoubtedly find at least one person you don't like. It doesn't mean Nancy is a bad person. It just means you have an unfavorable opinion about her, and that isn't reason enough to kick her out of the group.

The problem isn't Nancy. Unfortunately the problem lies with you and that's what you have to deal with. Basically, you don't have a choice in the matter, so get over it and get on with your life. Keep in mind there might be a person in the group who doesn't like you or your personality, but they have to deal with you every weekend. It's natural to not like everyone you meet. Sometimes personalities clash and you should do your best to just accept this fact and not let it get in the way of your friendships.

If you really think about it, wanting Nancy out of a group because you don't like her is pretty selfish. Maybe everyone else likes her and they enjoy her company. So why spoil it for everyone else? If everyone hated Nancy, it would be a different story, but that's usually not the case.

Just remember that you don't actually have to actively spend time with Nancy. It's fine to simply acknowledge her presence and do your own thing the rest of the night. It's also fine to try and get to know Nancy a little better. You might be pleasantly surprised and find you actually have something in common.

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It's Not You

You aren't going to like everyone you meet, just like not everyone you meet is going to like you. It works both ways. We all like to think everyone should like us because we have sparkling personalities, or we have a great sense of humor, or just because we're so darn cute. The reality is that not everyone is going to like you and some people are going to hate you. You can't avoid it and you shouldn't take it personally.

Even if you're the type of person who is friendly with everyone, it doesn't mean everyone will like you. Some people might see you as a goody-two-shoe. Even if you're a funny guy, some people won't like you because they take life too seriously. There are as many reasons for not liking someone as there are people in this world.

Everyone has an opinion regarding what makes a person likeable, and everyone is different. There is no such thing as a person whom everyone likes. If you were a movie star, there would be thousands, maybe millions of people who don't like you. However, there would also be millions of people who do like you. It's a fact of life. So instead of concentrating on the people who don't like you, concentrate on the people who do.

If you still find it difficult to not take it personally, then I would say you probably have a self-esteem issue. Of course, I don't know you, so that would just be a guess. The reason I say it's a self-esteem issue is that people with low self-esteems are always seeking approval from other people. In any case, it's a personal issue, however you label it. So the problem isn't with the people who don't like you. The problem lies with you, and you may want to talk to a counselor about it. Counselors are skilled at getting to the core of the issues and they will help shed some light on why you feel the way you do. If the thought of therapy frightens you, you could try self-help books. Either way, you have to do something about it if you want to stop taking it personally.

The point is to accept the fact that not everyone is going to like you, and certainly to not expect everyone to like you. Here's a question for you. Do you like everyone you meet? If not, then why should everyone else like you in return?

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Again With The President

After a long hard day at work, most people just want to go home, eat dinner, and relax in front of the TV watching their favorite shows. So what do you do if your show is not on, and instead the time slot has been taken up by the U.S. President who feels he needs to talk about the federal budget? Again! It's a bummer isn't it? I'm not just talking about TV though. I'm referring to anything you've been looking forward to which in the end doesn't happen for one reason or another. It's always a letdown, but it doesn't have to be this way.

Suppose you had planned on taking the family out to dinner and little Timmy gets sick. I guess you won't be going out anymore, but are you going to let it spoil your night? You know, you do have options. You can break out the board games, watch a movie, play video games together, or sit in the living room and talk. I know, call me crazy! What is this talking business all about? When was the last time you sat with your family and just talked about stuff? It seems there is always something else to do. Doesn't it? Besides, you might think watching TV equals spending time with the family. Actually, it equals spending time with the TV, and it doesn't matter who is with you while you do it. They are just doing the same thing with you.

I think the President gives us a great opportunity to get back to what's important. Chances are, you don't care about the federal budget, and I wouldn't blame you. So use that time to do what you hardly ever do, which is spending quality time with your family. If you live alone, call up a friend or your mom. I just think we're so out of touch with each other that we need our plans to change just so we can get back to what really matters. After all, when you're on your death bed, are you going to say, "I wish I spent more time watching TV," or will you say, "I wish I spent more time with my family?" Now I don't know what your family is like, but I would be willing to bet you would pick the latter.

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She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not

Years ago, when I was still very immature about love and romantic relationships, I was completely head over heels over a girl. I know it wasn't love because it wasn't what I have with my wife. Had I spent more time with her, it may have turned into love, but that is one thing I will never know. No, it was infatuation, and I spent countless days and nights thinking and fantasizing about her. I didn't love her, but I liked her very much and I really liked spending time with her. The problem was that I was pretty sure she didn't feel the same way about me, so I never let her know how I felt.

Of course I can never be absolutely sure today about her feelings, but I was pretty sure at the time. So I didn't bother asking her out. If I wasn't going to ask her out, why did I bother thinking about her so much? What I should have done was simply accept the fact that it was never going to be and concentrate on other girls. Eventually I came to my senses and I decided to forget about her and move on. Shortly after that, I met my wife.

I probably should have just let her know how I felt. I probably would have found out she didn't feel the same way and it would have been much easier for me to move on. If you don't know how the other person feels about you, it's very difficult to let it go. There is always that question of "What if?" in your head, and so you hang onto a glimmer of hope that that special someone might like you back. It's the biggest waste of time, and no one should have to go through that. It's better to just let the person know how you feel and get it over with. It's true it might hurt if you ask them out and they turn you down, but that's nothing compared to the personal anguish you'll go through if you just dwell on it for weeks, or even months as was the case with me.

My case was infatuation, but your case might be true love, and that makes it that much harder. If you really love a person, in most cases, you should just let them know. There are some cases where, for instance, spilling the beans might affect your friendship with that person, and that's a tough call. Ultimately, you have to decide what's more important. However if he or she is a close friend, you'll have to see your love interest often, which makes it even harder. I can't tell you what to do without knowing the whole story. All I can say is this. If you truly love the person, you are risking a lifetime without them if you don't express your feelings.

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I Asked For Well Done, Not Alive

Years ago, my wife and I went out to dinner at a mid-scale restaurant. We don't get out much, so when we do, I want to have a good time and enjoy it. We had reservations, and for reasons beyond the restaurant's control, they were not able to get us in at our appointed time. They

finally got us a table about twenty minutes later which I didn't think was a big deal. My wife on the other hand was furious about it and couldn't let it go. I was hoping we could spend some quality time together, but it just wasn't going to happen. She was angry and didn't feel like talking or having fun. I didn't feel like talking to myself, so the night was ruined for both of us.

I'm a pretty easy going guy and I don't complain much. I know that stuff happens and sometimes things don't go as planned. So why make a big deal out of it? We make a big deal because we have expectations, and when those expectations aren't met, we feel as if we've been cheated and we take it personally. The ego loves to complain about things, including trivial things.

There are people who complain about everything and they always feel as if they've been cheated in some way. Those are the people who can't relax and enjoy life. However, whether they know it or not, these people love to complain because it's a part of their personality. They actually get a high out of telling people how they messed things up, and those are the people who like to make a scene. Granted, if a server has purposely done you wrong, speak to the manager because you'd be doing the restaurant a favor. However, it's ridiculous to complain every time. The complainers think they're getting their way, but what they're really doing is cheating themselves out of a good time.

The way I see it is this. If something goes wrong because of someone's mistake, you can complain about it all night and feel lousy about it, or you can decide to forget the incident happened and enjoy yourself. It's absolutely true that some people should be reprimanded for their mistake, but why does it have to be at your expense? And if you're not alone, you might just ruin it for everyone else too. Is it worth it?

So when you get your steak and it's still moving, politely let the server know and they will correct it. In some cases they'll comp your meal. If it's Saturday night and the restaurant is busy, you're going to have to expect a few things to go wrong. Just take it in stride and enjoy the company. Or go on a power trip and make your ego feel better. It's your choice!

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Do It Yourself

Some people are perfectionists, and no matter how hard you try, you can never please them. They will always feel they could have done it better themselves. If you're a perfectionist, it would be helpful to know that many people are not, and not everyone is going to meet your expectations. So there isn't much point in complaining about it.

If you really can't bear to see someone do your work in a way that is different than you would do it, just do it yourself. Or you can show them how you want it done, but it's futile to complain about it. Even though you think you're perfect, not everyone else is. In fact, no one is. Period!

Also remember that not everyone works as efficiently as you do. Maybe you know a quick way to get the job done, and if you do, show your helper how it's done. But even then, they may not get it because their brain simply doesn't work that way. Some people have to be left to their own devices to get the job done. It may not be the best way, and it may irritate you, but you have to accept it if you want their help.

Even if you're a perfectionist and you think your way is the best way, there will always be someone who thinks they can do it better. Whether that's true or not isn't the point. The point is everyone prefers their way of doing things.

If you want the job done right, do it yourself. But if you need help and there is no way around it, don't expect your helpers to meet your high standards because you may be sorely disappointed. Just appreciate the fact that they offered their time and be thankful you have someone to turn to for help.

However, sometimes the person helping you is a fellow employee. I have employees in my business, and they don't always work as well as I think they should. Sometimes I feel I could do it better, so I show them a different way of getting the job done, but that is all I can do. Sometimes they get it, and sometimes they don't. If they don't get it, there really isn't a whole lot I can do about it, and I have to accept the fact that maybe their brain just doesn't work that way. Everyone is wired differently and everyone thinks his way is the best way. You can show your colleague a better way of doing a certain task, but if they don't get it, they may actually get the job done better and faster using their own methods. It may not be as fast as you can do it, but it's as fast as they can do it.

Acceptance of the fact that everyone is different is the key here. Expecting others to be as good as you is unreasonable. However, what is really important is that the job gets done. With that being the goal, does it really matter how you get there?

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Pick Me! Pick Me!

You've had your heart set on your dream job for a long time and you finally have a chance at getting your foot in the door. You've done six years of University and you have your Masters. Your resume is pristine and you thought the interview with McGill & Forester went better than you had expected. It's been two weeks since the interview and you finally receive a letter from them. You can't stand the anticipation and you tear into it, only to find it is a rejection letter. Your heart sinks to the bottom of your stomach. You did all that work and preparation, and you didn't get the job. What a heart breaker!

Stories such as this one are all too common, but this is what living in the real world is like. It would be nice to think you should be selected just because you're very talented, and you may even be the most qualified, but in the real world, you don't always get what you think you deserve. The reality is that this is a dog-eat-dog world and the competition is fierce. I'm not saying this to discourage you. I'm telling you this so the next rejection letter won't hurt as much. It's better to be realistic and accept the facts rather than put yourself down every time you get rejected.

One of the most difficult businesses to get into is show business, specifically acting and singing. I don't know the exact statistics regarding your odds of being successful in this business, but I know they aren't good. An actor may eventually get a small role in a movie with the big shots, but it doesn't mean he'll ever become a famous movie star. If an actor is really lucky, he will end up being a one-hit-wonder, and it's very discouraging. Yet actors keep trying because it's what they want to do. They also know that big risks equal big rewards, and this is true for practically every field.

If you really want to be realistic about your endeavor, look into the statistics regarding your field of interest. This way you will know what you're up against. It shouldn't discourage you. Instead it should prepare you for what lies ahead. If you expect to be rejected several times before you find success, you won't suffer as much. And if you find your dream job before that, that would be considered a bonus!

Having said this, I must also say I am absolutely convinced that if you want something strongly enough, you will eventually get it, assuming you are qualified. However, you must believe in yourself and you have to be persistent because you will fail if you give up. It's as simple as that.

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The Magic Carpet Ride

It's very sad when people get involved with drugs. Many people turn to drugs to escape reality and there is no such thing as an 'adult' who does drugs. The problem is no one expects to become addicted, but of course the first time leads to the second and so on until the addict is born. Then it becomes difficult to stop and the suffering begins.

Imagine you had to shoot up every night to get your fix. You would feel as if there is no way out and you would be miserable. Most people turn to drugs to escape misery, only to find more misery when the ride ends. Drugs are also expensive and they eat away at your bank account like nothing else can.

If you got yourself in such a mess, you will obviously need help getting out. Luckily you will find an addiction centre in every major city. If you're lucky enough to get over the addiction, the next thing you have to do is work on the reason you started doing drugs in the first place. You have to get to the root of the problem. Otherwise you will eventually turn to drugs again. Whatever the reason is, a therapist can help, but you have to be fully willing to resolve the issue. Your resolve to get over the addiction and get your life back on track must be unwavering. It has to be your most important goal before you can work on other goals like finding a job you enjoy, or finding someone to spend the rest of your life with. Anything is possible, but not with drugs in your system.

Unfortunately, drugs wreak havoc on the brain, and if you've done them for years, there may very well be irreparable brain damage. This doesn't mean your life is over. It just means you may be limited in what you can do. You can still live a happy life, but you'll have to accept the fact that you won't be able to do everything you could do before you did drugs. Everyone makes their own bed and we all have to live with the consequences of our actions. If you are in this situation, just make the best of what you have. Your life isn't over yet, and as long as you're alive, you will always have the opportunity to make things right and live a satisfying life.

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Oh My God I'm Fifty

Every decade of our lives is a milestone, but it seems that once you turn thirty, each milestone becomes more difficult to accept. Every milestone is a wake-up call that tells us we aren't getting any younger. Aging is a natural part of life and everything in life has a beginning and an end, and human life is no exception.

You have to admit that at fifty, you aren't going to turn heads like you did when you were twenty, and this can be a real blow to the ego, especially if you've drawn a lot of your self-esteem from your pretty face. It's also true most people don't age gracefully. It can be very difficult to accept grey hair, wrinkles, and flabby skin. I suppose this is why cosmetic surgery is so profitable.

Growing old also means not being able to do the things you used to do when you were younger. However, it also means being retired and not having to work anymore. It could also mean spending time with your grandchildren and even great grandchildren. So while youth has its advantages, old age also has its own. It's all about seeing the silver lining along the dark clouds.

There really is nothing to feel bad about as you grow old. If anything, you should be happy you reached seventy or eighty years old. Many people don't even get that far, so be glad if you did. Just look at how many children die every year in third world countries. The numbers are staggering, so count your blessings and be thankful you are one of the fortunate few to reach the golden years.

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