

Pure Soapbox Excerpts:

"Life begins at the end of your comfort zone." - N.D.Walsch

I don't know about you, but if this premise rings true, then many of you can identify a year, let alone an era, in which you have truly lived. Proudly acknowledge that you have also strived and survived the confounded labyrinth of potholes and prop doors. And with mosaic-ed prayer and possibility in hand, you have deciphered the hieroglyphics to unfold an irrefutably timeless and timely fact: Training wheels are meant to be taken off.

So, as I take my place at the helm of this little soapbox, I say, "comfort, shmomfort." Roll up your sleeves, toss on a helmet, kick up the stand, and pop a wheelie down the open road of adventure. Start each blessed year with the wind in your face and your hair on fire and see where the journey takes you!

*"In a relationship, two halves don't make a whole.
Two wholes make a whole." - Jo Coudert*

Attached at the hip. Funny little phrase, isn't it? Perhaps you reading this book creates a linking of sorts, an attachment, a connection that makes us need the other to infuse and illuminate our own Big Picture, whether of the day, an idea, a dream, a lifestyle, or a lifetime.

Moreover, I metaphorically propose that each of us embodies a full 24-pack of Crayola crayons. Plenty of variety there to play with, right? Boasting all the colors of the rainbow, and then some, and uniformly brimming with gorgeous pigment that defines our every thread and thought. Ooooooh, but remember what the full set of 48 looks like? Not to mention 64 or 128! Fluorescents, metallics, unpronounceable shades of blue, green and brown, and every color word combo imaginable. Not that more is better, nor is the littlest pack incomplete, less than half, or even limited. But the end result, the picture creatively born from the bigger, more varied pallet, climbs to a colorfully dramatic new dimension. A Crayola-ed masterpiece of Manet or Klimt proportion.

Truth be told, folks, even if your collection is peeled down to the labels and worn down to nubs, 24 is, was and always will be complete and unlimited by design and definition. Make this simple yet crucial connection and you just might begin to see both yourself and those in and around your life as complete creations, absolute sets. Playfully and boldly blend with family and friends, sweethearts, coworkers and strangers, and discover the magical cornucopia of shades you can add to this work of art called life.

"Life's a journey, not a destination." - Steven Tyler, Aerosmith

Hey there, rock and rollers! Here's a simple yet profound riff from the Canon of the music underworld. A hidden treasure from one of the disciples of lyric and noise which needs no explanation, no elaboration, and no drum roll.

Indeed, one of the great poets of our time enlightens us with a flick of his mic and a howl from his chops. Not bad for a stoner of the seventies, huh? Deceivingly basic at first glance, you must step back to appreciate its expanding profundity and note how it levels the playing field in one fell swoop. With commonsensical clarity it serves to remind us that we are all on the same map, folks. So, enjoy the route, the scenery, the pit stops, the landmarks, heck, even the 7-11s along the way. Take it all in before someone folds it all up.

“The definition of unhappiness is the person who doesn’t know where he’s going...and is working himself to death to get there.” - Anon.

Know anyone who fits the bill here? Even one person is one victim too many. It’s a darn shame what some people put themselves through, day in and day out, doing without true purpose or conviction. This gray area is just that. Gray. Dull. Lifeless. Bugged down with a tremendous burden of uncertainty, emptiness, and lack of confidence. I suggest you steer clear of it.

Alas, not all circumstances lie within our collective control. So without judgment or agenda, I’ll keep my insight simple: Know why you do, what you do.

That’s it, folks. That’s my big tirade. My secret weapon for you. The hidden treasure. Have a why for your actions, from choosing what movie to rent, to what kind of business you intend to run, to what values you will uphold. Make a concerted effort to establish in your heart, mind and spirit, the unyielding reasons for the choices you make. Then witness the constructive clarity and relish the karmic relief that abounds from such a powerful action. Talk about spelling R-E-L-I-E-F!

Find your why, my friends. Memorize it. Sleep on it. Stick it on your fridge. Pour it in your coffee. Pump it into your car. Kvetch it on everyone around you. Tattoo it onto your forehead. Just find it. Oh, but be careful: you might find yourself a bit happier. Then what’ll you do?

“Act without doing; work without effort.” - Tao te Ching

Did you ever push too hard only to have the metaphorical swing come back and hit you dead-on in the chin? Liken this to the self-inflicted searches for insight and inspiration from a bag of stale fortune cookies. Sometimes you’ve just got to let the meaning find you. Forcing profundity or comedy is like putting spoiled cream in your long awaited morning cup of coffee. It tastes like crap and wastes a perfectly good setup. Be you. Be open. And sip slowly.

"Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing, do it with your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

With a twinkle in your eye, no doubt you could story-tell a handful of fantastical life events that have unequivocally excited you; things that have forever captured your imagination and memory; things that you absolutely had to do or see –or you would just die! (Honest!) You delegated time to iron out each particular detail, so, hopefully, everything would turn out just perfect -like your wedding, a long-awaited vacation, a first date, an interview for your dream job, an Aerosmith concert. You know the feeling, the smile you wore from ear to ear, the memories you knew you’d have to share. Examine the painstaking preparation for each event -even if it only lasted two hours - and page through the spectacular stories that stemmed from it. Oh, the things we do for love...

Now, entertain applying that same enthusiasm toward an event called your life, purposefully and lovingly ironing out the critical details to ensure that you experience every day to its fullest. And what if you strived diligently to create memories that transform this journey into the ultimate event? Just a

matter of changing perspective, right? Well, hang on a sec, because simply sporting a smile ain't gonna make life one big carnival.

In truth, those critical details are really the collective health of your body, mind, family, relationships and career. When they tilt out of balance, everything else is compromised, tarnishing your overall experience and quality of life. So, why wouldn't you be passionate about taking care of yourself, working on your relationships, driving towards your business goals and ensuring a fantastic, long-lasting event?

Exude enthusiasm in creating your life. Don't just hang on for the ride. Be your own catalyst! Get fired up and make a difference in your own journey. Or as my dear Dad so eloquently put it, "Don't drag your arse. The light ain't gonna get any greener."

*"The world cares very little about what a man or woman knows;
it is what a man or woman is able to do that counts." - Booker T. Washington*

Got a question for you: What's the value of that Real Estate between your ears? No doubt, it sits at prime rate, a prominent investment for any capitalist these days. Yet what a shame if you never hold an open house to showcase the lavish landscape, intricate architecture and fabulous collectibles upon which you have stamped your name and appreciated its value.

And so, my fellow walking books of knowledge, what is on your agenda of action today? What's been brewing, stewing and spewing from mind to mouth that you need to act upon? Is today the day you dig into the neglected nest of nimbleness and grease your elbows? Will you march forward with workmanship, manuscript, or sacrifice? Perhaps, walk the talk and jump off the fixed fence of fluctuation?

Make today the day. Take flight. Move and shake with the best of 'em, and don't worry about explanations, manifestations and configurations. With brain brimmed and blueprints inked, exercise a path of exposition, exploration and execution. Make, move, groove, do, wave, riddle and beat. Today.

"Life is what happens while you're making other plans." - John Lennon

Whether shot-gunned or spread-sheeted, your gameplan is only as valid as the very moment you're existing in it. Like a Betty Crocker recipe, you can gather the ingredients and follow the play-by-play instructions, but once it's tossed in the oven, it's out of your hands...and who knows what's coming out. My advice? Surrender to the present. Set the table, pour a glass of wine and wait for the timer.

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear." - Ambrose Redmoon

The operative notion here is a four-letter word named Fear, that universal imp that can wheedle its way into the hearts of tycoon and street urchin alike. Undoubtedly, it has devilishly danced on shoulders and nestled pillow, and furtively frolicked in boardroom and bedroom without fatigue. It sits at attention with laptop at arms, tapping abundance to the list of terrors and trepidations.

Certainly the immeasurable frights of worldly plight are mere blips on our collective radar screens. We halt for a moment in an attempt to comprehend the awesome dilemmas, yet our noggins have little

space for the woes of the world. Instead we find ourselves mesmerized and manipulated by the effervescent horrors that chase us.

What do you fear? What invariably tattoos the deer-in-the-headlights look upon your brow? What scares the bejeezus out of you day or night? Death. Age. Marriage. Love. Taxes. Unemployment. Uncle Sam. Silence. God. The Boogie Man. Solitude. Public speaking. Kids. No money. Failure. War. Not being happy. Not making a difference. Never becoming famous. Never finding true love.

Born out of ignorance or avoidance, maybe even genetic disposition, it breathes and breeds. And try as you diligently may to avoid its arrival in your filing-system's frontal lobe, fear still creeps in like funk.

It clenches you when you know there are great things at stake; great memories being made; great people sharing the fruits of your life. Oh, but circumstance offers but one determinant of how inflated any imminence of danger will grow. Luckily the size of the battle within you has the power to belittle these assumed omnipotent challenges. Trust in the idea that you have the intrinsic ability to diminish the battalion of dreads and demons, equipping you to see the forest and the trees, and protect that which makes your life what you desire. You need only feed and fuel that morsel of bravery to bore through and stand triumphant with love and loyalty, faith and fervor. So go forth with courage in heart, mind and spirit, and light a cigar in celebration.
