

INVISIBLE HEROES

133 Stories
You Were Never Told

Roy H. Williams

Preface

Heroes are dangerous things. Bigger than life, highly exaggerated and always positioned in the most favorable light, a hero is a beautiful lie.

We have historic heroes, folk heroes and comic book heroes. We have heroes in books and songs and movies and sport. We have heroes of morality, leadership, kindness and excellence. And nothing is so devastating to our sense of wellbeing as a badly fallen hero. Yes, heroes are dangerous to have.

The only thing more dangerous is not to have them.

Heroes raise the bar we jump and hold high the standards we live by. They are tattoos on our psyche, the embodiment of all we're striving to be.

We create our heroes from our hopes and dreams. And then they create us in their own image.

This book doesn't profile the famous athletes, entertainers and political leaders whose stories you know by heart, but heroes whose tales were never told, whose exploits drifted like fog into the darkness of obscurity, whose deeds bounced like erasers off the chalkboard of history when the teacher's back was turned.

We dedicate these pages to the Invisible Heroes - many of whom were invisible only because of the color of their skin - others, because their fame loomed so large in our minds that we could not see beyond it.

America remembers John Steinbeck only as the Nobel Prize-winning novelist of *Grapes of Wrath*, *Cannery Row*, *East of Eden*, and *Tortilla Flat*. But within these pages you'll find the powerful letter he sent to just one man; a letter far more revealing than any book he ever wrote. You'll discover an obscure Welsh monk who inspired foggy, dull England to rise up and take over the world. You'll learn the truth about the hero of the first Thanksgiving. You'll shed a tear for the world's loneliest man. And sprinkled among these immortals you'll find a few personal heroes of my own - men and women whose influence on my life was more than they ever knew.

We bring these heroes into the worldwide spotlight to receive the ovations they deserve. But we don't pretend it makes up for the silence they endured.

Are you ready to meet the Invisible Heroes?

Roy H. Williams

New York Times and *Wall Street Journal* best-selling author

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On the Horizon

“There is a holy mistaken zeal in politics as well as in religion.”

- *The Letters of Junius*, 1769 - 1771

“The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to bed in the streets, and to steal bread.”

- Anatole France, 1844 – 1924

“Men who believe themselves to be good, who do not search their own souls, often commit the worst atrocities. A man who sees himself as evil will restrain himself. It is only when we do evil in the belief that we do good that we pursue it wholeheartedly.”- David Farland, 2001

If History repeats itself, as it often does, Western Society is in danger of becoming self-righteous, sanctimonious and insufferably judgmental. You don't want to see this happen. Neither do I.

My hope is that you and I - with open eyes and soft words - might be able to mitigate this fast-coming trend.

I recently completed a study of societal trends that have repeated themselves for the past 3,000 years. *Pendulum*, the book that resulted from this study, was released a few months ago.

The basic premise of *Pendulum* theory:

We see the world through the lens of an entirely different set of values every 40 years. We become a different people.

We are pulled 20 years up from the tipping point to the zenith of a “We” (1923 to 1943.)

We swing 20 years down to the next tipping point (1963.) Tipping points are interesting times.

We are pulled 20 years up to the zenith of a “Me” (1963 to 1983.)

We swing 20 years down to the next tipping point (2003.)

Eighty years is a complete cycle but there are only 40 years between the extremes. (The 1943 zenith of “We” to 1983 zenith of “Me.”)

We're nearly halfway up to the next zenith of "We" (2023.) 2011 is 1931 all over again. But instead of being gaga over a thing called "radio" we're gaga over this thing called "online."

A new set of values every 40 years...

On the other side are the values of "Me," the individual, unique and special and possessing unlimited potential.

On one side are the values of "We," the team, the tribe, the group working together, staying connected.

“We”

1. ...**demands** conformity for the common good.
2. ...**applauds** personal responsibility.
3. ...**believes** a million men are wiser than one man, “Two heads are better than one.”
4. ...**wants** to create a better world.
5. ...**is about** small actions.
6. ...**desires** to be a productive member of the team. “I came, I saw, I concurred.”
7. ...**admires** individual humility and is attracted to thoughtful persons.
8. ...**leadership is**, “This is the problem as I see it. Please consider the things I am telling you and perhaps we can solve this problem together.”
9. ...**strengthens** a society’s sense of purpose as it considers all its problems.

“Me”

1. ...**demands** freedom of expression.
2. ...**applauds** personal liberty.
3. ...**believes** one man is wiser than a million men, “A camel is a racehorse designed by a committee.”
4. ...**wants** to achieve a better life.
5. ...**is about** big dreams.
6. ...**desires** to be Number One. “I came, I saw, I conquered.”
7. ...**admires** individual confidence and is attracted to decisive persons.
8. ...**leadership is**, “Look at me. Admire me. Emulate me if you can.”
9. ...**strengthens** a society’s sense of identity as it elevates attractive heroes.

“Me” and “We” are equal-but-opposite attractions that pull our perspective one way, then the other. Western society swings like a pendulum from one set of values to the other every 40 years with the regularity of an old and reliable grandfather clock.

“Me” and “We” values are equally good, but we always take a good thing too far.

If history is to be our guide, the next 20 years will be when we move from our agreement of mutual brokenness, “I’m Not Okay – You’re Not Okay,” to embrace a self-righteous indignation, “I’m Okay – You’re Not Okay.” Sanctimonious vigilante-ism will become popular as indignant leaders demonize their enemies and rally their followers by appealing to their inborn sense of rightness and social obligation, “Let’s clean this place up and to hell with compromise. **They** are entirely wrong and **we** are entirely right. They are stupid. We are wise. They are evil. We are good.”

The last time we went through this, America formed a committee in Congress called the **House Un-American Activities Committee** (1938) which later watched with glee while Senator Joseph McCarthy destroyed countless careers by recklessly branding his enemies as “Communists” and creating the infamous blacklists.

This sounds a bit far-fetched, doesn’t it? I know it does. I’m writing because I want you to be able to look back and recall how absurd this all sounded when I first told you what was on the horizon if history can be trusted.

Our best and highest hope to avoid the dark side of the zenith of a “We” is to remember and value our heroes, those valuable icons of the “Me.” To that end, I’ve gathered 133 stories of heroes you’ve probably never heard.

Each of these “everyman” heroes is presented in his or her most favorable light. You’ll even find a few wicked people you previously assumed had no “good” in them at all.

Yes, some of these stories are about villains who made horrible, tragic mistakes. But my hope is that you will be able to open your heart and stretch your mind to embrace the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said, “*Every man is entitled to be valued by his best moment.*”

You are about to read a series of “best moments.”

Come. The future awaits us.

The Power of Labels

Even When They're Wrong

Christian Jürgensen Thomsen was a young man interested in archaeology so when the Danish government of 1816 needed someone to climb into the attic of Copenhagen’s Trinitatis Church and sort through the rubble that had collected there, Thomsen was their man.

Upon entering the attic, Thomsen reported random items in “dust and disorganized disarray, hidden away in chests and baskets, among bits of material and paper. It was total chaos.”

Sounds like my attic. Yours too, I'll bet.

The first thing young Christian Jürgensen Thomsen did was to organize the antiquities according to their material: stone in one pile, bronze in another, iron in a third. When the public was invited to an exhibition in that same church loft in 1819, this was the first time the false division of the past into three “ages” was ever used.

“So familiar has Thomsen’s tripartite division of the past into a Stone, a Bronze and an Iron age become, so complete the authority it has acquired, that we easily forget its comparatively recent vintage and attribute to it a degree of reality that it scarcely has a right to.” – Historian Robert Ferguson

Ferguson goes on to say “Stone Age,” “Bronze Age” and “Iron Age” are false labels adopted by people looking for categories where none exist.

Likewise, I believe “Baby Boomer,” “Gen-Xer” and “Millennial” to be false labels. People are not imprinted at birth with values they carry throughout their lives.

Search the phrase “Attributes of Baby Boomers” and you’ll read some truly idiotic assertions that have come to be widely believed, such as, “People born between 1946 and 1955 are experimental, value individualism and are free spirited. People born between 1956 and 1964 are less optimistic, distrust the government and are generally cynical.”
- Wikipedia

Stone, bronze and iron refer not to time periods but to materials. Likewise, Baby Boomer, Gen-X and Millennial refer not to people born during a certain window of years but to systems of values that were popular for a while in our society.

New systems of values are first adopted by the youth. Later, when those values become mainstream and are embraced by the rest of society, the values continue to be associated with the birth cohorts that first embraced them.

In truth, the pendulum of Western society swings in a very predictable 40-year arc and all of us are carried along with it. When our societal pendulum is moving toward **individuality and self-expression** we live in a “Me generation.” When we’re swinging away from these virtues and begin **working together for the common good**, we live in a “We generation.” The move from one extreme to the other takes 40 years.

We’ve recently seen our pendulum reach the bottom of its arc (2003) as we shifted from “Me” back to “We.”

In the next segment I’ll tell you what you can expect from the coming decade.

What to Expect 2013-2023

You can't have insiders unless you have outsiders.

"Leaving things out" is an important tool of self-definition, whether you're talking about a product, a company or a life. But *definition through exclusion* is about to be taken too far. John Steinbeck spoke of a similar time when he wrote, "a teetotaler is not content not to drink—he must stop all the drinking in the world; a vegetarian among us would outlaw the eating of meat."

I'm not saying that's how it ought to be. I'm saying that's how it's going to be. And I have 3,000 years of history to back me up.

We're about to enter the final 10 years in the upswing of a "We" cycle, an event that happens only once every 80 years. It is a time of high polarization, Us versus Them. "Working together for the common good" produces, over time, a gang mentality. The Salem witch trials, Robespierre's reign of terror in France, the American Civil War and the rise of Adolph Hitler are just a few of the angry, Us versus Them events that have occurred within 10 years of the zenith of a "We."

Joan Smith, a reporter in Britain for *The Independent* wrote in 2011, "The red poppy has been a symbol of remembrance since shortly after the First World War... a means of honoring the fallen and raising money for veterans and their families... This year, the pressure to wear one has been greater than ever... This year, coercion of reluctant red-poppy wearers has been joined by an outbreak of sheer nastiness towards the few who wear white ones."

Comedian Chris Rock makes this point more sharply in a Youtube video: "When the war started, it was great, man. It brought out a lot of patriotism. Patriotism is beautiful, man. But slowly but surely, the patriotism turned into hate-riotism."

David Farland warned us, I believe, very presciently, "Men who believe themselves to be good, who do not search their own souls, often commit the worst atrocities. A man who sees himself as evil will restrain himself. It is only when we do evil in the belief that we do good that we pursue it wholeheartedly."

"Choose who to lose" works well in advertising and marketing. Not so well in life.

1. The Value of Heroes

The saying, "The sun never sets on the British Empire" was true as recently as 1937 when tiny England did, in fact, still have possessions in each of the world's 24 time zones. It's widely known

that the British explored, conquered and ruled much of the world for a number of years, but what isn't as widely known is what made them believe they could do it.

For the first 1000 years after Christ, Greece and Rome were the only nations telling stories of heroes and champions. England was just a dreary little island of rejects, castoffs, barbarians and losers. So who inspired tiny, foggy England to rise up and take over the world?

Hoping to instill in his countrymen a sense of pride, a simple Welsh monk named Geoffrey assembled a complete history of England that gave his people a grand and glorious pedigree. Published in 1136, Geoffrey's "History of the Kings of Britain," was a detailed, written account of the deeds of the English people for each of the 17 centuries prior to 689 AD... and not a single word of it was true. Yet in creating Merlin, Guinevere, Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table from the fabric of imagination, Geoffrey of Monmouth convinced a sad little island of rejects, castoffs, barbarians and losers to see themselves as a just and magnificent nation.

And not long after they began to see themselves that way in their minds, they began seeing themselves that way in the mirror.

Most people assume that legends, myths and stories of heroes are simply the byproducts of great civilizations, but I'm convinced that they are the cause of them. Throughout history, the mightiest civilizations have been the ones with stories of heroes; larger-than-life role models that inspired ordinary citizens to rise up and do amazing things.

It's no secret that people will usually do in reality what they have seen themselves do in their minds.

In your mind, what do you see yourself doing?

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"Heroes are created by popular demand, sometimes out of the scantiest materials." Gerald W. Johnson

Did you, like most people, think that Thomas Malory's LeMorte D'Arthur was the origin of Arthurian legend? Nope, Malory's work, published in 1485, was based on Geoffrey's "history" which had been published and widely circulated 349 years earlier.

2. Johnny and Sam

Mason, New Hampshire. Summer, 1788. Thirteen year old Johnny Chapman meets young Sam Wilson while visiting his cousin Betsey at her family's farm. Sam and Betsey later marry and move to Troy, New York, where they launch a meat packing business.

After Sam and Betsey's wedding, Johnny heads west until he comes to a river about nine miles below Steubenville, Ohio. Men describe him as "small, wiry and restless, with hollow cheeks in a face bronzed by wind and sun and with piercingly brilliant, dark eyes that can surely read the thoughts in a man's soul." He

sleeps outdoors, never wearing shoes or carrying weapons. His clothing is a coarse, coffee sack with a hole cut in the center for his head, and his only possession is the tin cooking pot he wears like a hat.

For more than 50 years, when settlers arrive to settle a new area, they find Chapman already there nursing a small orchard of young apple seedlings. But the man who will be known as Johnny Appleseed doesn't wander the Midwest giving away apple seeds and seedlings. He is a businessman. In Boston, the price of a seedling apple tree is 6 or 7 cents, which is what Johnny charges for his trees out in the wilderness, even though the settlers would gladly pay a great deal more. Throughout his life, Johnny serves his fellow man by preparing apple tree nurseries along the banks of rivers and streams, staying just ahead of the settlers as they move ever westward.

Years pass and Johnny becomes accidentally rich. The wilderness plots on which he planted apple seedlings now mark the center of town after town. He happily sells the land, but uses the money for charity rather than for his own personal comfort. His amazing generosity, startling endurance and personal faith in God inspires and changes a fledgling nation during her most formative years. His name continues to live in legend nearly a century and a half after his passing.

But what of Sam and Betsey?

During the War of 1812, while Johnny is planting apple trees across Ohio and Indiana, Sam and Betsey are supplying the American army with beef in Troy, New York. America is not often referred to as the "United States" during these years, so when Sam marks barrels of army meat with a big "U.S.," not everyone is sure what it means. When a federal inspector asks a watchman why "U.S." is marked on the barrels, the watchman makes a guess, "I think it means Uncle Sam."

Forty years later, **The New York Lantern** publishes the first drawing of "Uncle Sam," the invisible benefactor who has become every soldier's best friend. On September 15, 1961, the 87th Congress of the United States adopts the following Resolution: "*Resolved by the Senate with the House of Representatives concurring, the Congress salutes "Uncle Sam" Wilson of Troy, New York, as the progenitor of America's national symbol of "Uncle Sam."*

Johnny Appleseed and Uncle Sam. Just a couple of kids who met one summer on a farm outside Mason, New Hampshire. Just a couple of kids like you and me.

3. The Real Ichabod Crane

"He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield."

When Washington Irving penned The Legend of Sleepy Hollow in 1819 his inspiration for the character of Ichabod Crane might easily have been the gangly and sensitive Chris Andersen, an awkward fourteen year-old with a long nose and close-set eyes whose father had died three years earlier. His mother, a washerwoman, was uneducated and superstitious. His half-sister worked as a prostitute.

Tormented by the other young men because of his slender build and effeminate interests, Chris was once stripped of his clothes by a gang of boys who suspected him of being a girl. Shortly after this incident, Chris left his job as a factory worker and tried to use his beautiful soprano voice to launch a career in singing. After 3 years of bitter disappointment Chris finally did appear briefly on stage but had to leave it when his voice began to change. Then one fateful day an acquaintance referred to Chris as “a poet” and the comment hit him like a bolt of lightning; “It went through me, body and soul, and tears filled my eyes. I knew that, from this very moment, my mind was awake to writing.”

Trapped in a world in which he felt he did not belong, Chris wrote a story about a mermaid in the same predicament. Recalling the incident when the other boys stripped him of his clothes, Chris wrote about an emperor who was duped into walking down the street in the nude. And after he began to achieve some acclaim as a writer, Chris wrote the story of an awkward and misfit little duckling who grew up to discover that he wasn't a duck at all, but a beautiful swan.

Today we refer to these stories as The Little Mermaid, The Emperor's New Clothes and The Ugly Little Duckling. But we no longer call the awkward little duckling “Chris,” but by his full and proper name: Hans Christian Andersen.

4. Margaret, Mabel and Jimmy

Jimmy was an abandoned baby. Mabel, a widow deep in poverty with two hungry children of her own. Washing other people's laundry ten hours a day, Mabel earns barely enough money to keep them fed. To keep a roof over their heads, she works for a real estate man who moves her and the children from shack to shack to “*clean them up and make them salable.*” But poor though she is, Mabel can't watch a baby go unloved, so she makes room in her home and her heart for Jimmy.

Throughout his childhood, Jimmy will wear old, second-hand clothes because that's the best that Mabel can do. His shoelaces will be broken and knotted. He'll never own a pair of skates, a bicycle, a baseball glove or a toy of any kind. But when his little town opens a public library, he and a girl named Margaret Mead will be the first in line to receive library cards. One day, as the pair are searching for books they've not yet read, the librarian says, “*Goodness, Margaret and Jimmy, I believe you've read all the children's books we have! If you wish, you can start on the other shelves.*”

Margaret Mead will grow up to author 20 books and serve as president of a number of important scientific associations, including the American Anthropological Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She will receive 28 honorary doctorate degrees from

America's leading universities and in 1978, be given the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

As an adolescent, Jimmy hitchhikes his way from Pennsylvania to Florida and back again with only 35 cents in his pocket. By the time he graduates from high school, he will have visited all but 3 of the 48 contiguous states. In the Navy, Jim rises to the rank of lieutenant commander, serving on some 49 different islands in the South Pacific during World War II. Each night, he writes his thoughts and impressions in a journal.

“Sitting there in the darkness, illuminated only by the flickering lamplight, I visualized the aviation scenes in which I had participated, the landing beaches I'd seen, the remote outposts, the exquisite islands with bending palms, and especially the valiant people I'd known: the French planters, the Australian coast watchers, the Navy nurses, the Tonkinese laborers, the ordinary sailors and soldiers who were doing the work, and the primitive natives to whose jungle fastnesses I had traveled.”

The book that will emerge from Jim's journal will be published as *Tales of the South Pacific* and win the Pulitzer Prize in 1948. And by the time he's done, James Michener will have written more than 40 books that will collectively sell more than 100 million copies. He will be granted more than 30 honorary doctorates in five fields and receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977. His cash donations to public libraries and universities will exceed 117 million dollars.

It seems a child can learn a lot by just reading.

5. Eisuke's Little Girl

Eisuke had a university degree in economics and another in mathematics, but his true love was his music. His wife, Isoko, was the granddaughter of Zenjiro Yasuda, the founder of the Yasuda Bank and one of the world's richest men. Zenjiro Yasuda had amassed a personal fortune of more than one billion dollars before his death. The Yasuda family was not happy when Isoko fell in love with a musician.

Eisuke's little girl was born on her grandfather's palatial estate overlooking Tokyo, where 30 servants made sure that everything was perfect. The emperor's compound was located nearby.

When Eisuke's little girl was 4, her brother Keisuke was born. That was the year Japan invaded China and anti-Japanese sentiment began to escalate in the US. When Eisuke's little girl was 8, her country bombed Pearl Harbor and anti-Japanese sentiment peaked at an all-time high. When Eisuke's little girl was 12, they were driven from their home by an all-night air raid that killed 83,000 citizens of Tokyo. The poor villagers in the countryside did not welcome the children with open arms. Eisuke's little girl often begged door-to-door for food for her brother. She became his protector and strength.

“When I saw my younger brother getting weaker and weaker from hunger every day, I thought I must do something to gain his strength back. I asked him, ‘What would you like to eat?’ He said, ‘Ice cream.’ So I

said, 'Imagine there is a lot of ice cream in a pail. Have as much as you want!' He got excited and looked so happy. We played this imaginary game every day and managed to survive through those difficult times from hunger."

Not many years after the war was over, Eisuke's little girl wrote a series of poems that had the feel of traditional Japanese Haikus. They were self-published in a little book called **Grapefruit**.

BODY PIECE - 1961 Summer

Stand in the evening light until you
become transparent or until you fall
asleep.

CLOUD PIECE - 1963 Spring

Imagine the clouds dripping.
Dig a hole in your garden to
put them in.

Eisuke's little girl gave a copy of **Grapefruit** to a thoughtful man she met in London in 1966. He was a musician like her father and he needed a protector like her brother. The man fell in love with her book. Later he wrote a song about it.

*"Well actually that should be credited as a Lennon/Ono song, a lot of it - the lyric, the concept - came from Yoko, but those days I was a bit more selfish, a bit more macho and I sort of omitted to mention her contribution, but it was right out of 'Grapefruit', her book. There's a whole pile of pieces about imagine this and that and I have given her credit now long overdue." - John Lennon, in an interview two days before his death, about his biggest hit, **Imagine**.*

Eisuke's little girl worked so hard at sheltering the thoughtful man from the demands of a too-much world that people began to call her the Dragon Lady.

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"A sunset can go on for days. You can eat up all the clouds in the sky. You can assemble a painting with a person in the North Pole over a phone, like playing chess. This painting method derives from as far back as the time of the Second World War when we had no food to eat, and my brother and I exchanged menus in the air."- *Yoko Ono*

6. Molly Welsh and Banna Ka

Molly Welsh was an English peasant girl accused of stealing milk in the late 1600s. The punishment for milk-theft in those days was death. Fortunately for Molly and for America, her sentence was commuted to banishment to “the colonies.”

After serving 7 years as an indentured servant, Molly bought a small farm outside Baltimore and married an African slave named Banna Ka. In those days, the law dictated that if a child’s mother was a slave, then the child would be a slave. But if the mother was a free woman, then the child would be free as well. Thus, the daughter of Molly and Banna Ka, ‘Mary Bannaky’, was free, as were all her children.

In due time, Mary Bannaky married a slave named Robert, who took Mary’s last name in marriage since he had none of his own. Their son Benjamin ‘Banneker’, was born November 9, 1731. He was taught to read and write by his English grandmother, Molly Welsh, the wife of Banna Ka.

When he was 22, Benjamin borrowed a pocket watch from a wealthy neighbor, studied it, then crafted a clock from local hardwoods which kept accurate time for nearly 50 years. This astounding feat only added to his near-legendary reputation for making and solving mathematical puzzles:

“Divide 60 into four such parts that the first being increased by 4, the second decreased by 4, the third multiplied by 4, the fourth part divided by 4, that the sum, the difference, the product and the quotient shall be one and the same number.” – Benjamin Banneker

In later years a neighbor, George Ellicot, lent him some astronomy books and instruments when Benjamin was 57 years old. With no one to instruct him, “... and only a few semesters of elementary schooling in his childhood, Banneker taught himself the algebra, geometry, logarithms, trigonometry, and astronomy needed to become an astronomer. He also learned on his own how to use a compass, sector, and other instruments to make astronomical predictions, including that of eclipses.”

In 1789, Banneker successfully forecast a solar eclipse well in advance of the celestial event, contradicting the predictions of better-known astronomers.

In 1791, when Benjamin was 60, a survey was commissioned for what was known as the Federal Territory. One of the surveyors, Andrew Ellicot, had heard of the genius of Banneker and hired him to be an assistant on the project. Benjamin was working on an astronomical almanac at the time, and was corresponding regularly with Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State. On August 19, 1791, Banneker sent a manuscript of his Almanac to Jefferson, who later wrote, “*I have a long letter from Banneker, which shows him to have had a mind of... stature.*” Jefferson promised Banneker that he would send his Almanac to Condorcet at the Académie des Sciences in Paris. A copy of Jefferson's letter to Condorcet is in the Library of Congress.

When he became too old to work on his farm, Banneker sold it to the Ellicot family on condition that he would be allowed to live in the farmhouse for the rest of his days. He spent his final years alone in the farmhouse carrying out the scientific experiments that filled many scientific journals.

On October 26, 1806, the day of Banneker's funeral, his farmhouse burnt to the ground - probably the work of jealous racists. Banneker’s laboratory, his journals, and the wooden clock he had made in his

younger days were reduced to ashes by the flames. Only one of Banneker's journals was outside the house at the time, and so survived. Also remaining were Banneker's six almanacs published between 1792 and 1797, which included information on medicines and medical treatment, accurately listed ocean tides, astronomical information and eclipses, all calculated by Banneker himself.

But perhaps the greatest legacy left to us by Benjamin Banneker are the plans he reproduced from memory after designer Pierre L'Enfant withdrew from the project of laying out the "Federal Territory." The city designed from Banneker's memory is known today as "Washington D.C."

Roy H. Williams

Here's one of Banneker's mathematical puzzles from his sole surviving journal:

A cooper and a vintner sat down for a talk,
Both being so groggy that neither could walk;
Says cooper to vintner, "I'm the first of my trade,
There's no kind of vessel but what I have made,
And of any shape, sir, just what you will,
And of any size, sir, from a tun to a gill."
"Then," says the vintner, "you're the man for me.
Make me a vessel, if we can agree,
The top and the bottom diameter define,
To bear that proportion as fifteen to nine,
Thirty-five inches are just what I crave,
No more and no less in the depth will I have;
Just thirty-nine gallons this vessel must hold,
Then I will reward you with silver or gold --
Give me your promise, my honest old friend."
"I'll make it tomorrow, that you may depend!"
So, the next day, the cooper, his work to discharge,
Soon made the new vessel, but made it too large;
He took out some staves, which made it too small,
And then cursed the vessel, the vintner, and all.
He beat on his breast, "By the powers" he swore
He never would work at his trade any more.
Now, my worthy friend, find out if you can,
The vessel's dimensions, and comfort the man!

7. B'B'B' Bennie and the Jets

I stand on an island in New York Harbor, quietly gazing upwards at the torch of Lady Liberty, when my ears catch the sound of a distant rumble. The noise quickly becomes a rushing roar and for an instant, the pale blue sky above the Lady's torch turns dark as six Navy jets pass over her in tight formation. It's the first time I've ever seen The Blue Angels. My thoughts turn immediately to Bennie.

Bennie is a printer who has taught his craft to several young people, then helped each one of them open their own little printing shop. Bennie remains a silent partner in each of the shops as he sells his young partners all their paper and printing supplies. Most people think Bennie is a printer, but in reality, Bennie is a salesman.

Bennie is such a good salesman, in fact, that he has been sent to make an impossible sale. His employers need money desperately, but no one is willing to loan it to them because everyone knows they are going under. Bennie's mission is to secure the funding that will allow them to survive, an amount totalling several million dollars, and Bennie has nothing to offer as collateral. But Bennie has a plan.

Bennie wrangles himself an invitation to a dinner party where movers and shakers will be gathered, but instead of smiling and handing his business card to each of the powerful men, Bennie slips into the room next door where all the men's wives have gathered. Bennie smiles and listens and asks perceptive questions and is soon quite a favorite among the ladies, so it comes as no surprise when he is invited to party after party. And each time it is the same: speak with the women, avoid the men.

One night, the ladies say, "Bennie, tell us about yourself. Tell us about where you are from." Soon they are spellbound as Bennie speaks from his heart about his employers and their lofty goals, hopes, dreams and beliefs. Within a few days, Bennie's employers have the money they need.

As the Blue Angels pass over Lady Liberty, my mind turns to Bennie because this is the statue that was sent as a gift to Bennie's employers by the nice people who loaned them the money back in 1777. Yes, it was during America's darkest hour that Benjamin Franklin arranged to borrow from France the money needed to continue the Revolutionary War. One hundred years later, the French congratulated Bennie's employers on their success with a little gift called The Statue of Liberty.

8. No Plan for Success

It was all a big mistake. A shipment of pocket watches arrived at the train station addressed to a jeweler in Redwood Falls. The startled jeweler told the young railway agent that he never ordered the watches and refused to pay for them. The young railway agent, Richard Sears, decided to purchase the shipment of watches himself.

Evidently there was something magical about that shipment. Whoever accepted those watches was destined and fated to become rich. Either that, or a lowly railway agent named Richard Sears saw opportunity where others saw only problems.

The following year, Richard Sears moved to Chicago and ran an ad in the *Chicago Daily News*. "WANTED: Watchmaker with reference who can furnish tools. State age, experience, and salary required. ADDRESS T39, Daily News." An Indiana lad, Alvah Roebuck, answered the ad, never suspecting it to be the luckiest day of his life. Sears made him a partner, and Sears, Roebuck and Co. was

born. Like the jeweler in Redwood Falls, however, Roebuck had little need for adventure and resigned from the company just a few years after responding to the classified ad.

Alvah Roebuck and the jeweler from Redwood Falls each had a plan for success, and the dreams of Richard Sears had no place in those plans. The jeweler was a jeweler. He didn't order any watches. Watches had no place in his plan. "Send the watches back." Roebuck was a watchmaker. His plan was to fix watches. Roebuck's plan had no place for a mail-order company, so he briskly stepped away. Richard Sears was a lowly railway agent who had no plan for watches, no plan for a direct-mail company, no plan for success at all. Richard Sears's only plan was to seek opportunities where others had found only problems. Sears would find a need, then fill it.

The cliff is high, but the view is beautiful. Will you walk near the edge with Richard Sears, or will you settle for a post card from the tourist shop? If you choose to get in line for the post card, buy a couple extra and send them to Alvah Roebuck and the jeweler in Redwood Falls. Write, "Having a great time, wish you were here," and sign it, "Richard Sears."

9. Right Where You Are

James Cramer dreams of managing a multimillion-dollar stock portfolio. He wants to be a force on Wall Street and speak with a voice of thunder.

James Cramer barely makes a living as a writer for a small newspaper.

Since he has zero real dollars to invest, James begins managing an imaginary stock portfolio. Soon he is spending all his free time studying the stock market and agonizing over his imaginary investments as though millions of real dollars were at stake. His focus and intensity are astounding. His friends ask, "*What's gotten into James?*"

James is bursting with new theories about stock trading. Since his newspaper bosses won't allow him to write about his bizarre ideas, he decides to simply start where he's at. So, like a dreamer, James Cramer begins leaving stock tips on his answering machine for whoever might happen to call his number.

Sometimes the calls are from telemarketers who want James to change his long distance service. Sometimes the calls are from strangers who have mistakenly dialed the wrong number. But mostly the calls are from friends who think James is tilting at windmills. "*Listen Don Quixote, I'm really sick of having to listen to your stupid stock-tip-of-the-day before I can leave you a message. Just cut it out, okay? No one is interested and even if we were, you know that none of us has any money. Hey, call me when you get in and we'll decide where to have dinner. But I don't want to hear about the stock market tonight, okay? And by the way, you're an idiot.*"

Martin Peretz wants James to write a book review for his magazine, **The New Republic**. He calls and gets the answering machine. Fascinated by the stock tip, Peretz decides to take

the advice that James has so generously left for “*whosoever will.*” Soon Peretz is a daily caller. One day he calls while James is at home. There’s an awkward silence while he waits for the recording to begin. When Peretz finally realizes that James is actually on the line, he says, “*Hi. My name is Martin Peretz and I’m convinced that your stock tips are way better than what I’m getting from my stockbroker. How would you like to manage a \$500,000 portfolio?*”

No, this is not a story that I invented for a movie script. James Cramer and Martin Peretz are both real people. Today, James Cramer is a hurricane on Wall Street where he manages a stock portfolio that exceeds two hundred million dollars. His website, www.TheStreet.com is visited by thousands of investors each day.

Maybe James Cramer’s friends were right. Only an idiot would do that much research just to leave a daily stock tip on an answering machine. Yes, any person who would do that would have to be a solid gold, totally focused, two hundred million-dollar idiot.

Gosh, I wish I were that big an idiot.

10. Wieners, Beans, and \$530 Million

Evan Chrapko and his brother, Shane, sold their two year-old internet business for more than half a billion dollars.

Internet. That’s the key word, right? Unless I miss my guess, right now you’re probably thinking, “So two guys made a lot of money on an internet startup. Big deal. Lots of internet techies cashed in for big bucks. My only problem is that I wasn’t an internet techie.”

Oddly enough, neither were Evan and Shane Chrapko. “Well, it takes money to make money, so Evan and Shane obviously came from a wealthy family, right?” No, Evan and Shane Chrapko were raised on the Chrapko family farm in rural Alberta, Canada. Their father, Victor, was unable to grasp the financial success of his sons. On the day that their multimillionaire status was announced, he said, “Before I see it in their bank account, I don’t believe it.”

But it is to this same man that the boys give all the credit for their success. Wearing a black knit shirt, faded jeans and a felt cowboy hat, Evan said, “Growing up on the farm together prepared us well for doing business together.” Nodding his head in agreement, Shane added, “Mom and Dad taught us the importance of being calm under pressure and seeing two sides to every issue.” During the years that they were developing their company, DocSpace, Evan and Shane slept at the office each night and lived on a diet of wieners and beans.

No, Evan and Shane Chrapko aren’t a couple of young internet technical geniuses. Evan brought into the business a degree in accounting and Shane contributed his years of experience as a river-rafting tour guide. People who know them best characterize their greatest assets as

being (1.) the deep trust they have in their friends and in each other, (2.) their passion for an idea, and (3.) their willingness to follow through on a plan, regardless of the barriers.

An interesting story, right? Let me tell you how it ends: Ten years from now, Evan and Shane will look back on their days of wieners and beans as being the happiest days of their lives. I guarantee this unconditionally. Their single biggest worry will be how to give their children the hardships that made them rich. Their second biggest worry will be the motives of all the people who want to be their friends.

Are you still in the wieners and beans stage of your life? If so, let me encourage you to celebrate each and every day. Few people ever see as much excitement, anticipation, risk and reward as you see each day, and there are no better friends in life than the ones who will eat wieners and beans with you.

Why not get 'em all together and tell 'em how much they mean to you? After they've had their laugh and ridiculed you for being a sloppy, sentimental fool, you can all sit around and feast a great feast upon the very finest wieners and beans.

Twenty-five years from now, it will be your fondest memory. This, too, I guarantee unconditionally.

11. New Kid

My mother and I pack our few possessions into boxes we have found behind the grocery store, then drive to the house we've rented in the poorest part of town. I stack the boxes on the kitchen floor, then go in search of the sweet fragrance that hangs like mist in the still summer air. Stepping into the backyard, I see that honeysuckle vines wrap a chicken-wire fence in a thick carpet of green leaves and yellow flowers. I stare at the honeysuckle and smile into the sunlight.

Across the fence an old woman is working in her vegetable garden, watching me in the way that old people sometimes do. After a few moments, she straightens her back and says, "*Climb over. I've got something to show you.*" I hop the fence where the honeysuckle is thinnest and follow her into a tiny garage where she points to a cardboard box. "*My son loved those books, but he's gone to college now. He said to give them to an eleven year old boy. Are you eleven?*" I nod that I surely am.

The box contains all the adventures of Tom Corbett, Space Cadet, and inside each cover is a name written in blue ink, "*Sammy Haggard.*" It's a signature that will forever be etched in my memory because Sammy Haggard made it possible for me to spend an entire summer traveling the solar system in a spaceship called Polaris, with a new friend named Tom Corbett.

When you're the new kid and you don't know anyone and your parents are getting a divorce, Jupiter is a pretty great place to be.

Thank you, Sammy Haggard. I'll always remember your name.

12. The Power of Encouragement

When I was nineteen, I spent every Saturday from 1 a.m. to 10 a.m. in the control room of a low-power Christian radio station on the AM dial in Oklahoma. Our Saturday program line-up was mostly local guys with a message in their heart and thirty dollars in their pocket. Dick Bailey was one of those guys.

Nine hours came to about twenty dollars a week after taxes, but Pennie and I needed the money, so every Friday I would hurry home after eleven hours in a welding shop, sleep about five hours, then drive forty minutes to the radio station, where I would change tapes for the next nine hours. Lunchtime saw me staggering home to fall into bed. All this for twenty dollars a week — but I got to meet Dick Bailey.

Old enough to be my granddad, Dick Bailey came to the studio each Saturday morning about 5:30 to do his radio show “live from the top of Inspiration Mountain.” He would always close the show by announcing where he was going to have breakfast, and he'd invite anyone listening to join him.

When you change tapes once a week in the middle of the night on the number twenty-one station in a city of twenty-one stations, you are definitely the lowest form of life in broadcasting. Deliverymen, the janitorial staff, and especially the part-timers at the FM station across the hall took great pleasure in ridiculing me. My incredibly low status was probably the reason Dick Bailey never failed to bring me a little gift each Saturday morning.

Dick worked as a salesman for Brown and Bigelow, an advertising specialties company. The first of Dick's many gifts to me was to say, “Roy, you're doing a fine job,” as he pressed into my hand a little screwdriver, which I carry on my key chain to this very day. The next week it was “Roy, you're a hard worker, and I'm convinced you're going to be a great man someday.” Then he handed me two Norman Rockwell prints, which Pennie still proudly displays in our dining room. One week, Dick told me a big company had placed a large order for ink pens, which had qualified them to receive a fifty-dollar, embossed-leather thesaurus. He said they didn't care about the thesaurus, so he was having it sent to me.

Dick Bailey believed in me long before *I* believed in me. His affirmations each week helped me bounce out of bed with a sense of mission and purpose. There might have been only fourteen people listening to my station, but one of them was Dick Bailey, and Dick cared whether I did a good job.

One Friday evening, Pennie and I opened our mail to find the most elegant leather thesaurus we had ever seen. Twelve hours later, as the morning clock approached 5:30, I walked from the control room to the parking lot to see if I could spot Dick getting out of his car. Finally, I walked back to the control room and turned the page of the program log to find a little note from the station manager: “Dick Bailey died in his sleep yesterday. Please play one of his prerecorded standby programs.”

Each morning, as I unlock the offices of Williams Marketing, a little screwdriver on my key chain quietly whispers, “Encourage the people around you today, for you never know who they might become, or what tomorrow may bring.”

13. What Makes Alexander Great?

Alexander is a dreamer who inspires everyone around him with visions of grand possibilities. Always the first over the wall of an enemy city, Alex is wounded in the neck at the Granicus River, in the thigh at Issus, and in the shoulder at Gaza, but he never quits fighting, never quits shouting encouragement to his men. A broken leg in Turkestan and a pierced lung in India barely slow him down. Is it any wonder he's never lost a battle?

Alex commits to memory his soldiers' names and deeds, calling each by name when publicly extolling their exploits. He often sends men home to rest and spend time with their families. Is it any wonder they adore him?

In Alexander's presence, common men become radioactive. An unstoppable, natural leader, he conquers all the known world before he is thirty-three and is charging off to conquer the unknown world when he is overtaken by illness and dies.

The life of Alexander profoundly illustrates the difference between leadership and management. Possibly the greatest leader ever to stride the earth, Alexander is a lousy manager. His hatred of bureaucracy and his need for excitement prevent him from building a governmental machine of systems, accountabilities, and procedures. Consequently, his legendary empire disintegrates immediately upon his death.

Not once in the following fifteen hundred years will the Romans have a leader who can escape the shadow of Alexander the Great. Yet their system for management will hold the Roman Empire together decade after decade, century after century, even when grievously incompetent leaders impose amazingly stupid decisions on their people.

Not even the most brilliant manager can do the job of a natural leader, yet even more rarely will a strong leader be a good manager when there is no crisis. Success is the result of having the right person in the right job at the right time.

Do you prefer being a leader or a manager? Whether in business or in society, times of great change require bold leaders to take us places we've never been. But in times of peace and prosperity a leader will often change what doesn't need changing. When things are going smoothly we need a manager - a guardian to protect what the leader fought so hard to win.

There is a time for revolution and a time for evolution. Which time is this?

14. Dark with Smoldering Eyes

He was a 25 year-old Scot, she, a 36 year-old American with 2 children. They met when she was traveling alone in Paris; she divorced her husband to marry him.

It was not the Scot's best moment.

Mark Twain described him thusly: *“He was most scantily furnished with flesh, his clothes seemed to fall into hollows as if there might be nothing inside but the frame for a sculptor's statue. His long face and lank hair and dark complexion and musing and melancholy expression seemed to fit these details justly and harmoniously, and the altogether of it seemed especially planned to gather the rays of your observation and focalize them upon [his] special distinction and commanding feature, his splendid eyes. They burned with a smoldering rich fire under the penthouse of his brows, and they made him beautiful.”*

Hoping to win some small measure of acceptance from his new wife's children, the young Scot took them on holiday to his native Scotland. As if in judgement, the weather immediately turned cold and rainy and they were forced to amuse themselves indoors. Seated by the drying fire, the young Scot watched in rapt attention as his 12 year-old stepson, Lloyd, drew, colored, and annotated the map of an imaginary place. Loyd's map stimulated our young Scot's imagination and, "On a chill September morning, by the cheek of a brisk fire, I began to write a story based on Loyd's map as an entertainment for the rest of the family."

Do you remember meeting this "man with the smoldering eyes" so admired by Twain? For it was he that introduced you to young Jim Hawkins, Billy Bones, Captain Flint and Long John Silver and gave you a place called Treasure Island; we speak his name always in its fullness because he gave us fully of all he had to give. "Robert Louis Stevenson."

After giving us his best, he parted, and left us with these few words:

"That man is a success who has lived well,
Laughed often and loved much;
Who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of children;
Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task;
Who leaves the world better than he found it,
Whether by a perfect poem or a rescued soul;
Who never lacked appreciation of the earth's beauty or failed to express it;
Who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had."

Are you looking for the best in others? Keep in mind those words of Emerson: *“Every man is entitled to be valued by his best moment.”*

Don't you hope that you'll be valued by yours?

15. The Confusion of Nemo Chapman

Nemo Chapman was a teenager devoted to the South De Kalb County YMCA, *“a guy down on one knee helping out a little kid, or with kids just hanging around his neck, following him everywhere he went.”* When Nemo was presented with the award for Outstanding Camp Counselor, the kids all leaped to their feet chanting, *“Ne-mo, Ne-mo, Ne-mo!”*

After graduating from high school, Nemo and his friend Mike McFarland spent the summer in Chicago where they performed a comedy act in churches and Christian nightspots. In the fall, Nemo went back home to Georgia and enrolled at South De Kalb Community College, hoping to get a degree that might help him land a job with the YMCA. It was then that Mike suggested Nemo read J.D. Salinger’s novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, the story of a mixed-up teenager who, *“distracted at his discovery that the world seems to be made up of phonies, runs away to wander around New York.”*

The following summer, Nemo volunteered for the Y’s international program and was sent to Lebanon. But when civil war erupted there, the YMCA was evacuated. Nemo was then sent to work with Vietnamese refugees at a resettlement camp in Arkansas where he quickly became the hero of all the Vietnamese children. He rose through the ranks to become Area Coordinator and a key aide to the Program Director, who said, *“He was really caring with the refugees and he worked his tail off to do everything exactly right. He was a super kid.”*

When the resettlement program ended in December, 1975, Nemo said to his friend, Rod Riemersma, *“We’re all going to get together again. One day one of us is going to be somebody. About five years from now, one of us will do something famous, and it will bring us all together.”*

Holden Caulfield, the tortured protagonist in Salinger’s book, describes to his kid sister, Phoebe, the job of his dreams: *“I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody’s around - nobody big, I mean - except me. And I’m standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff. I mean, if they’re running and they don’t look where they’re going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them... I’d just be the catcher in the rye and all...”*

But who will keep Holden Caulfield from falling off that “crazy cliff”? Who is there for him? Sadly, no one stepped out from the field of rye to stop Nemo Chapman, either.

When the New York police arrived on the scene five years later, December 8th, 1980, they found Mark David “Nemo” Chapman sitting on a curb reading *The Catcher in the Rye*. John Lennon lay dead on the sidewalk beside him. Looking inside the book’s cover, the police found written these words: *“This is my statement.”* And it was signed, *“Holden Caulfield, Catcher in the Rye.”*

Sometimes good people – people just like you and me - do sick and twisted things.

And we have no answers why.

16. Priorities

Remember James Cramer, the guy who started a multi-*billion* dollar consulting firm by leaving free stock tips on his answering machine? James gave me permission to share this note with you. I think you'll like it:

All hell broke loose for me yesterday. I had so many crises going on that I could barely keep track of them. It is always difficult for me when I am out of the office. But yesterday I had to be at the office, at *CNBC*, for Squawk Box, at the Spy Bar to film a commercial for *TheStreet.com*, monitor my stocks -- all of which were going down -- and get this piece out.

At 2PM I was juggling two cell phones and my personal computer, while a woman put makeup on my face and a guy tied a tie around my neck. Suddenly, Jeff, my partner, says "call your wife at home, there's a problem."

I call, and sure enough our daughter is sick and has to be rushed to the hospital. Dehydration.

I say to my wife that I'd love to help out but I've got 30 people waiting on me at the commercial site, and two companies begging for me to do several things at once.

She says, okay. Do what you have to do. And I hang up.

And then it hits me. On Monday Bill Griffeth, the excellent anchor on *CNBC*, said he couldn't get the story about the **Luby's** chairman killing himself out of his head. Griffeth is usually so jocular and funny that we all stop and listen at my shop for his 1:55 p.m. droll lesson of the day. But that day he talked about how important it was to remember that even if business is going poorly, it's just business. It will come back. It will sort itself out. And if it doesn't, there will be another opportunity. But family, life - now that's real.

I picked up the phone and called my wife back. I said I am stopping the shoot right now no matter how much it costs, jumping into my car and I will be there immediately.

Twenty minutes later I walked into the hospital and I could hear my daughter crying for her daddy all the way down the hall. I rushed in and she said, "Daddy, these people put this thing in my arm and it hurts, why didn't you stop them?" I explained to her that it was an IV, and she needed the energy from it. But, Daddy, she asked, "Why didn't you get here sooner?"

I took a deep breath and said, "I got here as soon as I could." And for a moment, in all the turmoil, I felt good. I hadn't lied. I had gotten there as fast as I could.

Now it's 5:34 a.m. My daughter slept well and is doing better already. I'm looking at my screens. I'll make it back. Things will be fine.

I did the right thing. Thanks Bill.

James Cramer CEO
thestreet.com

17. Gabrielle, the Orphan Girl

“What am I bid for this classic Shagger?” I’m sitting in the third row at the famous James C. Leake auction in Tulsa watching a tuxedoed, British auctioneer work a room full of Oklahoma oilmen. Ninety seconds later, the auctioneer bangs his hammer and the Shagger sells for a record price. Just then, Tony leans over, cups his hand to my ear and whispers, “I’ve got a car just like that at home, but mine’s called a JAG-wire and it won’t bring anywhere near that kind of money.”

Sometimes the power of a thing isn’t in the thing, itself, but in the way that you present it. When a man in a tux pronounces Jaguar as “shagger,” it makes the car seem more sophisticated and desirable. There are no rules in this game called “Style.” It’s a game that anyone with enough boldness and audacity can win.

No one knows this better than Gabrielle.

Gabrielle is a little orphan girl who lives with her 2 aunts in a desolate section of rural France. In 1899, at age 16, Gabrielle runs off with Etienne Balsan, a young cavalry officer who calls her “Little Pet,” the name by which she will become known throughout the world.

At age 30, Little Pet opens a boutique in Paris where she breaks every rule of fashion. Occasionally, her rule-breaking is based purely on practicality: She wears bell-bottom trousers in Venice only because she feels it will be easier to climb in and out of gondolas in them. It starts a pants revolution. After accidentally singeing her hair, she decides to cut it off completely and boldly strolls into the Paris Opéra that way. It starts a craze for bobbed hair. While watching a boyfriend play polo, she becomes chilled and borrows his blazer. It turns so many heads that she immediately begins designing what will become known as her famous “box jacket.”

Throughout her life of 87 years, Little Pet is bold, driven, and intense. "There is time for work. And time for love," she says, "That leaves no other time." Little Pet’s friends include Picasso, Churchill, Dali, Cocteau, Stravinsky and Princess Grace. Her Paris boutique will have more than 3,500 employees and her designer perfume will become the most famous in the world. In the movie about her life, Katherine Hepburn will be chosen to play the lead. When she passes away in 1971, TIME magazine calls her “the 20th century's single most important arbiter of fashion.”

How does she do it? What secret energy does Little Pet use to rocket herself from the desolate fields of rural France onto the covers of every fashion magazine in the world? The answer in a word, is *generosity*. Throughout her life, Little Pet never once tried to “protect” her style. Anyone who wanted to sell knockoffs of her products was perfectly welcome to do so. Little Pet knew that it would only make her more famous.

When one of the world's wealthiest men, the Duke of Westminster, asked her to marry him, she turned him down flatly, saying, "There are a lot of duchesses, but only one Coco (French for 'little pet') Chanel."

You go, girl.

18. What Was I Thinking?

"Band-Aid Beige" is the only way to describe the color of the car I just bought. My friend Tony calls it "Caucasian." Either way, I'm pretty sure it's the only Corvette in the world ever to be painted this color.

Tony and I suspect that some guy in a paint booth at General Motors was bored out of his wits one afternoon and said, "I think I'll paint the next Corvette beige, just to see what it looks like." When he saw the car in the drying room later that afternoon, he muttered to himself, "Good God, what was I thinking?" and quickly wrote someone else's name on the paint job's completion slip.

Ever since I bought the car, that painter's mumbled question has been running through my own mind as well; "Good God, what was I thinking?"

Our youngest son, Jake, took one look at the car, turned to me and said, "Dad, you're not gonna become one of those old guys who unbuttons his shirt down to his navel and starts wearing a lot of gold jewelry, are you?" Before I could answer him, his brother Rex began swiveling his hips in his best "groovy dude" imitation and said, "Ohhhh yeahhh, Baby, he's a real 'mac-daddy' now." Pennie quickly turned her head so that I wouldn't see her smile.

What *was* I thinking?

I was thinking of the day when my mother, 32 years old and divorced from a 16-year marriage, announced that she was going to buy herself "a corvette car" as soon as she could afford one. I was 11 when she said it and thought, "I have the coolest mom on earth."

I was thinking of the Saturday morning, 9 years later, when Tony and I went with her to help pick out a used Corvette. Tony is an automotive genius who, by the age of 19, had already bought and sold more than 100 cars. "Is this car mechanically sound?" asked my Mom. "Yeah, it's plenty tight," said Tony, "but when it comes to resale, that color..." "I'll take it," Mom told the owner, "I've never seen another one like it."

So why did the world's coolest mom decide to sell her signature Corvette after 20 years? Was it because she's now a silver-haired retiree and considered it no longer appropriate? No, the reason she sold it was because she couldn't fit it into a suitcase. Mom recently packed two, small overnight bags with her most comfortable clothes and then sold all her remaining earthly possessions and moved to the Costa del Sol in Spain. In her most recent letter to us, she says her apartment overlooks the sun-drenched Mediterranean. Mom doesn't speak a word of Spanish,

German, Italian or French, but says that she intends to learn. Her plan is to spend the balance of her years exploring all the nooks and crannies of Europe.

So why does a 62 year-old woman sell everything she owns and move to Europe? *Because it's something that she had always wanted to do, and unlike most of us, she actually had the guts to do it.*

Is there anything you've always wanted to do?

19. A Magial Christmas Letter

*While traveling in France, Mr. William Lederer witnessed an incident involving an American sailor that touched him so deeply he sent the following letter to the chief of naval operations in Washington, D.C. The letter is taken from the amazing book, **Letters of a Nation**, edited by our pal, Andrew Carroll.*

Admiral David L. McDonald, USN
Chief of Naval Operations
Washington, D.C.

Dear Admiral McDonald,

Eighteen people asked me to write this letter to you. Last year at Christmas time, my wife, three boys and I were in France, on our way from Paris to Nice. For five wretched days everything had gone wrong. Our hotels were "tourist traps," our rented car broke down; we were all restless and irritable in the crowded car. On Christmas Eve, when we checked into our hotel in Nice, there was no Christmas spirit in our hearts.

It was raining and cold when we went out to eat. We found a drab little restaurant shoddily decorated for the holiday. Only five tables were occupied. There were two German couples, two French families, and an American sailor, by himself. In the corner a piano player listlessly played Christmas music.

I was too tired and miserable to leave. I noticed that the other customers were eating in stony silence. The only person who seemed happy was the American sailor. While eating, he was writing a letter, and a half-smile lighted his face.

My wife ordered our meal in French. The waiter brought us the wrong thing. I scolded my wife for being stupid. The boys defended her, and I felt even worse.

Then, at the table with the French family on our left, the father slapped one of his children for some minor infraction, and the boy began to cry.

On our right, the German wife began berating her husband.

All of us were interrupted by an unpleasant blast of cold air. Through the front door came an old flower woman. She wore a dripping, tattered overcoat, and shuffled in on wet, rundown shoes. She went from one table to the other.

“Flowers, *monsieur*? Only on *franc*.”

No one bought any.

Wearily she sat down at a table between the sailor and us. To the waiter she said, “A bowl of soup. I haven’t sold a flower all afternoon.” To the piano player she said hoarsely, “Can you imagine, Joseph, soup on Christmas Eve?”

He pointed to his empty “tipping plate.”

The young sailor finished his meal and got up to leave. Putting on his coat, he walked over to the flower woman’s table.

“Happy Christmas,” he said, smiling and picking out two corsages. “How much are they?”

“Two *francs*, *monsieur*.”

Pressing one of the small corsages flat, he put it into the letter he has written, then handed the woman a 20-*franc* note.

“I don’t have change, *monsieur*.” She said. “I’ll get some from the waiter.”

“No, ma’am.” Said the sailor, leaning over and kissing the ancient cheek. “This is my Christmas present to you.”

Then he came to our table, holding the other corsage in front of him. “Sire, he said to me, “may I have permission to present these flowers to your beautiful daughter?”

In one quick motion he gave my wife the corsage, wished us a Merry Christmas and departed.

Everyone had stopped eating. Everyone had been watching the sailor. Everyone was silent.

A few seconds later Christmas exploded throughout the restaurant like a bomb.

The old flower woman jumped up, waving the 20-*franc* note, shouted to the piano player, “Joseph, my Christmas present! And you shall have half so you can have a feast too.”

The piano player began to belt out *Good King Wencelaus*, beating the keys with magic hands.

My wife waved her corsage in time to the music. She appeared 20 years younger. She began to sing, and our three sons joined her, bellowing with enthusiasm.

“*Gut! Gut!*” shouted the Germans. They began singing in German.

The waiter embraced the flower woman. Waving their arms, they sang in French.

The Frenchman who had slapped the boy beat rhythm with his fork against a bottle. The lad climbed on his lap, singing in a youthful soprano.

A few hours earlier 18 persons had been spending a miserable evening. It ended up being the happiest, the very best Christmas Eve, they had ever experienced.

This, Admiral McDonald, is what I am writing you about. As the top man in the Navy, you should know about the very special gift that the U.S. Navy gave to my family, to me and to the other people in that French restaurant. Because your young sailor had Christmas spirit in his soul, he released the love and joy that had been smothered within us by anger and disappointment. He gave us Christmas.

Thank you, Sir, very much.

Merry Christmas,
Bill Lederer

20. Ted and the Redhead of 1886

New York City, 1886: As dock workers unload crates containing the Statue of Liberty, a young railway agent named Richard Sears is launching the company that will bring catalog shopping to America. In Atlanta, John Pemberton is mixing his first batch of Coca-Cola, and across the water, Gottlieb Daimler is tightening the last bolt on the world’s first automobile. Cars, catalogs, Coca-Cola, and the Statue of Liberty simultaneously come into existence in 1886.

But what is the big news in 1886? According to *Manufacturer and Builder*, the leading monthly journal of innovation and change, the big news in New York isn’t the Statue of Liberty but the scandal over the proliferation of overhead electric lines. Among the most important discoveries chronicled in the journal this year is a new way to color bricks red. The leaders of American industry are blind to the changes happening all around them.

But not so the people.

America in 1886 is like a girl in adolescence, old enough to see glimpses of the woman she will become and anxious to complete the transformation. Her parents, the wealthy aristocrats who rule her thirty-eight states, are completely unprepared for the strong will of this redheaded teenage daughter.

The girl called America can't understand why the poor seem to have no rights. She is troubled by the fact that women have no vote, and she believes blacks deserve the same respect as whites. America in 1886 is a whirlwind redhead in need of a boyfriend who can keep up with her.

She finds him in Teddy Roosevelt. America falls in love with Teddy the moment she hears him say, "When they call the roll in the Senate, the senators do not know whether to answer 'present' or 'not guilty.' "

Teddy is a renegade Republican. His party is the party of the rich, but Teddy is a man of the people. Teddy says to them, "The government is us; we are the government, you and I."

When the Republicans become fearful of Teddy's wild ideas and his popularity among the commoners, they decide to bury him in the ultimate political grave: they make him the vice-presidential running mate to Stick-in-the-Mud McKinley. Shortly after the pair are elected, McKinley is assassinated. Teddy the Rough Rider is now president of the United States, and America loves it.

Immediately upon taking office, Teddy invites Booker T. Washington to dinner in the White House, and white rage is ignited across the South. Teddy says, "If I have erred, I err in company with Abraham Lincoln." With a smile that makes you feel he must have the teeth of a walrus, Teddy continues, "I am only an average man but, by George, I work harder at it than the average man."

When America was born in 1776, only rich, white males were allowed any hope. Then a mischievous cowboy swept America off her feet, and the land between Mexico and Canada has never been the same.

21. Friend of Booker T. Washington

Julius was born in Springfield, Illinois, in a house directly across the street from where Abraham Lincoln had once lived. A small influence, surely, but it seems to have been enough.

Soft-spoken, Julius grew to be highly organized, but he could never abide bureaucracy. And although he was unusually focused and highly attentive, he never worried. "Early in my business career," he wrote, "I learned the folly of worrying about anything. I have always worked as hard as I could, but when a thing went wrong and could not be righted, I dismissed it from my mind."

Quietly, Julius gave away more than 50 million dollars during his lifetime, mostly to empower black Americans. So liberally did he distribute his wealth that more than once he was forced to borrow money from the bank to cover his own living expenses. Receiving neither applause nor acclaim, Julius faithfully and silently built dozens of YMCAs and YWCAs in America's impoverished inner cities and provided dollar-for-dollar matching funds to construct 5,357 schools across the South. The only recognition he would ever receive would be the friendship of Booker T. Washington.

So how did Julius make all that money? Ah, that's another story entirely, but we'll spare a paragraph to tell it: Smiling Richard was perhaps the world's greatest salesman. His amazing ads prompted thousands of people to send him money for his merchandise. But Richard was woefully unorganized, so his customers often had a difficult time getting what they had ordered. At best they received incorrect items or were erroneously told the item they had ordered was out of stock. But in spite of all these problems, Smiling Richard's marvelous ads continued to bring in orders faster than factories could supply the goods or the orders could be shipped from his warehouses. He fell behind... 30 days, 60 days, then 90 and 120. That's when Julius stepped in to solve Richard's problem by creating a system that would allow Richard's employees to accurately handle up to 100,000 orders a day. This may seem a mundane achievement by today's standards, but it was considered a miracle of efficiency back in 1895, so Julius was asked to be president of the struggling young company that had been founded only 9 years earlier by Richard Sears and Alvah Roebuck. Immediately upon assuming the presidency, Julius introduced money-back guarantees and insisted that all future advertising be honest in its descriptions of the company's products. "Sell honest merchandise for less money and more people will buy," Julius said. "Treat people fairly and honestly and generously and their response will be fair and honest and generous." Under Julius Rosenwald's leadership, Sears and Roebuck became one of the world's most successful corporations.

Julius died in 1932 as quietly as he had lived. And should you visit his grave in Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery, you'll find only a single word carved on his tombstone: "Rosenwald." The tiny stone marker says nothing about how he lived a modest Jewish life, or how he spent \$63 million of his own money trying to make the world a better place.

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PS – Throughout his life, Julius was often overheard quoting the 15th Psalm, "LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken."

22. Is Ours an “Any Road” Generation?

In 1967, the Jefferson Airplane said, "Go ask Alice." So I did. Here's what I learned:

Abundant money and miraculous technologies confront us daily with an excess of options, while in the quiet shadows a debilitating apathy moans and whispers; "nothing is special anymore."

You've heard these whisperings, haven't you?

I get the feeling these days that many people have no idea where they're going. Not in advertising. Not in business. Not in life. Stranger yet is the feeling that they just don't care. Back in 1865, when Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat first quipped, "*If you don't care very much where you are going, any road will get you there,*" the comment was considered comically absurd.

It's not so funny anymore.

Are we becoming an Any Road generation?

Faith Popcorn warned us about the insidious danger of too many choices back in 1991, when she wrote, "We used to believe that we could become anything we wanted to be. But now we tell ourselves that we can be *everything* we want to be." Pennie agrees with Faith's statement and says, "Most people are reluctant to choose because they don't want to leave anything out." But she also notes a second, more perplexing problem. "Others are afraid to choose because they fear they'll make the wrong choice."

Hmm... Afraid to choose. Let's talk about that:

1. Most choices are less important than the fact that you made a choice. So make one. Do it. Provide yourself with a direction. By choosing a destination, you give yourself hope and a plan.
2. Never look back "at what might have been." If you spend too much time looking in life's rear-view mirror, you're going to have a horrible crash. It's the surest way to become an emotional cripple.
3. In the end, it isn't important whether you ever "arrive" at your destination. What matters most is that you had a purpose, a personal code of conduct, and a beautiful dream.

"A personal code of conduct?"

Question: Is your behavior the result of your genetic make-up or are you merely a product of your environment? This weary debate is commonly referred to as "Nature vs. Nurture," and it's an old and foolish argument. The Nature people say, "You can't help it. You just inherited a bad chromosome." The Nurture people say, "You can't help it. It's just how you were raised." I say, "Piffle and pooh, you CAN help it. You're going to *choose* what you will do."

The point that I'm trying to make is this - You are much more than the random product of a genetic lottery and you are much bigger than your environment. You, my friend, are becoming with every passing moment, the product of your choices.

So what will you choose?

23. Defending a Woman's Honor

Andrew marches cheerfully behind George Washington as they go to bravely fight the British. When it's discovered that the 13 year-old boy is an excellent rider, he's given the job of courier. But within a year he is captured and taken prisoner of war by the troops of Sir Banastre Tarleton, a British commander known throughout the Carolinas as "The Butcher."

As Andrew stands quietly at attention, Tarleton looks him over with a sneer. Lifting a muddy foot onto a wooden box in front of the lad, Tarleton says, "Boy, clean my boot." Andrew replies by suggesting that Tarleton do something quite different with "that boot." (Andrew's suggestion, by the way, is anatomically unfeasible.) A viper-quick blow from Tarleton's sword knocks Andrew off his feet and exposes the white bone of his forehead. Andrew is delirious for weeks and an invalid for months, but somehow he survives.

When the war is over, 21 year-old Andrew moves to Nashville where he rents a room from a Mrs. Donelson. He has been in her home only a few days when the door quietly opens and a young woman slips quickly inside, her wet cheeks bruised by the hand of a violent husband. Surprised by Andrew's presence, the girl quickly wipes the tears from her cheeks, composes herself and politely asks, "Is my mother home? I'm Rachel Donelson Robards." Smitten, Andrew instantly becomes Rachel's guardian and protector. The two are married 3 years later in the honest but mistaken belief that Rachel's husband, Lewis Robards, has been granted a legal divorce. They are stunned to hear, two years later, that Rachel's divorce has only just become final. They are immediately remarried in a second wedding ceremony.

Years later, when the famed duelist Charles Dickinson becomes furious at Andrew over a wager that he has lost, he publicly accuses Rachel of having abandoned her husband to live in adultery with Andrew. Rachel, the love of Andrew's life, is devastated. Andrew immediately challenges Dickinson to a duel and tells a friend, "Though he shoot me in the brain, I will kill this man." The pistols are brought. The distance is stepped off. They face one another from 24 feet. Knowing Dickinson to be a faster and better shot, Andrew doesn't even try to shoot first, but calmly takes a bullet in the chest. It shatters two ribs and lodges near Andrew's heart. Then, without flinching, Andrew takes long and careful aim. Charles Dickinson dies on the spot.

Inoperable, Dickinson's bullet was still in Andrew's chest 23 years later when he was inaugurated to serve as the seventh president of these United States.

Am I glorifying violence? Don't be silly. Today's memo isn't about violence, but about tenacity, commitment and resolve. Andrew Jackson knew what he was willing to die for. Right or wrong, his life revolved around his commitment to the creation of an American nation and his guardianship of Rachel Donelson. The only way to create a crisis in Andrew's life would have been to force him to choose between those two.

Is there anything that your life revolves around? If so, then your universe has a center; an anchor that gives you stability and allows you to focus your energy, prioritize your time and commit your heart. If your life has no such anchor, then you probably often feel as though you're floating aimlessly through time, drifting on the muddy, mindless tides of daily circumstance.

Am I right?

24. Nine Irishmen

It's 1848. Nine Irishmen have been captured, tried and convicted of treason against Her Majesty, the Queen. They are sentenced to death. The men's names are Charles Duffy, John Mitchell, Morris Lyene, Pat Donahue, Thomas McGee, Richard O'Gorman, Thomas Meagher, Michael Ireland, and Terrence McManus.

As the judge is about to pronounce their sentences, he asks if there is anything they would like to say. Meagher steps forward and speaks for the group. "My Lord, this is our first offense. If you will be easy with us this once, we promise, on our word as gentlemen, to try to

do better next time. And next time - you can be certain we'll not be fools enough to get caught!"

The obviously embarrassed and infuriated judge sentences them to be hanged by the neck until dead, then drawn and quartered. When the world cries out in protest, Queen Victoria commutes their sentences to banishment for life in the wilderness of Australia.

In 1874, Queen Victoria was astounded to learn that the newly elected Prime Minister of Australia was the same Charles Duffy she had banished to that continent 25 years earlier. Curious, the Queen ordered that the other eight men be located and here is what she learned: John Mitchell had become a prominent American politician and his son was now the Mayor of New York. Morris Lyene had become the Attorney General of Australia and upon completion of his term, Michael Ireland succeeded him. Thomas McGee was a member of parliament in Montreal, Canada. Pat Donahue and Terrence McManus were both Brigadier Generals in the United States Army. Richard O'Gorman was Governor General of Newfoundland. And Thomas Meagher, the spokesman who had so infuriated the judge, was now the Governor of Montana.

Is it a merely a coincidence that all nine of these men rose to positions of leadership and prominence? Or is this simply what happens to people who have the courage of their convictions? I tend to believe the latter.

Is there anything in your life that causes you to feel the passion of these men? Do you, like them, have the courage of your convictions? Is there anything important enough to cause you to speak to a judge as Thomas Meagher did? I am not advocating conspiracy against the government; I'm merely speaking of the value of passion.

If there is nothing you would be willing to die for, then you have little for which to live.

What, in your life, holds such meaning?

25. Teedie the Asthmatic

Teedie is a scrawny teenage boy with bucked teeth and asthma, but he has the heart of an overcomer. While the other boys sneak glances at Connie Boden, Teedie boldly walks over and asks if he might come by to visit sometime. "Certainly!" says the stunningly attractive Miss Boden, "How about a picnic tomorrow?" Now it's the other boys who are gasping for air.

At 5 AM the following morning, Teedie plops into his rowboat and throws his slight weight into the oars. It's several miles across the bay to where the Bodens live, but Connie Boden has invited Teedie to a picnic and he has no intention of being late. Three hours later, Teedie steps out of his rowboat to realize that he is fully two hours early. Exhausted from his rowing, Teedie lays on a rock and promptly falls asleep. He awakens an hour later to find that his boat has drifted two hundred yards from shore.

Resourceful and self-reliant, Teedie places his clothes neatly in a pile, swims naked to his boat and rows it back to shore, thinking, “Never ask for help when you don’t have to have it.” Now dripping wet and bone weary, Teedie stacks his clothes in the boat and lays down naked on the rock to dry.

The sound of distant voices awakens him! Connie Boden and another girl are coming through the trees and Teedie’s boat has drifted out to sea again! Teedie dives beneath the dock to hide. Later, a naked and weary Teedie swims out to his boat to begin his long, silent journey home. “I never got to the picnic,” he thinks, “ but I didn’t have to ask for help, either. Everything considered, not a bad day.”

Why didn’t Teedie ask for help, you ask? “If Teedie had simply asked someone to row him to his boat instead of swimming to it naked, his story would have ended with a picnic instead of rowing home alone.”

Yes, this is altogether true. But if Teedie had been the kind of boy who was quick to ask for help, he wouldn’t have been the man to lead the Rough Riders up impossible San Juan Hill. He wouldn’t have been the lovable renegade who became our 26th president and we certainly would never have carved his face into a granite mountain in South Dakota.

Teedie will live forever on Rushmore with Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln because America saw in him the embodiment of her own soul. Bold enough to attempt the unlikely; Resourceful to the point of nakedness; Reckless to the point of near drowning. But with the heart of an overcomer. Everything considered, not a bad way to live.

What impossible thing will you attempt today?

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If you want to see a delightful movie, watch *The Wind and The Lion*, a 1975 film starring Sean Connery as Raisuli, a Moroccan desert pirate and Brian Keith as the irrepressible Teddy Roosevelt. A wonderful 2 hours.

26. “Never Had a Chance”

Orphaned at the age of 7, she’s a black, self-made millionaire who offers powerful advice to all who will listen. "There is no royal flower-strewn path to success," she once commented, "and if there is, I’ve not found it. If I have accomplished anything in life, it is because I have been willing to work hard." To teenagers she says, “Don't sit and wait for opportunities to come, you have to get up and make them." But it’s on the subject of civil rights that her voice rings out most clearly; "America doesn’t respect anything but money. What our people need is a few millionaires."

Her magnificent 30 room Italian Renaissance mansion was designed by one of the leading architects of his day, and it’s name, “Villa Lewaro,” was given to it by Enrico Caruso, the legendary opera singer. Obviously, this is a woman of extraordinary elegance, wealth and taste.

Can you name our black female millionaire? I'll give you a clue - she died exactly four years before television was invented. Now that sort of shoots your Oprah theory all to pieces, doesn't it? No, the great Enrico Caruso wasn't just an historical figure to Sarah Breedlove, he was a personal friend, and Sarah wasn't just America's first black, female millionaire. She was America's first self-made female millionaire of any color.

Born in 1867 on a Louisiana plantation, Sarah was the daughter of former slaves who died when she was seven. When Sarah was 18, she and her husband had a baby girl. He died 2 years later. Yes, the woman who would become known throughout the world as Madam C.J. Walker began her long walk toward success as a black, 20 year-old widow with a 2 year-old baby on her arm. And she did it during a time when America was not only violently racist, but deeply sexist as well. Yes, Sarah Breedlove had all the advantages.

"I got my start by giving myself a start," she says, "I came from the cotton fields of the South. I was promoted from there to the washtub. Then I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing cosmetics. Everybody told me I was making a mistake."

Evidently, "everybody" was wrong.

How about you? Do you have the patience, tenacity and grit to bang the hammer of hard work against the anvil of your disadvantages until you've pounded your own future into a shape that you like? Or do you just plan to sit there with your fingers crossed and wait for "your big break" and then, when it doesn't come, whine about how you "never had a chance?"

27. Joe Is Not Your Average Boy

Joseph is a weak and sickly Hungarian teenager with a dream of adventure. Rejected by the Hungarian Army because of his poor eyesight and fragile frame, Joe is accepted by the Union Army of the United States and travels to America to fight in our civil war.

Miraculously, Joe survives the war and moves to St. Louis, where he accepts a job burying the dead during a cholera epidemic. Three years later, he competes in a special election to fill a seat in the lower house of the state legislature. He wins.

As a legislator, Joe is widely known for fighting corruption in city government. A lobbyist who disagrees with Joe publicly calls him a "damned liar." Joe shoots him. Wounded and outraged, the man tackles Joe and wrestles him to the ground. Joe receives a large gash in his forehead from being pistol whipped with his own gun.

Joe decides the best way to fight is with words. He starts a newspaper. His values, techniques, and reckless style of presentation are completely insane in the eyes of the established press, but newspapers will never be the same. In later years, Joe says, "The trouble with this business is nobody gets drunk anymore."

Immediately upon his return from an extended vacation, Joe is sued by the White House. A furious Theodore Roosevelt demands the retraction of a story. All of America is waiting to see what Joe will do. Trying hard not to show his fear, Joe calmly says, "Mr. Roosevelt is an episode. The [press] is an institution."

America the Beautiful. Where else could a weak and sickly teenager take on the king of the land and win?

A financial magazine recently reported Joe's family to be worth more than one billion dollars, and the prizes given in his name continue to be among the most coveted literary achievements in the world.

"Put it to them briefly, so they will read it; clearly, so they will appreciate it; picturesquely, so they will remember it; and, above all, accurately, so they will be guided by its light." — Joseph Pulitzer

28. Pull the Trigger and Ride the Bullet

My friend, Tony, is a deep recluse. Such a recluse, in fact, that no one in recent years has been able to completely confirm his existence. I'm not even sure Tony has a social security number; I know that he's certainly never had a job. My staff thinks Tony is just a figment of my imagination. But he's not.

When we were in high school, Tony bought and sold cars on the weekends. I watched with interest as he made and lost thousands of dollars. Later, I watched Tony become the owner of a small oil company and then a wholesaler of fine furniture.

I comforted Tony the day his first wife ran off with the carnival and I was there when he learned the state had auctioned off his "free-and-clear" house for back taxes. I answered the phone when he called for me to bail him out of jail after he'd held a gun to the head of his first wife's boyfriend. Recently, I watched as Tony sold the wrong stock short in a day-trade and was forced to cough up a quarter million dollars.

I've watched my friend Tony do some extraordinarily stupid things over the past twenty-five years, but not once have I ever heard him whine about how things turned out. For all his faults, Tony takes complete and utter responsibility. I've never seen him point a finger toward anyone but himself. When most people would be wailing, "Oh God, why me?" Tony simply looks up to the heavens, shrugs his shoulders and says, "I pulled the trigger and rode the bullet."

Are you able to make a decision and then live with the consequences? Do you have the courage of your convictions, or do you find yourself vacillating, waffling, and wringing your hands whenever you must make an important decision? I've learned a valuable lesson from my friend Tony and you'd do well to learn it, too: whenever there is a decision to be made, make it! Don't be a hand-wringing weasel.

Every tomorrow is shaped by the choices of today. You know this and it scares you, right? Quit worrying! While tomorrow will be shaped by today's choices, the day after tomorrow will be shaped by tomorrow's choices. Each and every day of your life you get one more chance to get it right.

Later today you'll be faced with a choice and will have to make an important decision. In that moment, I hope you'll examine your options and then do what must be done; no hand-wringing. No moaning. No hopping back and forth from one foot to the other.

Just make a decision and live with it. Follow the example of Sarah Breedlove, buck-toothed Teedie and Joe the sickly Hungarian: *Pull the trigger and ride the bullet.*

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"For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin - real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, or a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life." Alfred De Souza

29. Paul's Adopted Son

Paul Compton had a wife and four daughters, and in later years, a fourteen-year-old son added himself to the dinner table. That son was me. My own mother was a great cook and she loved me like crazy, but Mom had to work full time and there was a lot to do in the evenings, so I fell into the habit of showing up at Paul's house every night around supertime.

Paul Compton is the kindest and best man I've ever known. Paul understands the difference between "doing" and "being," so he never once asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Paul felt he knew who I was going to be, and for Paul, that was enough.

Many nights after dinner, Paul's youngest daughter and I would get up from the table and leave on separate dates, but after our dates we would often seek one another's advice. Over the next four years, she had a long string of boyfriends and I had a long string of girlfriends, but when she wasn't on a date with a boyfriend and I wasn't on a date with a girlfriend, Paul's daughter and I were most likely together, usually about five nights a week.

It know it sounds insane, but Paul's daughter and I went at least a thousand places together without it ever crossing my mind to hold her hand as we were walking.

Somewhere near the end of our senior year, as she and I returned from buying a root beer across town, I turned off the ignition, looked at her, and said, "I recently realized that I enjoy being with you more than anyone else in the world, and that makes it difficult for us to be friends anymore, because it would be torture for me to keep seeing you every night if I thought there was ever a chance it would end." I had never once kissed Paul's daughter good night. Six months later we were married.

A whole generation of American kids grew up being asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" as though it would be the most important question we would ever face. It wasn't. We learned we could easily and painlessly change careers throughout the course of our lives. Not one of my childhood pals is currently

involved in the career for which he studied. Now that I have boys of my own, I've elected not to quiz them about what they would like to be.

Should any person ever ask my sons what is important to their father, I'll wager that my boys will be able to recite it verbatim. "Boys, when you're ready to marry, don't marry a person who has high and lofty expectations of you. Don't marry the girl you've struggled to impress. Marry the girl you always thought of as a sister, the one who knows you as you really are. Marry the girl who has seen your every fault and weakness but likes to be with you just the same. Boys, when you're ready to get married, I hope you'll marry your best friend."

30. June, 1999

"Is this William Lederer?"

"Yes, it is."

"Hello, my name's Roy Williams and I'd like to include the letter you wrote to Admiral David McDonald in a book I've written that's about to go to press. May I have your permission to do that, sir?"

"Where you calling from, son?"

"Austin, Texas."

"I was in Austin not long ago."

"I wish I had known, sir. Maybe we could have gotten together."

"I was there to bury a friend."

"I'm sorry to hear that, sir."

"You'd have liked Jim."

"I'm sure I would have. Now about that letter to Admiral McDonald..."

"Have you got a minute?"

"Certainly, sir."

"I'd like to tell you about Jim. I'm trying to remember if I ever told this to anyone, and I don't think I have. But I always meant to."

"I'm all ears, sir."

“What was that?”

“I’m listening.”

“Well, I was a journalist and I had written a book. But before I gave it to the publisher, I asked Jim to read the manuscript and tell me what he thought of it.

“What did he tell you?”

“He said, ‘William, you tell this like it’s a true story.’ And I said, ‘But Jim, it is a true story. I was there and I’m a reporter. I’ve got detailed notes. These things actually happened!’ Then Jim told me something I’ll never forget.”

“What did he say?”

“He said, ‘William, the public is more willing to believe *fiction* than *non-fiction*. Change the names in your story so that they’re all imaginary and you’ll find people will be a lot more willing to hear what you’re trying to tell them.’”

“Did you do it?”

“Yes, I did.”

Here’s what I learned after I hung up the phone: Shortly after William Lederer’s book was released, a young senator named John F. Kennedy bought a copy for every member of the United States Senate. Historians today believe Lederer’s little book did more to change American foreign policy than any document since the *Declaration of Independence*. Then on October 14, 1960, after completing his third debate with Nixon, JFK flew to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he found 10,000 university students waiting for him at 2 o’clock in the morning. With a copy of Lederer’s book in his pocket, Kennedy climbed the steps of the student union building and launched into an extemporaneous address, challenging the students to spend a few years of their lives helping the underprivileged peoples of the world. The audience went wild and in that magic moment an organization known as *The Peace Corps* was born. Since then, more than 157,000 volunteers have traveled to the remotest places on earth to deliver what William Lederer cried out for in his book, *The Ugly American*. And none of this would have happened had it not been for the advice of William’s buddy, Jim.

“I really wish you could have met Jim,” said Lederer. “I’m sure you read about it when he died.”

“No, sir, I don’t often read the obituaries.”

“But it was national news when Jim died. It was news all over the country. It was on all the TV shows.”

Unable to think of an appropriate response, I silently thought to myself that this man was, after all, 87

years old and people at his age don't always think as clearly as they should... William J. Lederer broke that awkward silence with something that will be forever etched in my memory:

"Oh, I'm sorry, son. You probably knew him better as *James*. James Michener."

And so it wasn't his 40+ bestselling books, or the 100+ million dollars that he gave to charity that was Michener's greatest gift to the world, but the single word of advice that he gave to a friend; advice that helped his friend to inspire thousands of people to begin helping millions of others.

31. An Old Mustang Revertible

I have a 1971 Mustang with a canvas top that folds down behind the rear seat. Ask me why I chose to restore this particular year, make and model of car and I'll immediately point out to you the convenience of having a gas cap that is centered between the tail lights, "You can pull up on either side of the gas pump. Either side!" After showing you how effortlessly one can remove the gas cap, I'll continue the explanation as though you're actually interested, "and it's not hidden behind an irritating, spring-loaded license plate like the gas caps on GM cars!" By the time I've explained the slope angle of the windshield and pointed out the fully retractable wipers, you'll be wishing you had never asked.

But Pennie will tell you that the real reason we own a '71 Mustang is because every time I sit in one, I revert back to when I was 15 years old. That was the year that Perry McKee and I ruled the world from our headquarters on the second floor of his grandmother's house in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Perry always drove the Mustang with his left hand, because his right hand was busy pounding invisible piano keys on the dash as we sang at the top of our lungs to a blaring AM radio. And in between each song, we'd lean out the windows and shout "Suuuu-bah-RUUUUUU!"

Perry and I never once lost a race in that Mustang. Never. But then, none of the other drivers ever knew that they had been racing. Like the shark in the movie, "Jaws," our Mustang was just a speck in their rear view mirrors, right up until the moment Perry and I zipped past them with shouts of "Subaru." It was always then that Perry would turn to me and say, "Got'em."

If a girl was especially pretty or a cheeseburger was particularly good, Perry and I would lock eyes for a moment, turn one thumb slowly upward and say in solemn unison, "Subaru."

When we got tired of sitting at a red light, we'd throw our fingertips toward it and shout the command, "Subaru!" Shortly thereafter, the light would always turn green.

Why "Subaru," you ask? Well, in simple truth, Perry and I just liked the sound of the word.

And when you rule the world, that's the only reason you need.

32. Martin's Very Big Day

His name was Martin, and in the early 1500's he wrote a thing that changed our world forever. As Martin dipped pen in ink that momentous day, he could not possibly have known the degree to which he was redefining our future. No, Martin innocently put pen to paper and forever changed our world, never once suspecting the full magnitude of what he was doing.

If you assume that I'm referring to the day in 1517 when a man named Martin Luther ignited the flames of the Protestant reformation, well, you're wrong. The Martin of whom I write was very near the end of his life on the day that Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church. The Martin of whom I speak had done his scribbling exactly 10 years, 6 months and 6 days earlier. It was on April 25, 1507, that Martin Waldseemüller scribbled the word "America" on the map of a continent that had previously had no name. Martin, you see, was a mapmaker.

Martin's Universalis Cosmographia was the first map to show the New World as being comprised of two continents joined by a narrow strait. The southern landmass, previously known as "The Western Indies," Martin designated "America." In Cosmographiae Introductio, the book that accompanied the map, Martin explained that he had named the New World after Amerigo Vespucci, the man that he believed had discovered it. Nine years later, Martin acknowledged Columbus as the true discoverer and immediately dropped the name "America" from his maps. But by then it was too late. America was here to stay.

Martin's decision in 1507, however, was of far less impact than many of the decisions you and I make each day. Martin's decision affected only the name of a country, a word on a map. Our decisions affect the lives of human beings. We choose to encourage someone and in so doing, help shape their future success. We repeat a gossip and in so doing, create a breach that may never be healed. We contribute our time or money and in so doing, make the world just a little bit better.

Today we will choose whether to frown or to smile. We will choose whether to hide love or show it. We will, by our choices, encourage or discourage the people around us. And each of these choices will have a far greater impact on the future of our world than did the meaningless markings of a mistaken mapmaker named Martin.

What kind of future will you choose?

33. A Haircut and a Barber's Boy

It all began when an abusive policeman walked out of a barbershop without paying. An adolescent boy followed the officer outside and made a disparaging remark behind his back. The cop spun and hit the boy in the face with his gun.

Word spread quickly.

When 47 year-old Crispus Attucks heard of the injustice, he walked directly to the police station and shouted for the policeman to “step outside and try that on someone his own size.” An angry crowd gathered. The cop came out with a loaded rifle and brought five other policemen with him. Striding up to within a few feet of Attucks, the officer aimed the slender rifle directly at his head. In a blink, Attucks grabbed the end of the rifle barrel in his fist, yanked it up next to his ear, then slammed the butt-end of the rifle into the face of the officer.

Crispus Attucks fell dead before the cop hit the ground, shot by 2 of the other policemen.

Sadly, Crispus had only just returned to Boston after being gone for 20 years. Shortly after he had left, the following ad had appeared in the October 2 issue of the *Boston Gazette*: “Ran away from his Master *William Brown from Framingham*, on the 30th of *Sept.* last, a Molatto Fellow, about 27 Years of age, named Crispas, 6 Feet two Inches high, short curl'd Hair, his Knees nearer together than common: had on a light colour'd Bearskin Coat.”

Crispus Attucks, the dark hero of the white barber's boy, had been born a slave, the child of an African father and a Native American mother. He was 6'2" in a day when the average man was only 5'7". For more than a decade Crispus had carefully saved the money he earned trading horses and cattle, then, when his owner refused to sell him his freedom, he escaped first to Boston, then to Nantucket where he became a harpooner on a whaling ship. To threaten Crispus Attucks by holding a harpoon-shaped object within his grasp was simply not a smart move for the red-coated policeman.

In a single, reflexive moment, Crispus became the first man to die in the struggle that would become America's War for Independence. Four other Americans died of gunshot wounds suffered in the fight that followed Crispus Attucks' murder. Their collective deaths would become known as the Boston Massacre.

The Redcoats would not see another man as tall or as audacious as Crispus Attucks until they faced a farmer from Virginia named George Washington.

34. Tom and His Editors

“Asking a writer what he thinks about editors is like asking a lamppost what it feels about dogs.” John Osbourne

Tom is steaming with outrage. He has poured heart and soul into the writing assignment that he was given and now the editing committee is picking his work apart, little by little.

Ever been there?

Seeing Tom's frustration, Ben says, "Tom, I once knew a hatmaker who, needing a sign for his shop, drew a little sketch of a hat and wrote above it the words, 'John Thompson, Hatmaker, Fashionable Hats Sold Inside for Ready Money.' As he was taking his sketch to the sign maker, his wife said, 'Who would sell a hat for anything but ready money? Delete that part.' And so he did. Then a friend said, 'And no one cares who made the hats as long as they're good. You should also delete John Thompson, Hatmaker.' And so he did, which left only his picture of a hat with the words, 'Fashionable Hats Sold Inside.' John hadn't gone far before someone looked at the sketch and chuckled 'Who would sell unfashionable hats?' so John removed the word 'Fashionable.' And then another said, 'Who sells hats on the sidewalk? Of course they're sold inside! All you really need is the picture of a hat and above it, the word, 'Hats.'"

"Satisfied that he now had the perfect sign, John showed his sketch to just one more friend. Looking quizzically at it, the friend said, 'You surely don't need the word 'Hats' above the picture, John. All that's needed is the picture itself.' So when he finally arrived at the sign maker's shop, John Thompson had nothing to show him but his little drawing of a hat. Seeing it, the sign maker said, 'Hmmm, this needs something more. Might I suggest that we add your name and occupation, John Thompson, Hatmaker, and perhaps beneath it the words, 'Fashionable Hats Sold Inside for Ready Money?'"

You will find the original story of the hatmaker's sign in the congressional archives among the papers of Thomas Jefferson, preceded by this notation: "Dr. Franklin perceived that I was not insensitive to Congress' mutilation of my document, (the Declaration of Independence,) and tried to reassure me by whispering a parable..."

Alas, I fear that H.G. Wells was correct when he said, "No passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else's draft." For when you have found Thomas Jefferson's original story of the hatmaker's sign and compared it to my account above, you will find that, yes, god-forgive-me...I edited it.

Sorry, Tom.

####

"I'm sorry, Mr. Kipling, but you just don't understand how to use the English language."

Publisher's rejection letter to Rudyard Kipling, rejecting his **Jungle Book**, (1889)

"A sheer dead pull from start to finish."

Book review of Charles Dickens' book, **A Tale of Two Cities**, (1897, Century Magazine)

"...so this is a book of the season only."

New York Herald Tribune review of F. Scott Fitzgerald's **Great Gatsby**, (1925)

"It is impossible to sell animal stories in the U.S.A."

Publisher's rejection letter of George Orwell's **Animal Farm**, (1945)

"The girl doesn't, it seems to me, have a special perception or feeling which would lift that book above the curiosity level."

Publisher's rejection letter of Anne Frank's **Diary**, (1952)

35. Encourager of Others

The world's most widely recognized sculpture, *The Thinker*, would probably never have come into existence had Rodin not received encouragement from a poor Scottish lad named William Henley. The son of an obscure bookseller, William was afflicted with tuberculosis of the bone, a condition that caused him to have his left leg amputated at the knee when he was 19 years old. Five years later, he was told that the surgery had been unnecessary. *"Sorry about that, William."*

But William Henley was not a whiner. During his years as an invalid in the dungeon-like infirmary of 1870's Edinburgh, he wrote a number of marginal poems and submitted them to various magazines for publication. The editor of *Cornhill* magazine, Leslie Stephen, once went to the hospital to visit young William and brought along a fellow William's age named Robert. *"It was very sad to see him,"* Robert wrote, *"in a little room with two beds, and a couple of sick children in the other; Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs and the poor fellow sat up in his bed, with his hair and beard all tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he had been in a King's Palace . . ."*

No, William was not a whiner, for it was in that same dark hospital room that William met his future wife, Anna, when she came to visit her brother in a neighboring bed. His new buddy Robert came back to visit William often and later wrote of him, *"He is a great man; he commands a larger atmosphere... It has been said that his presence could be felt in a room you entered blindfolded."* Upon his release from the hospital at the age of 26, William was described as, *"a large and boisterous man, wild haired and red-bearded. Lively, impulsive, enthusiastic, vigorous, and full of vehement tastes and distastes."* Indeed, it was these

"vehement tastes and distastes" that earned William his reputation as a writer for publications such as London, Saturday Review, and Vanity Fair. By the age of 31, William had become a highly regarded critic at the Magazine of Art, *"generous in his promotion and encouragement of unknown talents and fierce in his attacks on unmerited reputations."*

As a critic, William not only drew attention on the genius of Rodin, but was instrumental in helping launch the careers of Rudyard Kipling (Jungle Book,) J.M. Barrie (Peter Pan,) George Bernard Shaw (Pygmalion,) Thomas Hardy (Far From the Madding Crowd,) H.G. Wells (The Time Machine,) and William Butler Yeats, who once wrote of him, *"I disagreed with him about almost everything, but I admired him beyond words."*

A bronze bust of William Henley, made by Rodin, remains in Saint Paul's Cathedral to this day.

But the honor that was to immortalize William Henley forever was bestowed upon him by his old hospital companion, Robert, who saw something *"boisterous and piratic"* in Henley and shaped it into Long John Silver, the one-legged sea cook of Treasure Island. Yes, Robert's middle name was Louis. And his last name was Stevenson.

####

Here's the poem that William Henley wrote that best summarized his outlook on life:

Invictus

OUT of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,

How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

###

36. Sam's Heart and Soul...and Sigh

From the day that Susy was born until her thirteenth birthday, her father, Sam, wrote innocent and exhilarating adventure stories for children. Toward the end of Sam's life, he wrote, "When Susy was thirteen... she secretly, and of her own notion, and out of love, added another task to her labors -- the writing of a biography of me."

In this biography of her father, thirteen year-old Susy tells the world, "*We are a very happy family. We consist of Papa, Mamma, Jean, Clara and me. It is Papa I am writing about, and I shall have no trouble in not knowing what to say about him, as he is a very striking character. He is a very good man and a very funny one - and oh so absent-minded! He does tell perfectly delightful stories. Clara and I used to sit on each arm of his chair and listen while he told us stories about the pictures on the wall.*"

One of the high points in Sam's life came when he was introduced to Robert Louis Stevenson, the celebrated author of **Treasure Island**. In a letter home to young Susy, Papa Sam described him thusly: "*He was most scantily furnished with flesh, his clothes seemed to fall into hollows as if there might be nothing inside but the frame for a sculptor's statue. His long face and lank hair and dark complexion and musing and melancholy expression seemed to fit these details justly and harmoniously, and the altogether of it seemed especially planned to gather the rays of your observation and focalize them upon Stevenson's special distinction and commanding feature, his splendid eyes. They burned with a smouldering rich fire under the penthouse of his brows, and they made him beautiful.*"

A few years later, while Sam was away from home on a trip, Susy died. In a letter to his best friend, Sam wrote, "*I did know that Susy was part of us. I did not know that she could go away. I did not know that she could go away and take our lives with her, yet leave our dull bodies behind.*"

In the years following the death of his daughter, Sam became a devoted atheist and died an angry old man. But we forgive Papa Sam his anger. You and I can easily erase it from memory because unlike Sam, we never knew his daughter Susy. We remember Sam only for the stories that he told young Susy as she sat on the arm of his chair and stared at the pictures on the wall. We remember Sam, not for Susy Clemens, but for Tom and Huck and Cousin Sid and Becky Thatcher.

And perhaps that's the way it should be.

37. Is Happiness a Reasonable Goal?

One of my great joys is to read transcripts of the online discussions between Wizard Academy graduates. From astrophysics to advertising to albino monkeys, you never know what will be discussed. Recently, Lisa Davis blurted out, “*Is Happiness a Reasonable Goal?*”

Several students responded to Lisa’s question. Among them, Russell Friedman, who co-authored a multimillion-selling book called *The Grief Recovery Handbook* wrote:

“Many years ago I watched a Firing Line TV special with William F. Buckley, in a long one-on-one interview with Malcolm Muggeridge, the famous English Journalist/Philosopher/Religionist. They had an hour-long intellectual discussion about ‘happiness.’ I sat on my couch, getting more and more frustrated as I listened to the two of them pontificating on ‘happiness.’ When I could take it no longer, I grabbed a pen, and the envelope of an old piece of mail that was lying on the coffee table, and I wrote the following words: ‘Happiness is how I live my life. Happiness is an action, not a result.’”

Russell went on to say,

“I have watched people miss happiness because they didn't realize they already had it. And I have known way too many people who were focused on how they would feel when and if they became ‘happy.’ Of course, they were disappointed, because happiness is not really a feeling. It is more of a by-product than a product. Goals are good, sometimes, but as in the case of happiness, they can cause us to live ‘out-of-the-moment,’ which is never okay. Thus, ‘I will be happy when... [fill in the blank]’ ...is the great illusion. The fact is, if I am not happy now - I will not be happy when I get rich - I will not become happy when I lose 40 pounds - I will not be happy when I get married - and on and on and on.”

Russell’s answer reminded me of a couple of quotes I had tucked away on my computer:

“This is my depressed stance. When you're depressed, it makes a lot of difference how you stand. The worst thing you can do is straighten up and hold your head high because then you'll start to feel better. If you're going to get any joy out of being depressed, you've got to stand like this.” - Charlie Brown

“Whenever I feel afraid, I hold my head erect, and whistle a happy tune, and no one will suspect I'm afraid.” - Anna, in *The King and I*, by Rogers and Hammerstein

Just as actions can be the product of feelings, feelings can also be the product of actions.

So if how you’re going to feel later is determined by the actions that you take now, what actions are you going to take?

###

We don’t stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing.

38. Feynman's Pendulum

Well, I did it.

I actually did it.

I put the lime in the coconut and drank 'em both together. I put the lime in the coconut; it made me feel better.

Seriously, my Nigerian pal Akintunde Omitowoju came over for lunch on Sunday and we did it together. I had heard the Harry Nilsson song in my head for more than 30 years, but had never met anyone who actually tried the experiment. Have you?

Being only 29, Akintunde had never even heard the song, but he's a good enough friend not to need an explanation, so he drank his portion like a man. For the record: The milk of a coconut is pretty weary by itself and lime juice is, well, lime juice. But together they are surprisingly good. The coconut milk removes the edge from the lime and the lime adds an intriguing sweetness to the milk.

Why did I do it? I was looking for the equilibrium of Feynman's Pendulum; searching for a fun activity that was sufficiently ridiculous to counteract the insane discipline of the previous week and swing my life back into balance. I was looking for the key that would free my mind from the handcuffs of obligation. In other words, I was playing.

For an activity to be play, it must be...

- 1. intrinsically motivating.** If you play because you want to win a trophy, you're not really playing for pleasure and are therefore not truly playing.
- 2. freely chosen.** If you are playing because someone told you to, you are not truly playing.
- 3. actively engaging.** If you play while disinterested in the game, you are in essence not playing.
- 4. fun.** You must derive pleasure from it.

I began my search for Feynman's Pendulum after hearing a homemade tape recording of him singing a ridiculous song about orange juice while playing the bongos like a madman. Even after his development of the space-time view of quantum electrodynamics won him the Nobel Prize for theoretical physics in 1965, Richard Feynman never stopped banging on his bongos and making up silly songs. I believe it's what helped him keep his life in balance. Feynman was rarely seen without a smile.

Have you forgotten how to play like a 3 year-old? Have you lost the talent for beating on a drum and making up silly songs about orange juice? Please don't think that I'm advocating self-destructive behavior. I'm talking about losing your inhibitions, not your mind. I'm talking

about dumping your fears, not your morals. I'm talking about finding Feynman's Pendulum, a silly green fruit to sweeten the bland coconut milk of your life.

Go ahead. Do it.

Put the lime in the coconut.

39. One Night in Hawaii

I am small enough to have absurd little prejudices, but I'm also big enough to admit it. Oddly, though, I have none of the traditional stupid prejudices we typically associate with the word. I have my own brand of stupid prejudices.

One of the most longstanding of these prejudices has been against men with ponytails. I've always felt that guys with ponytails were painfully complacent. They never seemed to be bad people, they just lacked the enthusiasm to be good for much either. A ponytail was the unmistakable sign of yaaaawning apathy. A man with a ponytail was a tragic waste of skin.

My ponytail prejudice was recently ground into dust and blown into the night breeze on the island of Kona, Hawaii. Pennie, the boys and I were having dinner at a popular restaurant. You couldn't have wedged another person into that place with a shoehorn, and there were dozens more waiting impatiently outside. It was a scene beyond frantic; this place was a madhouse. We were seated and told "Sam" would be our waiter.

I judged Sam in a glance. You guessed it. Down to his waist.

But Sam Hori rocked my world that night, and it began the moment he introduced himself. We didn't get the obligatory plastic-coated greeting. Sam was friendly and relaxed; he made my family feel comfortable in an environment where I would never have thought it possible. My interest deepened when Sam offered his appetizer recommendations. He seemed somehow more sincere than the typical waiter, so I ordered both of the appetizers he recommended, along with two of my own choosing. Sam's favorites were clearly the winners. Mine were good; his were fabulous.

But I couldn't get past the ponytail. I said to myself, "*He has a strong opening, but I'll bet he fades in the finish.*" I had barely completed the thought when Sam arrived to refill our glasses, clear the appetizer dishes, and bring us more bread.

I decided Sam must have only two or three tables to wait. This would explain the lavish service. So I began watching. I soon realized that Sam was responsible for several tables, and that each of them was getting the same charming treatment my family was getting.

Then I decided, "*It must come to him naturally.*" But as I continued to watch, I realized that when Sam was not tableside, he was a veritable blur of efficiency. This wasn't just natural talent — Sam Hori was working his butt off.

“I’ve got it! Sam is an expensive consultant the owner imported from the mainland to train his other waiters!” When he returned, I casually asked, *“Sam, where are you from, originally?”* Sam smiled his amazing smile and told us he had been born and raised on Kona and was thrilled to have found a job so close to home.

That did it. I knew I would write about Sam. But as they say, talk is cheap. So I added thirty dollars (about 20 percent) to the tab I was paying by credit card, and then looked Sam in the eye. *“Sam,”* I said, *“my business has taken me into thirty-eight states and three foreign countries, and I’ve eaten at no less than one thousand of the finest restaurants in the world. I tell you this only so you will grasp my meaning when I say that you are the best waiter I have ever seen.”* And with that I pressed into his hand a hundred-dollar bill. I would have felt guilty had I done less.

What does any of this have to do with you? It’s simple. Sam Hori walked into a situation where the deck was stacked against him, and he won. He had no chance, but he won. He had every excuse to *“fail with honor,”* but he won. The place was crowded, people were waiting, and some idiot customer was prejudiced against his haircut, but he won. Have you ever had the deck stacked against you? Have you ever been dealt a raw deal? Have you ever felt that you had no chance? Have you ever had an idiot customer?

Sam Hori waits tables, and in my opinion, he is the best waiter on earth. Who is the best at what you do?

40. Racism and the Grapes of Wrath

When we think of the civil rights movement, we remember the early 60’s and men like Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, impassioned leaders who would slowly wrestle civil rights from the hands of an unwilling white majority. But not all whites were resistant to the idea of blacks being fully equal to them. Twenty years earlier, the Nobel Prize-winning novelist John Steinbeck wrote the following letter to the president of 20th Century Fox Films:

New York
January 10, 1944

Dear Sir,

I have just seen the film *Lifeboat*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock and billed as written by me. While in many ways the film is excellent there are one or two complaints I would like to make. While it is certainly true I wrote a script for *Lifeboat*, it is not true that in that script as in the film there were any slurs against organized labor nor was there a stock comedy Negro. On the contrary there was an intelligent and thoughtful seaman who knew realistically what he was about. And instead of the usual colored travesty of the half comic and half pathetic Negro there was a Negro of dignity,

purpose and personality. Since this film occurs over my name, it is painful to me that these strange, sly obliquities should be ascribed to me.

John Steinbeck

That letter was followed by a telegram sent 3 weeks later on February 19, 1944, stating, "I REQUEST MY NAME BE REMOVED FROM ANY CONNECTION WITH ANY SHOWING OF THIS FILM."

Steinbeck's request was never granted.

In a letter written the same day to Annie Laurie Williams, he said:

"It does not seem right that knowing the effect of the picture on many people, the studio still lets it go. As for Hitchcock, I think his reasons are very simple.

1. He has been doing stories of international spies and masterminds for so long that it has become a habit.
2. He is one of those incredible English middle class snobs who really and truly despise working people."

John Steinbeck was a man of courage, principle, and conviction who didn't wait until it was acceptable to cry out for fairness and equality. In 1962 during the hottest part of the civil rights debate the deeply introverted Steinbeck spoke out again in his book, *Travels with Charley*, in which he chronicled their journey together through 38 states in search of America.

"In Salinas in California, where I was born and grew and went to school gathering the impressions that formed me, there was only one Negro family... [and] the Cooper boys were my friends. Now these were the only Negroes I knew or had contact with in the days of my flypaper childhood, and you can see how little I was prepared for the great world. When I heard, for example, that Negroes were an inferior race, I thought the authority was misinformed. When I heard that Negroes were dirty, I remembered Mrs. Cooper's shining kitchen. Lazy? The drone and clop of Mr. Cooper's horse-drawn dray in the street outside used to awaken us in the dawn. Dishonest? Mr. Cooper was one of the very few Salinians who never let a debt cross the fifteenth of the month. If in Salinas anyone from a wiser and more sophisticated world had asked, 'How would you like your sister to marry a Cooper?' I think we would have laughed. For it might have occurred to us that a Cooper might not have wanted to marry our sister, good friends though we all were."

And Steinbeck was more than willing to share his views face to face:

"Recently a dear Southern friend instructed me passionately in the theory of 'equal but separate.' 'It just happens,' he said, 'that in my town there are three new Negro schools not equal but superior to the white schools. Now wouldn't you think they would be satisfied with that? And in the bus stations the washrooms are exactly the same. What's your answer to that?'"

I said, 'Maybe it's a matter of ignorance. You could solve it and really put them in their places if you switched schools and toilets. The moment they realized that your schools weren't as good as theirs, they would realize their error.'

And do you know what he said? He said, 'You trouble-making son of a bitch.' But he said it smiling."

The most poignant of Steinbeck's stories occurs near the end of the book as he reminisces about earlier days: "I lived then in a small brick house in Manhattan, and, being for the moment solvent, employed a Negro. Across the street and on the corner there was a bar and restaurant. One winter dusk when the sidewalks were iced I stood in my window looking out and saw a tipsy woman come out of the bar, slip on the ice, and fall flat. She tried to struggle up but slipped and fell again and lay there screaming maudlinly. At that moment the Negro who worked for me came around the corner, saw the woman, and instantly crossed the street, keeping as far from her as possible.

When he came in I said, 'I saw you duck. Why didn't you give that woman a hand?'

'Well, sir, she's drunk and I'm Negro. If I touched her she could easy scream rape, and then it's a crowd, and who believes me?'

'It took quick thinking to duck that fast.'

'Oh, no sir!' he said. 'I've been practicing to be a Negro a long time.'"

During his lifetime, John Steinbeck did what he could to make the world a better place for all of us.

Are you doing what you can?

###

41. An Island in WWII

The Associated Press may own the copyright, but I own the actual photograph. I'm not really sure why I bought it, though. You can't even see the faces of the six people in it. I'm told their names were Ira, Mike, Franklin, Harlon, Rene and John, but that's not really important. Ultimately, it's just a photograph of six people doing something that people do every day.

But for them to do it that day was crazy. The photographer who took the photo was crazy and I was crazy to buy it. I do crazy things sometimes. I'll bet you do, too. And like me, you probably have no better explanation than "It seemed like the right thing to do at the time." Fortunately, Pennie tolerates

my irresponsible behavior. Maybe she even loves me for it. That's one of the many advantages of marrying your best friend.

But I really do like this photo. It's special, somehow. Beyond the fact that three of the six people in it died shortly after the photographer's shutter went "click," the photo is unique because everything about it was an accident and Accidental Magic is the theme of my collection. This particular accident happened when a photographer named Joe Rosenthal heard a noise and swinging his camera toward it, pressed his finger on the camera's shutter unintentionally and captured a millisecond of history by accident. The millisecond happened on Feb. 23, 1945. The photo is called *Raising the Flag Over Iwo Jima*.

I bought the photo, through a broker, from the estate of John Faber, the man who became the official historian for the National Press Photographers Association in 1956. Faber kept the job and the photograph until the day he died. Faber had obtained the photo from Joe Rosenthal, the Associated Press photographer who had actually snapped it. In the preface of his 1977 book, *Great News Photos and The Stories Behind Them*, Faber writes, "Assembling this book has been a series of unforgettable experiences for me. I listened again to my tape recording of Joe Rosenthal describing, in his humble way, the day he made the Iwo Jima Flag Raising picture..."

Gosh I wish I could find that tape.*

I really do hope that you'll come to visit us sometime and take a long, hard look at this picture. It's a photo that speaks of all the best in us - heroism, sacrifice, principles and honor. But it also speaks of the worst - anger, violence, killing and war. Yes, there are two ways of looking at this photo. There are two ways of looking at everything. Wisdom is often found in the ability to look at a thing from both sides and not feel like you have to choose between them. It is perhaps that very tension that makes the photo a profound and powerful millisecond of history.

In his book, **Flags of Our Fathers**, James Bradley opens with a quote from a Japanese man, Yoshikani Taki, who said, "Mothers should negotiate between nations. The mothers of the fighting countries would agree: Stop this killing now. Stop it now." What makes James Bradley's use of this quote particularly interesting is that the man in the center of the Iwo Jima photograph was James Bradley's father, John, and it was the ancestors of Yoshikani Taki that John Bradley had been sent to Iwo Jima to kill.

Our spinning world is an interesting place, but you've got to hang on tight.

- On July 1, 2002, a time capsule landed in my office that had been sent into the future 45 years earlier by John Faber and Joe Rosenthal. It was a round, flat metal can containing an extremely fragile reel-to-reel tape labeled, "Iwo Jima Flag Raising - Joe Rosenthal interviewed by John Faber on 3-24-57 in Washington, DC." Miraculously, we were able to digitally re-master the tape so that the recording of Faber's amazing interview of Joe Rosenthal is available at www.WizardAcademyPress.com

42. Cohen of China

“The bullet that caught me in the left arm had made me think. Supposing it had been my right arm and I carried my gun that side, I'd not have been able to use it. As soon as we got back to Canton I got me a second gun, another Smith and Wesson revolver, and I packed it handy to my left hand. I practiced drawing and soon found that I was pretty well ambidextrous - one gun came out about as quick as the other.”

Early in the 20th century, when China was struggling against the Japanese, a lone occidental walked the halls of Chinese power for the first time in 4,000 years. He was from Canada, born in the slums of London, the child of devout Polish Jews, and the only foreigner ever to become a member of the Kuo-mintang, China's ruling party.

“Cohen was very proud of his Jewish heritage. He was touched when he saw the Jewish flag carried high about the Betar marchers and, being an uninhibited extrovert, he burst out in loud approval . . . He broke into a broad smile that lit up his face and grey eyes. The transformation was complete. His toughness gave way to warmth, generosity and kindness which were his basic characteristics . . .” – Judith Ben-Eliezer

A chunky and audacious 11 year-old, Morris Cohen had been magnetically drawn to the cardsharps and con men of London's East End. Arrested in 1900 for picking pockets, he was sent to reform school and then later shipped off to western Canada where he became widely known as a hard-fisted hustler with a weakness for gambling and women. When Cohen stumbled into the armed robbery of a Chinese gambling den, he sprang to the defense of the Chinese owner, an act that was unheard of at the time, as anti-Chinese feelings were running strong and deep. This selfless act gained Cohen the respect of the downtrodden Chinese community.

As a result, Morris Cohen was introduced to the famous leader Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the man who would become the George Washington of China. They discussed how the Chinese and Jewish nations had each contributed much to the civilization of the world and of how the Chinese people experienced untold sufferings as Jewish people did. Warmed by their conversation, Dr. Sun asked Cohen to become his *aide decamps* and soon promoted him to the rank of colonel in the Chinese army, where he proved to be remarkably good at procuring weapons and smuggling them into China to aid in the fight against corrupt feudal lords. Armed night and day with two holstered pistols, one on his hip, the other slung about his shoulder, he became known throughout the land as "Two-Gun Cohen.”

When Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, his successor, Chiang Kai-Shek, promoted Cohen to the rank of General and named him Chief of Chinese Intelligence. From 1930 onward, Cohen's counterintelligence unit was focused on two major threats to China's fragile government: (1.) the Chinese Communist Party, which had been organized in 1921 and had been growing in power ever since, and (2.) the Japanese, who had thousands of spies in China's coastal cities, all preparing for the day when Japan would invade China. Cohen's reputation for integrity

and loyalty was so profound that he alone was trusted to protect the government's gold bullion.

In 1943, Cohen slipped into Hong Kong from Shanghai in an attempt to rescue Mme. Sun who had been overseeing charitable, medical and welfare programs for the people there. She was now in danger from the Japanese who had conquered the island. The Japanese authorities arrested Cohen immediately upon his arrival and interned him in a concentration camp, which he miraculously survived. Years later, when questioned about the foolhardy Hong Kong rescue attempt, Cohen explained: *"I felt this might be the last service I could do for Dr. Sun."*

When Cohen died in 1970 at the age of 81 and was buried in the Blakely Jewish Cemetery of Manchester, England, the venerable Mme. Sun personally engraved a Chinese blessing on the tall, black tombstone of her husband's loyal friend, one of the most unusual and colorful adventurers of the twentieth century.

43. Eddie's Song

Have you ever heard someone singing a song and then found yourself singing it all the rest of that day? Songs are funny things, even when they're not sung to music. Sing words of victory and you'll soon start feeling triumphant.. Sing of warmth and love and feel it welling up inside you. Sing of loneliness and despair and your skies will soon be gray.

What kinds of songs have you been singing?

Edward Rowland Sill was only 45 years old when he died in Cleveland, Ohio, exactly 115 years ago. In poor health at the age of 20, Ed worked first on a ranch, then in a post office, then briefly studied theology, but gave that up to become a journalist in New York. Finally, he began teaching school, first in Ohio and then in California where he eventually became a teacher of English at the State University. He kept the job for 8 years, but was forced to resign in 1882 on account of the failing health that had dogged him most of his life.

Yet in spite of all his physical troubles, Ed was the kind of singer I'd like to have known. This is the song he left us:

THIS I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel-
That blue blade that the king's son bears, -but this

Blunt thing--!" He snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

If you haven't yet picked a song to sing today, why not try Eddie's song? With his life he wrote the words.

Might you write the music with your own?

44. Emily Lives Inside Herself

Born into a wealthy family in 1830, Emily has her photograph taken at the age of 18, then lives a remarkably uneventful life until she quietly passes at the age of 55. It will be the only photograph ever made of her.

Incredibly shy, Emily asks her friends to speak to her through an open door from an adjoining room while she stands behind the wall. Her life consists of tending her garden and baking. She never travels, never marries, and rarely leaves her home. Emily lives in a world of imagination where words are all she requires to generate a series of vivid associations. She believes that words have the power to alter us irrevocably. I believe that she is right.

Though she is widely considered to be one of the greatest wordsmiths who ever lived, not even her own family knew that Emily Dickinson was a writer. It was only after her death that more than 1,700 of her poems were found hidden in a bureau drawer. Describing the power of words to envelop and devastate the listener, Emily writes, "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

Having had virtually no communication with the world, how was it possible for Emily Dickinson to so richly describe the human experience? I believe the answer lies partly in physiology; The nervous system of a human being has approximately 100 million sensory receptors which allow us to see, hear, feel, taste and smell our environment. Yet our brains contain more 10,000 *billion* synapses which allow us to ponder and think and relate new data to previously stored ideas. Based upon this simple, mathematical differential, we are approximately 100,000 times more capable of experience in the invisible world of the mind than we are in the physical world which surrounds us.

Emily knew words to be the most powerful force there has ever been. Had she been inclined to start an advertising firm, it would likely have become the most successful one in history. I believe Emily was sending a message to ad writers when she wrote,

"It is the Imagination

that lights
the Slow Fuse
of the Possible.”

Imagination lights the fuse of the Possible with the magical fire of words. Have you ever seen the world of the Possible under the illumination of words? There are 100,000 places to go in the world of the Possible, with each one as richly textured as the world you currently see, hear, feel, taste and smell. The mind is an incredible thing.

Bringing things home from the world of the Possible to the land of Present Reality requires only that you build a bridge of words strong enough to carry your dream. Some people call this bridge Advertising. Some people call it Selling. Some call it Simple Persuasion.

Call it what you will, it is a bridge built of magical fire.

45. Nathan’s Little Flags

Twice each day, Mocatta, Pixley, Montagu, Nathan, and “Yankee” meet at Nathan’s place on St. Swithin's Lane in London. During these meetings, each of them will raise and lower little Union Jack flags until the glorious moment arrives when all five flags are down simultaneously. It is at precisely that moment that five obscure individuals, Mocatta, Pixley, Montagu, Nathan, and “Yankee,” will have established the worldwide price of gold.

The story begins with a man named Amschel, an insignificant collector of old coins who lived in the ghettos of Frankfurt, Germany during the late 1700s. Due to his specialized knowledge of coins, Amschel soon became the official “seeker of old coins” for a wealthy and powerful coin collector, the Landgrave William IX of Hesse-Kassel.

In 1805, impressed with the financial insight of Amschel’s 28 year-old son, Nathan, William IX entrusts a large portion of his wealth to him and asks that Nathan invest it for him. But rather than buying and selling old coins as his father had done, Nathan chooses to buy and sell gold bullion. One day, Nathan reports, “I know of only two men who really understand the true value of gold - an obscure clerk in the basement vault of the Banque de Paris, and one of the directors of the Bank of England. And unfortunately, they disagree! But don’t worry, sir, I have a plan.”

Soon Nathan is receiving advance information from France through a series of carefully arranged flag signals from across the English Channel. Since Nathan is receiving his information much faster than the other traders, he quickly amasses a staggering fortune. Seventeen years later, Francis I of Austria makes Nathan a baron.

And that, in a nutshell, is why a representative from the **Mocatta** Group (a division of Standard Chartered Bank), Deutsche Bank Sharps **Pixley**, **Montagu** Precious Metals (part of Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp), and Republic National Bank of New York (The **Yankee** Bank,) meet twice each day to raise and lower little flags as they fix the worldwide price of gold. And at whose place do

they meet on St. Swithin's Lane in London? Why, the headquarters of the Baron **Nathan** Mayer de **Rothschild**, of course.

And that's how five obscure individuals in London establish the worldwide price of gold at 10:30 each morning and at 3:00 each afternoon, to this very day.

46. Carrying Boxes With Cornelius

Cornelius Vanderbilt was in the first grade the year George Washington died. Five years later, Cornelius quit school at age eleven and set out to make his mark on the world.

When he was sixteen, Cornelius Vanderbilt borrowed his mother's life savings to buy a little sailboat to haul passengers and freight between Staten Island and New York City. Hungry, focused, and efficient, Vanderbilt quickly dominated the business and broke his competitors. His little boating enterprise became known as The Staten Island Ferry. By the time he was forty, his ships were hauling passengers and freight to ports all along the Atlantic coast, earning him the nickname "Commodore."

Since passengers and freight were the Commodore's business, it was only natural that he would buy up struggling railroads and turn them around. The difference between Vanderbilt and his predecessors was that his trains ran on schedule and the service was excellent. His New York Central Railroad quickly grew to become the nation's largest enterprise. During the Panic of 1873, Vanderbilt gave jobs to thousands by ordering the construction of Grand Central Station in New York City.

Cornelius Vanderbilt offered better service and lower prices than his competitors, but these are not the things that made him wealthy. The characteristics that made him one of the richest men in the world were best described by a friend: "The largest employer of labor in the United States, he despised all routine office work; kept his figures in a vest-pocket book; ate sparingly; never speculated in stocks; never refused to see a caller; rose early; read *Pilgrim's Progress* every year; and, for diversion, played whist and drove his trotters whenever he could."

Cornelius Vanderbilt did not offer better service and lower prices so that he might become rich. He became rich because he loved hauling passengers and freight, and because he did it very, very well.

Why do you do what you do? Is it for the money alone, or is it because you love to do it well? Wealth is not a destination, not a sparkling city on a hill. Wealth is simply a by-product of passion. You will become rich only if you learn to love what it is you do.

Commitment is not a product of passion.
Passion is a product of commitment.

What will you choose to love?

47. Willie and His Bank Balance

“It has left me with nothing to hope for, with nothing definite to seek or strive for. Inherited wealth is a real handicap to happiness.” — William K. Vanderbilt Sr.

Evidently, Willie Vanderbilt, grandson of Cornelius “Commodore” Vanderbilt, believes the only way a person can measure success is by the size of his bank balance. What a shame! Here’s a man with the resources to attempt anything his imagination can conceive, and he has no dreams, aspirations, or goals that are bigger than he and his little bank account.

Willie’s moanings underscore the importance of a question Pennie and I ask all our friends: “How will you measure success?”

Does anything loom bigger on the horizon of your mind than money? If your answer is no, I fear you will have a sad life. Yet if you have a dream whose accomplishment means more to you than cash, chances are you will enjoy the pursuit of that dream immensely, regardless of whether you ever achieve it.

If you aren’t happy with the money you have now, what makes you think you’ll be happier with more? If you believe money is a way of keeping score, you have condemned yourself to run, forever gasping for breath, in a race without a finish line. The race for “more” is a race in which there is never a winner.

Patrick Henry dreams of a free American nation. Orville and Wilbur Wright dream of flying like birds in the sky. Susan B. Anthony dreams of women voting like men. John F. Kennedy dreams of walking on the moon.

What dream fills the landscape of your imagination? If you cannot answer immediately, don’t despair. Dreams quickly take root when their seeds are planted by one who has taken the time to care.

Look around you and care about the things you see. Your dream will sprout soon enough. There are many things bigger than money, Willie. Open your eyes and look around.

48. Not All the Rich Are Whiners, Willie

William K. Vanderbilt Sr. is a forgettable man, best remembered for whining that “inherited wealth is a real handicap to happiness.”

Piffle, Willie. You simply have no imagination. Your own son proves it.

Willie Vanderbilt II is a young man fascinated with automobiles. He’s often seen covered in grease with an entire engine spread out around him. In 1904, young Willie outruns Henry Ford to set a new world speed record, ninety-two miles per hour. Later in the year, Willie II holds the first Vanderbilt Cup Auto Race and single-handedly changes the course of American auto making.

Before the Vanderbilt Cup, American cars are merely motorized buggies moving not much faster than a horse can trot. By offering a first prize of nearly one million dollars (by today’s standards), Willie II

inspires more than three thousand entrepreneurs to leap to the task of manufacturing stronger, better, faster cars. The race is discontinued after its seventh year, because the crowds of more than 400,000 spectators can no longer be safely controlled.

Immediately following his final Vanderbilt Cup Auto Race, Willie II begins building himself a home. The house is only a cottage at first, obviously designed for solitude rather than glittering parties. Eagle's Nest is noted primarily for its excellent wharf and boathouse. Willie II's heart, mind, and energy have now turned to sea journeys and to marine life in all its strange and wonderful forms. Each day is to be a new adventure in the waters of the deep. Before his death in 1942, Willie II discovers sixty-eight species of ocean life previously unknown to science.

I am convinced that Willie II would have been happy regardless of his financial circumstances. I am equally convinced that his forgettable father would have been a whiner had he been born destitute, middle class, modestly wealthy, or Martian.

What about you? Will you follow the example of Willie the Forgettable and blame your unhappiness on your circumstances? Or will you wake up each morning like Willie the Adventurer and shout, "Oh, good morning! What a beautiful day!"

"It is my desire and purpose that . . . Eagle's Nest become a public park and museum and as such be devoted in perpetuity to the use, education, and enjoyment of the public."

— William K. Vanderbilt II, Last Will and Testament, August 19, 1942

49. Griswold's Prank

You are Pierre Lorillard IV, heir to a vast tobacco fortune. As a Lorillard, you move in the highest social circles and are considered to be a pillar of New York's Fifth Avenue society, even though you live 40 miles north of Manhattan.

As you stroll the sidewalks of New York City this fine autumn day, you look toward the harbor and see a mountain of unsightly crates that are said to hold a gigantic statue of a woman holding a torch and wearing a crown. There has been quite a local ruckus about whether to assemble the statue or ship it back to the French. You vote for shipping it back. Your son, Griswold, however, thinks it should be installed on an island in the harbor where it can greet the incoming immigrants. Young men can be so impulsive. You turn and wave to the Roosevelts, making direct eye contact with "Teddy," the one they say has political aspirations. Perhaps it will someday prove helpful to know him.

Your principal concern at the moment, however, is that it's time once again for the Autumn Ball in the small community where you live. You were hoping to wear something a little less formal than the short, black jacket with the extremely long, split tails that has become the standard of men's formalwear. At your request, a Manhattan tailor has designed several new, black formal jackets and you're on your way to look at them.

Arriving at the tailor's shop to examine the jackets, you are instantly chagrined, wondering if perhaps a friend has bribed the tailor to play an elaborate joke on you. Though you are more than a little angry,

you smile sweetly as you gently decline to pay for the jackets, saying only, “No. I fear these simply won’t do at all.” You then walk unceremoniously out of his shop, thinking, “Let him eat those jackets for his supper. No tailor will make a fool out of me.”

Later that evening, you are stunned as your son, Griswold, swaggers into the party with his friends. They’re all wearing the black jackets that you, earlier that very afternoon, declined! You listen with rising horror as murmurs ripple across the room, “But those jackets are shaped exactly like the bright red jackets the English wear when they’re out hunting foxes!” To make matters worse, Griswold and his friends are wearing red vests beneath the tailless, black riding coats. Throughout the evening, the boys smile broadly and say, “Yes, we’re hunting foxes,” as they glance at the young ladies about the room. You leave the Autumn Ball early, certain that you will never live down the shame of this night. A few days later, you are relieved to learn that the boys’ lofty charm and social status has resulted in their outfits being imitated rather than condemned.

Today, the sale and rental of those jackets brings in more than half a billion dollars a year in the United States alone. It’s impossible to imagine a wedding or a high school prom without them. And we owe it all to a silly prank played in 1886 by Griswold Lorillard and his pals on the evening of the Autumn Ball in a little community north of New York City known as Tuxedo Park.

50. Moon River

Remember Andy Williams, the silver-voiced crooner who had his own TV show back in the 1960’s? How about Alice Cooper, the first of the gory, 70’s shock-rockers? Now imagine a happy quartet composed of Andy Williams, Alice Cooper, 1940’s sing-along cowboy Gene Autry and adult magazine publisher, Hugh Hefner. Sounds unlikely at best, right?

Well it happened.

Although the philosophical and stylistic differences separating these men were definitely “wider than a mile,” the four unlikely comrades did, in fact, come together to save a sentimental icon that was very dear to each of them. Williams, Cooper, Autry and Hefner joined hands, hearts and wallets to refurbish a deteriorated, five-story billboard in Los Angeles. What was it that made the sign so special to Andy, Alice, Gene and Hugh? Perhaps it had to do with the fact that, like each one of them, the sign was glitzy, larger-than-life, and completely homemade.

Built in 1923 to promote a Beachwood Canyon subdivision, the strange, homemade sign became the property of the city in 1944, when the company that had erected it filed bankruptcy. Not wanting to draw attention to a failed area subdivision, the city of Los Angeles chopped off a third of the sign’s message, hoping that newcomers would now assume it to simply be a navigational landmark.

It worked. By removing the last four letters, L-A-N-D, hundreds of thousands of dreamers, hopefuls, cornballs and crazies, including Andy Williams, Alice Cooper, Gene Autry and Hugh Hefner, were brightly encouraged each day as they drove past Mount Lee in Griffith Park. No

longer did they see a tacky, promotional billboard for Hollywoodland, the failed subdivision of 1923, but they saw instead a glitzy, larger-than-life landmark of nine white letters sprawled across a mountainside that somehow seemed to whisper to them, “Never give up. Never give in. This is the place where dreams come true.”

So now you know.

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“L.A. is a great big freeway.
Put a hundred down and buy a car.
In a week, maybe two, they'll make you a star.
Weeks turn into years. How quick they pass!
And all the stars that never were
Are parking cars and pumping gas.”

From **Do You Know the Way to San Jose?** Written by Hal David and Burt Bacharach.
Immortalized by Dionne Warwick.

51. Have You Never Been to NeverLand?

“I don't know whether you have ever seen a map of a person's mind. Doctors sometimes draw maps of other parts of you, and your own map can become intensely interesting, but catch them trying to draw a map of a child's mind, which is not only confused, but keeps going round all the time. There are zigzag lines on it, just like your temperature on a card, and these are probably roads in the island, for the NeverLand is always more or less an island, with astonishing splashes of color here and there, and coral reefs and rakish-looking craft in the offing, and savages and lonely lairs, and gnomes who are mostly tailors, and caves through which a river runs, and princes with six elder brothers, and a hut fast going to decay, and one very small old lady with a hooked nose.”

(Chapter 1, Paragraph 18, Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie.)

Sterling Randall Alexander Benningfield is celebrating the 46th anniversary of his 7th birthday this year and I've decided to help. Like all of Alex's birthday celebrations, this one is expected to last exactly 365 days. Then Alex will begin celebrating the 47th anniversary of his 7th birthday. As you can see, Alex has been 7 for a very long time.

In that tiny place where his world overlaps with mine, Alex is a self-made multimillionaire who owns a large corporation and is well known for his daring raids on Wall Street. But in the world where Alex lives alone, he is an adventurous pirate who wears an eye patch and a sword and keeps a knife firmly clenched between his teeth.

Following Alex through the strange oval door that leads into his private office, I notice that the opening is barely one inch higher than he is. Anyone who is taller than Alex must lower their head as

they step through the portal. Raising my head, I see that I'm now in the Captain's wood-planked cabin on an ancient sailing ship where I'm surrounded by swords and maps and flintlock pistols and a real treasure chest that's overflowing with treasure. The Captain's desk and chair sit on a raised platform that's 8 inches higher than the rest of the room. "Alex," I ask, "do you have any idea how psychologically transparent all of this is?" Of course I do," he replies with a devilish grin as he steps up onto his elevated platform.

You've heard the story of a boy who lives in NeverLand who claims that he will "never grow up." Most versions attribute that quote to Peter Pan but they're wrong, it was Captain Hook. Grown-ups call him "that nut who flies the Jolly Roger from the flagpole above his mansion." But children just call him Alex. We're delighted to have been invited to his party.

My question for you today is this: Do you wish that you knew Alex Benningfield, or are you glad that you don't?

How long has it been since you visited NeverLand?

"All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this. One day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother. I suppose she must have looked rather delightful, for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried, "Oh, why can't you remain like this for ever!" This was all that passed between them on the subject, but henceforth Wendy knew that she must grow up. You always know after you are two. Two is the beginning of the end." (Chapter 1, Paragraph 1, Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie.)

52. Secret Hiding Place

Elias was Irish-Canadian. Flora was German-American. Little Elias was the fourth of their five children. Inept at almost everything, he was scorned by his father virtually every day. Little Elias' only place to hide was in the secret world of his mind. And from this world emerged imaginary characters and places too wonderful to describe.

During the summer of 1918, 16 year-old Elias lied about his age to become a Red Cross ambulance driver in France near the end of World War I. But the ambulance of Elias wasn't quite like the hundreds of others in France. His was covered with drawings of all the imaginary friends that had so comforted him in his childhood. That year, when Elias wasn't playing poker, smoking or writing letters, he and another young man were painting helmets with camouflage colors, banging them up to look battle-scarred, and selling them to Americans in search of souvenirs. To Elias' way of thinking, he was only helping these souvenir seekers enter the world of myth and legend they sought.

After the war, Elias devoted himself to his drawing and began training several young apprentices. Using the sales skills he had honed selling faux battle helmets in France, Elias raised

\$15,000 from investors to launch Laugh-O-gram incorporated. When he won a contract to draw a series of fairy-tale cartoons for \$11,100, Elias accepted a down payment of a mere \$100 and enthusiastically dove into the assignment. Six months later the client claimed bankruptcy and Elias never saw another cent.

Despite his frantic efforts to bring in money, Elias couldn't pay his landlord so he moved into the Laugh-O-gram office. His workers soon left him and he had hardly enough money to buy food. When he received \$500 for producing a dental hygiene film, he poured it into a last-ditch effort called "Alice's Wonderland." But before it could be completed, Elias had to declare bankruptcy. Shattered, he purchased a train ticket to California where he met Lillian Bounds, who was to become the love of his life. At first it appeared as though Elias' skies would finally turn sunny, but heartbreak again hid behind the horizon. To Elias and Lilly's deep dismay, her first two pregnancies ended in miscarriages. Struggle. Bankruptcy. The death of two children. Just as Job sat in the ashes and cried out to his God, Elias sat among the shards of a thousand broken dreams.

Elias was 36 and France was 20 years in the past when, on December 21, 1937, the biggest movie stars of the day gathered to see the premiere of his new film. Charlie Chaplin, Cary Grant, Jack Benny, Shirley Temple, and George Burns were all there. As one attendee would later recall, *"It was at the climax of the film, when Snow White is presumed to be dead and she's laid out on the slab... Here was a cartoon, and the audience was crying. The biggest stars, you name them, were all wiping their eyes."*

During his lifetime, Walter Elias Disney, along with members of his staff, would receive more than 950 honors and citations from every nation in the world, including 48 Academy Awards and seven Emmys as well as honorary degrees from Harvard, Yale, UCLA and the University of Southern California. He would receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, France's Legion of Honor - Thailand's Order of the Crown - Brazil's Order of the Southern Cross - Mexico's Order of the Aztec Eagle.

Sometimes it's good to have a secret hiding place in your mind.

53. Sneaking Into Prison Camp

"The sun did not shine.
It was too wet to play.
So we sat in the house
All that cold, cold, wet day.

I sat there with Sally.
We sat there, we two.
And I said, 'How I wish
We had something to do!'

Too wet to go out

And too cold to play ball.
So we sat in the house.
We did nothing at all.”

- *The Cat in the Hat*, 1957, Random House

Felice Benuzzi is one very bored prisoner of war. Having served as a junior officer in the Italian Colonial Service under Mussolini, Benuzzi was stationed in Addis Ababa when the British barged into East Africa and took all the Italians prisoner. Now he's sitting in a POW camp near the foot of Mount Kenya where he waits despairingly for the end of an eternal war. One tedious afternoon as Benuzzi stares at the mountain that punctures the clouds of the horizon, he mumbles, *“In order to break the monotony, I need only to start taking risks again.”*

Soon he is secretly sewing clothing, making tents, hoarding food and gathering scrap metal to hammer into homemade climbing gear. *“I shall try to get out, climb Mount Kenya and return here.”* Two of his friends decide to go with him.

Leaving a note telling their British captors *“not to worry, we'll be right back as soon as we climb the mountain,”* the unlikely trio snuck out of prison camp with their bags full of makeshift gear to begin the most outrageous adventure of WWII. At first they were in danger from elephants, rhinos and leopards. Then they were in danger of starvation. Finally, they were in danger of the rocks and ice and blizzards of lethal Mount Kenya.

The three men ascended 16,300 feet to Mount Kenya's Point Lenana, hoisted a homemade flag, and then returned to the prison camp. Even though they had scaled a mountain that had previously repelled some of the world's best-equipped and most expert climbers, the most difficult part of their journey was sneaking back into prison camp without getting themselves killed, or having to hurt someone else. But they did it.

Benuzzi and his pals didn't climb the mountain simply *“because it was there.”* Their motivation in climbing majestic Mount Kenya was to laugh in the face of a barbaric world war.

What might our world be like today if we had more Felice Benuzzis?

54. That Rascal Tom

Tom was sent to prison for rustling cattle, poaching, extortion, robbery and attempted murder. But Tom was sneaky enough to escape from prison. Not once, but *twice*. Such a rascal was he that when the government began pardoning whole cellblocks full of prisoners due to overcrowding, Tom was specifically excluded by name.

At age 16, Tom participated in the Siege of Calais as the aide of Richard Beauchamp, a high-ranking army officer. When Beauchamp was killed, Tom returned sadly and wearily home, an embittered young man with a chip on his shoulder. Tom's 3 years overseas had made him dangerously critical of the government; critical enough to wind up in prison.

But young Tom didn't go to prison because he was poor - He was a wealthy landowner. And it's not that he didn't have friends in high places. In fact, Tom received a knighthood. But none of these are the things for which he's remembered. We remember Tom today because when he was forty-nine he sat cross-legged on the floor of his prison cell and read a 300 year-old book of history written by a mysterious fellow named Geoff. And then Tom began to write.

Shortly after his book was completed, Tom died in prison alone. Today there are only 2 things that remain of his life. The first of these is a marble tombstone in the graveyard of the Friary Church of St. Francis that reads, "Sir Thomas Malory. March 14, 1470." The second is a book that contains the final words that Tom ever wrote: "Here is the ende of the hoole booke of kyng Arthur and of his noble knyghtes of the Round Table." Tom's book is known today as *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

55. Birth of the Counter-Culture

Remembering the Real Dobie Gillis and Maynard G. Krebs

It was a parenthesis in the evening news, October 21, 1969. Walter Cronkite, filling the left side of 60 million black-and-white TV screens, said, "*Jack Kerouac, the novelist who wrote On the Road reached the end of it today. The 47 year-old spokesman for the Beat Generation died of a massive hemorrhage in a St. Petersburg, Florida hospital. Kerouac's books, selling millions of copies and translated into 18 languages, were regarded as a bridge between older bohemian movements and today's hippies.*"

Watching the videotape of Cronkite's 22-second eulogy of Kerouac is revealing. Over his shoulder, the whole right side of the screen reads, "*New York Index - UP 35cents, American Index - UP 26 cents*" and he says "*hippies*" in the same droning, judgmental way that moms and dads pronounced the word "*drugs*."

A melancholy misfit in his middle 20's, Jack Kerouac wandered America for 7 years in the late 1940's, and in 1951, he wrote to us of all he'd seen. Jack gave us the phrase "*Beat Generation*" and we coined from it the term "*Beatniks*"- finger-snapping, jive talking, bongo playing, poetry reading hipsters; Bob Denver as Maynard G. Krebs in "*The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*."

But finger-popping isn't what Jack was talking about at all. John Clellan Holmes was with Jack Kerouac the moment the Beat Generation was born. He says,

"Jack and I used to sit around in my apartment in New York doing what a lot of young, would-be writers in those days undoubtedly were doing also; trying to see if we could discover what, perhaps, was unique about people of our age. And Jack said, 'Well, it seems to me there is something, that we're all kind of furtive.' I said, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'We all walk down the street in the same way.' And I knew what he meant without being able to describe it. And then he kept worrying the idea, and said, 'You know, we're really beat.' It meant being reduced to the

essentials. It came out of the war when people had to live under continual tension and stress which was unnatural and the only way to do it was to no longer engage in attitudinizing and poses. You were beat. And so any energy you had left to do what you had to do was the important thing to preserve."

Prior to the publication of Kerouac's *On the Road* in 1951, America was a homogenized society. We dressed alike, acted the same, and had similar values, goals and dreams. Jack's book opened we're a multifaceted and colorful nation of diversity, fragments and fringes, and we owe it all to Kerouac.

Vincent van Gogh tried to get our attention by cutting off his ear. When we failed to notice his wound, he shot himself. Fifty-seven years later, in a 20-day marathon stream-of-consciousness, Jack Kerouac pounded his pain through the keys of an old manual typewriter onto a 120-foot roll of butcher paper. We thought it was a brilliant fiction novel. So Jack drank himself to death.

On May 22, 2001, Christie's auction house sold 120 feet of yellowed butcher paper in which were wrapped the pieces of a broken soul. Item 9652 - Lot 307, fetched 2.43 million dollars.

That's pretty cheap for a soul, don't you think?

56. Below Deck in a Storm at Sea

Ted pursued a Ph.D. in English literature at Oxford for awhile, but dropped out when he decided that his studies were "astonishingly irrelevant." In 1950, Ted invented the word "nerd". In 1984 he won a Pulitzer prize.

After dropping out of Oxford, Ted worked 9 years for Standard Oil as a designer of brochures. In the summer of 1936, he found himself below deck on the MS *Kungshold*, listening to the rhythm of the ship's engines in a focused attempt to distract himself from the terror of the storm. To further distract himself, Ted began writing a nonsensical poem to the motor's pounding beat.

"I was trying to keep my mind off the storm that was going on. This rhythm persisted in my head for about a week after I was off the ship and, probably as psycho-therapy, I began developing the theme."

When his nonsensical poem was finally complete, Ted decided that instead of signing it with his real name, Theodor S. Geisel, he would use only his middle name. And as long as he was writing nonsense, he would give himself an honorary doctorate. And in a singular, magical moment worthy of all the pixie dust of Tinker Bell, the world's beloved "Dr. Seuss" was born.

"Although I knew nothing about children's books it sounded pretty good, so I decided to get it published. It was rejected by twenty-eight publishing houses before the twenty-ninth, Vanguard Press, agreed to take a chance on bringing it out." The main reason given by the other publishing houses for rejecting Ted's book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, was that it was too different from the other children's books on the market.

By the time of his death in 1991, the 46 books written and illustrated by Ted Geisel had sold more than **200 million** copies and had been translated into 20 languages. Former Random House president Bennett Cerf once remarked, "I've published any number of great writers, from William Faulkner to John O'Hara, but there's only one genius on my authors list. His name is Ted Geisel."

A storm in your life can help you focus on what really matters, if you'll let it.

57. Words Like Boulders Down a Mountainside

Speaking of schoolchildren 60 years ago, the great Russian poet Kornei Chukovsky said, "When they read to me poems that have been taught to them in school... they have been taught hackneyed lines, absurd rhythms, cheap rhymes. There are times when I could cry with disappointment."

Chukovsky would have loved Peter Nevland.

What Peter does with words is illegal in 7 states and under investigation in 17 more, but no one would ever call him malicious. It's the Huckleberry Finn in him that causes Peter to send an avalanche of mental images thundering at you like boulders tumbling down a mountainside. You dive, dodge and jump to keep from being buried under his reckless words only to find that each narrow escape puts you directly in the path of an even bigger and more dangerous mental image.

I could give you an example but I won't, because reading a Peter Nevland poem is like watching a video of someone else's vacation to the Grand Canyon. But hearing Peter *perform* that same poem is like seeing the Grand Canyon for yourself. No, it's more like taking a running leap off the rim of the Grand Canyon with your hands tied behind your back so that the only way to pull the parachute's ripcord is with your toes.

Ted Pelton once described the writing of Jack Kerouac as "*untutored prose...filled with neologisms, onomatopoeia, speed, rough edges, frazzled grammar. Plots--if they appear at all--give way to word-riffs on ideas as they arise.*" Pelton may just as well have been describing Peter Nevland. What Kerouac did to America 60 years ago, Nevland is doing today; the two men are similar in style and identical in spirit, except for one small detail; Jack Kerouac spent his life searching for what Peter Nevland has already found.

Ever notice how the hidden moral in a Dr. Seuss book is always extremely subtle? "*Kids*," Seuss said, "*can see a moral coming a mile off and they gag at it.*" Consequently he allowed his story's morals to develop on their own, never were they forced or contrived.

Peter is like Dr. Seuss' in that he opens our eyes without ever preaching. But while the friends of Seuss include "*a Bippo-no-Bungus from the wilds of Hippo-no-Hungus*" and "*a tizzle-topped Tufted Mazurka from the African island of Yerka*," Peter's friends are dope dealers and missionaries, bankers and bums, body-pierced wackos and cake-baking Moms, and he speaks of each with equal love.

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"The creator of a new composition in the arts is an outlaw until he is a classic, there is hardly a moment in between." - Gertrude Stein

58. Strangers on the Beach

It is a cold Thursday morning in December, and I've had three days of poor fishing. Water is freezing in hoof prints on the road. I am looking toward the sea, unsure whether I will fish, when I see that the strange brothers are still camped out on the beach. I guess crazy people don't feel cold like the rest of us.

As I walk toward the camp, I am intercepted by little Johnny Ward, who falls into step beside me. We greet the brothers and are offered coffee, which we gladly accept. Johnny Ward, spying a box filled with eggs, asks one of the men where they got so many. "Didn't you notice the small hen running about?" says the man to Johnny. "That hen lays eight to ten eggs a day!" I know the man is joking, but Johnny runs off to find the miraculous hen.

The brothers tell me they are building a machine that will fly like a bird and carry them into the sky. I warm my hands around my coffee cup and quickly change the subject. "Woolworth says he's going to build the tallest building in the world. What do you think about that?" The quiet brother says over his shoulder, "I think that's a lot of nickels and dimes."

He turns and shows me a box on three legs and asks if I can make a photograph. I tell him I've never done it, but that I'm willing to try. He sets up the three-legged box and points it toward the beach. "Just squeeze this bulb when I pass in front of you."

The strange contraption, all cloth and wires, has a motor that sounds like hail on a barn roof. I watch as it lumbers down the beach gaining speed. In a moment, it is in front of me.

I come to my senses sitting on the ground with a crowd gathered about me shouting, "Did you get it? Did you get it?" I'm not sure what they mean. My brain has been foggy for several minutes, but I think I just saw a man fly into the sky. I'm not sure it really happened, and I'm afraid to ask. One of the men says, "The shutter is dropped. Let's see what he got."

The picture I've made will become the most famous photograph in the world. I have recorded the first moment of the first powered flight of a heavier-than-air flying machine. Orville and Wilbur tell me the name of John T. Daniels, photographer, will forever be remembered. I'm glad I didn't go fishing.

As the brothers help me to my feet, little Johnny Ward arrives to proclaim, "But it's only a common looking chicken!" I am told that Johnny Ward will someday look into a magic window and watch a man stride the surface of the moon. I am told that all houses will have such windows in the future.

59. Thumbing Through The Diary Of A Genius

"Our first interest began when we were children. Father brought home to us

*a small toy actuated by a rubber string which would lift itself into the air.
We built a number of copies of this toy, which flew successfully.*" - Orville Wright

June 1, 1900, from Dayton Ohio "For the present, I have but little time for my aeronautical investigations, in fact I try to keep my mind off the subject during the bicycle season as I find that business is neglected otherwise." - Wilbur

September 23, 1900 from Kitty Hawk "I have not taken up the problem with the expectation of financial profit. Neither do I have any strong expectation of achieving the solution at the present time or possibly any time. My trip would be no great disappointment if I accomplish practically nothing." - Wilbur

Friday, September 26, 1902, from Kitty Hawk "I put in part of the day constructing a death trap for a poor mouse that has been annoying us by prowling about our kitchen shelves at nights. We are now anxiously awaiting the arrival of the "victim." - Orville

Saturday, September 27, 1902, from Kitty Hawk "At 11 o'clock last night I was awakened by the mouse crawling over my face. Will had advised me that I had better get something to cover my head, or I would have it "chawed" off like Guillaume Mona had by the bear. I found on getting up that the little fellow had only come to tell me to put another piece of corn bread in the trap. He had disposed of the first piece. I have sworn "vengeance" on the little fellow for this impudence and insult..." - Orville

October 18, 1903, from Kitty Hawk "The wopper flying machine is coming on all right and will probably be done about November 1." - Wilbur

November 20, 1903, from Kitty Hawk "While in the bicycle business we had become well acquainted with the use of hard tire cement for fastening tires on the rims. We had once used it successfully for repairing a stopwatch after several watch smiths had told us it could not be repaired. If tire cement was good for fastening the hands on a stop watch, why should it not be good for fastening the sprockets on the propeller shaft of a flying machine?" - Orville

In a Western Union Telegraph to their father, December 17, 1903

"Success four flights thursday morning all against twenty one mile wind started from level with engine power alone average speed through air thirty one miles longest 57 seconds inform press. Home Christmas." - Orville

"When Columbus discovered America he did not know what the outcome would be, and no one at that time knew; and I doubt if the wildest enthusiast caught a glimpse of what really did come from his discovery. In a like manner these two brothers have probably not even a faint glimpse of what their discovery is going to bring to the children of men.
- Amos I. Root, January 1, 1905

Geniuses are just regular people, utterly committed to something. To what are you committed?

60. A Simple Telephone Call

Antonio Meucci is an Italian immigrant who cannot speak English. When his wife begins to suffer from crippling arthritis, he sets up a telephone link between his basement workshop and his wife's second floor bedroom. He then installs another telephone line so that a singer's voice can be clearly heard a long distance away. None of this would be particularly noteworthy today, but Antonio Meucci did it in 1855, *twenty-one years prior to Alexander Graham Bell's "invention" of the telephone.*

When Meucci was severely burned in the explosion of the steamship *Westfield*, his wife sold his prototype "talking telegraphs" to a junk dealer for 6 dollars. When Meucci sought to buy them back, he was told that they had been resold to an unknown man. Apprehensive that someone might steal his idea before it could be patented, Meucci worked feverishly to reconstruct his invention. Unable to raise the \$250 for a definitive patent, he filed a caveat or "notice of intent" which cost only 10 dollars. The caveat was duly registered on December 28, 1871 and renewed in 1872 and 1873.

As soon as Meucci received certification of the caveat, he delivered a working model and complete technical details to Edward B. Grant, vice president of Western Union Telegraph Company, asking permission to demonstrate his "talking telegraph" on the wires of the Western Union system. But each time Meucci tried to follow up with Mr. Grant, he was told there had been no time to arrange such a test. After two years of getting the runaround, Meucci asked that his materials be returned only to be told they had been lost. Meucci was now living on welfare and didn't have the \$10 to renew his caveat on Dec. 28, 1874.

A few months later, Alexander Graham Bell filed his historic patent. When an English-speaking friend of Antonio's contacted the Patent Office, he was told that all the documents related to the "talking telegraph" filed in Meucci's caveat had been lost. A government investigation later produced evidence of illegal relationships between certain employees of the Patent Office and officials of Bell's new company. And during the course of later litigation between Bell and Western Union, it was revealed that Alexander Graham Bell had secretly agreed to pay Western Union 20 percent of all profits from his "invention" of the telephone for a period of 17 years.

Antonio Meucci finally made it to court in 1886, but by this time Bell's company was a financial giant. Despite a public statement by the Secretary of State that "there exists sufficient proof to give priority to Meucci in the invention of the telephone," and despite the fact that the United States initiated prosecution for fraud against Bell's patent, the trial was postponed from year to year until the death of Meucci in 1896, when the case was quietly dropped.

In other words, the big boys of business had political connections and they waited the little man out.

If these words seem like the ravings of a mad conspiracy theorist to you, let me direct your attention to House Resolution 269, passed on June 11, 2002, by the 107th Congress of these United States of America. You'll find that [HRES 269 IH](#) to be an official Act of Congress that confirms everything I just told you.

Sadly, we in America have too often been willing to "look the other way" when to do otherwise might be awkward or prove embarrassing. So we shrug our shoulders and say "too bad" and go on as though nothing has happened. But thankfully, gross injustices like the swindle of Antonio Meucci don't happen anymore.

But now I'm speaking like a man wearing a paper hat. Of course these things still happen. But do we now

have the courage to stand up to the big boys when they steal from the weak and the helpless?

Do we?

61. Who the Heck is Kary Mullis, anyway?

I was reading a collection of quotes when I discovered one that made me smile:

"There is a general place in your brain, I think, reserved for 'melancholy of relationships past.' It grows and prospers as life progresses, forcing you finally, against your better judgment, to listen to country music." - Kary Mullis

I said, "This Kary Mullis fellow sounds interesting," so I decided to find out what I could.

I learned that Mullis was just 24 years old when *Nature* magazine published his paper, *The Cosmological Significance of Time Reversal*, in which he suggested that exactly half the universe is hidden inside black holes that consist of antimatter running backward in time.

But wait, there's more... Later, Mullis was buzzing down Highway 128 from San Francisco to Mendocino when he suddenly realized how to make millions - or even billions - of copies of a DNA molecule in a very short time. His breakthrough discovery, called Polymerase Chain Reaction, is a technique that amplifies DNA, enabling scientists to detect DNA sequences, diagnose genetic diseases, carry out DNA fingerprinting, and detect the AIDS virus. For this discovery, Kary Mullis was awarded the 1993 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Can I spot interesting people, or what!

Unfortunately, Kary was working as a scientist for a big corporation at the time, so they became the legal owners of his amazing discovery. When that company later sold the technology to LaRoche for \$300,000,000 did they give Kary Mullis one percent of the money? Did they toss him 3 mil for his effort? Or maybe even one third of one percent - a simpering million bucks? Nope, what Kary got was a firm handshake, a warm smile, ten thousand dollars and a certificate suitable for framing. (Gee, I'll bet all the best scientists want to go to work for that company now.)

Kary's invention of PCR opened the door that has allowed thousands of other scientists to begin finding cures for hundreds of ailments that have plagued mankind for centuries.

And some things are worth more than money.

62. Curiosity and a Cat Named Adrian

"Curiosity killed the cat," is an expression often quoted by the terminally dull, but I've never been able to make any sense of the statement. To which cat does this old adage refer? I'm aware of no story, myth, fable or fairy tale in which a cat dies of curiosity.

But I do know a story about a contemporary Englishman named Adrian.

Adrian Nicholas was curious about a small sketch drawn by Leonardo DaVinci in the margin of a notebook nearly 500 years ago. Beneath this obscure and unremarkable sketch, DaVinci had added these few words, "If a man is provided with a length of gummed linen cloth with a length of 12 yards on each side and 12 yards high, he can jump from any great height whatsoever without injury." Modern experts have long been united in their agreement that Leonardo DaVinci was wrong. Very wrong.

Adrian Nicholas, however, wasn't so sure. Using only the tools and materials that would have been available to Leonardo in 1514, Adrian Nicholas built DaVinci's 187-pound, pyramid-shaped, canvas and wood contraption and on June 27, 2000, took it with him in a hot-air balloon to an altitude of 10,000 feet and then cheerfully jumped out with it.

You gotta love a guy like that.

Even though it's been 10 weeks since Adrian jumped, I figure DaVinci is still struttin' around the streets of heaven, high-fiving all his buddies and saying, "That's right. Uh-huh. I'm bad. I'm bad. You know I'm bad," because from the majestic skies above Mpumalanga, South Africa, Adrian Nicholas lazily floated to perfect safety beneath DaVinci's canvas pyramid, saying the ride was "smoother than with modern parachutes."

Heathcliff O'Malley, who photographed Adrian's drop from a helicopter, said, "It was amazing, really beautiful. But none of us knew if it would fold up and Adrian would plummet to Earth... It works, and everyone thought it wouldn't."

Like Leonardo DaVinci, Adrian Nicholas was curious. As were Queen Isabella of Spain, Claude Monet of France and Benjamin Franklin of the Red, White and Blue.

Are you curious?

One of the benefits of curiosity is that curious people are seldom bored.

Conversely, boring people are seldom curious.

Which are you?

63. Aboard the Whaling Ship Pequod

Howard Schultz agreed to serve on the board of a strange new Internet company because he was certain that by giving online shoppers an opportunity to experience the thrill of the chase, the odd little company, eBay, would succeed beyond all expectations. What Howard Schultz did not suspect is that his involvement would earn him more than 100 million dollars. But launching an online auction company was not the original dream of Howard Schultz. No, not by fathoms.

Years earlier, three short words, "Call me Ishmael," had plunged a much younger Howard deep into a tale that was at once both dark and strong. As Howard sailed 129 chapters aboard the whaling ship *Pequod*, the heat of Captain Ahab's smoldering rage had caused him to see a steamy mist floating before his eyes.

Finally in chapter 130, "while peering ahead through the horizontal vacancy between the main-top-sail and top-gallant-sail, he raised a gull-like cry in the air, 'There she blows! - there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby Dick!'" From that moment forward, tall ships sailed the horizon of Howard Schultz's mind and there was forever magic in "a hump like a snow-hill" floating above dark waters.

Hermann Melville penned the story of Ahab's mad chase in 1851, but the book went largely unnoticed for more than 70 years. The fact that Melville died in grim and cold obscurity seemed terribly wrong to Howard Schultz and he wanted to do something about it. His boyish dream was to liquefy and bottle all the seafaring romance of Melville's tall ships and open seas. Howard believed that by doing so, he could create a beverage that would rival Coca-Cola.

When he told his friend Terry Heckler that he would someday launch the Pequod Company, Terry said, "No one is ever going to say, 'Hey, let's drink some Pee-quod!' You're going to have to come up with something else." So Howard sailed once more in chase of the great white whale and found his answer in Chapter 81 of *Moby Dick*. "The predestinated day arrived, and we duly met the ship Jungfrau, Derick De Deer, master, of Bremen. At one time the greatest whaling people in the world, the Dutch and Germans are now among the least; but here and there at very wide intervals of latitude and longitude, you still occasionally meet with their flag in the Pacific. For some reason, the Jungfrau seemed quite eager to pay her respects. While yet some distance from the Pequod, she rounded to, and dropping a boat, her captain was impelled towards us, impatiently standing in the bows instead of the stern. 'What has he in his hand there?' cried [the first mate,] pointing to something wavingly held by the German; 'It's a lamp-feeder and an oil-can. He's out of oil, and has come a-begging.' 'Not that,' answered Stubb, 'no, no, it's a coffee-pot, Mr. Starbuck; he's coming off to make us our coffee...'"

So when next you take a sip that is at once both dark and strong, take a look at the circular green logo on the side of the cup. And if your whipped cream floats with "a hump like a snow-hill," perhaps you'll understand why.

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From: "Walters, Terry"
To: "memo@wizardofads.com"
Subject: Starbuck Fact or Fiction?

Date: Mon, Jul 23, 2001, 11:21 AM

Mr. Williams,

I thoroughly enjoyed your story about Howard Schultz and Starbucks. Unfortunately your facts may be suspect. According to my research, Starbucks was founded in 1971 by three teachers that also chose the two-tailed siren for their logo. Here's the problem: Mr. Schultz joined Starbucks in 1982, a full 11 years after the founding of the first store. So, either Mr. Schultz was involved from the beginning, or the name Starbucks wasn't coined until after Mr. Schultz joined the company, OR your information is completely wrong and Mr. Schultz was not involved at all in the naming of Starbucks Coffee.

Terry Walters

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From: Roy H. Williams
To: "Walters, Terry"
Subject: Re: Starbuck Fact or Fiction?
Date: Tue, Jul 24, 2001, 6:46 AM

Terry,

You caught me.

As an historian, I am definitely of the revisionist camp in that I never let the facts get in the way of a good story. (I'm an ad writer, remember?) Admittedly, I blended four distinct persons into a single, representative, "Howard Schultz" character in my memo, "Aboard the Whaling Ship Pequod." The story - as I told it - is true, although it's not altogether accurate.

The unvarnished facts of the Starbucks story are actually a bit tedious. Had I for the sake of detailed accuracy inserted Jerry Baldwin, Gordon Bowker and Zev Siegl into my story, the pace would have slowed, the story's essence would have dissipated and its romantic point would have been unconscionably dulled.

By opening with Howard Schultz, (who purchased Starbucks from Baldwin, Bowker and Siegl just as Ray Kroc once purchased McDonald's from Mac and Dick McDonald.) I was able to foreshadow the whaling theme with a few words about online auction bidders and "the thrill of the chase."

In defense of my reckless handling of fragile accuracy, I can say only that my stories are never constructed to revolve around their central characters, but around the reader. I stretch literary license to near-transparency in an effort to help my readers see inside themselves more clearly.

The point I was hoping to make as we sailed aboard the Pequod is that virtually anything – even a book about a ship chasing a whale and the wind that blows through its sails – can be used as a unifying force to give a person focus and direction.

And we all need focus and direction.

Thanks for writing, Terry, and my compliments on your studious research.

Yours,

Roy H Williams

PS - Where was Starbucks really born? Probably in the brain of Gordon Bowker. Co-founder Jerry Baldwin once said that Bowker was "the magic, mystery, and romance man. It must have been obvious to him from the start that a visit to Starbucks could evoke a brief escape to a distant world." At the time that he, Baldwin and Siegl launched Starbucks, Gordon Bowker was in the advertising business. Interestingly, it was actually his creative partner, Terry Heckler, who shot down the name "Pequod" and designed the now-famous mermaid logo. Bowker went on to found the Redhook Ale Brewery.

64. Charlie and Fred

Orphaned at the age of 9, Fred survived by selling newspapers on street corners and working long hours for the railroad. Later as a struggling teenager, Fred taught himself enough science and algebra to push his way into the emerging frontiers of electric energy and mechanical engineering. By the time he was grown, Fred was manufacturing and selling electric light fittings, dynamos and lift cranes to an eager public. He had, at last, escaped an impossibly difficult childhood to live in a world that was under complete control; a world in which every day was a perfect copy of the day before.

Charlie on the other hand, had it easy. Born into the English aristocracy, Charlie lived the sporting life of the idle rich, racing bicycles as a child and then founding the Aero Club at the age of 14 for the sole purpose of flying hot air balloons. By 19, Charlie was considered to be one of the most skillful drivers of racing automobiles in the world, and at 26, he set a new World Land Speed Record at 93 mph. Charlie was completely happy only when things were in danger of careening impossibly out of control. His only thoughts were of freedom, danger, and reckless abandon.

Charlie was an adventurous 27 and Fred a predictable 41 when they met in 1904. Miraculously, this misfit pair became great friends and went into business together. Their agreement was that old Fred would continue to manufacture fine mechanical products and that young Charlie would sell them to all his fine friends.

Six years later, sporting Charlie became the first man to fly an airplane non-stop across the English Channel both ways. He was killed in July of that same year when his French-built Wright biplane broke up in mid-air. Charlie was Britain's first aircraft fatality.

Fred was devastated by Charlie's death and immediately had a nervous breakdown. But when he recovered, he spent the balance of his life making sure that Charlie's fondest dream would come true – that his name would be forever associated with automobiles in the way that Chubb's was with safes and Steinway's was with pianos. And that, my friends, is the story of how Charlie Stewart Rolls and Frederick H. Royce came together to build Rolls-Royce, one of the best-known brands in history.

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NOTE: Just before his death in 1933, Fred dictated a handbook of guidelines for future generations of his company's engineers to follow. That handbook is one of the most closely guarded industrial secrets in the world today.

65. The Loneliest Man

Excruciatingly shy, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson lived a lonely childhood. Bullied and tormented by the older children because of his severe stammering, Charlie turned ten on January 27, 1842, and he remained ten years old until the day he died in 1898. Though he lived to be nearly 67, Charlie never overcame his stuttering problem, except, curiously, in the presence of little girls younger than eleven. He was to them a brilliant entertainer and friend, a knight in shining armor.

Fascinated with inversions, Charlie's favorite game was to change one letter of a word to make an entirely new word, and to continue doing so until he had created a word which was related to the original; such as changing Wheat to Bread, and then Bread to Toast:

WHEAT -> CHEAT -> CHEAP -> CHEEP -> CREEP -> CREED -> BREED ->

BREAD -> BREAK -> BLEAK -> BLEAT -> BLEST -> BLAST -> BOAST -> TOAST (Sound easy? Then why not try a simple one, like changing Head to Foot, Sleep to Dream, or Linen to Sheet? Charlie accomplished each of these and hundreds of others as well! *)

Though painfully shy, Charlie was highly organized, keeping a register of every letter he ever wrote. Upon his death, Charlie's register filled 24 volumes and listed 98,721 letters.

Perhaps the loneliest man who ever lived, Charlie had insomnia, ate only one meal a day and never married. His only joy was playing games with little kids.

Henry Liddell, dean of Christ Church College, employed Charlie as a logician and a professor of mathematics, posts he held at the college until the end of his life. On July 4, 1862, Henry Liddell asked Charlie if he would row his three daughters up the Thames River from Oxford to Godstow for a picnic and then row them back home before dark. Delighted, Charlie spent the entire day telling the girls a fantastic story in which Liddell's 9-year-old daughter was the heroine. Upon returning home, the little girl begged Charlie to "please write the story down." A few days later, Charlie presented her mother with a lengthy, hand-written account and assumed he had heard the last of it.

Not long after, novelist Henry Kingsley visited the deanery and happened to pick up the story from the drawing room table. Reading it, he urged Mrs. Liddell to persuade the author to publish it. The daughter's name, by the way, was Alice, and Charlie's story was about her adventures in a place of inverted reality called "Wonderland."

True to his love for inversions, the book was published only after Charlie inverted his Christian name to Lutwidge Charles, then translated it to the Latin, Ludovicius Carolus, from which he then anglicized it to Lewis Carroll. Though he, himself, could never speak clearly, the names and sayings of his characters, the March Hare, the Mad Hatter, the Cheshire Cat and the White Knight, have become part of our everyday speech. Only the Bible and Shakespeare are quoted more often.

66. The Rainbow and the Woodster

Until recently, I had always assumed that rainbows disappeared from sight long before they touched the earth and that searching for the end of the rainbow was nothing more than a game for the gullible. Or that if they did touch the earth, that the rainbow moved with the viewer, so that you could spend all day chasing one and never be closer than you were when you started.

But now I know the truth: rainbows do reach the ground and you can walk into them and through them and be wrapped in luminous ribbons of color. I know it because I've seen it, done it, been there.

The rainbow was a big one, making landfall in the center of a new-mown lawn at the southeast corner of Koenig and Lamar in Austin, Texas. Pennie, Rex and Jake were all with me, as well as Woody Justice, the original client of my firm and a very dear friend. (Not many years ago, back when Woody and I were both desperately poor, I made a solemn pledge to him that I would do all I could to help him succeed, and he pledged the same to me. For my part, I began telling Springfield, Missouri what a wonderful jeweler Woody was. For his part, the Woodster began telling the whole world what a marketing wizard he had found in me.)

Now back to the corner of Koenig and Lamar: seeing the end of a rainbow physically touching the earth not 100 feet in front of me, I now had a new question: where was my leprechaun and his pot of gold?

Having had a few months to think about it, I've decided that there can only be three possible answers:

1. There is no pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.
2. Someone else had gotten there first and had already taken it.
3. The leprechaun was riding in the car with me, and had already given me his pot of gold.

Look at the illustration of Woody Justice and I think you'll agree that number 3 is not only possible, but more than a little bit likely.

How about you? Do you have a friend who works day and night to help you reach your goals? Is there someone in your life who always cheers you on, no matter what?

If so, I think that perhaps you, too, have touched the colors at the end of the rainbow.

67. Using Your Ruby Red Slippers

Dorothy's dream is to get to Kansas, but the people around her are all little Munchkins who have never heard of Kansas and would never consider leaving Munchkinland anyway, so she's off to see the Wizard.

Along the way, Dorothy teams up with a Tin Man without a heart and a Scarecrow lacking a brain. Together they enter a dark forest where their greatest fear is that they will be attacked by "lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Lions and tigers and bears." As often happens to the fearful, the first creature they encounter is the one they fear most. (Ironically, the thing we fear most is often the best thing that can happen to us.) The Lion — who, as it happens, claims to be a coward — turns out to be a tremendous ally and becomes an intimate friend.

This trio, lacking courage, brains, and heart, must now defeat a wicked witch, flying monkeys, and ugly castle guards. After much hardship and pain, they arrive in Oz, only to realize they already possess the things they sought! The Wizard affirms the bravery of the Lion, the intellect of the Scarecrow, and the heart of the Tin Man with presentations of a medal, a diploma, and a clock.

But what about Dorothy and Kansas?

Struggling, fighting, running, and exasperated, Dorothy has been wearing the ruby red slippers all along. She simply doesn't know how to use them. The secret to accomplishing her dream, says the Wizard, is to concentrate on it with all her might while saying the right words. Voilá! Kansas.

I believe God has given you a dream and your own special pair of ruby red slippers. You have the ability to do great things. Are you concentrating on your goal with all your might? Are you saying the right words? Are you helping the heartless, the frightened, and the foolish around you? Scarecrows, tin men, and cowardly lions are quick to rally 'round a person with a dream. Yes, you need them, but they need you, too.

You are the one with the slippers.

68. Were You a Happy 2 Year-old?

Do you remember when your mind was fully open and you saw the world through eyes of wonder? Everything was new when you were two. And anything was possible.

“All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this. One day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother. I suppose she must have looked rather delightful, for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried, "Oh, why can't you remain like this for ever!" This was all that passed between them on the subject, but henceforth Wendy knew that she must grow up. You always know after you are two. Two is the beginning of the end.”

- *Peter Pan*, Chapter 1, Paragraph 1.

Although J.M. Barrie wrote those words in 1904, they've recently been proven to be precisely correct by one of the world's leading neurologists. Professor Steven Pinker, chair of the department of Brain and Cognitive Science at MIT, says,

"We don't really know why, but the brain of a child is literally different from the brain of an adult. We do know that the brain of a two-year-old has fifty percent more connections between brain cells than an adult has. Basically from two it's all downhill in terms of the power of the brain to store new memories and form new associations, because it's the connections between the brain cells where the memory traces are laid down. The brain of a child is literally working harder. A two-year-old's brain is burning fifty percent more sugar and consuming fifty percent more oxygen than an adult's brain, and that might be why they're so much better at learning than we are."

The moment that Professor Pinker prefaced his comment about two-year olds with that curious, qualifying clause, “We don't really know why...” the beagle in my brain awoke from slumber and wailed "Aroo! Aroo-aroo! It's time for an adventure."

As I followed the beagle, Intuition, through the Forest of Confusion, a strange hypothesis came upon me: *Science can't figure out "why" because science has been looking for a biological reason. I'm convinced that the slowing of brain activity past the age of two is a **learned** behavior and not biological at all.*

Anytime a two-year-old has a learning experience and decides "always..." or "never..." a predictable firing order of neurons is established and alternative neural pathways are closed. The reason that two year-olds have 50 percent more connections between brain cells is because they have not yet decided what's impossible. At least that's what my beagle told me.

Can you believe that J.M. Barrie came to exactly the same conclusion in *Peter Pan*?

"When the first baby laughed for the first time, the laugh broke into a thousand pieces and they all went skipping about, and that was the beginning of fairies... Every time a child says 'I don't believe in fairies' there is a little fairy somewhere that falls down dead."

In a very similar sense, when we think "always" or "never," a synaptic pathway closes in our brains and a possibility dies. With each day's new experiences, a child decides that more and more things are "not possible." It doesn't take many years before they are living a world of drab possibilities and dreary, grey expectations.

You haven't been living in that black-and-white world, have you?

Awaken your beagle! The game is afoot, the chase is on and you are desperately needed.

Come, it is time to run.

69. The Best Salesman I Ever Knew

Charlie Myers's job was to sell used cars from a dumpy car lot on the wrong side of town. And sell them he did. Charlie knew nothing at all about cars, but he did know a lot about people.

The thing I remember best about Charlie was his upbeat attitude. Charlie was instantly and forever your friend — and there was nothing phony about it. Charlie believed that each day was going to be the best day of his life, and it often was.

The first time I saw him, he was dressed like a man going to the bank for a loan. I asked him what was the occasion. “No occasion,” he replied. “I just believe that when you look right, you act right.” Charlie didn't dress well to impress the customer; he dressed well because it gave him confidence. It made him feel in control. Charlie said it made him feel “ready.”

One day when I had dropped in to visit Charlie, I noticed on his lot the most boring car I had ever seen. It was solid beige with no accent trim, and it even had a bench seat. I said, “Charlie, how in the world will you ever find a buyer for a car like that one?”

I'll never forget Charlie's answer. “Roy, there's a butt for every seat,” he said. “That's Somebody's dream car, and I'm just waiting for Somebody to get here!”

Ultimately, Charlie Myers was discovered by a leading radio station and became “Cheerful Charlie,” one of the most successful morning drive deejays of the decade. Tens of thousands of people enjoyed starting off their day to the sound of Charlie's voice.

The point I'm trying to make is this: Contrary to popular belief, selling isn't about having the right inventory; as Cheerful Charlie so eloquently phrased it, “There's a butt for every seat.” Selling is simply “acting right.”

I once sat in a room with 29 other businessmen while Zig Ziglar took us through a simple exercise: Standing at a whiteboard, he asked us to name the attributes of the perfect employee. When we had listed 114 different things, none of us could think of another. Zig then took us back through the list and asked us to tell him whether each of the attributes was an attitude or a skill. We'd call out the answer and Zig would write next to the attribute and “A” for attitude or an “S” for skill.

When we were done, we saw that in describing the perfect employee we had listed 105 words that referred to an attitude and only 9 that referred to a skill.

In case you haven't yet figured it out, this story isn't about just my friend Cheerful Charlie and his opportunities. It's about you and yours.

Has your attitude been holding you back?

70. A Tale of Two Eddies

“Easy Eddie” O’Hare is a dirty lawyer in the pay of Chicago’s Al Capone. Not wanting to see his son get pulled into a life of criminal activity, Easy Eddie sends 13 year-old “Little Eddie” to military school, where he pursues an interest in marksmanship and becomes president of the rifle club.

When the Feds begin to close in on Al for tax evasion, Easy Eddie dodges a prison sentence by turning over the documents that send Al to the Graybar Hotel. With Capone safely tucked away in prison, Easy Eddie begins helping the feds put other members of Capone’s gang behind bars as well.

During his final year at the Annapolis Naval Academy, Little Ed learns that a member of Al Capone’s old gang has gunned down his father on the streets of Chicago. Shortly after his father’s funeral, Little Ed is sent to Pensacola, Florida, to complete his training as a Navy fighter pilot.

In Pensacola, Little Ed proposes to Rita on the day they meet. They marry 6 weeks later and sail to Hawaii in separate ships - Ed in a navy transport, Rita in an ocean liner. But upon their arrival there is little time for romance. Ed is needed quickly in the South Pacific.

February 20, 1942 - Nine Japanese bombers are closing in fast on the USS Lexington. Six Navy Wildcats, one of them piloted by Ed O’Hare, roar off the *Lexington's* deck to try and stop them. Ed and his wingman are the first to spot the V formation of bombers and begin a steep dive to head them off. The other 4 pilots were too far away to intercept the enemy bombers before they’ll be in position to drop their load on the Lexington. The odds are 9 to 2. Not good. To make matters worse, Ed's wingman discovers that his guns are jammed and is forced to turn away. Eddie O’Hare stands alone between the *USS Lexington* and 9 Japanese fighter planes.

Never hesitating, Ed roars into the enemy formation and shoots down 5 of the enemy planes. He is a busy, busy boy. His commander will later report that he saw 3 of the bombers falling in flames toward the sea at the same time. Eddie is busy damaging a sixth Japanese plane when his 4 buddies finally arrive and the *USS Lexington* is saved.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt calls Ed’s fearless attack “one of the most daring, if not *the* most daring, single action in the history of combat aviation.” Ed is promoted to Lieutenant

Commander and awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. A year and a half later, Eddie will fail to return to the ship after flying a dangerous nighttime mission. He and his plane will remain forever somewhere in the South Pacific.

The next time you're changing planes in Chicago, ask for directions to see the statue of the man for whom the world's busiest airport is named. And take a look at Chicago's favorite son - Lieutenant Commander Edward "Butch" O'Hare.

71. Ernie and Laurine

"Just as I was to enter the 7th grade at St. Mel's I was stricken with rheumatic fever and was confined to bed for almost a year and was in a wheelchair for another. When my physician heard that a tutor had been employed for me, he asked Father if his son, Ernie, could join me for the sessions. (Ernie had dropped out of school to roam and consequently, was quite far behind the other students.) Thus we began a regular routine of study as Ernie, in his sonorous tones, read aloud to me; first from the classics, then always from a Zane Grey novel. When I was able to begin attending public school again, Ernie would come and wheel me there and back each day. On the way home, we always stopped at the bakery where Ernie would buy a chocolate éclair and I would buy a cream puff. Those were happy times."

Years later: "At that time there was no Cesar Chaves to make the dramatic appeal for justice. There were grave abuses by gancheros in recruiting. It was an evil form of bondage. Salaries and housing were an abomination, and there was nothing against child labor. When Cardinal Mooney heard of the situation, he asked me to tutor his priests in the Spanish language. Though our attempts to set up credit unions and co-ops were always thwarted, we did persuade several families to break the circuit and find jobs in the factories rather than in the fields where work was seasonal and dependent on the gancheros who kept them in slavery."

"Countless stories could be told about those who were brought to freedom. There was little Pepito existing in unspeakable squalor, his small body battered black and blue, his cheeks, lips, nose and toes nipped by rats. He was six years old, a four-corner-shoe-shiner, whose so-called father grabbed his earnings for liquor. With legal aid we were able to release him from his father and give him into the custody of his grandmother. Today he is a happy, successful businessman in Toledo, devoted to his faith and family. Nor can I forget the depth of purpose of middle-aged men sitting on the floor, practicing writing on old scraps of paper, listening to tapes I made, and repeating after me words and sounds. Reading to the men always made me think of Ernie, my childhood friend who, during World War II, was among the Allied force that liberated Paris from German occupation. I'm told that Ernie personally liberated the Paris Ritz Hotel, where he marched through the front door, walked directly to the bar, laid his rifle upon it and ordered a whiskey."

“Years later in West Palm Beach, I saw a man with a black moustache outside the church talking to the pastor. As I passed by them, the man stared uncomfortably at me until he finally shouted, ‘You’re Cream Puff!’ Recognizing the voice, I turned and smiled, ‘Yes, and you’re Chocolate Eclair.’ Back in the days when Ernie would read to me and wheel my chair to the bakery, who would have predicted that ‘Cream Puff Catherine’ would become Sister Laurine, a nun of the Catholic church, and that ‘Eclair Ernie’ would become Ernest Hemingway, a writer who would tilt the world?”

- Isabel Catherine Neville (1901-1981)

Excerpted from her unpublished memoirs,
Graciously shared with us by Donna Pugliani

72. Tigers in the Mind of Borges

A Safari into the Imagination of a Literary Legend

Throughout his lonely childhood, his dull Swiss teachers insisted on pronouncing his first and last name as though both rhymed with "forge." Never once did they suspect that it might be pronounced "HOR-hay LWEES BHOR-hays." Not once did they look at this shy Argentinean and see in him the audacious writer who would soon startle the world. But his weary instructors did know that he was fond of the Zoo and that he spent countless hours there gazing at the tigers:

"In my childhood I was a fervent worshiper of the tiger - not the jaguar, that spotted "tiger" that inhabits the floating islands of water hyacinths along the Parana and the tangled wilderness of the Amazon, but the true tiger, the striped Asian breed that can only be found by men of war, in a castle atop an elephant. I used to linger endlessly before one of the cages at the zoo; I judged vast encyclopedias and books of natural history by the splendor of their tigers... Childhood passed away, the tigers and my passion for them faded, but still they are in my dreams. In that underground sea of chaos they still endure. As I sleep, I am drawn into some dream or other, and suddenly I realize that it's a dream. In those moments, I often think: This is a dream, a pure diversion of my will; and since I have unlimited power, I am going to bring forth a tiger. Oh, incompetence! My dreams never seem to engender the creature I so hunger for. The tiger does appear, but it is all dried up, or it's flimsy-looking, or it has vagaries of shape or an unacceptable size, or it's altogether too ephemeral, or it looks more like a dog or bird than like a tiger..."

As he grew older, Borges' eyesight did cruelly abandon him, but never his faithful tigers.

"And now that I am blind, one single color remains for me, and it is precisely the color of the tiger, the color yellow."

Tigers, leaping out from the pages of books once read. Tigers, creeping from the mists of forgotten zoo-trip memories. Tigers, filling the mind of Borges:

"So interwoven is reading with the other habits of my days that I do not know if my first tiger was the tiger in a print or the one, now dead, whose stubborn come-and-go in its cage I followed as if in a spell on the other side of the iron bars. My father enjoyed encyclopedias; I judged them, I am certain, by the images of tigers they offered me... One

will wonder quite reasonably why tigers and not leopards or jaguars? I can only respond that spots displease me and not stripes. If I were to write leopard in place of tiger the reader would immediately intuit that I was lying. To these tigers of sight and word I have joined another which was revealed to me by our friend Cuttini, in the curious zoological garden whose name is Animal World... This last tiger is of flesh and blood. With evident and terrified happiness I neared this tiger, whose tongue licked my face, whose indifferent or affectionate mitt lingered on my head, and which, unlike its precursors, possessed smell and weight. I will not say this tiger that amazed me is more real than the others, since an oak is not more real than the shapes of a dream, but I would like to thank here our friend, this tiger of flesh and blood my senses perceived that morning and whose image comes back as those tigers come back in books."

Jorge Luis Borges, consumed by tigers, is gone now. And of his days of walking among them he had only this to say:

"Time is the substance of which I am made. Time is a river that sweeps me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger that tears me apart, but I am the tiger; it is a fire that consumes me, but I am the fire. The world, unfortunately, is real; I, unfortunately, am Borges."

73. The Seventh Wonder of the World

You've heard of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, but you probably can't name them. This is because the Seven Wonders are utterly irrelevant to your life today, and most of them no longer exist.

While each of the individual wonders stood for centuries, it was only during the time of Aristotle and his star pupil Alexander (later to be suffixed "the Great") that all seven were in simultaneous existence. Only the oldest of the wonders, the Great Pyramid at Giza, remains with us today.

Yet far more wonderful than the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World are the seven *original* wonders of the world, and all seven of these remain! As a matter of fact, you and I are wonder number six. The seventh wonder is rest.

I write about rest because I greatly fear the disappearance of this wonder from our generation. Were rest an animal, it would certainly head the endangered species list. Its extinction would come at a terrible price.

The original plan was for every seventh day to be set aside for quiet reflection — thinking, unwinding, pondering — not for frantically trying to get caught up on all the things left undone. "Remember the seventh day, and keep it set apart." Was this advice given for the benefit of the Creator? No, it was for the benefit of humankind. Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not talking about religion; I'm talking about our obvious and indisputable need for mental, emotional, and psychological rest.

I am convinced of the wisdom of the original plan because I have seen the results of its abandonment. Rest is under siege today; work and entertainment have placed a bounty on its head, and we collect this bounty with the fierce determination of addicts. We trade rest for movie tickets, career advancement, Little League games, and traffic jams. As a result, we are frazzled, frantic, short tempered, and dissatisfied. Have we forgotten how to rest? Do we think it no longer essential to our mental and emotional well being? I believe joy and contentment will continue to elude us until we reclaim the gift of rest.

When rest becomes boredom, we have become addicted to work and have forgotten how to sit and think.

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The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World were the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Lighthouse of Pharos Island.

74. How 'Bout Those Canadians, Eh?

I wear a little Canadian flag on the lapel of my sport coat these days as a statement of my admiration for the people of Canada. Having traveled to Canada several times, I can safely say that I've finally figured out what it is that makes Canadians a little bit different from their counterparts here in the US.

In a word, it's the Canadian Perspective.

Canadians look at things differently from those of us who live in these frantic United States. Is it any wonder that many of our greatest comedians and comic actors are actually Canadian? Jim Carrey, Mike Myers, Dan Akroyd, John Candy, Norm MacDonald, Michael J. Fox, David Foley, Mathew Perry, Howie Mandel, Rick Moranis and Martin Short. All Canadian. Likewise, the great Thomas Chong of Cheech and Chong and the late Phil Hartman of NewsRadio and *Saturday Night Live*. Canadian. Speaking of *Saturday Night Live*, you know Lorne Michaels, the writer and producer of the show? Yep, he's another one.

You know that Canada is exactly like the US, except that it's cleaner and has friendlier people and a lot less crime, right? Each of those differences can be directly attributed to the Canadian Perspective, which, in a nutshell, is this: Canadians care. They genuinely, truly, and honestly care. (Don't ask me why they care or how they learned to care. I really don't know. My best guess is that the cold Canadian winters made them huddle up and get to know each other, and after they got to know one another, they said, "Hey, you're not so bad...")

Trust me, one can learn a lot from a trip to Canada. (Uh-oh. I can already hear the rednecks bellowing, "I don't believe in travelin' outside the US when there's plenty to see right here in

'merica...") But I'm not suggesting that you travel to see mountains, canyons, lakes, rivers or buildings. I'm suggesting that you travel to meet people who are different from you. It's worth a trip to Canada just to talk to a Canadian cop. His warm attitude and big grin will remind you so much of Andy Griffith that you'll think you're in Mayberry.

Do you resent me saying that Canadians, as a rule, seem to care more than we do? Have I made you angry by implying that we could learn a thing or two from our brothers and sisters to the North? Does it make you uncomfortable that Canadians might actually be better than us at more than just ice hockey?

Canadians have figured out that "caring about people" doesn't cause the same kind of stress as caring about things. Canadians are more concerned with who they are being than with what they are doing.

All in all, it's not a bad way to live, eh?

75. Chariots of Fire

I finally figured out how the movie *Chariots of Fire* received its name. The main character, Eric Liddell, is a student whose running makes him feel closer to God. Consequently, when he learns that his Olympic race will be on a Sunday, he chooses not to run, believing that he should honor God by resting on the seventh day. His decision throws everyone around him into turmoil, but Liddell holds fast and everything works out fine in the end. The movie's title, *Chariots of Fire*, is a specific reference to an ancient story about another man who holds firm in the face of seeming disaster.

The title, *Chariots of Fire*, was taken from the second Book of Kings, where we read of yet another man with total confidence in the invisible and the unknowable:

"Go, find out where Elisha is," the king orders, "so I can send men to capture him." The report comes back: "He is in Dothan." So the king sends horses and chariots and a strong force during the night, and they surround the city.

When Elisha's servant Gehazi gets up and goes out early the next morning, he sees that an army with horses and chariots has surrounded the city of Dothan. "Oh, my lord Elisha, what shall we do?" Gehazi asks. "Don't be afraid," says Elisha calmly, putting on his clothes. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." As Gehazi continues to pace about, wringing his hands in fear, Elisha looks upward and says, "Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then Gehazi's eyes are opened, and he looks, and sees the hills around the king's army are full of *horses and chariots of fire.*"

Is this kind of supreme confidence available only to great historical figures and amazing athletes, or is it hidden deep inside every one of us? I can't help but remember a scene from another movie. In *Shakespeare in Love*, Mr. Fennyman, the loan shark, and his two henchmen apprehend Henslowe, the cash-poor owner of The Rose Theater; they demand the repayment of his debt. "Allow me to

explain about the theater business,” explains Henslowe. “Its natural condition is one of insurmountable obstacles on the road to imminent disaster.” “So what shall we do?” asks Fennyman sharply. Henslowe shrugs and replies, “Nothing... Strangely enough, it all turns out well.” His answer is unacceptable and Fennyman’s goons lurch forward to kill him. Suddenly, the queen’s herald strides into the town square and announces a solution. The scene ends with Henslowe walking away unscathed.

When you find yourself solidly in the middle of “imminent disaster,” consider the confidence of Eric Liddell, Henslowe and Elisha, and look up; the hills around you are covered with horses and chariots of fire, waiting to come to your rescue, if only you will believe in them.

76. Life is a Carnival Ride

"Life is truly a ride. We're all strapped in and no one can stop it.... I think that the most you can hope for at the end of life is that your hair's messed, you're out of breath, and you didn't throw up." - Jerry Seinfeld

Budapest, Hungary -1910: Bertalan Gabor takes his 10 year-old son, Dennis, to a carnival where the boy rides a merry-go-round whose seats aren't on the backs of little wooden ponies, but in the cockpits of little wooden airplanes. Later, when a real plane flies low over the carnival, Dennis has a classic "little boy's" idea. Scampering home, he finds a pencil and draws an amusement park ride with real airplanes tethered to a pole by a wire. Smiling, Papa Bertalan helps young Dennis put his 'blueprints' in order and even pays the fees to have them submitted to the Hungarian Patent Office.

Can you imagine the confidence that was gained by little Dennis Gabor when he was awarded Patent No. 54, 703 for the airplane merry-go-round? I suspect it made a lifelong impression on the kid. Wouldn't you agree?

Seventeen years later, 27 year-old Dennis Gabor invented the mercury-vapor lamp used in millions of streetlights around the world. Then, while waiting for a tennis court at age 47, Gabor had another "little boy's" idea. Gazing at the peaks and valleys in water ripples, Gabor knew that the height of its peaks and the depth of its valleys could measure the intensity of a wave. And if a set of ripples collided with a second set of ripples and the peaks of each coincided with the peaks of the other, they would combine to form still higher peaks. But if the peaks of one matched up with the valleys of the other, they would cancel each other out.

Realizing that light is likewise made of waves of varying intensity, it occurred to Gabor that "light added to light could produce darkness." And the hologram was born - a discovery that enjoys hundreds of uses today, including bar-code scanners in supermarkets, 'heads-up' displays in automobiles, and holographic security devices on millions of credit cards. Dennis Gabor's discovery won him the 1971 Nobel Prize in Physics.

But what if Bertalan Gabor hadn't been willing to send a little boy's idea to the Hungarian Patent Office? Might we be walking darker streets today and waiting in longer lines at the supermarket?

Do you give the people around you the encouragement they need? Or do you wait, straight pin in hand, to burst every half-inflated idea you encounter?

The world is full of people like Dennis Gabor. What we need is another encourager like Bertalan.

Are you willing to fill his shoes?

77. The Exact Science of Creativity

It was during the Business Topology module of the Magical Worlds curriculum that John Quarto von Tivadar raised his shy hand and quietly asked, "Have you ever studied TRIZ?" Seeing the blank look on my face, John knew instantly that he might as well have asked, "How much should a hamster weigh?"

"No, John, I've never even heard of TRIZ," I answered. "Why do you ask?" "Oh," he responded casually, "it's only because what you're teaching is a little like what got Genrich Altshuller thrown into prison back in 1950." A bit of computer-aided research the next morning revealed TRIZ to be an acronym for a Russian phrase that means, "Theory of Inventive Problem Solving."

Evidently, Genrich Altshuller had the right idea at the right time, but in the wrong place.

Born during Stalin's abuse of the people of Soviet Russia, Genrich Altshuller didn't have the freedom to study, say or do as he pleased. So when at the age of 20 he wrote a letter suggesting that Soviet scientists might be more productive if they employed a systematic method of creative thought, Stalin, offended by the suggestion that Russian scientists weren't already perfect, responded by having Altshuller arrested and sent to prison.

But Altshuller outlived the old fool and was released shortly after Stalin died. And though he had been wrongfully imprisoned for more than 6 years, the irrepressible Altshuller immediately went back to work. After studying 200,000 patents, Altshuller concluded that there are only about 1,500 basic problems... all of which can be solved rather easily by applying a series of 40 fundamental principles. "You can wait a hundred years for enlightenment," he said, "or you can solve the problem in 15 minutes with these principles."

Wow. Every problem in life can be solved with one of 40 basic answers? That's wild. Insane. Can't possibly be true. Can it?

Yes, as impossible as this may sound, Genrich Altshuller actually refined a method for synthesizing natural talent and inspiration.

“Although people who had achieved a great deal in science and technology talked of the inscrutability of creativity, I was not convinced and disbelieved them immediately and without argument. Why should everything but creativity be open to scrutiny? What kind of process can this be which, unlike all others, is not subject to control? What can be more alluring than the discovery of the nature of talented thought and converting this thinking from occasional and fleeting flashes into a powerful and controllable fire of knowledge?”

- Genrich Altshuller, from his Russian book, *Creativity as an Exact Science*

Altshuller's 40 principles have now been successfully applied to nearly every possible category of problem - from business problems to technical problems to social problems to engineering problems. But very few people in America have ever heard of Altshuller.

Mark Fox, the youngest person ever to hold the title of Chief Engineer on the Space Shuttle project, was at Wizard Academy a few weeks later. I shared with Mark the substance of my conversation with John Quarto von Tivadar and said, “You should write a book about TRIZ and call it Da Vinci and the 40 Answers.”

Mark agreed. The book was written. Transformations have happened. Thousands of lives have been altered forever.

And it all began with a shyly raised hand.

78. History's Greatest Hoax

Bill is a merchant, married to the woman who became pregnant when they were both eighteen. He lives an obscure life and dies at age fifty-two, having never learned to read or write.

Edward is a writer who calls himself, “The 17th Earl of Oxford.” He is an educated man with a passion for tennis and is well versed in the intrigues of politics. Ed writes deep and biting satire. His wit has a razor's edge.

Orphaned at twelve, Edward is reared by a high ranking government official. At the age of twenty-one, Ed defies convention by marrying the official's daughter. The hero of Edward's next story also marries his guardian's daughter.

Three years later, Edward is on a ship which is attacked and its passengers held for ransom. Likewise, the hero in Ed's next story is captured by pirates and held for ransom.

Eight months after Edward leaves on a one year journey, his wife has a baby daughter. Upon his return, he falsely accuses his wife of infidelity and refuses to live with her. Five years later, Edward comes to his senses and his loving wife forgives him his ridiculous accusations. Several of Ed's later stories feature a woman wrongfully accused of adultery, but in each story the woman forgives her husband.

During the five years Edward is separated from his wife, he has an affair with another woman and is physically attacked by one of her friends, resulting in a blood feud between the two families. This feud becomes the foundation for the biggest story Ed will ever write.

Learning of his intentions to publish, the government asks if they might read Ed's stories before they go into print. This is important only because Edward *really is* the 17th Earl of Oxford and dozens of the characters in his stories are modeled after people still in government. Horrified by what might happen if the stories are published in Ed's own name, the government offers him an amazing stipend for life if Ed will agree never to claim authorship of the work. Ed immediately agrees and chooses a name at random, never once suspecting it to be the name of an obscure and illiterate merchant on the other side of town.

Would Edward de Vere have accepted his government's liberal pension and inserted a name other than his own had he known that future generations would believe an obscure and illiterate merchant to be the greatest author who ever lived? For Edward did not sign his work as "Bill," but chose to use the more formal name of William. William Shakespeare.

79. American Indian Eloquence

America's Thanksgiving holiday originated when the Pilgrims gave thanks to God for sending them an Indian friend named Squanto. This much you already knew. What you didn't know is that long before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, this same Squanto had been captured by two English sea captains, George Weymouth and John Hunt, and abused as a slave for fourteen years. Squanto had been free less than five years when Capt. John Bradford's Pilgrims arrived on the good ship Mayflower.

Squanto had every reason to organize a killing party and wipe out the pale-skinned invaders, but he chose to help them instead. Gazing with pity at Bradford's pathetic band of would-be settlers as they huddled around Plymouth Rock, Squanto thought, "If I don't help these silly white men, they're all going to die in the coming winter." And with that, he walked out of the woods and introduced himself.

Squanto died two years later of a disease contracted from these same Europeans.

When I was a boy, all the movies were about heroic cowboys and evil Indians. And in virtually every one of them, courageous settlers had to circle the wagons to defend themselves against unprovoked attacks from ape-like savvages who said things like, "Ugh. Me want'um whiskey."

Would you like to know how Indians actually spoke back then? Consider the musings of Ispwo Mukika Crowfoot, a Blackfoot Indian who was twenty years old in 1803, the same year that Lewis and Clark launched their famous expedition. As he lay dying, Ispwo left us with these last words: "What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset."

Was Ispwo Crowfoot a particularly eloquent Indian? Not at all. Fifty-nine years earlier, when George Washington was just a twelve-year-old boy, the Collected Chiefs of the Indian Nations met to discuss a letter from the **College of William & Mary** suggesting that they "send twelve of their young men to the college, that they might be taught to read and write." The Chiefs sent the following reply:

Sirs,

We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in Colleges, and that the Maintenance of our young Men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinc'd, therefore, that you mean to do us Good by your Proposal; and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different Nations have different Conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our Ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same with yours. We have some experience of it. Several of our Young People were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but, when they came back to us they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the Woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a Deer, or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counselors; they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less oblig'd by your kind Offer, tho' we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take care of their Education; instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them.

I wish I could have met the Collected Chiefs who wrote that letter. I wish I could have known Ispwo Crowfoot.

I'm really glad they don't make cowboy and Indian movies anymore.

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· Collected Chiefs letter taken from **Letters of a Nation**
(edited by Andrew Carroll, published by Broadway Books, 1997)

80. Space We're Afraid to Face

"One of the things we run away from in this culture is solitude," says Anne Luther, "We use substances or activities to fill the empty space that we're afraid to face."

To what 'empty space' does Ms. Luther refer, do you think?

Before you read any further, I feel compelled to warn you of my intentions with a quote from the Pulitzer prize-winning humorist, Dave Barry, who once said, *"People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them."*

I know this, so why do I so recklessly plunge ahead? I'm not really sure. Perhaps it's because I also agree with Dave Barry's statement, "If there really is a God who created the universe in all of its glories, and He decides to deliver a message to humanity, He will not use, as His messenger, a person on cable TV with a bad hairstyle." (No, I'm not saying that I've been sent to you with a message from God. Heck, I'm not even saying I've got a good haircut. I just want you to know that not everyone who has placed their trust in Him is a total religious goof.)

Throughout the centuries, many have spoken of Anne Luther's 'empty space.' Modern ministers are fond of saying, "*There's a God-shaped hole in the heart of every person who doesn't know Him.*"

But it's not only the clergy who senses an empty space inside each of us that only God can fill. That great American poet, Edwin Arlington Robinson, once said, "*The world is a mass of bewildered infants all trying to spell 'GOD' with the wrong blocks.*"

Is there an empty space inside of you that you've been afraid to face? Have you been trying to spell 'GOD' with the wrong blocks?

Once, as a young man, in a moment when I was completely and utterly alone, I said, "*God, if you're there and you're listening and you care, I'd really like to hear from you.*" Then, on impulse, I added, "*As of this moment, I place myself completely, totally, and utterly into your hands. Do with me what seems to you good.*"

Smartest thing I ever did.

81. Dark Water, Strong Current

Alone or in public, when something good happens and I'm happy, I do a perfectly ridiculous little dance. Pennie calls it my "*dance of delight.*" It makes me look like an idiot.

I don't care.

By doing the dance when I'm feeling great, it becomes a powerful tool I can use when I sense the ominous darkness that occasionally tries to creep over my soul. Do you know the darkness I mean? That desolate "*blues of midnight - nothing matters,*" sort of darkness that tries to pull you downward into a whirlpool of despair? (Some of you have no idea what I'm talking about. You're very fortunate. But if, like me, you occasionally feel that darkness, nod your head.)

I do the dance when I'm happy because I want to store the physical feel of it as an associative memory closely linked to good news, sunny skies, serendipity and joy. Then, when I need to feel those feelings, all I have to do is dance my little dance to recall them. The dance of delight is my first weapon against the blues.

If my dance isn't enough to chase the blues away, I'll walk into the offices of my co-workers and pay each of them a genuine, heartfelt compliment. This technique is a tough one because it requires you to say warm, positive things at a time when you least feel like saying them, but after you've made four or five other people feel like a million bucks, you're usually feeling pretty darn good yourself.

The blues usually come on me as a result of spending too much time thinking about myself, my circumstances, my problems, disappointments and anxieties. Let me say it plainly: Focus on making yourself happy and you'll soon be miserable. Focus on bringing joy to others and your own happiness will quickly follow. To beat the blues, you've got to redirect your emotional river from inward-flowing to outward-flowing.

But when the river of blues is flowing so deep and fast that I can no longer turn it around, I don't swim against the current, I swim sideways to the safety of the rock: Specifically, I find someone who will let me tell them what I believe about the love of God. I do this because we learn what we believe as we hear ourselves say it. And when you're deep in the blues, you need to remember what you believe.

Half a century ago, Dr. Leon Festinger paid 60 people to participate in what he told them was to be "*a study of hand-eye coordination*." None of the 60 participants ever met. They took the tests at different times on different days. During the "*test*," each participant was asked to aimlessly move wooden pegs around on a board while seated in a room alone. After half an hour, an assistant would enter the room and announce that the test was over. As each participant exited the building, a second assistant would present them with a score sheet asking them to honestly rate how interesting they had found the task to be. Each of the first 30 participants ranked the task as the most boring thing they had ever done.

The second thirty participants were treated exactly the same as the first thirty, except that each was told by the assistant at the end of the half-hour, "*We're having trouble getting subjects for the tests, so if on your way out, you could mention to the next candidate that you found the test to be interesting, it would really help us a lot.*" The assistant then opened the door and introduced the participant to a person of their own age whom they were told was the next candidate. (It was actually a staff member.) Shaking the stranger's hand, the participant would say something like, "*It's really a very interesting test,*" or "*I found it to be quite fascinating.*" After meeting and encouraging the "*candidate*," they exited to the outer lobby where the second assistant gave them the same score sheet that each of the first thirty had received.

Does it surprise you to learn that the second group, those who filled out the score-sheets immediately after hearing themselves say, "*it was interesting,*" rated the task far more highly than the first group?

How we feel is determined largely by what we hear ourselves say.

What have you been hearing yourself say?

82. 121,000 People Build a Statue

America did not become what it started out to be, and I, for one, am glad. When Thomas Jefferson penned the Constitution in 1787, only white, male landowners were given the right to vote. Poor men, Africans, Asians, Indians, and women were not entirely "citizens." America was decidedly not the land of opportunity — unless you were wealthy, white, and male.

The structure of society in the New World was very much as it had been in the Old World until 1886, when the Statue of Liberty arrived as a gift from the French. In all America, there was no one among the privileged of 1886 who was willing to undertake the raising of a paltry \$100,000 to assemble the Statue of Liberty.

Today's America was born in 1886. The Statue of Liberty would have remained in crates to this very day had it not been for the efforts of an immigrant from Hungary. In his little paper, the *New York World*, Joe Pulitzer appealed to the little people of the city to undertake the installation of the

statue. Shoe-shine boys, chimney sweeps, machine operators, and grocery clerks were called upon to come to the rescue. In recognition of their heroism, Pulitzer published the name of every contributor, even little kids who gave a nickel.

One of the contributors was a young Jewish girl named Emma Lazarus, who wrote a poem for an art exhibition to help raise money for the statue's installation. Emma's poem closed with the following lines: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" (I'll bet you thought the government wrote that, didn't you?)

In the end, 121,000 people contributed an average of 83 cents each to erect what has become the most American of all symbols. As a result of his efforts to erect the monument, the circulation of Joe's little paper grew to monumental proportions as well, and Joseph Pulitzer went on to impact our nation as few men have ever done.

America is truly the land of opportunity, where you can become whatever you want.

What is it you want to be?

83. George Just Wants To Be Left Alone

George has been without a Daddy since he was ten years old. A quiet boy, George mostly likes to put seeds in the ground and then watch over them as they sprout and grow. He doesn't get to do this very often though, because people are always taking advantage of George's highly developed sense of duty. George mostly just wants to be left alone, but the people around him don't seem to care what George wants. Duty is George's undoing.

As a young man, George is involved in a protest against the government and his highly patriotic mother never forgives him. She complains bitterly about her "unpatriotic son" until the day she dies. "Oh, well," thinks George, "No one is perfect."

"Dutiful George" becomes widely known for quietly accomplishing whatever is asked of him and in later years, he wonders whether this might have been his biggest mistake. "No matter how much I do," thinks George, "people always want me to do more. I never get to put seeds in the ground anymore, and even if I did, no one would give me the time to watch them sprout and grow." George sometimes wonders whether things would have turned out differently if he had just learned to say, "No. You'll have to find someone else."

But George continues to do whatever is asked of him and when he is sixty-four, he surprises his employers by delivering a heartfelt speech in which he begs them to let him retire. His bosses keep George on the job for another three years, but late one autumn afternoon, George is finally given the freedom to return to his fields.

Day after day, George spends his retirement in quiet anticipation of springtime, thinking of seeds and soil and sunshine and of having plenty of time to watch things sprout and grow. Sadly, George dies that winter, having never had the chance to grow anything but a baby nation.

But we Americans are not an ungrateful people, so we print George's face on our dollar bills and celebrate his birthday each February. And I, for one, quietly hope that George found some small satisfaction in planting the seeds of a nation and then watching that nation sprout and grow. I like to believe that if George had it all to do over again, he would make the same choices and do the same things.

How about you? Are you irritated that you are being asked to do your duty? Do you resent the fact that no one seems to be willing to let you do what you really want? If so, you may take a lesson from George and try to make the best of your situation. Maybe it will turn out all right in the end.

84. Poem in Stone

White Wind is duty, pure and clean.
Yellow Fire has high and lofty dreams.
Red Earth is all adventure; Tom Sawyer to the core.
Blue Rain is quiet wisdom. Who could ask for more?

North, South, East, West:
Arrows pointing in four directions;
The compass that brought us here.

Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall:
A quartet singing in harmony;
The four faces of our year.

George, Tom, Teddy, Abe:
A mirror in shining Dakota granite,
Reflecting what we hope to gain.

Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, Lincoln:
White Wind, Yellow Fire, Red Earth, Blue Rain.

The soul of America is perfectly revealed in the four, flawed faces on Mt. Rushmore:

George Washington was a man driven by obligation and sacrifice, the perfect symbol of every father who ever marched off to war.

Thomas Jefferson was a visionary of high ideals who saw in his heart what America *ought* to be, but in his own flesh, fell horribly short of it. He wrote, "All men are created equal," and inspired hundreds of his countrymen to free their slaves, yet Jefferson never freed his own. The author of

the document that made us a nation, he lived a life of quiet hypocrisy, yet I'm hesitant to cast the first stone. How often have I failed to live up to the standards in which I believe?

Teddy Roosevelt was rambunctious in his boyish enthusiasm, as much a maverick and a renegade as any hippie who ever burned a draft card. His was the spirit of freedom, adventure, and reckless abandon.

Abraham Lincoln was physically ugly, but he held us together with the wisdom and tenacious commitment of a mother watching over her children - the very embodiment of American grit and sacrificial determination.

No single one of these is capable of telling the American story alone, yet together they sing it in perfect harmony: Four faces on a mountainside, the four seasons of the American year.

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On December 1, 1913, a little more than fourteen years after Elbert Hubbard first vented his frustration in "A Message to Garcia," he penned the following memo:

Over forty million copies of "A Message to Garcia" have now been printed. This is said to be a larger circulation than any other literary venture has ever attained during the lifetime of the author, in all history — thanks to a series of lucky accidents!

Elbert Hubbard called "A Message to Garcia" a "literary trifle, written one evening after supper in a single hour. It was on the twenty-second of February, eighteen hundred ninety-nine, Washington's birthday, and we were just going to press with the March *Philistine*. The thing leaped hot from my heart, written after a trying day, when I had been endeavoring to train some rather delinquent villagers to abandon the comatose state and get radioactive."

Hubbard went on to say that the article was inspired by an argument with his son, Bert, who suggested that "an obscure lieutenant named Rowan was the real hero of the Cuban War" (today known as the Spanish-American War, in which Teddy Roosevelt led his Rough Riders up San Juan Hill). Bert's argument was that Rowan had "gone alone and done the thing — carried the message to Garcia.

"I then got up from the table and wrote 'A Message to Garcia.' I thought so little of it that we ran it in the [newspaper, as a filler] without a heading. The edition went out, and soon orders began to come for extra copies. A dozen, fifty, a hundred, and when the American News Company ordered a thousand, I asked one of my helpers which article it was that had stirred up the cosmic dust.

"'It's the stuff about Garcia,' he said.

"The next day a telegram came from George H. Daniels, of the New York Central Railroad: 'Give price on one hundred thousand Rowan article in pamphlet form — Empire State Express advertisement on back — also how soon can ship?'

"I replied giving price, and stated we could supply the pamphlets in two years. Our facilities were small and a hundred thousand booklets looked like an awful undertaking."

Hubbard then gave Mr. Daniels permission to reprint the article in his own way, which turned out to be multiple editions of 500,000 copies each. In addition, the article was reprinted in over two hundred magazines and newspapers, and within fourteen years had been translated into every written language on earth.

85. A Message to Garcia

Elbert Hubbard, 1899

In all this Cuban business there is one man stands out on the horizon of my memory like Mars at perihelion. When war broke out between Spain and the United States, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain fastnesses of Cuba — no one knew where. No mail or telegraph could reach him. The President must secure his co-operation, and quickly.

What to do!

Someone said to the President, "There's a fellow by the name of Rowan will find Garcia for you, if anybody can."

Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How "the fellow by name of Rowan" took the letter, sealed it up in an oil-skin pouch, strapped it over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, and in three weeks came out on the other side of the island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and having delivered his letter to Garcia, are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail.

The point I wish to make is this: McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter and did not ask, "Where is he at?" By the Eternal! There is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college in the land. It is not book-learning young men need, nor instruction about this or that, but a stiffening of the vertebrae which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies; do the thing — "carry a message to Garcia!"

General Garcia is dead now, but there are other Garcias.

No man, who has endeavored to carry out an enterprise where many hands were needed, but has been well-nigh appalled at times by the imbecility of the average man — the inability or unwillingness to concentrate on a thing and do it. Slipshod assistance, foolish inattention, dowdy indifference, and half-hearted work seem the rule; and no man succeeds, unless by hook or crook, or threat, he forces or bribes other men to assist him; or mayhap, God in His goodness performs a miracle, and sends him an Angel of Light for an assistant. You, reader, put this matter to a test: You are sitting now in your office -six clerks are within your call. Summon any one and make this request: "Please look in the encyclopedia and make a brief memorandum for me concerning the life of Corregio."

Will the clerk quietly say, "Yes, sir," and go do the task?

On your life, he will not. He will look at you out of a fishy eye, and ask one or more of the following questions:

Who was he?

Which encyclopedia?

Where is the encyclopedia?

Was I hired for that?

Don't you mean Bismarck?

What's the matter with Charlie doing it?

Is he dead?

Is there any hurry?

Shan't I bring you the book and let you look it up yourself?

What do you want to know for?

And I will lay you ten to one that after you have answered the questions, and explained how to find the information, and why you want it, the clerk will go off and get one of the other clerks to help him find Garcia — and then come back and tell you there is no such man. Of course I may lose my bet, but according to the Law of Average, I will not.

Now if you are wise you will not bother to explain to your "assistant" that Corregio is indexed under the C's, not in the K's, but you will smile sweetly and say, "Never mind," and go look it up yourself.

And this incapacity for independent action, this moral stupidity, this infirmity of the will, this unwillingness to cheerfully catch hold and lift, are the things that put pure socialism so far into the future. If men will not act for themselves, what will they do when the benefit of their effort is for all? A first mate with knotted club seems necessary; and the dread of getting "the bounce" Saturday night holds many a worker in his place.

Advertise for a stenographer, and nine times out of ten who apply can neither spell nor punctuate — and do not think it necessary to.

Can such a one write a letter to Garcia?

"You see that bookkeeper," said the foreman to me in a large factory.

"Yes, what about him?"

"Well, he's a fine accountant, but if I'd send him to town on an errand, he might accomplish the errand all right, and, on the other hand, might stop at four saloons on the way, and when he got to Main Street, would forget what he had been sent for."

Can such a man be entrusted to carry a message to Garcia?

We have recently been hearing much maudlin sympathy expressed for the "down-trodden denizen of the sweat shop" and the "homeless wanderer searching for honest employment," and with it all often go many hard words for the men in power.

Nothing is said about the employer who grows old before his time in a vain attempt to get frowsy ne'er-do-wells to do intelligent work; and his long patient striving with "help" that does nothing but loaf when his back is turned. In every store and factory there is a constant weeding-out process going on. The employer is constantly sending away "help" that have shown their incapacity to further the interests of the business, and others are being taken on. No matter how good times are, this sorting continues, only if times are hard and work is scarce, this sorting is done finer — but out and forever out, the incompetent and unworthy go. It is the survival of the fittest. self-interest prompts every employer to keep the best—those who can carry a message to Garcia.

I know one man of really brilliant parts who has not the ability to manage a business of his own, and yet who is absolutely worthless to anyone else, because he carries with him constantly the insane suspicion that his employer is oppressing, or intending to oppress, him. He can not give orders, and he will not receive them. Should a message be given him to take to Garcia, his answer would probably be, "Take it yourself."

Tonight this man walks the streets looking for work, the wind whistling through his threadbare coat. No one who knows him dare employ him, for he is a regular firebrand of discontent. He is impervious to reason, and the only thing that can impress him is the toe of a thick-soled No. 9 boot.

Of course I know that one so morally deformed is no less to be pitied than a physical cripple; but in your pitying, let us drop a tear, too, for the men who are striving to carry on a great enterprise, whose working hours are not limited by the whistle, and whose hair is fast turning white through the struggle to hold the line in dowdy indifference, slipshod imbecility, and the heartless ingratitude which, but for their enterprise, would be both hungry and homeless.

Have I put the matter too strongly? Possibly I have; but when all the world has gone a-slumming I wish to speak a word of sympathy for the man who succeeds — the man who, against great odds, has directed the efforts of others, and, having succeeded, finds there's nothing in it: nothing but bare board and clothes.

I have carried a dinner-pail and worked for a day's wages, and I have also been an employer of labor, and I know there is something to be said on both sides. There is no excellence, per se, in poverty; rags are no recommendation; and all employers are not rapacious and high-handed, any more than all poor men are virtuous.

My heart goes out to the man who does his work when the "boss" is away, as well as when he is home. And the man who, when given a letter for Garcia, quietly takes the missive, without asking

any idiotic questions, and with no lurking intention of chucking it into the nearest sewer, or of doing aught else but deliver it, never gets "laid off," nor has to go on strike for higher wages. Civilization is one long anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asks will be granted; his kind is so rare that no employer can afford to let him go. He is wanted in every city, town, and village — in every office, shop, store and factory. The world cries out for such; he is needed, and needed badly — the man who can carry a message to Garcia.

86. Pointing Chris Like a Gun

Just as the UPS package hits the bottom of the post office mailbox, Chris realizes what he has done. Most people would have simply shrugged and said, "UPS must have lost it." But Chris is not most people. Chris sits and waits for the nightly postal truck to come and collect the mail. When the driver begins spouting post office regulations and tells Chris to go away, Chris politely says he will take it up with a postal supervisor.

Stopping at every blue box along the way, Chris follows the truck more than thirty-five miles to the Central Texas Postal Facility, a huge compound surrounded by a tall, chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. When the guards open the gate to let the postal truck through, Chris nails his accelerator and shoots the gap. No time for explanations. Sliding to a stop in front of the main office, Chris runs inside only moments before the furious guards arrive on foot. There is quite a scene. Thirty minutes later, Chris hands my package to a man at United Parcel Service.

Jon tells me his flight number. I say Chris will meet him at the gate, not knowing that Chris will find a new sign in front of the metal detector: "Ticketed Passengers Only Beyond This Point." Not missing a step or pausing to think, Chris returns to his truck, where he stuffs his backpack full of things he finds behind the seat. He then digs through the airport trash until he finds an empty ticket folder, which he promptly tucks under his arm. With backpack and ticket folder in hand, Chris runs headlong across the parking lot, through the airport lobby, directly to the head of a long line. Shouting, "I'm sorry, everyone!" he tosses the backpack onto the conveyor belt and flashes the ticket jacket to the guard while diving through the metal detector. Never glancing back, Chris then runs down the concourse to the gate. As Jon steps off the plane, Chris is waiting. "So how was your flight?"

God help the person who stands between Chris and something I've asked him to do. If I send Chris to buy fruit and King Kong is guarding the bananas, call Hollywood. *King Kong Meets Chris* will be a box-office bonanza, but don't bet on the monkey to win. It is Chris who will come home with bananas.

Every business owner needs a Chris, but I'll warn you, there aren't nearly enough to go around. The secret of attracting a Chris and keeping it happy is knowing how to work with one. You see, a Chris will work with you, but never exactly for you, and a Chris cannot be badgered, bullied, frightened, bought, sold, bribed, or manipulated in any way. To attempt these things is to lose your Chris. And never tell a Chris how to do something. You should tell it only what you need done.

And when the thing is accomplished, don't ask a lot of questions. It would probably be better if you didn't know.

87. Singing in the Face of Danger

In 1965, a tiny American combat unit entered a clearing in Viet Nam's Ia Drang valley and was quickly surrounded by nearly 2,000 enemy troops. The ensuing battle, the first major engagement of the Vietnam War, was one of the most savage in U.S. history. *We Were Soldiers Once... And Young* is a detailed account of the battle of Ia Drang. The book became a New York Times bestseller in 1994.

But the photo chosen for the book's cover has a story all its own: the gritty young soldier leading the bayonet attack is barely mentioned in the text. The platoon leader of Bravo Company wasn't the captain of the football team, the mayor's son, or his high school's valedictorian. Cyril "Rick" Rescorla wasn't even an American citizen. Rescorla volunteered to fight in the US army because he remembered the arrival of the Americans on D-Day to rescue his native Cornwall, England, when he was 5 years old.

Pat Payne fought beside Rick Rescorla in the vicious battle of Ia Drang. *"My God, it was like Little Big Horn. We were all cowering in the bottom of our foxholes, expecting to get overrun when Rescorla looked us in the eye and said, 'When the sun comes up, we're gonna kick some ass.' He gave us courage to face the coming dawn."* Throughout the bloody battle that followed, Rescorla could be heard singing *God Bless America* and Cornish folk songs at the top of his lungs:

"Men of Cornwall stop your dreaming.
Can't you see their spear points gleaming?
See their warriors' pennants streaming
To this battlefield?"

"Men of Cornwall stand ye steady.
It cannot be ever said ye
for the battle were not ready.
Stand and never yield!"

And sure enough, the battalion fought its way out.

Following the war, Rescorla came to the US and found success on Wall Street as vice president of security at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter. His office was in the south tower of the World Trade Center. In a report filed with the Port Authority in 1990, Rescorla pinpointed the load-bearing columns in the garage as a vulnerable point for a terrorist attack, but there was no response to his warning. Then, in 1993, a van packed with explosives was detonated exactly 30 feet from where he had predicted. Rescorla began pressing his employer to move out of the Twin Towers, convinced that the next attack would come by air.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Rescorla used his cell phone to call an old army buddy, Dan Hill, in St. Augustine, Florida. "Are you watching TV?" he asked. "What do you think?"

"Hard to tell. It could have been an accident, but I can't see a commercial airliner getting that far off."

"I'm evacuating right now," Rescorla said.

Over the phone, Hill could hear his old friend calmly issuing orders over the bullhorn, never raising his voice. Then he heard him break into song. When Rescorla came back to the phone, he told Hill

the Port Authority had told him not to evacuate - Rescorla was ordered to tell people to stay at their desks.

“What’d you say?” Hill asked.

“I said, ‘Piss off, you son of a bitch, everything above where that plane hit is going to collapse and it's going to take the whole building with it. I'm getting my people out of here.’”

The only other call Rick made was to his frantic wife, Susan. “I want you to know that if something happens to me, you made my life.” And then 62 year-old Rick Rescorla picked up his bullhorn and safely evacuated all but 3 of his company’s 2,700 employees from 22 smoke-filled, upper floors of the burning South Tower. He was searching for the final 3 when the building went down.

Rick Rescorla’s body was never found. But those who made it safely out of the building in the final seconds before its fall speak of the hallways behind them echoing with refrains of *God Bless America* and old, Cornish folk songs.

88. Unlikely Parentage

A year before Tim Paterson developed his “Quick and Dirty Operating System,” the US military created a powerful new programming language called “Ada.” Dozens of books and manuals were written about Ada. In the eyes of computer programmers, she was a stunning beauty who had walked into the room.

Paterson sold his “Quick and Dirty OS” to Bill Gates who shortened QDOS to DOS and used it as the foundation of what was to become the mighty Microsoft empire. But why did the US government choose the name “Ada?”

Unlike DOS, Ada was not an acronym. She was a real woman who died in 1852.

Five short weeks after the real Ada was born, her mother left her father, believing him “*to have his head so much in the clouds that his feet never touch the ground.*” Under no circumstances was the daughter of Annabella Milbanke going to grow up and become a worthless romantic like her father! Instead, Annabella insisted that young Ada study mathematics. But much to her terror, Ada’s vision of mathematical concepts was draped in imagination and described in metaphors. After years of heated confrontation and bitter debate with her rigid mother, Ada finally wrote her a letter saying, “*If you can't give me poetry, can't you at least give me 'poetical science?'*”

When Ada was 18, she met a man at a dinner party who spoke of his dream for a Mathematical Engine. “*What if a calculating engine could not only foresee, but could act on that foresight?*” No one but Ada understood the strange man, but she would never be the same. That man was Charles Babbage, and over the next 10 years Ada wrote him a series of letters that provided the inspiration and much of the guidance that allowed him to create the world’s first computer. In her letters, Ada predicted that Babbage’s machine would someday be used “*not only for scientific inquiry, but also to compose complex music and produce amazing images.*” And she imagined all this when tribal nations ruled the heartland and Martin Van Buren was the president of only 27 United States.

In one of her letters, Ada describes an algorithm for the Babbage's analytical engine to compute Bernoulli numbers - the first algorithm ever specifically tailored for implementation on a computer - earning Ada the title of "*The World's First Computer Programmer.*"

As she lay dying of cancer at the tender age of 36, Ada requested that she be buried next to her flamboyantly handsome father, the "useless romantic" her mother had never allowed her to meet; a man who had died tragically when Ada was just 8 years old. So if you're ever in Nottinghamshire, look for Ada's tombstone next to that of her father - George Gordon, Lord Byron - the most famous poet of England's Romantic Age.

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smil'd,
And then we parted - not as now we part,
But with a hope. - Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me; and on high
The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

- Opening lines of the third cantos of Byron's epic poem, *Childe Harold*.

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89. Man of His Word

Tulsa, Oklahoma - 1978: 20 year-old me is in need of a car. I dream of a Triumph Spitfire. Waking early one Saturday morning I scan the classifieds to see, "*1973 Triumph Spitfire. Runs good. Needs work. \$900.*" There is no telephone number. Breathless, I drive like a maniac to the address in the ad and see a fabulous, British Racing Green sports car glistening in the driveway.

The man who answers the door, Irv Lenovitz, is the first Jew I've ever met. "*Here are the keys,*" he tells me. "*Drive it and tell me what you think.*" A quick spin around the block tells me all I need to know.

"Mr. Lenovitz, the only reason the steering wheel jerks back and forth is because one of the tires has a bubble protruding from the tread. A twenty-nine dollar tire will make this car as good as new."

Smiling, Lenovitz replies, "*So you would like to buy it?*"

"*Yes, sir,*" I answer, extending a check for the full nine hundred, "*and I'll be happy to give you this check for it.*" Then, swallowing hard, I added, "*But I feel you should know that there are insufficient funds in the account to cover it.*"

No longer smiling, Lenovitz asked, *“Why would I want such a check?”*

“Because I will leave the car with you until Monday morning, at which time I will return with 900 dollars in cash.”

Accepting my check, Lenovitz nods and says, *“The car will be here.”*

Nervous, I take a deep breath and say, *“Mr. Lenovitz this car is worth at least 22 hundred dollars and there is no telephone number in your ad. Please believe me when I tell you there will soon be lots of other people here with cash in hand.”*

Lenovitz stiffened almost imperceptibly, then quietly responded, *“Young man, I said the car would be here.”*

Monday came and I flew like the wind to the home of Mr. Lenovitz. I was ecstatic to see that my car was still there. As he counted the cash, Mr. Lenovitz smiled and said, *“To you, I should have listened.”*

“Why? What happened?” I asked.

“People came and came and came. I tried to explain to them our deal but the people would not hear me.” Lenovitz sadly shook his head. *“One man was determined to put fifteen hundred dollars into my shirt pocket. I kept pushing away his hand until almost we had a fistfight. Finally, my son hid your car at the grocery store so that the people who drove to this house would no longer see it in the driveway.”*

A lot of people would have torn up my admittedly worthless check and taken the other man's \$1,500 in cash.

My Jewish friends tell me that my prejudice in favor of Jews is as irrational as any other prejudice. But I can honestly say that in the many thousands of dealings I've had with them since that fateful day in 1978, never has a Jewish person failed to do precisely as they promised they would do.

Many of my closest friends today are Jewish and several are Israeli. These peace-hungry people are fighting for their very lives in the Middle East but always they use restraint, fighting mostly house-to-house and hand-to-hand so that innocent Moslem lives will not be lost.

When terrorists shout of atrocities supposedly committed by Jews, we print it as Front Page news. But when those accusations are proven to be false, we print only a small paragraph at the bottom of page 19. Israel is losing a public relations war in the minds of most Americans and I can only say that this troubles me deeply. The accusation that Jews are violent and unfair makes me laugh so hard that tears come out my eyes.

Yes, that's it. That must be it.

That must be why I'm crying.

90. Before the Battle of The Alamo

Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States and Lewis and Clark were still on their long journey in the year that Benito Pablo Juarez learned to talk. But little Benito never met them. And even if he had, it wouldn't have mattered, because Benito was a Mexican peasant boy who didn't speak a word of English.

He didn't speak Spanish, either - only Zapotec, a tongue of the Central American Indians.

Benito's parents died before his fourth birthday, so he was raised in the home of his uncle.

"I was hesitant to separate myself from him, to leave the house that had sheltered me in my orphaned childhood, and to abandon my little friends, with whom I had always had the deepest sympathies and from whom any separation always wounded me. The conflict that arose within me, between these feelings and my desire to go to another society, new and unknown to me, where I might acquire an education, was cruel indeed. However, my hunger overcame my emotions, and on December 17, 1818, when I was twelve years old, I fled from my house and walked on foot to the city of Oaxaca, where I arrived on the night of the same day."

In Oaxaca, Benito's natural curiosity and insightful questions brought him to the attention of a lay Franciscan named Antonio Salanueva, who helped arrange for him to be accepted as a student at the city seminary. In 1827, while Andrew Jackson was campaigning for the American presidency and Ludwig van Beethoven lay dying in Vienna, Benito graduated from seminary and in 1834 became a lawyer. Two years later, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, Mexico's self-proclaimed "*Dictator for Life*," slaughtered the immortals of Texas at the Alamo.

Meanwhile, back in Mexico, Benito Juarez ruled wisely over the people of Oaxaca as their governor, faithfully serving them until he was sent into exile for criticizing Santa Anna. With a clear conscience and perfect dignity, Benito spent his years of exile working as a common laborer in a cigar factory in New Orleans.

Following the Mexican-American War, Santa Anna fled to Cuba and Benito Juarez returned to Mexico. Then, while Abraham Lincoln was taking the oath of office to serve as President of the United States, Benito Juarez was elected to serve as the President of Mexico.

But within the year, France invaded Mexico with plans to conquer it. Following fierce and bloody fighting, Juarez and his elected government were forced to flee into the northern part of the country. Maximilian of Habsburg, the puppet emperor, offered Benito Juarez amnesty if he would agree to serve the King of France as Mexico's prime minister. But Benito could not suffer a foreign government to rule his people, so throughout the years of America's Civil War, Benito led his people in rebellion against the troops of France and its mighty allies. Finally, in 1867, they were victorious. Mexico's enemies were driven from the land and Benito Juarez was happily reelected by the people of Mexico to serve a second term.

Fearless, patient, and faithful to the end, the little orphan from Oaxaca was working at his desk in the National Palace when he died of a heart attack in 1872. His birthday, March 21, is national holiday throughout Mexico and his favorite phrase echoes in every corner of that land: *“El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz.”*

“Respect for the rights of others is peace.”

Benito Pablo Juarez was a visionary like Jefferson, a man of deep honor like Jackson, and a self-sacrificing leader like Lincoln.

What would our world be like if all its statesmen were like Benito Pablo Juarez?

91. Four Feet Tall, a Giant Among Men

July 1, 1889 – Looking down at the little hunchbacked man barely four feet tall, the immigration officer at Ellis Island saw only a deformed German cripple who could barely walk. *“No, I don’t think America needs you,”* he said. Raising the stamp that shouted, *“Rejected”* in red ink, he was about to send Karl August Rudolph Steinmetz back to the angry Germany he had fled when a tall man stepped forward and shouted *“Wait!”*

Lowering the rejection stamp, the clerk watched as Mr. Assmussen fanned out a large amount of cash and said, *“One of my duties as valet to Mr. Steinmetz is to carry his money for him. This man is an electrical genius who is coming to your country to build for you a practical power distribution system.”*

In a day when electric lights were few and far between and the landscape was coated with an ever-present layer of black soot from the coal-fired steam engines that ran all the factories, the idea of a nation running on electricity was a compelling dream, indeed.

The clerk looked once more at the twisted spectacle that stood before him. *“Your name?”* he asked with a sniff. *“Steinmetz,”* said the little hunchback with a twinkle in his eye, *“Charles Proteus Steinmetz.”* And so it was on the impulse of a single moment that Karl August became *“Charles”* and Rudolph became *“Proteus,”* the shape-shifting son of the Greek god Poseidon in Homer’s *Odyssey*: *“He will turn into all sorts of shapes to try you, into all the creatures that live and move upon the earth, into water, into blazing fire...”*

In reality, Steinmetz had only recently become an electrical engineer and Assmussen had only just met him onboard ship - the money he fanned out was his own. But never were truer words spoken than the falsehood that Assmussen told about Steinmetz being *“an electrical genius who will build for you a practical power distribution system.”*

Three years later, using complex or so-called *“imaginary”* numbers, Steinmetz formalized the laws that describe and govern alternating current (AC) devices, including the electric motors and transformers that perform almost every job in our modern lives. And in so doing, the tiny man

with a funny accent put General Electric on track to become the wealthiest and most powerful company in the world.

In 1902, when none of GE's technicians or engineer's could isolate the malfunctioning part in a complex system that was broken, GE asked Steinmetz to come out of retirement and fix the problem. Steinmetz traced the systems, found the malfunctioning part, marked it with a piece of chalk, and submitted a bill for ten thousand dollars. The startled accountants asked for an itemized invoice.

Steinmetz sent the following:

1. Making chalk mark \$1
2. Knowing where to place it \$9,999

Steinmetz used the money to buy a Christmas present for every orphan in town.

Charles Proteus Steinmetz spent his last years improving the educational system of Schenectady, New York, the town where he lived happily with the family of Joseph Le Roy Hayden, whose children called him "Grandpa" until the day he died.

Numerous universities awarded Steinmetz honorary PhD's during his life, and at the time of his death, he held over 200 patents.

And thus did a man only four feet tall rise up and light the world.

92. Korea's Sequoyah James

We remember Sequoyah as the Cherokee warrior who in 1809 created a written language for his people. Likewise, we remember King James as the monarch who commissioned the first English translation of the Bible in 1611. But hundreds of years before either of these, Korea's King Sejong created a written language for his people so that they might read the important words of their time.

Born in 1397, Sejong advanced to the throne at age 22 when his father elevated him instead of his oldest brother, whose lifestyle was deemed unfit for a king. Sejong's reign, which lasted until 1450, was a period of cultural and intellectual accomplishment in Korea that is often called the Golden Age.

Sejong placed great emphasis on scholarship, culture, economics and politics and made improvements in the movable metal type that had been invented in Korea around 1234, (fully 202 years before Gutenberg.) He initiated the development of musical notation, helped improve designs for various musical instruments, and encouraged the composition of orchestral music. Sejong also sponsored numerous scientific inventions including the rain gauge, sundial,

water clock, celestial globes, astronomical maps and a mechanical representation of the solar system.

But the most pivotal of his achievements was the creation of the Korean alphabet. Previously, Korean students had learned Chinese and had relied on Chinese lettering since they didn't have an alphabet of their own. But Chinese is very different from Korean in both its vocal patterns and organization. Hoping to provide Koreans with a written language other than the complicated Chinese system, Sejong commissioned a group of scholars to devise a phonetic writing system that would accurately represent the sounds of spoken Korean and could be easily learned by all the people.

Amazingly, many Korean scholars and government officials of the time argued that Sejong's alphabet would hinder education because it was "*too easy*" to learn. Hoping to overcome these objections, Sejong ordered popular poems, religious verses, and well-known proverbs to be published using his new alphabet, but the political and educational establishment was too strong, even for the king. So Sejong's miraculous gift gathered dust until the late 1800's when it was used for a translation of the Bible. Soon afterwards, Sejong's alphabet exploded in popularity and Korea quickly rose to become one of the most important nations of the world.

King Sejong's alphabet, *han'gul*, is now used throughout North and South Korea and his picture is on the 10,000 wan, the most valuable note in Korean currency.

93. The Choice of Florence Balcombe

For the past several months, Florence Balcombe has been dating Finegal O'Flahertie, the baby boy of Speranza, an unconventional poetess who fights for women's rights. To the outrage of many, the six-foot Speranza coolly justifies her public extravagances by saying that she is "*above respectability*."

Like his memorable mother, young Finegal is colorful and sensitive and writes poetry from the heart. But Florence Balcombe is the daughter of a lieutenant colonel who sees no great value in poetry or in the boys who write it. Lieutenant Colonel Balcombe much prefers young Abraham Stoker, a boy that had been sickly as a child but who "*whipped himself into manhood*" with a diet of strict discipline and athletic endurance. And like the Lieutenant Colonel, Abraham works as a civil servant. He is a file clerk at the courthouse.

In a single moment of pivotal decision, Florence rejects the marriage proposal of young Finegal O'Flahertie and chooses to become Mrs. Abraham Stoker instead. Brokenhearted, Finegal immediately flees to London and buries himself in his poetry. Later that year he wins the coveted Newdigate Prize for his poem, *Ravenna*, and it ignites in him a burning desire to achieve stardom. Since his mother had taught him to view everything in life as a performance, young Finegal is soon making a spectacle of everything, sometimes even hailing a cab just to cross the street. He has his clothes made by theater costumiers instead of tailors, since he feels they better understand the dramatic effect that he is trying to achieve. Soon Finegal O'Flahertie is the talk of all England.

Back home in Ireland, a slightly intimidated Abraham Stoker decides to publish a book of his own. Needless to say, "The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland" is not a huge success. In London however, Finegal O'Flahertie continues to pile fame upon fame as both poet and playwright. His short stories and magazine articles are in constant demand.

When an old but powerful politician accuses Finegal of homosexuality, he quickly responds with a lawsuit. Interestingly, the politician, like Lieutenant Colonel Balcombe, is "*a real man's man*" who achieved his fame by writing the official rulebook for the sport of boxing.

Finegal loses the lawsuit. The macho politician, Queensberry, then counter-sues and on May 25, 1895, Oscar Finegal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde is sentenced to 2 years at hard labor for the crime of indecency.

Shortly after he is released from prison in 1897, Oscar learns that Florence's husband, 'Bram Stoker, has written another book. Within 3 years, that book, *Dracula*, has outsold every other book in history except the Bible.

On November 30, 1900, Oscar Finegal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde lay down and died in a rented room in Paris. He was 46 years old. Doctors say that an infection of the inner ear was the likely culprit.

Those who knew him best did not agree.

They say it was a broken heart.

94. Bobby and John

Bobby and John are dead now.

John was the older of the fated pair. When he died, Bobby followed the funeral procession and then was taken home.

When Bobby turned up missing the next day, they found him lying on John's grave. Time after time they took Bobby home and again and again he escaped, each time returning to the grave.

People began to take pity on him.

The cemetery's gardener, James Brown, began bringing Bobby his meals. James Anderson, who lived across the street, once moved Bobby into his house during a fierce rainstorm, but Bobby cried so pitifully throughout the night that Anderson spent all the next day building a shelter for Bobby near the grave.

John was a Scottish policeman. Bobby was his Skye terrier companion. Their job was to guard the cattle waiting to be sold at Edinburgh market. John Gray died in 1858.

In 1861, city officials began firing a cannon at exactly one o'clock so the citizens could set their clocks accordingly. And each day when the gun sounded, Bobby would trot to a restaurant called the Eating House where a man named Scott would buy him his lunch. It soon became a daily attraction. Crowds would gather to wait for him. But the moment Bobby had finished his lunch, he would scamper back to John's grave at Greyfriars churchyard.

According to Scottish law, dogs not wearing a license in Edinburgh were to be captured and put to death. So the Lord Provost of Edinburgh himself, Sir William Chambers, purchased the wee dog a collar and had a special tag engraved, "Greyfriars Bobby from the Lord Provost, licensed."

Bobby guarded his master's grave until the day of his death - January 14, 1872 - when, in an unprecedented move, the authorities of Edinburgh determined that Bobby should be buried in the churchyard next to his master. The following year a bronze statue of Bobby was commissioned by the Baroness Burdett Coutts and placed just outside the entrance to the graveyard. The monument was unveiled on November 15, 1873.

The most photographed landmark in Scotland today is the bronze statue of a little dog who refused to forget the master he loved.

It is visited by more people each year than Balmoral, the Scottish castle of the queen.

95. See the Angel?

"The greater danger, for most of us, lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark... Lord, grant that I may always desire more than I can accomplish."

- Michelangelo

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

- Robert Browning

"I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."

- Michelangelo

Like Michelangelo Buonarroti, you've been given a rough block of marble to carve.

It's called your Life.

What will you make of it? Do you see something beautiful inside the stone, or do you see only a heavy lump of rock? Michelangelo believed there was an angel inside his rock and he was committed to setting it free. What do you see in your block of marble?

You carry the tool of self-improvement with you everywhere you go. It's a thing called "choice." Michelangelo put his chisel to work and did not become discouraged when an angel did not

immediately appear. Like Michelangelo, you live chisel in hand and you shape yourself daily through your unconscious choices. Are you willing to put your chisel to more active work? Are you willing to make choices consciously that are currently being made unconsciously?

In her book *Random Thoughts*, Dr. Karen Royer asks, "Have you ever wondered why the world fell in love with the fictional character in the movie *Forest Gump*? He wasn't an intelligent man but he was an honest one. He was made fun of, yet he chose to think the best of people. Choosing to see good instead of evil is a conscious decision."

Michelangelo saw an angel where other men saw only a rock. What do you see when you look at yourself? Solomon said in Proverbs 23:7, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

In other words, you will become the person you believe yourself to be.

So who do you believe yourself to be?

96. Japanese Sunshine

In 1946, as Japan rose from the rubble of a devastating world war, Masaru Ibuka and his partner opened a repair shop among the broken fragments that once were Tokyo. They called their shop "Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo" and said its purpose would be "To do what others have not done." In the years to come, repairman Masaru Ibuka would become widely known for his books on the education of young children. In an interview shortly before his death, he said, "*I was blessed by Taeko, and she was the sunshine of my life.*"

Taeko was Ibuka's mentally retarded daughter.

Of Ibuka's many books, some of the most controversial were:
The Missing Half of Education - Japanese Who Left Behind Their Humanity
Thirty-minute Briefings for Mothers - What You Should Do Now
The Pleasure of Parenting
A Fetus is a Genius

In his bestselling book, *Kindergarten is Too Late*, Ibuka expressed his philosophy of life:

"Courage is not absence of despair; it is, rather, the capacity to move ahead in spite of despair. If you do not express your own original ideas, if you do not listen to your own being, you will have betrayed yourself. Everyone should develop fully his or her potential abilities and grow courageous in thought and straightforward in character."

Upon its release, *Kindergarten is Too Late* sold so rapidly that the printer had to print five editions in the first thirty days and sales didn't slow until after the eighty-seventh edition. Obviously, Ibuka left his mark on the world. But what became of his business in Tokyo?

During the early years after World War II, "Made in Japan" meant "Low Quality Product," so between repairs, instead of making copies of inventions from other nations, Ibuka and his partner worked to

create things that didn't exist anywhere else in the world. Their first product, an electric rice cooker, failed, but the little company hung on. During these years, when Ibuka would drop in to visit his cousin Tachikawa, the family would silently fly around the house, whispering "Masaru is here," hiding their clocks and other items to prevent Ibuka from tinkering with them.

In the early 1950s, Ibuka heard about Bell's invention of the transistor. While American companies were researching the transistor for military applications, Ibuka envisioned using it for communications. He convinced Bell to license the technology to his little Japanese company.

A Harris Poll conducted in 1998 confirmed that Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo, the little repair shop created by Masaru Ibuka and his partner, had overtaken GM and General Electric to become the best known brand in the world. But you've probably never heard of Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo because in 1958, since the initials "TTK" were already taken by another company, Ibuka's partner suggested they take the name "Sonus," referring to the mythic god of sound, while Ibuka was drawn to the warmer "Sonny-boy," an American phrase used to describe a bright young child.

So like true partners, they compromised.

Taeko was Ibuka's daughter and the sunshine of his life. But Sony was his "sonny-boy," the bright light that sprang from his mind.

97. World of 2,000 Pages

In his real life, John Lang lived a life full of romance, adventure and intrigue in the country of Islandia, on the southern portion of Karain in the South Pacific. In his imaginary life, John Lang was "Austin Tappan Wright," a *cum laude* graduate of Harvard Law School and the dashing editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Wait a second, I have that backwards - John Lang was the imaginary character. Austin Tappan Wright really was a *cum laude* graduate of Harvard and the editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Following Austin Wright's untimely death in 1931 at the age of 48, Mrs. Wright discovered more than 2,000 pages detailing her husband's imaginary adventures as "John Lang" in a world as richly detailed as the Middle Earth of Tolkien – a world of vivid geography, fascinating language, complex religion and a copiously itemized history. She spent the next 10 years typing and arranging the assorted pages into a manuscript of epic proportions.

When *Islandia* was finally published in 1942, *Time* magazine's Robert Little wrote,

"The product of modern time, *Islandia* is vivid chiefly with the desire for complete escape from the actual world. It tries to make that escape so detailed, so palpable, that it will outrealize reality. It also tries to anatomize (and to dream solutions for) those pressures which have made escape so desirable."

So careful was Austin Tappan Wright never to speak of *Islandia*, that a close friend of his, Leonard Bacon, confessed,

“In spite of my affection for him and what I supposed to be my knowledge of him, I hadn't the faintest inkling that he had left something behind him outside of his professional publications.”

Austin Wright was a lawyer who dreamed a fantastical place. But that didn't make him special. The car accident that took Austin would have erased his imaginary world from human memory had it not been for the real-world woman he married, Margaret Garrad Stone, who loved him enough to spend 10 years compiling his musings into an underground classic of utopian fiction.

So if you ever read *Islandia*, read it for what it is – the true story of a wife's unwavering devotion to a husband who died too soon.

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98. A Single-Eyed Brazilian

Paulo Freire was born in northeastern Brazil in 1921. When he was eight, the depression of 1929 struck his family hard and Paulo knew hunger for the first time. “*I could not understand the lessons of primary school. I got zero. I cried, I suffered. I was hungry and feeling guilty.*” By 1939 the family's economic situation had improved. “*I began to eat more, and then I began to understand everything.*”

Growing up poor gave Paulo Freire a unique perspective. During his university years, he saw jarring disconnections between elitist educational practices and the lives of the working class. In 1959 he wrote his Ph.D. thesis, *Present-day Education in Brazil*. Then he taught 300 farm workers to read and write in just 45 days. Excited by Freire's success, the government approved thousands of ‘Freire circles’ to be set up all over Brazil. But the military coup of 1964 halted the work and Freire was sent to prison as a traitor, (due to the fact that his 1959 doctoral thesis had been critical of Brazilian education.) Upon his release from prison, Paulo and his wife continued their work in Chile. After 15 years of exile, they were allowed to return to Brazil.

Throughout his long life of 75 years, Freire's vision never wavered, nor did his enthusiasm wane. He gave no thought to making money or a name for himself, but spent his life like a pocket full of coins trying to make a difference in the lives of the poor. His singular dream, “to help men and women overcome their sense of powerlessness.”

Paulo Freire's method was to create a dialog between teachers and students, where both would learn, question, reflect and participate in the making of meaning. Tom Heaney describes it vividly:

“Eight Hispanic adults - three women and five men - gathered with their teacher to resume their lessons in literacy. Maria had arrived late, visibly distraught, explaining that her husband had threatened her. He didn't want her going out to classes at night and argued

that her three children were being neglected. Maria, leaving the argument unresolved, had come to resume her studies. Her teacher, instead of giving advice or encouragement, asked the group for help. The members reflected on Maria's experience and, in the process, identified several issues: a husband's putative 'rights' over his wife, acceptance of domestic violence against women as 'normal,' a presumption that women are 'asking for trouble' if they go outside at night and that Maria had the major responsibility for her children. The discussion was energetic, with strong sentiments expressed by some who appealed frequently to 'the way things are,' and a growing solidarity among the women. While the group continued discussing these issues, the teacher recorded words on an improvised blackboard: 'woman,' 'violence,' 'mother,' and 'wife' - words to which the class would return, once their meaning had been expanded and enriched through the groups' discussion. Finally, it was Maria who interrupted and said, 'You've told me the way things are; I'll tell you how they should be, and together let's talk about how to make them so.' She effectively shifted the focus of the group from the patronizing solicitude of some who accepted the present reality to a strategy for social transformation."

The method of Freire:

1. Make the words important through interactive discussion, then
2. Show the class how the words are spelled.

This makes reading and writing high-impact subjects and sharply reduces the time it takes to teach them.

Like all visionaries, Freire had his detractors. A common criticism in the United States was that his writings were "mysterious" and "obscure." One booklet in which his work was mentioned said, "Paulo Freire is very much in vogue these days, but anyone who reads him will agree that he has a desiccated, metaphysical way of wrapping up his ideas that is most disconcerting." Another critic called his writings "abstract and dense almost to the point of impenetrability."

In a rare response, Paulo replied,

"I try to think dialectically by trying to understand contradictions and how they work in reality. How can I describe reality with a static language? My language has to be contradictory in order to grasp a contradictory reality. But in the United States the habit is to think not dialectically but in a positivistic way. And then my language becomes 'mysterious.'"

Happily, Paulo Freire wasn't looking for acceptance from US educators. He lived only for the poor of Latin America where his life touched millions in spite of his personal poverty, imprisonment, and exile.

May God send us more men and women like Paulo Freire.

###

*“If your eye is single
(focused on one thing,
your whole body will be full of light
(creativity, enthusiasm, stamina.)
But if your eye is unclear
(torn between two choices,
your whole body shall be full of darkness
(confusion and discouragement.)
If the light that is in you is darkness,
how great is that darkness!”*
- Jesus, in Matthew 6

99. Gift of a Jew

It's 1933, the lowest point in America's Great Depression, when Max Gaines loses his job as a novelties salesman and is forced to crowd into his mother's house with his wife, Jessie, and their two small children. Adolph Hitler has just been named chancellor of Germany. It's a dreary, overcast day.

The only cheer Max can find is in some old, Sunday funny papers that he finds stored in his mother's attic. Smiling as he reads the panels, it occurs to him that maybe other people might smile, too. Max persuades Eastern Color Printing to take a chance on his idea and the first American comic book is born. Thirty-five thousand copies are shipped to department stores and quickly disappear from the shelves. Less than a year later, comic books are being sold on newsstands from coast to coast. Eastern Color Printing rewards Max by saying, "Thanks for the idea, pal. Now get lost."

Hearing that the McClure Newspaper Syndicate has a pair of idle color presses, Gaines convinces them to let him print a new comic book in return for half the proceeds. McClure agrees and *Popular Comics* is born. Knowing that the success of recycled newspaper funnies would be short-lived, Max keeps his eyes open for something new. In 1937, McClure Newspaper employee Sheldon Mayer tells Max about a caped and muscled "Superman" in red-and-blue tights who can lift an automobile over his head. The strip has already been rejected by every New York newspaper as being too unbelievable, but Max Gaines knows the hearts of the people.

In 4 short years, 30 comic-book publishers are producing 150 different titles monthly, with combined sales of 15 million copies and a readership of 60 million people, making the comic-book industry a rare bright spot in America's Great Depression. Max Gaines has given the nation a beautiful gift. But now, staring into the cold eyes of Goliath, wartime Germany, America needs a patriot hero and no one understands heroes better than Max. The exploits of Abraham, Moses, Elijah and David have sustained his people for centuries. It's time to create a David for America.

Cartoonists Joe Simon and Jack Kirby created *Captain America* in 1941 to take on the Nazi agent *Red Skull*. "Two Jews created this weak little guy named Steve Rogers who gets shot in the arm by scientist Dr. Reinstein, (a reference to Albert Einstein) and by way of a 'secret

serum,' he becomes this super-strong hero who starts destroying Nazis," explains political cartoonist Peter Kuper. "What a distinctly empowering image."

The comic book industry was born on a gray afternoon in the dusty attic of Max Gaines' mother when he caught himself smiling at some old funny papers during the depths of the Great Depression. But the comic book wasn't the most precious gift Max would ever give. On August 20, 1947, Gaines was boating on Lake Placid with his friend Sam Irwin when a speedboat was suddenly upon them. In that singular, reflexive moment when time stands still and hearts are revealed, Max could either jump out of the way or toss Sam's young child to safety. There wasn't time to do both. Gaines threw the boy into the back of the boat and absorbed the full impact of the crash.

The boy was unhurt.

Max Gaines died instantly.

100. Cement Stays Wet Only a Little While

*Excerpted from remarks delivered by Spider Robinson,
(Award-winning author of more than 30 bestselling books),
At the Trade and Convention Centre, Vancouver,
On international Literacy Day, September 8, 1990,*

Paul Simon once said that "...the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls/and tenement halls..." I have myself recently seen the future writ large upon my own sidewalk.

Due to the recent construction of four megaboxes bracketing my own home in Point Grey, the sidewalk became so damaged as to require repair. The freshly poured cement naturally attracted *graffitisti* with popsicle sticks, determined to immortalize themselves. How few real opportunities there are these days for a writer to have his or her work literally graven in stone! Inevitably, one of these was an ardent young swain who wished to proclaim his undying love to the ages. His chilling masterpiece of...er...concrete poetry is located right at the foot of my walkway, where I must look at it every time I leave my home. It consists of a large heart, within which are inscribed the words:

TOOD + JANEY

Now, I don't know about you, but I decline to believe that even in this day and age, any set of parents elected to name their son "Tood." I am therefore forced to conclude that *young Todd is unable to spell his own goddam name...* despite having reached an age sufficiently advanced for him to find young Janey intriguing. As I make my living from literacy, I find

this sign of the times demoralizing. We are all, I hope, terrified at the growing prospect of a nation of illiterate voters attempting to make responsible decisions about complex and urgent issues of science and technology, issues whose cardinal points simply cannot be condensed into a ten-second sound bite. He who cannot read, cannot reason. And we know that the trend is in that direction.

Literacy is a very hard skill to acquire, and once acquired it brings endless heartache – for the more you read, the more you learn of life’s intimidating complexity of confusion. But anyone who can learn to grunt is bright enough to watch TV... which teaches that life is simple, and happy endings come to those whose hearts are in the right place.

The mind’s eye can show you things that no Hollywood special effects department can simulate – but only at the cost of years of effort spent learning to decode ink stains on paper. Writing still remains the unchallenged best way – indeed, nearly the only way except for mathematics – to express a complicated thought...and it seems clear that this is precisely one of its *disadvantages* from the consumer’s point of view. Plainly, recent generations of humans have begun to declare, voting with their eyes, that literacy is not worth the bother.

It will do no good merely to sing the praises of literacy to our children. We have done so all our lives, as our parents did before us, and it is not working any more... not working well enough, at any rate. We must be more devious than that: we must *con* our children into reading.

My mother’s scheme was to begin reading me a comic book – then, just as we had reached the point where the Lone Ranger was hanging by his fingertips from the cliff, buffalo stampede approaching, angry native peoples below... Mom would suddenly remember that she had to go sew the dishes, or vacuum the cat, or whatever – and leave me alone with the comic book.

I *had* to know how the story came out. There were pictures to assist me. Most of the words were ones I just heard read aloud; I could go back and refer to them, again with visual aids. By the age of five, thanks to my mother’s policy of well-timed neglect, I had taught myself to read sufficiently well that one day she presented me with a library card and sent me to the library to bring home a book. The librarian, God bless her, gave me a copy of Robert A. Heinlein’s novel for children, *Rocket Ship Galileo*... and from that day on there was never any serious danger that I would be forced to work for a living. Heinlein wrote stories so intrinsically interesting that it was worth the trouble to stop and look up the odd word I didn’t know. By age six I was tested as reading at college Junior level.

From the day our daughter was old enough to have a defined “bedtime,” my wife and I made it our firm policy that bedtime was bedtime, no excuses or exceptions... unless she were reading, in which case she could stay up as late as she pleased. The most precious gift any child can attain is a few minutes’ awareness past bedtime. She went for the bait like a hungry trout, and throughout her elementary school career was invariably chosen as The Narrator in school plays because of her fluency in reading.

Doubtless there are other schemes, and I urge you to give a little time to finding or inventing them. But one thing I promise you all: if you leave the problem to the government, or the educational system, or a mythical animal called society – to anyone but yourself – you will effectively be surrendering the battle, and giving your children over into the hands of Geraldo Rivera.

- Spider Robinson

PS: In case you weren't paying attention, the Invisible Heroes in this story are:

1. Spider Robinson's mom, who cared enough to trick her son into reading.
2. The unnamed librarian who cared enough to find "just the right book" for a big-eyed little boy.
3. Robert Heinlein, an already-famous author who cared enough to write a novel expressly for children.

101. America's Finest Hour

What makes us "America"?

If you were to name a single incident in American history that you feel was America's finest hour, what would it be?

Would it be a moment of patriotic sacrifice?

"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."
- Nathan Hale, [Sept. 22, 1776]

A moment of relentless determination?

"Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!"
- Admiral David Farragut [Aug. 5, 1864]

A moment of far-flung vision, an impossible dream?

"I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."
- JFK [May 25, 1961]

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a *dream* today!"
- MLK, Jr. [Aug. 28, 1963]

A moment of come-from-behind-to-win?

“...twenty-eight seconds. The crowd going insane. Kharlamov. Shooting it into the American end again. Morrow is back there. Now Johnson. Nineteen seconds. Johnson over to Ramsey. Bilyaletdinov gets checked by Ramsey. McClanahan is there. The puck is still loose. Eleven seconds. You’ve got ten seconds. The countdown going on right now. Morrow up to Silk. Five seconds left in the game. Do you believe in miracles? Yes!”

– Al Michaels, [Feb. 22, 1980]

Pennie and I were having lunch with our friend Rich Mann when he made a casual comment that sent such tremors through me that I wondered if we were having an earthquake. I never told Rich about the impact of his 4 little words on me that day, but he opened my eyes to a greatness that had previously been hiding in my blind spot.

The moment that defines America for me – the moment I’ll be proud of forever – was December 12, 2000, *when no one started shooting*.

Remember “The Month of the Hanging Chads?” Al Gore won the popular vote of the nation on November 7, 2000, but George W. Bush won Florida’s 25 electoral votes by a storybook-thin margin to gain the Presidency, 271 votes to 266. But the state laws of Florida required a recount due to the microscopic margin of victory.

On November 26, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris certified Florida’s voting results, declaring Bush to have won the state of Florida by 537 votes.

Many people were upset by this because Katherine Harris had also served as co-chair of Bush’s election campaign.

Gore's team won a court hearing to challenge the Katherine Harris results. The American people were confused, nervous and anxious.

On December 1, fully 3 weeks after Election Day, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments over whether the Florida Supreme Court had overstepped its authority in managing the recount. A week later, Florida's high court upheld their previous position.

Bush argued. Gore argued. And the leadership of our nation hung in the balance.

Finally, on December 12, the U.S. Supreme Court stopped the Florida recount, effectively declaring Bush to be the winner. That Supreme Court vote was 5 to 4.

And no one in America started shooting.

How many nations on this earth can rest in the knowledge that there will be a peaceful transfer of power, even in moments of heated disagreement?

“No one started shooting.”
– Rich Mann, Shogun Sushi, Austin, TX [Feb. 2001]

God Bless America.

102. An Unlikely Pair

The boys were born on the same day in the same year: February 12, 1809. Both were intensely private. Each boy lost his mother in early childhood. Neither was close to his father.

The two never met but together they tipped the world on its axis and made it wobble for 100 years.

You know the story of the first one; born in a log cabin, taught himself to read by the light of the fireplace, wrote with charcoal on the back of a shovel because there was no paper in the house, became a lawyer, had a big heart, kept the Union together. He accomplished his axis tilting because he believed the soaring words Thomas Jefferson had written 87 years earlier. He even made reference to those majestic ideals in the opening line of his most famous speech:

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

The other man believed precisely the opposite. He held a different set of truths to be self-evident. I find it strange that so many people consider him to be the greater hero.

Robert was raised with privilege, servants, independently wealthy. He toyed with the idea of becoming a doctor, then flirted with becoming a minister. His father said, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family."

At the age of 22, Robbie convinced the captain of a ship that he could provide intelligent conversation at the dinner table and was thus allowed to tag along on an adventure that would free a different kind of slave.

Five years later, a much-changed Robert returned to the shores of England where he began to edit the journal of his journey. After two decades of agonizing refinement, the story of his

voyage was published: *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.*

This book that elevated Charles Robert Darwin to god-like status was built upon his observation of “the survival of the fittest.” Lincoln held to the belief that all men are created equal, but Darwin insisted that some are a little more equal than others. His theory of natural selection tilted the earth again on its axis.

When humans use “survival of the fittest” as a model for making decisions, we lower ourselves to the level of animals. These conversations usually conclude with an agreement that “the end justifies the means” because of something we call “the greater good.”

Natural selection would justify every pogrom and ethnic cleansing in our history.

But the real earth-wobbling of Charles Robert Darwin was that he gave us a belief system that empowered us to triumphantly dismiss God from our thoughts. We say, "If God does not exist, then we are no longer subject to him." This shedding of our need for a deity is generally regarded as “the next important step” in human evolution.

Most of us, I believe, are captives of bad theology. We often escape one slavery only to be captured by another master even more demanding than the first. And each of us believes his or her own theology, or anti-theology, to provide the truest and best answers. Personally, I consider modern Darwinism to be a religion, or more accurately an anti-theology, a belief system that argues against a creator.

I believe in science and am devoted to its principles. I depend upon the reliability of physics. I acknowledge that evolution can and does happen. But I also believe that God spoke a universe into existence as is written in the book of Genesis and I believe “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” as is proclaimed in the Gospel of John. I am saddened by most televangelists and I deeply resent the annexation of Christianity by the religious right. I am suspicious of anyone who claims to speak for God.

You, too, have a theology or anti-theology, a belief system about God: whether he is or is not, and if he is, whether he is like this or like that. Most people believe in a God who is a lot like them. And this God can usually be trusted to do what that person would do if they were God.

God obviously prefers your political party. After all, he’s not stupid, right? And he enables the athletes of your favorite sports teams.

I do not mean to be irreverent.

An atheist believes there is no god.

A theist believes there is.

An agnostic tries not to think about it.

God is a big thought, a big question, often inflammatory, always uncomfortable, never to be brought up in polite society.

I guess I'm just not feeling that polite today.

103. Tuesdays with Stéphane

Eleven million copies of *Tuesdays with Morrie* have been sold.

But one hundred years before Mitch Albom began spending the-day-after-Monday with Morrie, a previous Tuesday gathering had already left its mark upon the earth and walked triumphantly into the pages of history.

You are cordially invited to the home of
Stéphane Mallarmé
89 Rue de Rome, Paris
Tuesdays, 9PM until Midnight

Stéphane Mallarmé was an English teacher who wrote a little poetry on the side.

Marcel Proust, the writer Grahame Greene would call "the greatest novelist of the 20th century," was fond of Mallarmé but did not care for his poetry, saying, "How unfortunate that so gifted a man should become insane every time he takes up the pen."

Ouch.

Other writers who spent Tuesdays with Stéphane were André Gide, Paul Valéry, Oscar Wilde, Paul Verlaine, Rainer Maria Rilke, and W.B. Yeats. Of these, only Verlaine was impressed with the poems of Stéphane Mallarmé.

Of greater consequence, perhaps, than the writers who gathered on Tuesdays were the artists who came and filled Stéphane's house with their drawings and paintings of him. These "Tuesday" works of art are now worth tens of millions of dollars though very few people realize Stéphane Mallarmé is the man portrayed. These works of art sell for millions because they were created by Manet, Degas, Gauguin, Whistler, Renoir and Munch.

Auguste Rodin would pop in from time to time even though he was busy sculpting *The Thinker*. Claude Monet said very good things about the snacks. Yes, these were the days when legends walked the earth *but they did not yet realize they were legends*. In Paris they were known only as Les Mardistes, derived from the French word for Tuesday; "The Tuesday people of Stéphane Mallarmé."

Mallarmé believed poetry should evoke thoughts through suggestion rather than description and that it should approach the abstraction of music.

Music! Claude Debussy, speaking of his masterpiece *The Afternoon of a Faun*, said “The music of this prelude is a very free illustration of Mallarmé's beautiful poem... a succession of scenes through which pass the desires and dreams of the faun in the heat of the afternoon. Then, tired of pursuing the timorous flight of nymphs and naiads, he succumbs to intoxicating sleep...”

Likewise, Ravel wrote *Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* shortly after Mallarmé died, fantastic music dedicated to his memory.

It's easy to understand why musicians and impressionist painters liked Mallarmé. He said, “I am creating a language which must necessarily spring from a quite new conception of poetry, and I define it in these words: To paint, not the thing, but the effect which it produces.”

Mallarmé liked images of snow, ice, swans, gems, mirrors, cold stars, and women's fans. He saw the poet's function as being, above all, "to give a purer meaning to the words of the tribe."

The music of Debussy and Ravel.
The sculpture of Rodin.
The words of Proust, Wilde and Yeats.
The paintings of Monet, Degas, Gauguin and Renoir.

The world may have forgotten Stéphane Mallarmé but we will never forget his tribe.

Les Mardistes.

It is enough.

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"Certainly Mallarmé prepared his conversations," recalled André Gide of those Tuesday night meetings, "but he spoke with such art and in a tone that had so little of the doctrinal about it that it seemed as if he had just that instant invented each new proposition."

104. 40 Years and 3 Miles Apart

1845: This is the year Johnny “Appleseed” Chapman will plant his final apple tree. Mark Twain is 10 years old, living the boyhood that will bring us Tom Sawyer. Florida will be added to the U.S. this year, raising the total number of states to 27. We think of life as being simpler, more idyllic back then, don't we?

The American Revolution was more recent to them than World War II is to us today. Memories of colonial times were only just beginning to fade. But Thoreau felt compelled to take a sabbatical in the woods near Concord, Massachusetts, saying, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

Stéphane Mallarmé was 3 years old and living in Paris in 1845, much too young and too far away to extend a hand to Thoreau. But in just a few more years he'll bring a generation of world-changers together on Tuesday nights at 89 Rue de Rome.

Gertrude Stein never met Mallarmé though their houses were only 3 miles apart. Stein arrived in Paris in 1903, 5 years after Mallarmé died. Stein's living room is where Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway, Henri Matisse, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Salvador Dali and Man Ray banged ideas together while Josephine Baker danced to the music of Cole Porter who played the piano and sang. None of them was yet famous.

Prior to 1953, America was too uptight to embrace outside-the-box thinkers so Paris was the haven for renegades. The living rooms of Mallarmé and Stein were like cabins in the woods. *But when several Henry Davids arrive at a cabin simultaneously*, the dust in the air begins to sparkle as the place becomes an island of pirates. Tinker Bell can be seen if you look quickly enough. Peter Pan is learning to fly.

The salons of Stein and Mallarmé brought together the great minds of their day and tumbled them like clothes in a dryer, influencing, stimulating, inspiring one another to new heights above the accepted norm.

Stein and Mallarmé were unimportant writers who surrounded themselves with the shapers of fashion, the inventors of tomorrow, the makers of the future.

I strongly identify with Stein and Mallarmé.

Funny, isn't it? No one wants to be average, but everyone wants to be normal.

How about you? Will your need to be "normal" condemn you to a life of screaming mediocrity? You're familiar with the phrase, "*The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation...*" but the truly frightening part is the thought that follows, "*and go to their graves with their songs still in them.*"

Don't go to your grave with your song still in you. Find and tumble topsy-turvy in the dryer with people who will make you sparkle and shine. Find others who are your brand of crazy. It's time you learned to fly.

The day-to-day can wait. Don't allow the merely urgent to displace the truly important.

Let this be your year.

105. America 2.0

America contained about two and a half million people when we declared our independence in 1776. Today's Portland, Oregon is bigger than that.

The Constitution (1787) empowered every citizen who was white, male and a landowner. Minorities, women and poor people? Not so much.

America was unlike Europe in that we didn't divide our population into nobles and peasants. We divided our people into landowners and land workers. This was different from Europe where the nobles owned the land and the peasants worked on it. You see the difference, don't you?

Three years later (1790,) our first census reported that America had mushroomed to 3,929,000 people; roughly the population of Seattle. But Seattle did not yet exist. It would be another 13 years before Thomas Jefferson would buy the Louisiana Territory and send Lewis and Clark to the other side of the continent to search for Starbucks. They didn't find it, but they did find enough land to ensure that everyone who wanted to be a landowner could easily become one.

"Land? I can own land?" Here came the people.

Study America's history and you'll find that most of us are the children of castoffs, rejects and refugees. Some of us were even brought here against our will. But that was also true of the original settlers of Australia, wasn't it? Australia, wow. What a gorgeous place to start a penal colony! If you're going to banish me, England, please send me there.

My own belief is that modern America – America 2.0 – began in 1883 when a 34 year-old writer born in New York City penned a poem to be auctioned in a fundraiser to help erect a 305-foot statue of a woman lifting a torch to the sky; "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." Emma Lazarus died just 4 years after she wrote that phrase, never suspecting her words would help shape the personality of America for a century. The rest of the money needed to erect the statue was raised by another Jew, a young refugee who had started a little newspaper in New York. His name was Joseph Pulitzer.

Jews understand the importance of tolerance.

The Dutch understand inclusion. Throughout history the Dutch have been quick to shelter the outcast and embrace the oppressed, so you shouldn't be surprised to learn that a fifth-generation Dutch New Yorker was President of the United States at the zenith of the "Me" in 1903* when the statue was finally finished and those now-famous words of Emma Lazarus were officially placed on the pedestal beneath it. This visionary Dutchman shut down the power of big corporations to oppress the poor and put an end to child labor. But before he did any of this, his first official act as President of the United States was to invite an African-American, Booker T. Washington, to the White House.

Tolerance and inclusion. "I accept that you are different and I want you to be in our group anyway." *This is America.*

Humility and courage. "I cannot do it alone, but working together, I believe we can." *This is America.*

Audacity and a sense of humor. As Babe Ruth reportedly introduced himself when he met the Queen of England, "Hey Queen, pull my finger." *This is most definitely America.*

Emma Lazarus, Joseph Pulitzer and Teddy Roosevelt believed in the beauty, the power and the wisdom of the little guy. They believed in you.

The American Dream is alive and well and this is going to be a very good year for you.

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

106. Shining City, Troubled Sky

Do Creative People Have to be Self-Destructive?

New York Times writer Samuel G. Freedman asks,

"Can the forces that make you creative also kill you?"

"Can you live with control and yet create free of restraint?"

"Can you live enough of the dark side to tell the tale without becoming a casualty?"

Freedman's curiosity is well founded. History is littered with the corpses of creative geniuses who were self-destructive.

Vincent Van Gogh cut off his own ear and mailed it to his girlfriend. Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko would likely have made out the mailing label and taped up the box. Rothko is the lightweight of this trio. His most valuable painting is worth only about 80 million dollars, while Van Gogh and Pollock have paintings worth 150 million each.

Nobel laureates Hemingway and Faulkner are the opening names on a *Who's Who* list of alcoholic authors. James Joyce, Dorothy Parker, Jack Kerouac, Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson and dozens of others trot faithfully behind.

Hendrix, Joplin, Cobain and Winehouse are the high-stepping drum majors in a holiday parade of musicians who flirted with death until it finally seduced them.

Each of these artists deserved better than what they gave themselves.

In her research paper, *Creativity, the Arts, and Madness*, Dr. Maureen Neihart says, "The belief that madness is linked with creative thinking has been held since ancient times. It is a widely popular notion."

In his book, *Creativity and Madness: New Findings and Old Stereotypes*, Dr. Albert Rothenberg says, "Deviant behavior, whether in the form of eccentricity or worse, is not only associated with persons of genius or high-level creativity, but it is frequently expected of them."

But we still haven't answered Freedman's questions. Let me do that for you now:

Q: "Can the forces that make you creative also kill you?"

A: There are no "forces that make you creative." Practice and determination are what make a person good at basketball, ice skating or cliff diving. The same is true of creativity.

Q: "Can you live with control and yet create free of restraint?"

A: Yes.

Q: "Can you live enough of the dark side to tell the tale without becoming a casualty?"

A: Can a man fight in a horrible war and return home safely to the people he loves?

Examine the life of a creative genius who got lost in the dark and you'll find that he or she had no partner watching out for them. When Pennie says, "Honey, help me carry the trash to the curb," it's not because she needs help with the trash. I'm always annoyed that she broke my concentration in the same way a pot smoker is annoyed when you harsh their mellow. But I help her carry the trash to the curb.

As we fall ever deeper into creative thought, we float weightlessly in a silent world underwater where time stands still and everything is beautiful. But it is dangerous to go swimming alone. Be sure someone who loves you ties a rope to your leg so they can haul you up when you've been under too long.

Self-talk is the other key to keeping your balance.

Do you want to drown in the darkness alone? All you have to do is say to yourself, "No one understands me... I'll never be appreciated... Some people have all the luck but nothing ever works out for me... It just wasn't meant to be."

Each of us believes what we hear ourselves say.

The maternal side of my DNA includes a strong predisposition to depression and suicide. I am familiar with that darkness. The most effective antidote I've found is to tell Pennie 2 or 3 times a day about some small thing that makes me happy. Many of the things I choose to celebrate are admittedly stupid but the technique works anyway. "This bowl of beans and rice is really hitting the spot tonight! I'm glad I found this can of beans in the pantry and I put exactly the right amount of black pepper in them. And this Fuji apple is the perfect side dish.

Food just doesn't get better than this." Pennie smiles and nods. She knows I need to find something to be happy about, no matter how small it might be.

Each of us believes what we hear ourselves say.
And it changes our mood.

What have you been hearing yourself say lately?

107. Merry... I Don't Know

I'm a Merry Christmas person. Does that make me bad? "Happy Holidays" doesn't carry quite the same exuberance for me as "Merry Christmas." And I must shamefully confess that deep in my heart I still think of Navajos, Cherokees and Apaches as Indians. My publisher tells me there is no such place as the Orient anymore! So are the boundaries of Asia the same as they were back when I was in school? In those days Asia was everything east of Constantinople. I'm sorry. My bad. Istanbul.

Russian Cossacks with their knee-high boots and furry hats, Arab Sheiks with their flowing robes and elegant turbans, and those squinty, inscrutable men wearing silk gowns with big sleeves are no longer to be differentiated from one another. They're all just "Asians" now.

Evidently, the goal is worldwide homogenization. We've already achieved it architecturally so now we're spreading that colorless twilight over every other expression of individuality. Welcome to Zoloft Grey where the mood is forever funereal. Cultural Splendor lies quietly in the coffin there but please don't look at it, admire it, comment upon it or celebrate it.

If you do, you're obviously a racist.

If you fail to ignore cultural differences you are a very bad person indeed. Indians? The Orient? Shame on you! What were you thinking? I just finished Agatha Christie's mystery novel, *Murder on the Asian Express*. John Wayne starred in a lot of cowboy and Native American movies. I'm sorry. My bad. *Cowperson* and Native American.

The best Indian food I ever had - (I can still say "Indian" if they're from India, right?) - was in 1986 at the Bombay Palace restaurant in Washington, DC. I'm sorry. *Mumbai* Palace. I don't want to be insensitive.

What the...? I just Googled Bombay Palace in Washington DC and they're closed! I wonder if it was because they failed to change their name to Mumbai Palace in 1995?

Does the word holiday come from holy day? I should check into that. I don't want to be insensitive to people who prefer to live deity-free. I'll let you know what I find out.

In the meantime, from me and mine to you and yours:

Merry...

Happy...

Have a good day.

Roy H. Williams

Were you offended by this chapter? If so, then you are a marvelous example of my point: In our attempt to create a society where everyone has equal status because they are equally human (egalitarianism,) we have created a bizarre hypersensitivity that elevates and celebrates victimhood. Having examined the rules of this game, I'm opting out.

"Working together for the common good" is a beautiful thing... until it creates a gang mentality. You were offended by this chapter? Okay, I'm offended that *Time* magazine named "The Protester" as "Person of the Year" for 2011. So what needs to happen here? Do *Time* and I apologize simultaneously to each other or do we just go our separate ways and get over it? I'll let you make the call. - RHW

108. Pearl Was a Bit of a Whore

Pearl was a bit of a whore.
We never kept her in a fence
So she had puppies at least once a year.

She was a good mother.

Abandoned in the country, starving,
We found her when I was in third grade.
She knew she was my dog immediately.

God help you if you got mad at me.

A blur of fur and teeth and little-dog roaring
Awaited you halfway to me. No one ever called
Pearl's bluff because they knew she wasn't bluffing.

I think I learned loyalty from Pearl.

Her oversized sense of protectiveness

Extended to the house a little, too.

But not much.

We lived on a small rise
At the end of a long driveway.
We would see her asleep on the porch in the sunshine
But when the crunch of tires on gravel reached her ears

She would leap like Wonder Woman off the porch
And race to the far end of the yard,
Barking the whole while,
Careful never to look our way.

She'd bark at the unseen burglar
Then cut and run a different way to
Stop and bark at other phantoms.

The shutting of a car door
Made her look our way, startled,
As if to say, "Oh, you're back already?
When did you arrive?"

And then she would trot with great pride,
Paws lifted a little too high
Her head swinging back and forth
As if to say, "Aren't I wonderful?"

"Pearl, you're wonderful," I would say
Because she knew her job and I knew mine.

In later years I stepped from the kitchen
Into the garage to see her curled
With a small cat under her foreleg,
It's head snuggled beneath her chin, friends
Laid down for a nap.

The screen door springs closed with a clap
And Pearl lifts her bleary eyes, "What was that?"
She looks up to see me,
With a cat in her bed.

Standing slowly to her feet
Pearl gives a soft "woof,"
As if to whisper,
"The boss is here."

The cat, knowing *her* job, too,
Stands,
Looks at me,
Looks at Pearl,
Then trots out the garage
And around the corner.

Pearl gives me one more look
Then chases the cat
To do her duty.

Later, I walk outside
And see Pearl beside the house
In the soft sunshine
Laid down for a nap
With her friend.

Forty years later
I walk around
another house
500 miles away,
And secretly hope to
See Pearl and the cat
One last time.

###

"Since Penelope Noakes of Duppas Hill is gone, there is no one who will ever call me Nellie again." - An Old Lady in *First and Last Things* by Richard Hoggart, p. 234. [The original statement is attributed to W.H. Auden by poet Alfred Corn in his book, *Autobiographies*.]

109. All My Weird Friends

Ken and Barbie are perfect.

Ken and Barbie are plastic.

Ken and Barbie are hollow.

I do not prefer them.

True friends are flawed in endearing ways. *Quirky*.

I'll never forget the morning when I asked a roomful of newly arrived Wizard Academy students to tell a little about themselves. The last to stand was a tall, silver-haired patriarch who said, "As I sat and listened to you people, I couldn't help but think, 'Never in my life have I been surrounded by as many weirdos, misfits, mavericks and renegades.'"

The silence throbbed as the old gentleman slowly surveyed the room, meeting the eyes of every student, "It's as if the Wizard sent out the mating call of the albino monkey, and this room contains the rag-tag rabble who answered."

No one was breathing.

"I just can't tell you what an honor it is to be counted here among you!"

The walls flexed outward from the shockwaves of spontaneous, thunderous applause.

That patrician gentleman was Keith Miller, the bestselling author of *The Taste of New Wine*, a revolution-triggering book that sold multiple millions of copies as it rocked religious America back in 1965.

Interesting people are nonconformists, swimming tirelessly against the flow of the cultural norm.

Only dead fish go with the current.

"We all know bad things are happening to our political and social universe; we know that business is colonizing ever larger chunks of American culture; and we know that advertising tells lies. We are all sick to death of the consumer culture. We all want to resist conformity. We all want to be our own dog."
- Thomas Frank, *Conglomerates and the Media*, 1997

A few months ago, Pink wrote an anthem to nonconformity, a paeon to society's outcasts, weirdos, mavericks and renegades:

"Raise your glass if you are wrong in all the right ways, all my underdogs!"

Raise Your Glass rocketed to the top of the charts. *But we shouldn't have been surprised.* Pink's song recalls the original American anthem found at the foot of a statue that raises not a glass, but a torch. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

"We will never be, *never be* anything but loud and nitty-gritty, dirty little freaks."
- Pink, *Raise Your Glass*, Oct. 2010

Have you done any traveling lately? During their 40-year reign as the king and queen of American culture, Ken and Barbie littered our nation with identical power centers hosting the same tenants in every village, town and city.

Come to Austin and we'll proudly show you 6th Street, a few blocks in our city that are unique to our wonderful town. New Orleans has the French Quarter. Atlanta has Buckhead. Your town has its special district, too. You know where it is.

But outside these highly-prized districts where we enshrine the last shreds of our uniqueness, your town and mine have precisely the same stores and restaurants as every other; *perfect, plastic, and hollow*.

Does that make you angry? Do you want shake things up a little? Are you eager to make a statement of life that will be heard around the world?

Come to Wizard Academy. You've got people here.

110. The Emily Dickinson of Photography

I look at Vivian Maier and remember Jane Hathaway, Mr. Drysdale's scholarly secretary on *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

Vivian was born in France in 1926. We don't know how or when Vivian came to America, but at age 11 she began working in a New York sweatshop.

She learned English by sitting in movie theaters, alone in the dark.

Alone in the dark. That pretty much describes Vivian's life except for 1959, the year she turned 33 and found just enough money to travel abroad to strange and exotic places; Egypt, Thailand, Vietnam, France, Italy, Indonesia, Taiwan.

Highly unusual for a woman of her time, Vivian journeyed alone.

Even more unusual, she often wore a man's bulky jacket, ugly and awkward men's shoes and a large, floppy hat. And she constantly took photographs that she never showed anyone.

It appears that Vivian escaped the sweatshops by moving to Chicago in the early 1950's and taking work as a nanny to three young boys: Matthew, Lane and John are now old men but remember Vivian as "peculiar, our own Mary Poppins. One time she brought home a dead snake to show us, another time she convinced the milkman to drive us all to school in his

delivery truck. But in the 10 years she worked for our family, she never once received a phone call.”

When the 3 boys were raised, Vivian became unemployed. The next half-century saw her shift from family to family, always caring for children who were not her own.

One employer hired Vivian to care for his disabled daughter. “But first thing in the morning on her day off, that camera would be around her neck and we wouldn’t see her again until late at night. I remember her as a private person but one who had very strong opinions about movies and politics.”

Vivian was born a French Catholic but according to her employers she died an anti-Catholic, Socialist, Feminist movie critic who hated American movies but loved foreign films.

At age 83, still in Chicago, she slipped on the ice and hit her head and died.

But on the other side of Chicago, alone in the dark, sat 100,000 photo negatives and more than 1,000 rolls of undeveloped film in a public storage facility. When Vivian didn’t show up to pay her storage fees, the contents of her space were turned over to an auction house.

Vivian’s features remind me of Jane Hathaway but her life reminds me of Emily Dickinson. *No one knew Emily was a writer until after the funeral when they cleaned out her chest-of-drawers and found more than 1,500 of the finest poems ever written in the English language.*

Likewise, the buyer of Vivian’s negatives was stunned by what he found. And though John Maloof has scanned only 30,000 of Vivian’s 100,000 photo negatives, *Finding Vivian Maier* is currently the featured exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center. A book and a documentary movie are in the works.

As a longtime collector of black-and-white photography (and the publisher of *Accidental Magic*, a coffee-table photo book,) I believe we’ll soon see Vivian Maier photographs featured at Sotheby’s and Christie’s.

From a storage locker in suburban Chicago to the finest auction houses in the world, I believe the second journey of Vivian Maier has only just begun.

111. Van Gogh's Hero

Adolphe Joseph Thomas Monticelli has been forgotten by all but the most devoted art historians, but his legacy will live eternal through the work of Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Cézanne and a whole generation of French Impressionists.

Thomas Jefferson was alive when Monticelli was born and Teddy Roosevelt had just entered politics when Monticelli died in 1886. Although he lived an obscure life in deep poverty, Monticelli left behind nearly 3,500 paintings.

Confronted with criticism of his unpopular style in 1860, Monticelli remarked, "I paint for thirty years from now."

When Vincent Van Gogh arrived in Paris in 1886, he discovered the paintings Monticelli had created 30 years earlier. Immediately upon seeing these works, Van Gogh adopted a brighter palette and a bolder attack and later remarked, "I sometimes think I am really continuing that man."

When Van Gogh's new style was praised by an art critic in the newspaper, he replied,

“Dear Monsieur Aurier: Many thanks for your article in the *Mercure de France*, which greatly surprised me. I like it very much as a work of art in itself, in my opinion your words produce colour. In short, I rediscover my canvases in your article, but better than they are, richer, more full of meaning. However, I feel uneasy in my mind because I know that what you say is due to others rather than myself. For example, Monticelli in particular. Saying as you do: ‘*As far as I know, he [Van Gogh] is the only painter to perceive the chromatism of things with such intensity, with such a metallic, gem-like lustre...*’ Please be so kind as to go and see a certain bouquet by Monticelli at my brother’s - then you will see what I want to say.”

- Vincent Van Gogh
to G. Albert Aurier, February 1890

Nine years after Monticelli died, Oscar Wilde moaned of his bankruptcy in a letter to Lord Alfred Douglas, "That all my charming things were to be sold: my Burne-Jones drawings: my Whistler drawings: my Monticelli: my Simeon Solomons: my china: my Library..."

Finally, more than 100 years after his death, Monticelli's paintings hang in the Louvre in Paris and the National Gallery in London. One painting by Monticelli was recently auctioned at Christie's for \$608,000.

The Monticelli at the top of this page recently traveled from Luxembourg to Austin where it will hang in the tower at Wizard Academy.

God bless Monticelli, “The World's Most Influential Painter That No One’s Ever Heard Of.”

May his light shine forever.

112. Walk on Water

Life is a journey on water. We spend our lives floating between the sunlit scenery of the conscious mind and the shadowy depths of **the unconscious** below. Dr. Richard D. Grant tells us our relationship to the unconscious is exactly our relationship to water.

1. We need it by the cupful to survive.
2. A plunge into it is refreshing. (Art speaks to the unconscious.)
3. Stay under too long and we'll drown. (A psychotic break.)
4. There are monsters in the deep.

Drifters on the ocean of life define themselves by their **circumstances**. Pushed here and there by the winds and waves of chance, their mantra is, "whatever."

Surfers on the ocean of life define themselves by their **activities**. Riding the swells this way and that, they dream of the perfect wave.

Drowners in the ocean of life define themselves by their **limiting factors**. Sad and mournful, they are professional victims, the walking wounded, an army that never heals.

Navigators sailing happily on the ocean of life define themselves by their **commitments**. Navigators know exactly what they're trying to make happen and they're willing to pay the price.

Do you know what you're trying to make happen? Are you willing to pay the price?

Lorian Hemingway chose not to drown in life's ocean. In her marvelous book, *Walk on Water*, she speaks of childhood loneliness and a hollow stepfather who abused her alcoholic mother. But Lorian chose not to let these limiting factors become her defining characteristics. She chose instead to admire the toothless but resilient old black woman, Catfish, who cooked hamburgers at the café. Lorian was also shaped by encounters with her mother's sister, Freda:

"At the age of thirty-five Freda had had a mastectomy. The bow and arrow was her therapy, to strengthen what was left of her chest muscles. Her body had been perfect, a sculptor's model, and she'd worn her summer shirts tied up high under her breasts, braless most of the time. She still wore her shirts knotted at the rib cage, but now they were men's cotton pajama tops, the material thicker so you could not see through; but often when she bent forward I could see the scarred bony place where the breast had been. I never knew if she was bitter for the loss, if she stared at the deformity in the mirror and wished for a time when she'd been whole. She never said. I never asked. She was not a woman martyred by tragedy, nor was she at all acquainted with self-pity..."

"Freda was a dazzle, a virtual watercolor of a woman whose moods and mannerisms were as electric as her wild black hair. Her grin alone, a flash of Ipana-white teeth, head tossed back, stopped men in their tracks, delayed them in traffic, and threatened their wives so completely even the milkman was not allowed to deliver at Freda's house..."

“She'd tried once to kill my stepfather, whom she'd always referred to by his first and last names, Bill McClain, the two words run together in her odd accent so it came out ‘Bimicain,’ sounding like a fungal cream.”

- **Lorian Hemingway**, *Walk on Water*, p. 38-39

Limiting factors are outside you.
Defining characteristics are within.

Catfish and Freda taught Lorian Hemingway not to swallow her limiting factors.

Has your self-image been damaged by things you did not choose? Have you internalized your limiting factors? Spit them out. Ceremoniously and with contempt. Spit them out. Limiting factors can be fought or ignored but they should never be accepted. To accept them is to move them inside you.

I'm not uneducated. Uneducated people are dull. I simply chose not to go to college.

I'm not a bald guy. Bald guys are pitiable. I'm just a guy who has no hair.

And I'm certainly not scruffy and poorly dressed. I'm a man whose mind is filled with things other than his personal appearance. The fact that this makes me look like a homeless beggar is nothing more than a meaningless coincidence.

I am deeply committed to my wife, astoundingly loyal to my friends and surprisingly dangerous to my enemies. See how easy it is to choose your identity?

You alone decide who you will be.

What have you decided?

113. Wile E. Coyote, Billionaire

There's not a lot you can learn from the Road Runner, but the Coyote knows the secret of wealth.

In September, 1949, the Coyote - *Carnivoros vulgaris* - built a catapult. But instead of launching him toward the Road Runner, it launched him straight up into a stone outcropping.

The Coyote crawled out of the hole and went back to work.

In December, 1955, the Coyote - *Eatibus almost anythingus* - waited anxiously for the Road Runner to come around a corner, then lit the fuse of a cannon. But instead of firing the

cannonball, the entire cannon - with the Coyote behind it - fired backwards into a mountain wall.

Again the Coyote crawled out of the hole and went back to work.

In May, 1980, the Coyote - *Nemesis ridiculii*- climbed aboard a rocket, aimed it toward the Road Runner on the opposite side of the canyon and lit the fuse. The fuel and nosecone of the rocket launched out of the rocket hull, leaving the Coyote sitting aboard that empty cylinder. He fell, annoyed, to the canyon floor.

The Coyote climbed out of the canyon and went back to work.

Are you beginning to see a trend here?

The Coyote – *Inevitablius Succeedus* - never gives up.

The Coyote is Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*. After 84 consecutive days of not catching a fish, the old man rises before dawn and pulls steadily on the oars until he is far beyond the sight of land.

The Coyote is Rowan of *A Message to Garcia*. Alone behind enemy lines, outnumbered thousands to one, Rowan never considers the impossibility of his mission, but doggedly attempts the ridiculous until he casually accomplishes the miraculous.

The Coyote is Quixote, foolishly committed to a questionable quest, paying his pint of blood daily without complaint, never wavering in his enthusiasm, never doubting he will ultimately succeed.

When we were young and fast and invincible, the Road Runner was our hero. Impervious to danger, the Road Runner ran without tiring, scooted without fear and beep-beeped coolly like a blue James Bond.

But as I look down now from this creaking tower of years, I see it was the Coyote who deserved my admiration. That TV show was never about the Road Runner. It was always about the Coyote. The Coyote was determined.

"Determined" is a word much misunderstood. Obstinate people are not determined. They merely suffer from too much pride. Stubborn people are not determined. Stubbornness is willful ignorance.

Determination is an unblinking willingness to pay the price as often as it must be paid. Determination is never losing sight of your objective, no matter what comes along to distract you. Determination is endurance.

How about you? If Failure appears without warning and throws you onto the rocks below, will you happily crawl out of that smoking crater and go back to work?

114. Just a Regular Guy

As a boxer, Chuck Wepner earned the nickname "The Bayonne Bleeder" because of the punishment he took even while winning. Tom Donelson of *Inside Boxing* writes of him,

"Wepner was what one would call 'a catcher', a fighter who often used his head to block the other guy's punches - not the kind of strategy that leads to long careers... He constantly pressured his opponent until he either won or was knocked out. He never truly cared how many shots he would absorb before landing the telling blow."

Trainer Al Braverman called Wepner

"the gutsiest fighter I ever met. He was in a league of his own. He didn't care about pain or cuts. If he got cut or elbowed, he never looked at me or the referee for help. He was a fighter in the purest sense of the word."

When Wepner knocked out Terry Henke in the 11th round in Salt Lake City, boxing promoter Don King offered Wepner a title shot against then-heavyweight champion George Foreman. But when Ali defeated Foreman, Wepner found himself scheduled to fight The Great One – Muhammad Ali himself. On the morning of the fight Wepner gave his wife a pink negligee and told her that she would "*soon be sleeping with the heavyweight champion of the world.*"

Ali scored a technical knockout of Wepner with just 19 seconds remaining in the fight.

But there was a moment... one glorious moment in the 9th round, when a ham-like paw to Ali's chest knocked the reigning champion off his feet. "When Ali was down, I remember saying to my ringman Al Braverman, 'Start the car, we're going to the bank, we're millionaires.' And Al said to me, 'You'd better turn around. Because he's getting up, and he looks pissed off.'"

After the fight, Wepner's wife pulled the negligee out of her purse and asked, "*Do I go to Ali's room or does he come to mine?*"

A struggling writer watching the fight remembers it well.

"I went to the fights and I saw this Chuck Wepner character who was called 'The Bayonne Bleeder,' who was just this fighter of really very, very little skill, but you know, kind of like a real American, you know, working-class stiff who just takes it on the chin and comes back and just a very symbolic kind of character. And I thought, 'There it is. There... it... is.' He was fighting Muhammad Ali who was like, you know, the perfect fighter and he knocked him down. And that validated his entire life. He didn't expect to win. He knocked him down. You could never take that away. I went, 'There... My God. Now if I can get that onto the page...' So I went home and I started writing. And I wrote for three days straight..."

– Sylvester Stallone, telling James Lipton about the birth of *Rocky* on *Inside the Actor's Studio*.

The movie studio offered the struggling writer an unprecedented \$400,000 for his script, but Stallone refused the money, choosing instead just \$20,000 and the right to play the part of Rocky for actor's minimum wage - just \$340 a week. The studio then offered Chuck Wepner a similar choice - a \$70,000 flat fee or one percent of the movie's gross profits. Believing that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, Chuck took the guarantee - a decision that cost him \$8 million.

Stallone believed in Wepner.

Wepner didn't believe in Stallone.

115: TRIZ Answer 13 Again

"Do It Backwards"

I was using the story of Henry Ford to explain the difference between cost-based accounting and customer-based accounting:

Cars in 1908 sold for about \$2,500 apiece. Nearly 2,000 entrepreneurs became car builders between 1886 and 1908 and each of these car builders began with the question, "How can I build a stronger, faster, more desirable car?"

But none of them could build and sell a car for less than \$2,500. Consequently, cars sold in small numbers and only to the very rich.

But Henry Ford wasn't product-focused, he was customer-focused. Henry asked, "At what price could I sell a lot of cars... a whole lot of cars?" Henry decided upon the price of \$849 and it became his non-negotiable, his guiding light, his North Star.

Designs A through S were impossible to build and sell for \$849 so those designs were scrapped. But the Model T at \$849 swept America like a prairie fire on a windy day and left 15 million Americans smiling happily in the smoke of identical, black cars. The bestselling car in the world today sells about 400,000 units per year worldwide, so 15 million is a lot of cars... a whole lot of cars.

Henry Ford developed the assembly line using the same sort of reverse logic. While visiting a large meat-packing house in Chicago, Henry was impressed with the efficiency of their *disassembly* line: a pig carcass hung from a hook that rolled along

an overhead rail in front of a line of workers, each of whom cut off a piece of pork with a specialized knife. *Whoosh*. The pig was skeletonized in less than 2 minutes.

“Instead of a rail overhead, I’ll have a conveyor belt underneath. And instead of taking off a piece, my workers will add a piece. Instead of ending with a skeleton, we’ll begin with a skeleton.” *Whoosh*. By 1920 a new Model T rolled out of the factory every 60 seconds and 1 of every 2 cars on earth was a Ford Model T.

Sam Walton was Henry Ford with a different haircut. Sam taught his buyers to look at an item and ask, “At what price could I sell a lot of these... a whole lot of these?” Then if the item could be bought for less than that amount, the buyer was told to buy a trainload of them.

“Roy, I can corroborate that story.” All eyes turned toward Norm. “I was with Fred Meyer in 1980 and Wal-Mart was part of our buying group. A man at the front of the room held up a rug and began explaining its features. The Wal-Mart buyer on my right leaned across to ask the Fred Meyer buyer on my left, ‘How much do you think we could sell those for?’ My buyer whispered back, ‘We don’t yet know what they cost.’ The Wal-Mart buyer cocked his head and responded, ‘What does that have to do with anything?’”

Fred Meyer and Sam Walton simultaneously broke the 1 billion-dollar mark in 1980. Fred Meyer now sells 7 billion dollars a year.

Wal-Mart sells that much every week.

Henry Ford and Sam Walton became ecstatically wealthy because they had an instinctive understanding of Genrich Altshuller’s **Answer 13: Do it backwards**.

Kary Mullis understands **Answer 13**, just like Henry and Sam. “Geneticists were looking for a needle in a haystack, so I said, ‘Why not turn the haystack into needles?’” The year was 2004. Kary was telling me how he invented Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR,) the scientific breakthrough that won him the Nobel Prize and opened the door to genetic research.

Kary then showed me a scale model of a new, organic molecule and said he was using that same inverted perspective – Answer 13 again – to eliminate bioterrorism. “We know all about this powerful immuno-reaction because we’ve been suppressing it during heart-valve transplants for decades. So I said, ‘Suppress it hell, why not aim it?’”

You’ll see Kary holding that molecule in the 2009 TED video in which he announces his creation of a vaccine for anthrax.

Answer 13: Do it backwards. Reverse it. Turn it upside down.

Backwards thinking is what made Henry Ford and Sam Walton rich and won Kary Mullis the Nobel Prize.

Think of a limiting factor; something that's holding you back. Now sling a little Answer 13 on that problem. What does it look like now?

116. Let Me Tell You a Story...

I was on the telephone with an 87 year-old man I had been hunting for several weeks. I needed this man's permission to publish a private letter he had written to America's Chief of Naval Operations back in 1963. The man's name was William Lederer.

He asked, "Where you calling from young man?"

"Austin, Texas."

"I was there recently. Nice town."

"What brought you to Austin sir?"

"I was there to bury my best friend Jim."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"You would have liked Jim. Everyone did. He once gave me some advice that changed my life."

"What was it?"

"William," he said, "the public is more willing to believe fiction than non-fiction."

Mr. Lederer now had my full attention as I had already written the following in my *Wizard of Ads* trilogy of bestsellers.

Our bodies contain approximately 100 million sensory receptors that allow us to see, hear, taste, touch and smell physical reality. But the brain contains 10 thousand billion synapses. This means we're roughly 100,000 times better equipped to experience a world that does not exist, than a world that does.

**The first step in persuasion
is to entice your target
to imagine doing the thing
you want them to do.**

In the summer of 2004, six years after my conversation with Mr. Lederer, a screenwriter named Eli Attie crafted a new fictional character that would appear on *The West Wing*. Matt Santos (played by Jimmy Smits) would be a young congressman, new to Washington, a working-class member of an ethnic minority. Prior to running for public office, our fictional character Santos had been a community organizer in a major city (Houston.)

Screenwriter Eli Attie admitted to *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, that the Matt Santos character was inspired by a young Illinois politician – not yet even a US senator – by the name of Barack Obama, a community organizer from Chicago.

As a result of Attie's attraction to Obama, the 2006 television season showed us a glittering, fictional candidate for the presidency, a happily married, young minority male with 2 children who would run against a moderate Republican opponent from a western state.

The imaginary Republican senator, Arnie Vinick (played by Alan Alda.) was unpopular with his conservative base due to his moderate views. His principal opponent in the fictional Republican primary was the Rev. Don Butler, a Christian preacher. Keep in mind these *West Wing* episodes aired 18 months before the nomination battle between John McCain and Mike Huckabee.

But wait, it gets weirder.

A few years earlier, Aaron Sorkin admitted that he had based *The West Wing's* Josh Lyman character on Rahm Emanuel, who had served in Bill Clinton's White House. Both Lyman and Emanuel are Jewish. Both are brilliant. Both mail dead fish to opponents who make them angry.

In the 2006 season of *The West Wing*, seasoned White House staffer Josh Lyman serves as campaign manager for the long-shot, minority candidate. When his candidate wins, Lyman is named Chief of Staff.

A few years later Rahm Emanuel, *the real Josh Lyman*, will become Barack Obama's Chief of Staff.

Was it all a plot? Don't be ridiculous.

It's just an example of how we tend to act out the things we've seen in our mind.

By the way, here's the end of that William Lederer story:

"How did Jim's advice change your life Mr. Lederer?"

"Well, I had written a few books but none of them sold very well. So in 1958 I showed Jim the manuscript for my newest book and he told me to go back and fictionalize the name of the country, the characters, everything. 'The public is more willing to believe fiction than non-

fiction.”

“How did it turn out for you?”

“Well, that book, *The Ugly American*, stayed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for 78 straight weeks and sold more than 3 million copies in its first year. Marlon Brando starred in the movie. But of course that’s nothing compared to what Jim did.”

“What do you mean?”

“Jim wrote more than 40 books, sold more than 100 million copies and won the Pulitzer Prize.”

There was an awkward silence.

“I’m sorry sir, but I can’t think of what Jim you might mean.”

“I’m sorry, son. You probably knew him as James... James Michener.”

117. Sailing the Sea of Japan

Elizabeth was a young Quaker girl who fell happily in love and got married in 1929. “Morgan Vining, my husband, swept my little boat out of the shallows into the sunlit depths of life’s stream and we had almost five years together before, in a single moment, he was gone.”

Car wrecks happen quickly.

Elizabeth Vining was adrift. A line from the Breton Fisherman's Prayer said it best, "Oh Lord, your sea is so great and my boat is so small."

Elizabeth became a schoolteacher who in the evening wrote children’s books. Her most popular title was *Adam on the Road* (1942).

Then, at the end of World War Two, 43 year-old Elizabeth Vining got a call. General Douglas MacArthur had decided not to charge Japan’s Emperor Hirohito with war crimes. Instead, he asked that Elizabeth Vining become the tutor of Crown Prince Akihito, the emperor’s son.

Elizabeth accepted.

Upon her arrival in Japan, she encountered a lonely 12 year-old boy whose eyes sparkled with “a hidden sense of humor.” As crown prince, Akihito lived separately from his parents. He saw them only once a week, for a one-hour meal together.

The next 4 years were filled with English lessons, games of Hide and Seek, Monopoly and stories of Abraham Lincoln. The seeds of independent thinking were planted.

Risk orientation.

Individual effort and reward.

Breaking the rules.

Thinking outside the box.

These ideas were profoundly *un*Japanese.

In 1950, Elizabeth Vining returned quietly to the United States since Akihito's mastery of English was nearly as good as her own. Akihito's farewell gift to Mrs. Vining was a poem, written in his best calligraphy, about the birds returning to the Akasaka Palace Gardens after the war.

Soon after the departure of Mrs. Vining, young Akihito met beautiful Michiko on the tennis court. In 1959, he broke 2,600 years of Japanese tradition by marrying Michiko, a commoner.

And a Quaker woman from America was the only foreigner allowed to attend the wedding.

But Akihito wasn't finished surprising the world. All Japan was stunned when he and Michiko announced they would raise their own children. Another 2,600 year-old tradition, shattered by the 125th emperor of Japan.

Akihito's attitude gave freedom to other Japanese to begin thinking independently as well. Honda, Sony, Toyota, Mitsubishi and their amazing fruits of innovation sprouted from a single seed, planted by a Quaker widow.

Vining opened the door in 1946. Deming walked through it in 1950.

Elizabeth Vining lived to be 97 years old. And each year on her birthday, with all the precision and dependability we have come to expect from Japan, a limousine from the Japanese embassy would stop in front of her home as a tuxedoed ambassador delivered a giant bouquet of flowers.

A simple woman quietly did her best,
a young boy had a change of heart,
and a nation opened the doors of its mind.

It would appear that a small boat is able to cross a great sea.

218. Feeding Stray Puppies and Kittens

Mom's off-white Formica table with wobbly metal legs had a charred circle on top where I once set a pan that was way too hot. Mom couldn't afford a tablecloth to cover it, but whenever she suspected a person might have nowhere to go for Thanksgiving dinner, she'd always invite them to our house and have another hungry mouth to feed.

Thanksgiving, for me, meant a house jammed with people I'd never seen before and would never see again. But each year I saw a whole other America through the eyes of the misfits who gathered around my charred little circle. And the stories I heard were amazing. It was magical.

I miss those days.

I watched Mom deny herself necessities during the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. Her emaciated paycheck couldn't possibly feed a houseful of strangers, but she always did it anyway. And no guest ever had to worry they were taking more than their share. Mom's opulence made us believe, at least for an hour, that we were royal.

What I've written is the sort of thing a person usually writes when someone they love has died, but I'm delighted to report that Mom is alive and healthy and recently returned from a trip to China.

I'm telling you about Sue Williams today because she taught me something else when I was young. *She said we should give our roses to the living and not save them for the dead.*

"When a person dies, everyone who loved them will cancel their other obligations, send a big bouquet of flowers, jump on an airplane and fly across the country to look at their dead friend in a box." Mom waited a moment for this to soak in. "If I'm going to cancel my plans, buy roses and travel because of friendship, I'm going to do it while my friend is alive to smell the flowers and enjoy the adventure with me. And if my friend passes before I do, I'll sit quietly at home and remember the trip we took together."

Once a year, Mom would treat a friend to a small adventure, a 3 or 4-day trip together to someplace interesting. Taos with Theresa. Santa Fe with Dee. A trip to Alaska to see Janice. West Virginia to see Velma. A trip to the Bahamas with Vicki. Spain with Cindy. These are the people my Mom cares about too much to attend their funerals.

Stephen Levine poses a very interesting question: "If you were going to die soon and had only one phone call you could make, who would you call and what would you say? And why are you waiting?"

So, who are you going to call?

119. Richie's Red Bus

The Monday Morning Memo for July 7, 2008

I've known Richie Starkey since I was five. He turns 68 today.

Richie said the only thing he wanted for his birthday was for you to pause today at noon, wherever you are in the world, make a peace sign with your fingers and say with a smile, "Peace and Love."

Will you do it?

Yes, it's ridiculous. But before you summarily dismiss his request, let me tell you a bit about Richie and why he might merit your cooperation.

1. People have made fun of his big nose his whole life.
2. He throws a great party.
3. He was dealt a bad hand as a kid.

Richie's dad was a dock worker who walked into a bakery one day to buy a donut and fell in love with the girl behind the counter.

Richie was three years old when his parents divorced.

At six, Richie was rushed to the hospital for a ruptured appendix which put him into a coma for 10 weeks. Then things went from bad to worse. Awakening from the coma, Richie was given 2 toys to play with in the hospital but the boy in the next bed didn't have any. Richie leaned out of his bed to give his red bus to the other boy but lost his balance, hitting his head hard enough to throw him back into a coma.

When Richie finally got out of the hospital, he'd missed more than a year of school so he was put into a class with much younger children.

Richie struggled to get caught up in school but at 13 he caught a cold that turned into pleurisy. This put Richie back into the hospital for several months and threw him even further behind in his schoolwork. Finally, Richie said, "screw it" and dropped out. He could barely read and write.

Richie went into business with three young partners and each of the others became incredibly successful. Richie was forever in their shadow.

His lifelong dream, sadly, could never be realized. More than anything, Richie wanted to be in the audience during a Beatles concert.

This is because the *other* toy they gave him was a drum. Richie taught himself to play it, began to wear a lot of Rings on his fingers, and dropped the "key" off the end of his name, "Starkey."

Peace and Love, Ringo.

120. A Memory of Life

I still don't know his last name.

Gille arrived from Michigan in a small jar with his photograph on the lid. His friend had sent an email to Chapel Dulcinea asking if we'd be willing to launch some of Gille's ashes into the breeze that always blows there.

We replied we'd be happy to do it.

It seems that Gille's parting wish was for his ashes to be scattered at beautiful and interesting places around the world and Chapel Dulcinea was selected as one of those places. So at sunset on December 13, 2006, Tom Grimes, Brett Feinstein and I became the awkward honor guard that entrusted Gille to the winds from the western pinnacle of Dulcinea's diamond foundation.

Feinstein rang the big bronze bell as Gille floated northward into forever.

How are things with you? Are you ready to begin a new year?

This is the time when millions of us pause to look back with regret and forward with hope. As you prepare for 2007, here are some thoughts I hope you'll ponder:

It's Always Okay To Begin Again

"The object of a New Year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul." – G.K. Chesterton

Pay Attention to the Little Things

"It is often said that before you die your life passes before your eyes. It is in fact true. It's called living." – Terry Pratchett

"No trumpets sound when the important decisions of our life are made. Destiny is made known silently." – Agnes De Mille

Know What You Want

"I can teach anybody how to get what they want out of life. The problem is that I can't find anybody who can tell me what they want." – Mark Twain

Don't Think You Know It All

"The more we live by our intellect, the less we understand the meaning of life." – Leo Tolstoy

"And he goes through life, his mouth open, and his mind closed." – Oscar Wilde

Don't Be A Couch Potato

"Literacy is a very hard skill to acquire, and once acquired it brings endless heartache – for the more you read, the more you learn of life's intimidating complexity of confusion. But anyone who can learn to grunt is bright enough to watch TV... which teaches that life is simple, and happy endings come to those whose hearts are in the right place." – Spider Robinson

"If I show up at your house 10 years from now, and find nothing in your living room but Reader's Digests, nothing in your bedroom but the latest Dan Brown novel... I will chase you down to the end of your driveway and back shouting 'Where are the damn books?... Why are you living the mental equivalent of a Kraft Macaroni & Cheese life?'" - Stephen King, to the 2005 graduating class of the University of Maine

You're Going To Have Some Bad Days

"Life does not have to be perfect to be wonderful." – Annette Funicello

"Life is like a train. It's bearing down on you and guess what? It's going to hit you. So you can either start running when it's far off in the distance, or you can pull up a chair, crack open a beer, and just watch it come." – Eric Forman, on *That 70s Show*

"My life has been filled with terrible misfortune; most of which never happened." – Montaigne

Have Courage

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Security does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than exposure." – Helen Keller

"Those of us who refuse to risk and grow get swallowed up by life." – Patty Hansen

Love Your Job

"Work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying." – Studs Terkel

Don't Forget to Have Fun

"Do not take life too seriously – you will never get out of it alive." – Elbert Hubbard

"Life is truly a ride. We're all strapped in and no one can stop it.... I think that the most you can hope for at the end of life is that your hair's messed, you're out of breath, and you didn't throw up." – Jerry Seinfeld

"Humanity has advanced, when it has advanced, not because it has been sober, responsible,

and cautious, but because it has been playful, rebellious, and immature." – Tom Robbins, *Still Life With Woodpecker*

"Don't be afraid your life will end; be afraid that it will never begin." – Grace Hansen

Remember the People Who Are Important to You

"There is only one happiness in this life, to love and be loved." – George Sand

"When you grow up, you have to give yourself away. Sometimes you give your life all in a moment, but mostly you have to give yourself away laboring one minute at a time." – Gaborn Val Orden

"I was fourteen years old the night my daddy died. He had holes in his shoes and a vision that he was able to convey to me even lying in an ambulance, dying, that I as a black girl could do and be anything, that race and gender are shadows, and that character, determination, attitude are the substances of life." – Marian Wright Edelman

Today Is The First Day of The Rest of Your Life

"Life is a journey, and with every step we reach a point of no return." – Gaborn Val Orden

"Many adventures await you upon the road of life. Enter these doors, and take your first step..." – from a placard above *The Horn and Hound Pub*

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"What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset." - Crowfoot, (1811-1890) a Native American warrior of the Blackfoot tribe.

121. Live Your Crowded Hour

Standing at your bedside, I don't know if you're dead or only sleeping.

Soon our friends will lay pennies on your eyes to pay Charon for your passage. A silly ritual, our friends will do it anyway.

But you were dead long before you died.

Something caused life to shrivel in you, bloodless and pale, until you began to smell of despair. Did fear of failure run so deep in you?

I was troubled by your passivity. I did not understand it. You refused encouragement. You sneered at good advice. You drank self-pity until it pickled your soul.

Did you never realize that He who gently made the lamb made the tiger also? Who strangled the tiger in you? Was it faulty religion? An overbearing parent? Wounded pride?

The tiger who fails is still a tiger. We do not laugh at it. A tiger is spectacular.

You understood the Jesus who turned water into wine at the wedding feast to save the young couple from embarrassment. You believed in that Jesus, the one who was kind and anonymously generous. But you never quite believed in the Jesus who braided a whip to drive the businessmen from the temple, who flung aside the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their cash and stampeded all their livestock.

Was there human blood on the whip when he was done do you think? Or did he just wave the whip over his head like a baton twirler in a halftime show and request that all the nasty, bad men please leave the premises immediately?

Jesus wasn't Gandhi. Jesus said that when someone jolted your jaw, the right thing to do was look them calmly in the eye and stick out your chin to give them a clean swing at the other side. This is how a tiger says, "*Is that your best shot? You want another swing? Here, let me make this easy for you.*"

Turning the other cheek isn't submissive. It's defiant.

But you were never into defiance. You were more into whining.

I wish I could say I will miss you. But in truth, I've been missing you since the day your tiger died.

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"One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name."
– from *Old Mortality*, (1816) chap. 34, by Sir Walter Scott, (1771-1832)

"Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming: 'Wow! What a ride!'" – Robert Wickman

122. “Where Do They Bury the Sons-of-Bitches?”

- Fred Eisenberg, (Brooklyn, NY)
after hearing one-too-many glowing eulogies

Colorful and interesting people surround you in life, but in a graveyard, everyone becomes boring: "John Smith. Devoted Husband, Loving Father."

That's it? That's a life remembered?

Where do they bury the interesting people? Where do they bury the reckless daredevils and tender poets and seductive femmes fatale? Where can I find their stories?

When Dad died a year ago, my friend Woody Justice cancelled a world of commitments to be at his funeral. Woody knew my father well. Thinking back about him, the Woodster smiled that day and said, "He was a *colorful* old son-of-a-bitch, wasn't he?" I looked up and smiled and nodded. "You know what I think he'd like?" Woody chuckled, "the biggest grave marker in the cemetery. And on it the words, 'Larger Than Life, Even in Death.'"

That was Dad. Always the center of attention. The kind of guy who would pay any price for any thing, as long as you could draw a big enough crowd to watch him buy it.

A few months ago I shared with you the note Dad scribbled when he knew he was dying. "All the little things in life add up to your life. If you don't get it right then nothing else matters. It gets lonely in the promised land by yourself."

But no one should be remembered only for their dying regrets. So after a year of pondering, my sons and I sat down on Father's Day, 2006, to decide what to carve on my father's oversized tombstone. They give you the first 30 characters for free.

We went over the limit by 1,037.

We feel sure that my Dad will be the center of attention in that cemetery for as long as those carved letters remain on the face of that granite. People will shout and say, "Come and see what I've found!" They'll have their pictures taken next to him. They'll go home and tell other people about him. They'll read his stone and smile and say, "He was certainly a *colorful* old son-of-a-bitch, wasn't he?"

And that's exactly how Dad would have wanted it.

But I'm not talking just about my father today. I'm talking about you, and I'm talking about making a difference.

Do you have something you believe in? Would you like to see it glisten and thrive?

You need to do what my sons and I did for my father. You need to embrace the amazing wisdom of Bill Bernbach, the legendary ad writer who said, "I've got a great gimmick. Let's tell the truth."

Telling the truth is powerful. Telling the truth is scary. Telling the truth will always trigger a few complaints.

Don't let it bother you. Small people complain. Let them stand in the darkness of your shadow.

123. A Tour of Tigers

TIGER ONE:

Are you trying to Grow a business, Build a career, Overcome an obstacle?

"Those who expect moments of change to be comfortable and free of conflict have not learned their history." – Joan Wallach Scott

Ferocity is a wondrous tool.

STOP. Read no further

1. if you are proud of your passivity,
2. if you are offended by reading a vulgar word (as opposed to seeing it represented by a first letter and a series of dashes,)
3. if you are angered by your own mortality.

TIGER TWO:

"When the stars threw down their spears and watered heaven with their tears, did he smile his work to see? Did he who made the lamb make thee? Tyger! Tyger! burning bright in the forests of the night, what immortal hand or eye dare frame thy fearful symmetry?" – William Blake, (1757-1827)

Yes, Blake was right. He who gently made the lamb made the tiger also.

Ah, ferocity is a wondrous tool.

Pursue your goals with ferocity and singularity of purpose.

TIGER THREE:

When you choose a goal to pursue, do you ask, "Is this a mountain I'm willing to die on?"

You should. For we begin to die the day we are born.

"I used to stop for a long time in front of the tiger's cage to see him pacing back and forth. I

liked his natural beauty, his black stripes and his golden stripes. And now that I am blind, one single color remains for me, and it is precisely the color of the tiger, the color yellow.” - Jorge Luis Borges

With every exhalation, we die a little. A moment is gone, a precious grain of sand from the tiny hourglass of life.

Each of us chooses the path we will walk, the mountain on which we will die. Have you chosen yours?

TIGER FOUR:

"When a man wants to murder a tiger he calls it sport; when a tiger wants to murder him he calls it ferocity." - George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

A man kills a tiger from a distance. But a tiger kills a man face to face, looking into his eyes, saddened by what must be done to survive.

I used a shotgun to kill a little bird on a snowy day when I was eleven. Then, as I looked down from Mount Olympus at the shattered angel in his crystal tomb, I covered him with a tear and swore that I would hunt no more until little birds were given shotguns.

*Yes, Tiger, you will make mistakes and have regrets.
But you will also make a family and have a life.*

TIGER FIVE:

“Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river that carries me away, but I am the river; it is a tiger that mangles me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire that consumes me, but I am the fire. The world, alas, is real; I, alas, am Borges.” - Jorge Luis Borges

With every step we take we reach a point of no return, and wonder what might have been.

Am I trying to bring you down? No, I'm trying to stimulate you, wake you up, raise you from your stupor.

The grains of sand are falling, friend.

TIGER SIX:

"There's a tendency today to absolve individuals of moral responsibility and treat them as victims of social circumstance. You buy that; you pay with your soul. What limits people is lack of character. What limits people is that they don't have the nerve to star in their own fucking movie, let alone direct it." - Tom Robbins

TIGER SEVEN:

Carpe Diem. Seize the day. *It is yours.*

124. Lenny the Misfit

Caterina dumps baby Lenny on her boyfriend, then moves to town and gets married to someone else. Neither Lenny's father nor his mother is willing to give Lenny their family name, so he is known only by the name of the mountain under whose shadow he was born: Lenny Albano.

An unwanted child, Lenny grows up strangely in this remote, rural neighborhood without access to comic books or video games. Estranged parents. Odd relationships. A badly broken situation.

But his imagination is intact. Is your imagination intact?

Long walks in the hills surrounding Mount Albano cause Lenny to fall in love with animals. He loves them so much that he buys caged creatures just so he can set them free. How Lenny makes his money is unimportant. But how he spends it reveals his soul.

How do you spend your money?

People laugh when Lenny becomes a vegetarian. He doesn't care. People have laughed at him since the day he was born. Lenny hides from them by taking journeys in his mind. He goes exploring, deep inside his own head. Lenny is amazed by the things he finds.

Lenny scribbles his thoughts in journals and draws little pictures in the margins. Although no publisher is willing to publish these random thoughts, Bill Gates recently paid 30 million dollars for just one of Lenny's journals.

Lenny is very smart.

But Lenny's deep curiosity causes him to be easily distracted. Although lots of people are willing to buy his paintings, rarely can he stay focused long enough to finish one.

Lenny isn't completely alone in his quirky curiosity. When Lenny is 40, a man named Chris sails west to look for the east. Go figure. Long after Lenny dies, the world realizes how far ahead of his time he'd been. Sigmund Freud said Lenny "was like a man who awoke too early in the darkness, while the others were all still asleep."

But we no longer call him by the name of the mountain under whose shadow he was born. We choose instead to call him by the name of the village he was from. And for some strange

reason we insist on calling Lenny of Vinci, "Leonardo."

I think Lenny would have laughed had he known.

125. The Seven Chairs

The fifth one ended up in France.

Peter Wenders chooses stories and illustrations for children's books.

It's 1954, and today is a day like any other; Wenders sits innocently in his office, believing that people are who they claim to be.

And he assumes they'll do what they say they'll do.

But today a man with round glasses and a large nose walks into his office wearing an overcoat and a fedora. The man offers his hand, "Hello, my name is Harris Burdick."

Wenders rises to his feet and shakes the hand. "Peter Wenders."

"I've written 14 stories and drawn multiple illustrations for each. Would you be willing to take a look?"

"That depends," says Wenders, "on what your stories are about."

Wordlessly, Burdick hands Wenders an illustration titled *The Seven Chairs*. The caption beneath it reads, "The fifth one ended up in France." Wenders looks at Burdick with a smiling look of surprise.

Burdick hands him another image. Then another and another. One for each story. Fourteen in all.

"Yes! Yes! I'd be delighted to read your stories. Can you bring them in tomorrow?"

Burdick says he'll be back, then reaches out to retrieve his 14 illustrations.

Pulling back a little, Wenders says, "Leave these with me, won't you? I'd like to show them to my colleagues." And with a quick smile, a nod, and a tip of his hat, Burdick was gone.

And was never seen again.

Wenders searched for Burdick more than 20 years, but no trace was found. If not for those 14 images, Wenders might have become convinced it was all just a false memory.

But what talent Burdick had!

In 1982, Peter Wenders, now 73 years old, met another gifted children's author. "Sit down, Chris. I want to show you something."

Chris Van Allsbury dropped into an old leather chair in Wenders' living room. A minute later Wenders came in with a dusty cardboard box. "What do you think of these?"

Wenders saw the same smiling look of surprise on the face of Chris Van Allsbury that Harris Burdick had seen on Wenders' face 28 years earlier.

Startled by the images and spellbound by the story of Wenders' fruitless search for Burdick, Chris Van Allsbury said, "Mr. Wenders, we have to publish these. The images, the titles, the captions! This man deserves to be remembered."

And that's the story of a thin book titled, *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Every home should have a copy.

Like Peter Wenders, I, too, have met men and women whose stories deserve to be remembered. And like Chris Van Allsbury, I've said, "We have to publish these."

These special moments have resulted in *Accidental Magic*, *People Stories*, and now *Dreams*.

Wizard Academy, high on a plateau at the southern edge of Austin, Texas, is a gathering place for the talented, the brilliant, the unusual and the different.

If Harris Burdick is alive, he'll find his way here.

I know he will.

126. Steinbeck's Unfinished Novel

John Steinbeck began writing a novel in the summer of 1957 and abandoned it the day after Christmas.

I was born 93 days later.

Those two events were unconnected before today.

Steinbeck wrote the first 114 pages of his novel before setting it aside. He had already completed 25 novels, including *The Grapes of Wrath*, *East of Eden*, *Of Mice and Men* and *Cannery Row*. He was 55 years old.

Steinbeck went on to publish *The Winter of Our Discontent* in 1961 and then *Travels With Charley* in 1962 and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature that same year.

He died in 1968, having published nothing else.

I was 10.

“I think he got to a point where he felt he couldn’t contribute anymore. And it was too heartbreaking to try. I mean, after awhile you get tired of being under attack. You’ve got to remember this was a man who had been under attack since he was a young man. He was under attack most of his life. When he wrote *The Grapes of Wrath* people thought he’d betrayed his own class.”

– Thom Steinbeck, (John’s son,) Sept. 2009

Thom went on to say his father was “a mythologist... He could take the broad myth and reduce it down to something you could understand and were living right next door to.”

The novel John Steinbeck didn’t finish was the story of an American who watched one too many westerns on television, then put on a cowboy hat and spurs and went out into the city to correct the injustices he saw all around him.

In June, 2010, CBS News announced, “**John Steinbeck Archive to be Auctioned. Never-Published Works Among Letters and Manuscripts from Nobel Prize Winner's NYC Apartment.**”

That CBS story included the following lines:

“The writer [Steinbeck] had Ingrid Bergman in mind for *Vikings*, a film script adaptation of a Henrik Ibsen play that he began in 1954 but later abandoned, which Larson attributed to his restless nature and busy schedule. Another project that was later abandoned was a 1957 reworking of *Don Quixote*, which Steinbeck titled *Don Keehan - The Marshal of Manchon*. Bloomsbury's catalog says he had high hopes for it and even considered director Elia Kazan for a movie version with [Henry] Fonda in the lead.”

Have you figured it out yet? I bought the unfinished manuscript.

It sat a long while in a New York bank while they tried to figure out how to insure the manuscript and transport it. They already had my money so I told’em to just shove it into a UPS envelope. But they wouldn’t hear of it.

It finally arrived a few minutes ago. I got 6 pages into it, then set it aside just now to write you this note because a wild and funny thought barged into my head:

Are you ready? *I'm going to finish it.*

“You’re going to finish reading it?”

No, I’m going to finish writing it.

“What! Who do you think you are?”

I think I’m a ridiculous, middle-aged man who believes it would be fun to write the back half of an unfinished Steinbeck novel.

“Are you comparing yourself with John Steinbeck?”

No. I just think it would be fun. I like to write and this is America and I bought the manuscript.

“You won’t be able to publish it.”

I don’t plan to publish it.

“There are hundreds of writers more qualified than you to undertake such an important task.”

They should have pooled their money and bought the manuscript.

“People will be outraged.”

Those people stay outraged anyway.

“You should leave *Don Keehan* unfinished out of respect for John Steinbeck.”

“I plan to finish it out of respect for John Steinbeck.”

“Are you really going to do this?”

Yes, I’m really going to do this.

“Can I read it when you’re done?”

No. You’re an obstructionist and a pest. Go away.

Wizard Academy students and alumni will have access to *Don Keehan, The Marshall of Manchon* in the library tower where he will reside.

Sorry, but I’ve got to run. I have more reading to do.

Exactly 108 more pages.

127. How Fresh Is Your Adventure?

Anxious anticipation, nervous trepidation, heart palpitation and a tingling sensation are the smells and bells of adventure.

Paul Tournier was a 3 year-old orphan in Switzerland when Teddy Roosevelt became President of the United States. Paul grew up to become a doctor.

He did a lot of thinking and he wrote a few books.

Paul Tournier was nearly 70 when he wrote *The Adventure of Living*:

“Our actual lives rarely suffice to assuage our thirst for adventure. Fortunately we can all supply the want by using our imaginations. The dullest and most humdrum life can be enlivened by imagined pleasures... Those who are lacking in imagination of their own can always use that of other people. There is no shortage of novels to read... The same mechanism of identification makes it possible in the cinema, through the radio or television, or at a circus to procure cheaply the feeling of taking part in an adventure. This is the case, too, with ‘sportsmen’ who come back from a football match proudly proclaiming ‘We won!’ although they personally have done nothing but applaud the winners... That the need for adventure lies behind the passion for gambling hardly needs mention. A habit that is quite as difficult to cure as gambling is that of drug-taking, in all its various forms. This too can be regarded as an expression of the instinct for adventure... Looked at in its best light, adultery may be seen to be for many men the only means of satisfying their craving for adventure.”

Tournier believed every human life is a never-ending search for adventure.

“A most important observation must, however, be made at this point, and that is that a distinction is to be made between *quality adventure* and *quantity adventure*. In capitalist countries financial success is still, if not a truly satisfying adventure, at least a symbol of adventure. There are of course other *quantity adventures* aside from those of money, gambling or dope. There is, for example, that of frenzied activity. It is obvious that for many people these days the whirl of activities with which they fill their lives is a compensation for a profound dissatisfaction in regard to the quality of life they are living.”

Video games, movies, reality TV shows, online flirtations, romance novels, sporting events and conspiracy theories are just different manifestations of our common need for adventure. I

learned all this in the first 17 pages of Tournier's 250-page book. I'm glad my friend Ron told me about it.

Purchases are often an adventure. Much of what we buy is bought to remind ourselves - and tell the world around us - who we are. The politically correct term for this, I believe, is self-expression. Kurt Vonnegut may have been pondering self-expression when he said,

"We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful what we pretend to be."

I pretend to be a writer and an advertising consultant and a connoisseur of fine art. (I say "pretend" because I'm not actually qualified to be any of these things. It's really quite an adventure.)

What is your current adventure? Are the stakes high enough to make it truly riveting?

Page 21 of Tournier's *The Adventure of Living* helped me to understand why people often do stupid things:

"Many people are never able to come to terms with the death to which every adventure is inevitably subject... The Law of Adventure is that it dies as it achieves its object."

And then we must find a new adventure.

Desperate for adventure, some people feel compelled to outsmart society. Vandalism and shoplifting are two of the standby adventures of youth. Road rage and embezzlement are just around the corner. And all these people ever really wanted was anxious anticipation, nervous trepidation, heart palpitation and a tingling sensation.

Life is a challenge. New problems slap us daily. In the words of the immortal G.K. Chesterton,

"An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered."

In other words, adventure is everywhere. You don't even have to go looking for it. You just need to learn to recognize it when it's wearing a disguise.

Thornton Wilder said,

"It's when you're safe at home that you wish you were having an adventure. When you're having an adventure you wish you were safe at home."

But Mark Twain encouraged us openly.

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Now what will you do with the rest of your life?

128. Flat Rock, Wide Pond

A Barely Explicable Collection of Moments

Every person is a collector, I think.

Businesspeople collect money.

Travelers collect places.

Competitors collect shining moments.

Insecure people collect conquests, panties hanging from the bedpost.

My own collection consists of curiosities, tokens of moments nearly forgotten; captured glimpses of interesting lives. I'm not certain what this says about me but I like to think it says I'm a writer.

Marcel Proust lectured, “The duty and the task of a writer are those of an interpreter.” So I try to interpret what I find.

Arthur Schopenhauer added, “The business of the novelist is not to relate great events, but to make small ones interesting.” So I do my best to make each small item in the collection interesting.

Mignon Eberhart echoed my soul when he confessed, “I seat myself at the typewriter and hope, and lurk.”

My collection of curiosities is a rock that skips across 500 years of cultural icons. The worldwide ocean of art is impossibly deep and wide and my rock touches only a few superficial places.

But the ripples are amazing:

A 500 year-old Spanish ship's bell dragged up from the ocean floor in the Philippines, very possibly from one of the two ships Ferdinand Magellan lost there in 1521 during his historic circling of the earth.

A pencil sketch of Napoleon drawn by his little brother, 24 year-old Lucien Bonaparte, shortly after the pair of them captured the throne of France in 1799.

Don Kehan, Marshall of Manchon, the original manuscript of an unpublished book about Don Quixote written by John Steinbeck.

The world's only copy of a 1936 photo of Jacqueline Bouvier at a horse show when she was just 6 years old, but already unmistakably "Jackie O."

The Wise Men who sat on the piano of Liberace each Christmas, complete with Joseph and Mary and an angel with just one wing. A one-of-a-kind, handmade set dressed in velvet. (Liberace was a flamboyant piano player known for his over-the-top costumes, the original Elton John.)

A cultural icon is never about the thing itself, but the *idea* it represents.

Magellan = Exploration

Napoleon = Strategy

Quixote = Commitment to a Dream

Jackie O. = Elegance

Liberace = Showmanship

You'll find these and other curiosities touching Teddy Roosevelt, Pablo Picasso, the Wright Brothers, Oceanic Flight 815 and dozens of other ripples on the water of time as you tour the campus at Wizard Academy.

You're coming, aren't you?

Wizard Academy is a 501c3 nonprofit educational organization committed to helping individuals achieve the things they have committed to do. You choose the star. We don't care. Our only job is to get you there.

A solid limestone plateau rises 900 feet above downtown Austin, overlooking that city from 20 miles away. We cut perfectly northward into that limestone with heavy diesel equipment for 4 months, then planted a vertical sword in the wall of the Stardeck that sits like a crown on the million-dollar tower we built at the end of it.

Walk to the center of that deeply cut limestone *becauseway* and stand on the Laughlin stone on any clear night. The point of light just above the hilt of the sword is Polaris, the North Star that rises above the axis of the earth. The whole world revolves around it. Polaris has served as a navigational tool for millennia because unlike other stars, its position never changes.

Can you name the star that beckons you?

We cut a 300-foot furrow 14 feet deep in solid rock on top a 900-foot plateau and then built a landmark tower with a sword in its crown purely as a symbol to help us make a point: that's how serious we are about the importance of picking a destination and launching your life's journey.

Wizard Academy is not a school for whiners, posers, devil's advocates, nitpickers, hand-wringers, crybabies, complainers, chicken-hearts or fools.

But it is definitely the school for you.

Come. The next chapter of your adventure is about to begin.

129. Are You Having Fun?

I was talking to an old friend. He asked the usual questions.

"Family okay?"

"Everyone is great."

"Business good?"

"Busier than ever."

"But are you having fun?"

He asked the question as any child of the '60s would ask it. The anthem we sang as young men was, "If It Feels Good, Do It." *Live fast, die young, leave a beautiful corpse. Life is kicks, fun, adrenaline:* Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Dylan Thomas, Anna Nicole, Paris Hilton.

I wasn't sure how to answer his question.

At the root of every misunderstanding is a lack of definition of terms.

"Fun" is a term that screams for definition:

Late at night, ask a weary mother nursing a sick child, "Are you having any fun?"

Ask Mohandas Gandhi on the 20th day of a hunger strike, “Are you having any fun?”

Ask Martin Luther King in Birmingham City Jail, “Are you having any fun?”

Each of these saw a change that was needed and happily paid the price to bring that change to pass. But change never happens quickly.

“The North Americans’ sense of time is very special. They are short on patience. Everything must be quick, including food and sex, which the rest of the world treats ceremoniously. Gringos invented two terms that are untranslatable into most languages: 'snack' and 'quickie,' to refer to eating standing up and loving on the run ... that, too, sometimes standing up. The most popular books are manuals: how to become a millionaire in ten easy lessons, how to lose fifteen pounds a week, how to recover from your divorce, and so on. People always go around looking for shortcuts and ways to escape anything they consider unpleasant: ugliness, old age, weight, illness, poverty, and failure in any of its aspects.”

- **Isabel Allende**, *My Invented Country*

My friend Don Kuhl is one of the world’s leading experts on how change happens. A couple of weeks ago Don said something on the telephone that I hastily scribbled down: “Change is not an event. It’s a tiny decision made over and over again. Change isn’t once. It’s daily.”

I recorded Don’s words because I heard in them an echo of the note my father scribbled to my sister and I as he struggled for one last breath in his final minute of life: “All the little things in life add up to your life. If you don’t get it right, nothing else matters.”

If you define fun as reckless, heady abandon spiraling upwards to climax in an intoxicating sense of personal freedom and power, then no, I’m not having any.

But if you define fun as the little things in life that add up to your life; nursing a child, doing without, paying the price for what you believe... then I would have to say I’m having quite a time.

The time of my life.

130. Play On

I’ve been thinking a lot about aging. Now I’m a cliché for sure: a middle-aged man contemplating all the things in his life that will likely remain undone.

The weirdest triggers send us off on these melancholy journeys. By “us” I mean pampered American men. Today’s introspective journey was triggered when Dale Betts asked me about the **12 Stages of Seduction**. He remembered reading my memo about them but hadn’t been

able to find it in the archives at MondayMorningMemo.com.

I found it for him. That memo was November 10, 2008, eighteen months ago.

Damn. Eighteen months. A year and a half.

I remember writing it. I remember Pennie asking me to help her hang shirts from the dryer, the client I was going to meet at the office when the sun was up, the bills I was worried about paying.

Where does time go when it passes? Does it wink out of existence? Is it in a file folder somewhere?

Methinks my finger has been on the fast-forward button when I should have been content with play.

“But if you are content,” we are told, “you aren’t living up to your full potential.”

Contentment is another interesting concept, a shimmering mirage we hear about, but never see.

“We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like.” - Kim Foss

Paul tells us that a person who knows God and is content is the richest person on earth, “for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”

Yes, my finger has been on the fast-forward button when I should have been content with play.

Play is the third interesting concept tumbling around in my mind. I remember writing about it recently. When was that? Pardon me while I look for it in the archives.

Crap. I wrote **that** on May 12, 2003, nearly 7 years ago.

Yes, I am a cliché. Turn with me now to page 17 in *The Handbook for Men Having a Mid-Life Crisis*. I read here on page 17 that I have 2 options:

1: Buy a sports car, a hairpiece and a membership at a gym.

2: Get a hobby.

Number one is definitely not going to happen and I don’t much like the word “hobby,” either. It doesn’t connect to big words like “joy” and “epiphany.” So I’m going to stick with “play.”

Play doesn't just connect to the big words; *it is one*.

My 2003 memo tells me that for an activity to be play, it must be:

1. intrinsically motivating.

If you play because you want to win a trophy, you're not really playing for pleasure and are therefore not truly playing.

2. freely chosen.

If you are playing because someone told you to, you are not truly playing.

3. actively engaging.

If you play while disinterested in the game, you are in essence not playing.

4. fun.

You must derive pleasure from it.

Play is a shortcut to happiness. Laughter is medicine. You know these things. But did you also know that people who are destitute are surprisingly likely to describe themselves as happy?

Let me be clear: I'm not recommending poverty as the key to happiness. But in her book, *Happiness Around the World: The Paradox of Happy Peasants and Miserable Millionaires*, Professor Carol Graham firmly disproves the supposed link between wealth and happiness.

As an example: the citizens of Japan earn and spend 25 times as much as citizens of Nigeria but the Japanese are no more likely to describe themselves as happy. Scientist Graham conducted an exhaustive study of the world's population, leading her to conclude, "Higher per capita income levels do not translate directly into higher average happiness levels."

Evidently, Frank McKinney Hubbard was right, "It's pretty hard to tell what does bring happiness; poverty and wealth have both failed."

I believe nothing on earth can "make" you happy.

Happiness is a choice.

And it's free.

Play on.

131. Fortress of Belief

A fortress protects you and makes you feel safe.

A strongly held belief is a fortress. It protects your view of reality. You defend your fortress when you feel it's under attack.

But is every strongly held belief true?

The sincerity of the believer does not determine the truth of the belief.

Don't panic, I'm not attacking your fortresses. I have no idea what you believe but I do know you have 4 categories of beliefs:

1. Beliefs about God

Is he there or not? Does he care or not? Has he spoken to us or not? Is the future written or do you have free will? You have a belief.

2. Beliefs about Self

Are you essentially good or basically bad? Are you broken or whole? Do you matter? You have a belief.

3. Beliefs about Others

Do others give to you or take from you? Can they be trusted? What do you mean to them? You have a belief.

4. Beliefs about Circumstances

Do you shape your circumstances or do they shape you? Will they get better or grow worse? What do you really deserve? You have a belief.

Is there a chance
that one of your beliefs is wrong
and your fortress has become a prison?

I'm not a motivational speaker. I'm a business consultant. Stay with me.

Frances Frei of Harvard Business School says you cannot change a person's behavior until you change their beliefs. I agree with her.

Feelings are the products of actions.
Actions are the products of beliefs.

Tell me how you spend your time – the minutes and hours of your life - and I will tell you who you are. I will tell you what you believe.

Because your actions will tell me.

Just as they will tell everyone else who is watching.

132. Do You Believe in Elbs?

Makers of miracles have magical little helpers. Is there a miracle you'd like to make?

Would you like to learn the magic of the elbs?

Elbs are Exponential Little Bits, tiny but relentless changes that compound to make a miracle. The power of an elb lies not in its size, but in its daily occurrence. For an elb to work its Exponential magic, the Little Bit must happen every day... every day... every day.

Every day.

Funny thing... When daily progress meets with progress, it doesn't add, it multiplies. To harness the magic of Exponential Little Bits you must learn to ask yourself, "What difference have I made today?" And never go to sleep until you have done a Little Bit to move yourself closer to your goal. But you must do a Little Bit every day, no matter how tiny the thing might be.

Exponential Little Bits work both ways. They can lift you up or hold you down. There is much power in the ELBs.

Start with a dollar. Double it every day for just 20 days and you'll have 2,097,150 dollars. But if you diminish each day's total by just 10 percent (a Little Bit) before the next day's doubling, you'll amass only 793,564 dollars. Diminish each day's doubling by 35 percent and you'll have only 56,784 dollars - a holdback of 95.83 percent.

There's a line in Robert Frost's "Mending Wall" that says,

“Something there is that doesn't love a wall, that wants it down!
I could say 'Elves' to him, but it's not elves exactly,
and I'd rather he said it for himself.”

Is there a wall between you and your miracle?

I could say how to bring it down.

But I'd rather you said it for yourself.

133. It's Always Christmas at Wizard Academy

Man of La Mancha rocked Broadway in 1965 with its thundering theme song, *The Impossible Dream*.

You remember that song, don't you? It opens in soft reflection, "To dream the impossible dream... To fight the unbeatable foe..." but then it defies mortal gravity to rise heavenward on a column of fury like an old Apollo rocket from Cape Canaveral:

This is my Quest: to follow that star!
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far!
To fight for the right
Without question or pause,
To be willing to march into hell
For a heavenly cause!
And I know, if I'll only be true
To this glorious Quest,
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
When I'm laid to my rest...

Wise Men follow a star when they believe the destination will be worth the journey.

Time and money: you can always save one by spending more of the other. *But money can be replaced and time cannot.* We spend the hours of our lives like a pocketful of pennies, one by one until they are gone. What are you buying with yours?

Can you name your current journey? You can call it your 5-year plan, your business plan, your goal, your mission. You can dress it up with numerals and call it a pro forma or wrap it in legalese and call it a prospectus. All that really matters is that you understand your time, your energy, *indeed the hours of your life* are being spent in the pursuit of something.

"And I know, if I'll only be true to this glorious Quest,
that my heart will lie peaceful and calm
when I'm laid to my rest..."

Wait a minute... are we talking about business goals, life goals, the Christmas story of Matthew chapter two or the Broadway musical of 1965?

Yes, yes, yes and yes; we are talking about those. That's the thing about an archetypal story. Its message will echo through different actors dressed in different costumes but the play never changes: Each of us follows a star. How clearly can you see yours?

Come. The next chapter of your adventure is about to begin.

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