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ANNIE AND THE FOUNTAIN OF NO LEDGE

Annie stared at the email that had just come in.

Another 11th hour crisis. Another “tiny” last-minute change to a project in its twilight.

Annie’s forehead felt clammy and heavy in her hands. She was sleep-deprived, and hadn’t eaten in almost 12 hours.

“Can I just click my heels and be somewhere else?” she mused, sarcastically.

This isn’t what Annie envisioned for herself; despite her intelligence, creativity, and incredible work ethic, she was being spread too thin.

She wasn’t being used to the best of her abilities.

While the pay was great, she simply wasn’t fulfilled by the type of work she was being given. And the office politics were driving her batty!

“If it was up to some people, I’d be out on the ledge, walking the plank,” Annie mumbled. “Right into the courtyard fountain below.”

Annie found that nothing she did at work fulfilled her anymore. She’d thought about leaving lots of times. But, that was like considering dating after being married for so long.

“Annie looked out of the office window, wishing she could be as carefree as the pigeons strutting out there.”

In an instant, Annie realized that her answer lay on the ledge.

While she had all the abilities of a top performer—a world changer—a dynamo ... she had let them make her a Jill of All Trades.

What she needed to do was demonstrably increase her value.

She needed SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE that would make her an expert at one thing.

Just one thing.

If Annie could just become an expert in one area of knowledge, she could finally step out through that window of opportunity *and have no ledge*.

Annie turned back to the email, with a sardonic smile.

And resolved to build a fountain of NO LEDGE.

As the pigeons stared at her quizzically.

BOLAJI OYEJIDE is a self-development fiction writer.

He tells stories about [escaping the rat race](#), and finding your true calling.

BECAUSE ... WE ARE ETERNAL

because no one is interested, because i'll get in the way, because it doesn't all make sense yet, because everyone's too busy to listen, because my voice won't make any difference, because it's too unscientific, because it's just my opinion, because i'm not in the mood, because it's not quite perfect yet, because i'm not sure, because they probably already know, because even if they do know they don't care, because it's none of my business, because it's boring, because it scares me.

we've all got small me's and big me's. the trouble is the small me is on duty most of the time and the big me often comes out when it's too late at night to do anything. which is part of the trouble, the big me is scared too, so she only comes out when it's too late. so now even the big me is afraid! but afraid of what? nothing. shadows cast by my imagination. some people don't like me, some people do, most don't have an opinion either one way or another. these are the thoughts that rattle around my mind and then the phone rings and i get busy so that takes it away for another day or month or year or lifetime. another smite of dust turning to dust without fully shining.

if you believe you get eternal chances to shine, both here and beyond, it's less of a worry. if you do or if you don't, your turn will come, one day. if energy is just a constant movement in time and space and you play with your energies over the aeons then slowly, slowly you will move towards your group, your cluster, your kind. then one day, before your very eyes the magical moments will appear and you will move gracefully and effortlessly in tune, in time and then no fear or loathing will be there, it will have vanished.

Sarah Farrugia, born in East London, a thinker, a strategist, a progressive. "Fear comes from the idea that time is running out, when we realise that time never runs out then the fear disappears."

CARPE DIEM QUAM MINIMUM CREDULA POSTERO

Last night, I was putting our nine-month-old to bed after tucking in the other three when I heard a scream from our family room in our ninety-year-old home. My wife's voice was true "fear and loathing" —it was a bat! I knew what to do.

When I was eight, my dad was away and a bat got into our house. This was long before Google allowed a quick search of what to do. My source then was a really helpful librarian who I called on for many different queries, and she always helped me out with answers. She shared that I should put on a hat, gloves and get a tennis racquet and try to tap it into a bucket, and then release it outdoors. It worked then and still works today.

I took action, peace was restored to our home and after about three hours of close family shivering and huddling, we all finally went to sleep.

I encourage all to re-watch "Pay it Forward." We rented it and watched it with the kids last night. More swearing than I remember when I watched it without kids, but, a great lesson still comes through loud and clear. Small positive actions and steps, things that make you uncomfortable, but are the right things to do, can change the world.

[Note: the full translation of the title is this: "Seize the day, trusting as little as possible in the future."]

Darryl B Bennett loves the quote "Good enough never is," appreciates all the sharing of ideas on Triibes, spends his days at www.ChampionshipProductions.com and his nights with a great "tribe"—his family.

CHOOSING TO ENGAGE

It is four am, I wake up, a voice within me tells me, "Are you insane? Go to sleep." Year after year, it keeps telling me that today is not the right day. That today I deserve an extra hour of sleep and that I can afford to miss the jog and the morning sun.

Until only a few years back, I told it to shut up and never manifest itself.

How can the output of a black box change if you keep popping the same input? "That BIG stint" does not happen. NEVER has, NEVER will.

This is the right day for anything, for connecting, for offering to help, engaging, learning, harboring curiosity, being and becoming.

The fear of disengagement is manifesting more than it ever did.

Indifference kills. So Engage instead. Anything. Substantial. Tangible. Persistent. Non-Superficial. It doesn't have to be large or remarkable upfront; it just has to be aligned to who you want to BE. We are not short of information, or resources, just the will to braid the resources around to get to that personal "Eureka!"

So, when you next ask yourself, "What should I do with my life?" just tune in to whatever is around you. When you start to consciously hunt and align your interests towards what you really want to do, you find it everywhere. When you are brushing, walking, talking, and even when you are taking a nap.

And yes, don't trash your ideas, recycle them!

This new year, do something substantial.
If you ever have to go down, Go Down FIGHTING !

The distance between two points is always a straight line. Go draw.

Ekta Grover helps people help themselves, and tries to find symmetries in a largely unsymmetrical world. She scribbles at [Find Some Thing New Today](#)

COMFORT

Are you sitting comfortably in the plush armchair or sofa you've worked hard to acquire?

Are you warm and content with the feeling like, you've done your bit and someone else can do their bit now?

Is this a time to be sitting comfortably? Really?

Let's think about why being comfortable in 2010 is akin to sitting in an oven and turning the temperature gauge to very high.

Could sitting in your armchair, feet-up and cozy-snuggled, be truly comfortable, whilst our limited resources are exploited to the point where your children or grandchildren won't be eating fish fingers, they'll be eating worm fingers instead? Or perhaps your extended family will grow to love jellyfish pan-fried in time.

If worm fingers don't sound appetizing or appealing and the thought of these are not making your taste buds salivate, perhaps it's time to rise out of your comfortable armchair and take notice of what is happening in our world.

Don't think you can make a difference? Who, Me? Yes, You! You and everything you do makes a huge difference.

Did you know that you have legal jurisdiction over what happens in our world's Oceans and Seas? Yes, you do.

Governments have legal jurisdiction in our world's oceans up to their given area surrounding the country you inhabit and call home. (In relation to the overall ocean circumference, however, government control is minimal and covers a very limited, confined area.)

As you sit in your armchair, perhaps you would like to watch a recent documentary called "The End Of The Line." You can get your copy here: www.endoftheline.com

From your armchair, after you've watched this vital documentary, you can get active online, bring about awareness of this very real and vital issue and start making a difference. There is no time to wait.

Start your campaign to end exploitative fishing methods today.

Bronwyn McConville is an Entrepreneur and she gives. Bronwyn is a triibester @ www.triibes.com, StorySearcher on Twitter, Founder, Leader and Creative Director working to deliver change by Inspiring Entrepreneurship In Communities. Email Bronwyn at info@brightsparks.me with your thoughts and stories about the change you would like to see happen in your community. Help Bronwyn Make Change Real.

COMMUNICATE & RELEASE JUDGMENT

How I Learned to Kick Fear and Loathing to the Curb While Chewing on a Bagel in NYC

It was a freakin' cold December day in Manhattan. I had just gotten off the subway on my way to work. I needed a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. I knew Nate, my food-stand guy, on the corner of 23rd and Park had the goods. I ambled up the staircase and headed for Nate's. There was a fairly long line. I stood wondering if getting my butt frozen was worth the \$1.50 early am coffee/bagel combo special.

Finally, I paid for a plain bagel with a smear of butter and coffee with 3 sugars and headed to work. I was chewing my bagel and sipping my coffee when out of the blue I heard screeching sounds of car brakes and a booming voice yelling, "Get your goddamn aging butt off the street, bitch!" Hell no, it wasn't me. I looked up; a little old lady with a small shopping cart was slowly crossing the street. The light was green, the yellow taxicab driver had the right of way, but didn't he see she was old and a tad befuddled? If you know anything about NYC yellow cabbies, you know they can be aggressive, abrasive; downright rude ... and if you're black, headed in the "wrong" direction, they might never pick you up. I am black. I should know.

In a NY minute, I was standing in front of the taxicab, asking him if he wanted a bite of my bagel because, unless he wanted to kill two people, I wasn't moving until she crossed the street. The cabdriver was shocked; first an old lady, now a black lady, what next? He laughed. The mood shifted. We talked about life, stress; we moved on. The point is: To make a lasting impact in 2010, we must communicate fearlessly and release loathing. Now go chew a bagel!

Elizabeth Obih-Frank motivates and sometimes titillates on her [blog](#).

DESIRE

Desire leads to suffering. Trying to do anything is just asking for trouble, especially if you tell anyone about it first. It's better just to plug away and surprise people with good results when they come along.

Remember, the arrow that isn't aimed never misses.

If you fail to accomplish your goals, you may end up miserable, and what's the point of that? Isn't life hard enough already? Why risk being held accountable for what you set out to do when you're not in control?

Life is much easier when no one calls you on the carpet just because something didn't get "completely" finished. After all, when you work on a report all week, is it your fault if it's Friday already? Why did you think you could get it done so quickly? All that other stuff that came up isn't your fault; you worked on it all week. Didn't she hear you? And why tell anyone that you'll have it done Monday? That's just asking to have to work on the weekend.

And this weekend, I know that you want to think about cleaning out the basement; I mean, there are boxes in there from your last move. You've got to work on that. Why not get a pad of paper out and think about what you will do with what's in the boxes? And then you can check the web and see whether you can find a good place to donate whatever you might not need. And you should probably check on your friends. What's new on Facebook?

Didn't you have a good idea for a blog post, too? Where was that? Look through your tweets to find the thing that caught your eye; well, you might as well look over what's new. After all, there might be something better than that other idea anyhow.

Okay, that's done. Logging into WordPress, let's update the plugins, clear out the spam comments, and see whether people are still looking at the one review you posted. Yep. I really should write more of those. Nuts! One more thing to do.

What was that, honey? Dinner? Okay. Grumble, grumble. I've got so much to do. When am I ever going to get any time to work on all this?

Rick Colosimo is a lawyer who writes about [personal productivity](#) and [unified performance management](#).

Don't LOOK at me: SEE me!

There's fear and loathing, and there's wimpy whining, which is also a friend of failure. Examples from the other side of the mirror, with my responses included:

1. How can you operate an effective business? You're in your seventies. Shouldn't you be playing bridge or canasta? *Perhaps in 10 years or so. Perhaps not.*
2. How dare you run a business, go to meetings, speak, write, and facilitate when you're not only old, but you have wrinkles everywhere? Well, just about everywhere. *It's easy when you consider the alternative: still being wrinkled, but bored, broke, and brain-dead.*
3. The nerve! You have a severe hearing loss, and you think you can run a successful business? *Dumb, dumb, dumb. My mind is fine, it's just my ears that give me problems, which I consider a challenge, not an affliction. I'm smart, smart, smart.*
4. You have some dyslexia. How arrogant to think you can edit articles, press releases, and websites. *Wrong. Work, work, work. Twice as hard.*
5. You're a widow. How can you operate a business by yourself? Shouldn't you be out scouting for a nice husband who needs someone to cook for him? And clean. *That's okay. I'll leave him for someone who's seeking a husband. I would certainly cook and clean for someone, but I am so not looking.*
6. How can you create/develop websites that cater to young people? You're a dinosaur. *Excuse me, but dinosaurs rock.*
7. At your age, you should have cataracts. *I did have cataracts. Removed. I see very well.*
8. You're going to the ZOO? To take pictures? Act your age. *Working on that, but my enthusiasm and excitement about life (and God, people, animals, flowers, Starbuck's, and Patrick O'Brian's writing) keep getting in the way.*

Judy Vorfeld, Peoria AZ Editing, Writing, Web Development, Photography

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EXPECTATIONS

The road to failure is rocky. Expectations can smooth it right out. Expectations can, in fact, transcend time and space and get you to failure at the speed of thought.

Unlike time and most spatial movements, expectations are bi-directional. They can help you fail, coming and going.

First, let's follow the arrows out, from your head to the world around you.

Does anyone, or anything, live up to the dreams you've built in your head?

Of course not. Fail. Big hard fail, instantly. (Doesn't that feel great?)

All righty then; let's conquer the incoming arrows: the expectations others have for you.

Despite being entirely unreasonable and completely out of tune with the true you, they have the ability to possess your reason and turn you into a marionette, dancing to whatever tune the world plays (or, making you look and feel even more foolish, no tune at all).

Be what the world expects instead of what you really are.

Big fail. This fails so big and fast that it's happened before the world even knows it has expectations.

Of course, they don't; not really. It's just you.

Looking for an excuse to fail.

Say it out loud: "I will be what I am, instead of what the world expects."

Win.

*Born too late to be a pirate or a cowboy, Joel D Canfield writes books and speaks in front of groups large and small to help new entrepreneurs avoid the broken thinking so common in business. He and his Best Beloved operate **Chief Virtual Officer** to help virtual workers and potential clients find each other and fall in love.*

KNOWFEAR

Every year I set new resolutions.
New aspirations.
New to-do lists.

And every year, the same fears, insecurities, and practicalities hold me back.

“Not me ... (I lack the skills and resources.)”

“Not now ... (I have too much going on right now.)”

“Not here ... (Once I’m in the right place in my life, I’ll definitely do this.)”

ENOUGH. NO FEAR: 10 Ways to Conquer Fear and Loathing

There is power in self-awareness. Take the time to discover what real value you provide, to whom, and in what fashion.

There is power in self-development. To provide value to others, you have to increase your value. Read at least one book a month. Jot down the best ideas in a journal. Teach what you’ve learned to others.

There is power in goal-setting. Do write down a few big goals. But then break each up into consumable chunks, by month. And by week.

There is power in milestones. Don’t try to eat the elephant all at once.

There is power in structure. Undertake a 30-day challenge or 12. The short-term goals will move you along.

There is power in numbers. Have accountability buddies—people pursuing similar goals, and/or responsible people that care about your success. They will keep you honest. Like a workout buddy.

There is power in writing. None of this is any good if you don’t outwardly express your growth and value.

There is power in inspiration. Find quotes, authors, audio, video, and mentors to keep you inspired when you are down.

There is power in persistence. Don’t change your goals when things get hard. Change tactics, but keep your goals the same.

There is power in failure. “Failure to fail”, or fear of failure, causes action paralysis. Embrace failure.

Failure = experience. Experience = real value. Therefore, failure = real value.

Don’t take your failures personally.

You will always be better than you think you are.

BOLAJI OYEJIDE is a self-development fiction writer.

He tells stories about [escaping the rat race](#), and finding your true calling.

LOVE COURAGEOUSLY

Love is such a weird word. We only have some people we're supposed to love, and we definitely can't love anybody else.

Once you're past, oh, the age of 8 or so, randomly loving people is absolutely forbidden. When you're dating, you can't love anybody "that way" but you can have friends you're close to. When you get into a permanent relationship you *definitely* can't love anybody "that way" but you also begin to tread lightly when your friends are on the scene.

We have Rules about these things! Too much camaraderie, too much time spent with people outside of the sanctioned love circle and you get In Trouble. Jealousy. Don't talk too much about this with that person. Don't get too close.

Fear and loathing of our fellow human beings.

This year, try something really, really brave. Something braver than quitting your job or saving the environment. Gather up all your courage and love people. And by "people" I don't just mean your significant other and your kids and maybe, maybe your mother-in-law. "People," by default, means bipedal mammals with big brains and loud mouths who might not want you to love them.

No seriously – try it. You can't do it right off, I bet you anything. You'll find it takes too much energy, it's too scary. Heck, you'd jump out of an aeroplane before you open up your tender little self to some stranger who might not like you.

Maybe you just don't have the guts to love people that aren't safe to love. Don't make me come back next year and call you a coward.

In memoriam, PGV 1953-2009

Jenn Taylor [ponders and pontificates](#) about management, leadership, and actions that encourage sustainable change.

REFLECTION

Do you remember when you were a child?

There were those fancy new toys, these pair of stylish, ultra-expensive designer jeans; I am sure there was something which you wanted.

You wanted them so badly; you were willing to do almost anything to get them.

“Anything,” including making a deal with the devil.

You were focused on what you wanted.

Now, a couple of years later—decades in some cases—you are sitting in your comfy couch; all the passion and energy you had once seems to be gone.

What has happened to you?

Fear and desperation has taken control of your life. You have become very much afraid of failing, of wasting your effort, of being embarrassed.

I have good news for you.

Get up, do something. There is no way you could possibly mess up your future more than if you remained passive and did nothing.

Actually you will find out very soon that it’s fun to get going again. And you will achieve more than you ever have dreamed of.

Now imagine you are already there.

How does it feel?

You still have some fire burning inside you, haven’t you?

Come back into reality (and turn off that TV in case you still have one.) Success as defined by yourself can be yours again.

*Mr. John W. Furst, the founder of Fcon21.biz - Email And Internet Marketing says:
“My mission goes far beyond making my clients more profitable, I want them to become market leaders.”*

RESISTANCE

Covers pulled over head, but dawn screams its relentless cry of “new day, new day!”
Must resist.

Coffee’s hot and good, feeling a mite revived. Not enough to venture out, though.
What’s the point?

Thought, unbidden, pops into head: say, it’s actually a way that I could approach old
problems with a new tack. NO! Old grooves are comfortable, easy. MUST KILL IDEA!

Carrying out the trash, neighbor greets me with wide grin. No eye contact, no, must
look away—too late! She’s enthusiastic about something; I can’t quite grasp it and beg
off with a weak smile, but back inside, I realize I feel a bit chipper. Maybe I’m getting an
infection?

The phone! Shouldn’t answer, no, always a trap. Ah, just this once, I can always hang
up. Old friend and partner from business crash long ago. Enthused, bubbly even.
New venture, am I in? No, can’t, prior commitments, no start-up money, some health
problems, might be werewolves in the pantry.

Ears pop. What’s he saying? What’s he saying? Adjust schedule to me? Open-ended
commitment? Health plan with no deductible? Silver stakes for werewolves? Damn.

I hear myself saying “Yes!” Dear God. Have to go back under the covers. Maybe he’ll
forget he called ...

Tom Bentley is a crackpot who spews nonsense (albeit of the well-edited kind) from his outpost at:

[The Write Word](#)

RESPONSIBILITY

When I was very young, my father offered me the best advice I've ever gotten:

"The world is a very large place, and no matter how good you are, there will always be someone out there better than you. Even if you're the best in the world right now, there's no guarantee you'll still be the best in the world tomorrow. You have to ask yourself, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to just give up because somebody might be better than you? Or are you going to work as hard as you can anyway?"

Fear and Loathing live inside us when we give up.

"There's nothing I can do to save the environment,
I didn't cause the problem and I can't fix it.
There's nothing I could possibly do to spend more time with my kids,
I have to work for a living."

We comfort ourselves with language that places our misery firmly outside of our control—it lets us give up more easily. What would happen if you learned to ask yourself, "What could I do to change this?"

Try ferreting out the "can't" and "never could" in your thoughts and replacing them with "can" and "must." When you take responsibility for an action, your thinking changes. You stop focusing so much on what you can't do, and you begin to get a little creative in how you can do something.

Pick one thing this year that you can't do. Ignore all the reasons you can't, and start writing down how you could do it, no matter how crazy. Don't be afraid to be silly.

Approach the world armed with your "cans" in 2010! You'll be amazed at the difference.

*Jenn Taylor **ponders and pontificates** about management, leadership, and actions that encourage sustainable change.*

THE RISK OF NOT SUCKING

There's a tape that plays in my head when I get close to breaking free of everything that holds me back. It goes something like this:

"You suck. Nothing you do is good enough."

I think there's more to it, but I don't hear the rest. I suck, and nothing I do is good enough. That is the mantra that bubbles up from my primordial insecurities.

Thing is, I have no evidence to support this mantra. Sure, my basement is full of unfinished projects, my computer littered with unfinished writing, several city dumps filled with unfinished works of art, but unfinished does not equate to sucking. Rather, unfinished is a defense mechanism to avoid final judgment. And that final judgment would be "sucks," of course.

But sucking is a self-imposed judgment that comes from some seminal moment in my far-distant past when I convinced myself that something I did wasn't good enough. I then let that injury become the truth about myself.

Again, I don't have any evidence to support "sucks." I have a financially rewarding job that provides enough to pay the bills. My family's material needs are met. My wife and kids love me. I have friends.

So, why bother doing anything different? I have a job, right? My family has food and shelter, right? I experience love on a daily basis, right? What's to change? Who cares that I only write as a hobby, that I don't create artistically, that I don't derive profound spiritual fulfillment from my work? Why upset the balance? Why endanger the security that comes from employment with a Fortune 100 company (that sources across the ocean, incidentally)?

Don't take the risk. You may become a more powerful you in the process.

Ricardo Gonzalez is an IT leader with the pen of a poet, the soul of an artist, and a penchant for [philosophizing](#) in his basement.

THE VISCERAL

Just before my Dad died, he gave me some advice. It was simple:

“Concentrate on the visceral.”

Today we can Google the answer for anything. We can look up the symptoms for what ails us, or learn how to fix a combustible engine. Sometimes we forget to do a “gut check.”

Music is the best example of where the visceral matters most. Miles Davis said: “Don’t play what’s there, play what’s not there.” Debussy said: “Music is the space between the notes.”

The finest *musicians*, the finest *authors* and the most brilliant *painters* had an exceptional recognition for their visceral. For what just felt right. Not what was deemed right by the populace.

The Beatles—always the exception—wrote masterpiece after masterpiece. Every now and then, a musicologist tries to discern their musical catalog into a theoretical study. They use words like Aeolian cadences and pan-diatonic clusters.

John Lennon, consequently, when told about his use of *Aeolian cadences*, thought they were some type of “exotic bird.” He also thought that “And Your Bird Can Sing” was “another of my throwaways ... fancy paper around an empty box.”

Intellectual mastery and the visceral often collide in decision-making when we create. One can understand Phrygian modes and still play with simplicity. One can also study, understand and explain the lunar phases, and also explain to a child why the sky is blue.

It was my Dad who introduced me to music, The Beatles and the guitar. He also encouraged me to be intellectually curious. But not without regard with what felt right.

It’s not so much when the wires cross that the soul gets lost, but more about when we go too far toward the intellectual side, and entirely forget that we are human, that what we choose, decide or create gets mucked up.

Concentrate on the visceral.

Alex Beattie is the “New Marketing” creator for duPont Publishing, Inc., and the author/designer and editor of the [duPont REGISTRY Luxury Marketing Blog](#)

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