

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a yellow off-the-shoulder dress and large hoop earrings, is sitting on a white surface. She is holding a purple balloon in her right hand. There are several other balloons in the background, including a green one in the foreground and several red ones. The overall scene is bright and festive.

freedom

How

Do

You

Know

About

Marriage?

Chapbook

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strength

marriage forum

JANET: The topic is marriage. Why do people ask their mate to marry in a private place?
andi: So, they slipped the ring upon their fingers, and shoved cake into each others mouths, and set the stage for years to come of waking up next to the same body every morning.

g: I have an 18 to 23 year-old mind. Much older but not ready to be. Birthday's were ignored, days uncounted, time flew by. The pursuit of the job took me away from everything. I found it, came back, my friend since 5 is engaged.

J: I suppose I lack the fortitude for marriage, the conscience too, and maybe the constitution to afford the possibility of boredom. Maybe I'm just so God damn lazy I can't put the effort into a relationship. Yeah, that's it. Chalk it up to character flaw and move on, or maybe no one lets me dress them up the way I'd like to.

a: I have no idea.

s: uhhhh-what?

T: I am engaged. We don't know when the big thing will happen. Too many things that need to be done before that time comes. We will explore a number of things before we enter into this lifetime commitment. Too much to do. Too much to explore.

JP: Why would I ask my mate to marry me huh? Yesterday I was taking a shit and it was long and flowing. It rapped around the toilet 2 1/2 times. It was incredible! I don't think marriage is necessary. Why do you have to make it a legal ceremony. Why can't you just have fun and do what you want to do. If there is a commitment to be made, why can't it be done between each other, why does it have to be done ceremoniously to make it mean anything.

One changes as life goes on and maybe ones partner changes in a completely opposite direction, then you are no longer suitable for each other and life goes on. Marriage is for the weak, who need a legally stable relationship so if anything goes wrong you're ok.

Janet: Marriage is for tax purposes. Marriage is to make your parents happy. Marriage is the one thing that men can do to make women feel better. Marriage is the one thing that women can hold over men's heads. Marriage is the one thing that make women feel like the princesses they read about when they were little girls, dressed in ribbons and pink dresses and patent-leather buckle shoes.

So marriage. It makes you feel like your mate actually means it, I suppose. So I feel like I don't ever want to get married sometimes, and sometimes I want the four bridesmaids dressed identically marching down a line together and I want all ::eyes to be turned on me. I want my day, even if (especially if) my parents would have to spend \$20,000 to make it happen.

GPG: I prefer vows sealed by blood - the point of marriage is a ritual that means your lover won't injure you. It's a ritual of trust, dig? It's something you shouldn't do until you are capable of that form of trust, or are the sort of person that ever .. thinks that trust is important.

Matt: I want to marry, someday in the so distant future. I want that unobtainable perfectness, but not now. Will I ever be ready? If I am so be it, it would seem that the other person would enter in to this and YES sir you are correct sir. Any way fuck this marriage topic and move on. I don't want to prove anything I just want what I want but who knows what i will or won't want when so this is all immaterial anyway.

andi: I want someone to take my head, and throw it back, and hit me like a ton of bricks so that when he asks me

" So what's your choice?" I can say " I don't have a Choice!" I don't want to have any feelings, beside the one that makes me want nothing more than their hand throwing my head back and that nothing more could get me so wet.

Lisa: marriage is death clear and simply, it is restricting as a computer that you don't know how to work, when you're me, you're spontaneity and drawn by your pants, whether or not there is something inside to draw them, whether or not it means a ring of energy, and well, to wrap it up if Z; which is my alter ego, ever gets married, then I will give her a cork and not a ring, and that's not good for anybody, is it?

JANET: Oh, God, this is a sick statement of how us poets here in Chicago deal with relationships. Anyone else?

JASON: Marriage? Is that the topic? I would like to get married. I seem to be the only writer in the entire city of Chicago who wants to. However, no one wants to get married to me. And that's all I have to say about marriage.

10/24/97 wishes forum

If you had three wishes, what would they be?

EUGENE: win the nobel prize, achieve eternal happiness, become one with the universe .

JANET: i can't help but think that achieving eternal happiness would encompass all of the other wishes you could possibly have, you know what I mean? What does becoming one with the universe entail?

EUGENE : Well, I hope to accomplish these things in that order.... becoming one with the universe would be a total understanding of all things around me at all levels and at all times...of course the drawbacks would be awareness of evil and destruction, but maybe my omniscience could eliminate some of that. Of course, there's no stopping nature.... I realize that 2 and especially 3 are not likely attainable, but if it were a magical genie, maybe i could get no. 3. You have to earn the Nobel, otherwise, what's the point?

JANET: Well, shouldn't all happiness be earned? I mean, if someone kept giving you money and you didn't have to earn it, and people liked you without knowing who you are, wouldn't anything that would make you happy lose at least some of its value? That's what makes your first apartment and your first love so grand - because you earned it, not because you wished for it.

EUGENE: Happiness isn't earned, it's something that you find, often without looking for it, even if that means being able to accept that things simply are the way they are...to find yourself you must first lose yourself. Therein lies the dilemma, that we must achieve the often lofty goals we set for ourselves or that others set for us, lest we never find true happiness. Happiness can be completely separate from accomplishment.

JANET: How? I don't understand. If someone does something nice for you, they do it because they care about you, and you earned their friendship. If you get better pay for a job, it is because you do good work and earned the raise. If you get something that can bring you toward happiness without earning it, it is luck, pure and simple, and won't be constant and will not provide long-lasting, happiness.

EUGENE: Achieving goals can be a source of happiness and love and kindness likewise, gratification is achieved through work and determination, but not necessarily enlightenment. (By the way, I never said I wanted happiness to be dropped in my lap, but this makes for an interesting discussion.) You can achieve tremendous wealth and power of your own accord and still not be happy.

JANET: No, but earning things - working toward goals, whether monetary or pertaining to people and their relationships or personal - is what makes you happy, isn't it? If that working and earning means studying texts and learning until you become "enlightened," I'm sure it would be a better method of achieving enlightenment than say having a chip inserted in your brain and you just getting "enlightened," for example. Know what I mean? It seems to me you always want happiness (i.e., happiness, on whatever level) dumped in your lap, earned or unearned. And I don't understand how that could make you happy. Is it that you don't know how to earn it?

EUGENE: No, enlightenment can not be inserted, it is the result of life (learned) experiences. Fortune just makes the path easier to navigate, regardless of means of acquisition, although theft should not be good. Winning money should not necessarily be considered cheating if it is used appropriately to further achieve goals. I'm not looking for an easy, path made of gold, just one where I don't get ambushed around every curve. Working towards goals makes you who you are, gives you substance, individual worth.

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10/25/97 embar- rassing forum

"My date has a normal-sized nose."

"Take it out on the peanut. It's all the peanut's fault."

So we're here and it morning in Champaign and it's before noon and we are at Garcia's. And Eugene and Scott are getting another pitcher of beer.

Janet: what is the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you?

Sara: Well, it's probably not THE most embarrassing moment of my life, but what sticks out, in light of this weekend, is having to walk out of Joe's in front of all the damn Pi Kappas, knowing that they all probably knew why we were leaving, and knowing that I had lost for the night. I was really pissed, and felt really stupid. So that's my answer. Deal with it.

Carol: This is probably not the most embarrassing thing, but at a pep rally in high school, I had the portable mike and was talking to the entire student body (pep rallies were mandatory) and I tripped and fell on my butt right in front of my class.

Scott: I haven't had one yet.

Mike: None of your damn business.

Eugene: There have been so many, I really can't say...perhaps tripping over a dog or fumbling through a presentation in front of 500 people.

now no more questions.

Scott, you just don't know when you should have been embarrassed. You didn't have to be embarrassed; Sara was plenty embarrassed for you.

10/29/97 friends forum

JANET: I think friendships are based not on class, but on aspirations. If someone doesn't care about their work, for instance, I think they don't have any aspirations and they probably aren't the type of person I want to be friends with. I look for a friend who has drive, talent and ambition, because that's what I find admirable. And how can you be friends with someone you don't respect?

BRAD: you pay them.

JUDE: I try not to judge my friends, I think friendship is based on freedom, freedom to be as close to who you really are with people who encourage you - so friendship is based on selfishness for me I guess... I'm selfish because I look to be friends with people who I don't have to try so hard with. I also get really attached and look for people who will love me as I love them. I don't have that many friends. I've got a lot of people who are in transition and have attached themselves to me. The only lesson I have to give is to use your friends well. Not meaning use them to manipulate them, but to use them to the best of their potential to encourage them.

ADAM: ARE FRIENDSHIPS USEFUL, OR ARE THEY SIMPLY SOCIAL ADORNMENTS? I VIEW FRIENDSHIP AS A DOUBLED JOURNEY INTO THE MYSTERY OF ANOTHER, THE BASIC MYSTERY PRESENTED BY SOMEONE WHO IS DISTINCTLY, FASCINATINGLY NOT

OURSELVES, YET WHOSE CONSCIOUSNESS TOUCHES OURS IN ENOUGH INTIMATE AREAS FOR US TO THINK OF THEM AS FRIENDS.

JANET: Ooh, someone doesn't know how to turn off the caps lock. Your turn...

BETH: Friends need not have anything in common with you. They may be people who judge you but offer this judgement to you with respect and not as a conclusion. They are people who know you may not share everything with. They are people who, even if they are not always true to themselves with you, you know and they know you.

NANCY: friendships....relationships....I try to fill the cup of my life so full, that at times I spill over and need to place a napkin on the saucer I call my soul. Absorb, soak up, clean up, toss out. I feel so much that at times I think I expect too much of my friends because I can't tend to the every THING that floods my senses. Have gone through the most hurtful period of my life, and my definition of "friend" has become "re-defined". But I have learned, through this, that I am my own best friend...together with myself, I am learning and experiencing things I never thought possible....am alive and vibrant, and have to thank Janet, for always being there, especially for encouraging and supporting my new found freedom.

JANET: Thanks, sweetie. But this should move over to someone else...

ANDI: My friends have been the most influential and the richest of endeavors I've ever willingly put myself through, and sometimes it is most definitely an endeavor.

Sabrina - I have only had one friend in my whole life. I love her more than myself sometimes. She is like the first breath I have ever taken, and many times I stare at groups of people in wonder and ask myself if they are suffocating yet. You know, I am not meaning to sound all lame and poetic or anything like that, but I am one of those people who gives my heart to very few people. She is the only one who didn't drop it. Sometimes I wish that I had more friends, but not really, because what I do have is just so fucking amazing that it just blows other people's shit out of the water. I don't know. I only need a love now and I'll be so high that I just won't be on earth anymore. Okay, I think I have just spilled too much, but whenever anyone asks me to type my mind, they are going to get way more than they are ever going to want to know. Either way-friends=good, but they have to be real.

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Justin- Friends are what life is about. But the bullshit that goes on in new relationships is quite tiring. I find that the relations that were developed as a young child when I and others gave true feelings and opinions, though at times were and are quite painful but truthful are the ones that I adore. All the happy and fake admiration in new relations and fake interest is for someone else. The ones who can call out each of your lies and exaggerations are the ones that keep me on my toes and therefore at my best.

dan this was such a great poem first of all because it was so real and true anyway i think the most important things in life are friends and we tend to take them for granted. It's nice to see someone with such hope and someone who looks at life for the positive. We as a society have gotten in the habit of complaining when things aren't really that bad. friendships are pure are real and although they seem sappy and corny when expressing how you feel it is all true and real and that's what's important in this world. thanks

JANET: Anyone else out there?

JASON: My friends are based entirely on how many piercings they have. None or one -- too square, not worth my time. Two, three or four -- enough to hang out with casually, maybe go to a coffeehouse or say hi to at an open mike. Five or six, including at least one in the eyebrow or nipple -- they're okay. I can confide my secrets, I can have a one-night-stand, or I can loan them money. Seven, eight or nine, including both nipples and at least one in the genital area -- best friend. I will travel to Wheaton to help them fix a flat tire. Ten or more, including both eyebrows, both nipples, genitals and an anal ring -- well, now you're talking about my wife.

JANET: Geez, and I thought it was okay to have one hole in each ear, and nothing else.

drunk forum

JANET: It's Halloween ,and I'm drunk off my ass and I'm very sad because I can't help but feeling that I've made a bad decision. I keep thinking that I've made a terrible decision and that I'm really fucked. I keep thinking that I've lost all of my security and I've made a terrible decision. Someone help me.

Oh, wait, the owner of the bar just screamed in the bar that you're not allowed in the bar unless you have an ID. And he told me to "write that in my letter." Then I asked him why he didn't ask for my ID. He didn't have an answer.

So anyway, please, someone make me feel better. I'm thinking I've just fucked my life over. Oh, and I'm also thinking of bizarre perverted things with this mask that Mike B. brought into the bar with him, well, as far as I can remember he started it, but Hell, I can't remember anyway. So are there any words of wisdom out there to make me feel better?

MIKE:

JANET: Oh, fuck, Mike said he wanted to write, but now he wanted to...

Ed is reading this now, and he's a big sweetie. Any comments?

ED:

JANET: He says he doesn't type. He's not in the mood to make any comments.

So I'm sitting here and no one wants to write to me and IU still feel poor.

Someone asked my why I was writing, and I said, "for the joy of writing."

And he said, "Oh."

Some people just can't get it.

Anyone help me here?

Blow me.

If I only had the chance.

Oh, wait, just for the record, that was Mike.

I think she is drunk off her ass, says Mike... and he's RIGHT! (Eugene) I'M SUPPOSED TO

WRITE MORE, BUT I HAVE

NOTHING TO SAY.

MIKE: JDLKFLKSDF. And I mean it. No, what I meant to say is, Janet seems to be very horny tonight. Don't you agree?

EUGENE: Fuck the journalistic integrity, Janet says. She says, do you think a seem horny to Ed, and he says, I have to be professional. 'Nuff said.

JANET: Okay, so I'm sitting here typing in between `two drunk men` `and Mi k`le I keeps

typing the the occasional letter o ` `

to fuck me up.

Yeah, he's cool.

I mean cool.

I just looked at the top of my screen, and I realized that no one would help me at all. Why am I here? I suddenly feel like no one cares about me.

Okay, it's the half-time report. No one seems interested in this at all, But then again, I'm going at half-speed because I'm drunk. The waitress isn't even interested, and usually the wait staff is interested in shit like this, because it livens their night for a bit . But here I am, like a big fucking dork, ditching my plans for the night and saying I'd rather hang out in a retarded bar with a bunch of losers (present company excluded, of course).

Why do I bother.

I feel like shit sometimes.

And I feel comfortable writing that, because no one reads what I write anyway.

JANET: I'm so wasted!!!!!!

Fuck you, Mike, that was Mike talking. thanks a lot, I'd rather stuff my own words in my own mouth, I write enough shit that I don't need someone else writing for me.

Happy Fucking Halloween.

Yeah, I'm horny, but what's wrong with that? It's a natural thing.

Fuck everyone.

do you know you are not dreaming right now?

Many times the average person wakes up in the morning after experiencing a vivid nightmare. "Thank God I was only dreaming," a person might claim. But a question then arises: is it possible to know for a fact, without a shadow of a doubt, that you actually aren't dreaming right now? After pondering this question, the conclusion only seems evident that you cannot have true (propositional) knowledge about whether or not you are not dreaming right now.

In order to have true (propositional) knowledge, the three premises from the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge must apply. In other words, one's argument must possess the following three qualities: 1) What the subject claims to know must be true, 2) The subject must believe that what they claim to know is true, and 3) the subject must be fully justified in believing what they claim to know to be true.

When it comes to answering the question of whether or not we are not dreaming right now, we cannot fully answer or prove claims 1 or 3 in the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge. Therefore, it seems only appropriate to state that we cannot have true (propositional) knowledge concerning whether or not we are not dreaming right now.

Let us first address the soundness of the premises of the argument stated, concerning ourselves first with the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge. In order to have true (propositional) knowledge, three conditions have to be met:

1) What the subject claims to know must be true. If, for example, I claim that my philosophy professor has blonde hair when in actuality he has very dark brown hair, I cannot have true knowledge about his hair color. The subject cannot make a false claim and also correctly claim that they have knowledge over the particular topic. This can be represented through a diagram of the argument:

- a) I claim that I have blonde hair.
- b) I do not have blonde hair; I have dark hair.
-
- c) Therefore I cannot know (have knowledge) that I have blonde hair.

Without this premise, many arguments would be invalid, for a false conclusion may be made if what the subject claims to know isn't true.

2) The subject must believe that what they claim to know is true. To continue with the example used earlier: if I were to claim that my philosophy professor had blonde hair, but I didn't believe that he had blonde hair, I wouldn't have knowledge on the subject. A broader example could pertain to religion. I could claim that God exists, but if I don't believe he exists then I do not have

knowledge of the matter. In this case, his existence (premise 1) is irrelevant, for if one doesn't believe in his existence (premise 2), the argument has already been proven that the subject doesn't, in this case, have true knowledge. This could be diagrammed as follows:

- a) I claim a statement to be true.
- b) I do not believe my statement to be true.
- c) One must believe in a certain piece of knowledge in order for them to have knowledge in that area.

d) Therefore I cannot have knowledge that my statement is true.

3) The subject must be fully justified in believing what they claim to know to be true. In other words, there must be no reason to suppose the subject is wrong in claiming or believing what they know to be true. To provide an example: if I claimed that I owned a dog, and I believed that I owned a dog, but I had no reason to believe that I owned a dog, then I wouldn't have true knowledge of my "ownership". Furthermore, if I claimed I knew that I owned a dog because my dead grandmother told me in a dream that I did, I still wouldn't have knowledge: this is because there is reason to suppose that I am wrong in believing it. In other words, I would not be fully justified in my claim to knowledge on this particular topic. A possible argument may be:

- a) I claim that I own a dog.
- b) I believe that I own a dog because my dead grandmother told me in a dream that I own a dog.
- c) A claim to knowledge because one's dead grandmother told them in a dream that their statement is true is not a valid reason.

d) Therefore I do not have knowledge about the topic (owning a dog).

This argument does not even address whether or not I do have a dog. It is because of the subject's unsound reasoning (speculating that they own a dog for some very odd reasons) that the subject cannot have knowledge pertaining to this topic. Whether or not I even own a dog in this case doesn't matter.

This argument can also, once again, be applied to religion. If a subject claimed to believe in a God (whether or not a God existed), the subject cannot claim to have knowledge over God's existence because the subject was not fully justified in believing that a God existed.

These three premises, when combined, form the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge, which can be diagrammed as follows:

- a) The subject makes a claim, and what the subject claims to know is true.
 - b) The subject believes what they claim to know is true.
 - c) The subject is fully justified in believing what they claim to know to be true.
-
- d) Therefore their claim is a valid claim to knowledge.

These conditions must be met in order for a person to be able to correctly claim that they have knowledge.

When applying the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge to the question, "Do you know that you are not dreaming right now?", a problem arises, for there are evident conflicts with premises a and c in the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge.

Firstly, concerning premise a: we cannot know (positively) that what we claim to know is true. As Descartes explains in his Meditations on First Philosophy, we have no way of proving that we are not dreaming right now, and are possibly about to wake up. In Meditation I (concerning those things that can be called into doubt) he explains:

Indeed, how often has it happened that during the night I have dreamt these familiar things, that I am here, dressed, sitting by the fire, although I lie undressed in my bed. But now, at any rate, I am surely gazing at this paper with wakeful eyes, this head I am shaking is not heavy with sleep, I am consciously and deliberately extending this hand, and I am feeling it. In sleep what happens would neither be as clear nor as distinct as these things. But, thinking carefully, I recall having often been deceived by similar thoughts in dream. Now, as I think over these matters more attentively, I see so plainly that there are no conclusive signs nor sufficiently certain indications for distinguishing being awake from dreaming that I am almost amazed. And this very amazement almost convinces me that I am dreaming.

Based on the skeptic's claim that if something can at all be doubted, or if something cannot be proven to be true then you cannot have true propositional knowledge, the conclusion would be that one cannot be sure that they have true knowledge pertaining to whether or not they are not dreaming right now.

This can be illustrated as follows:

- a) In order to have propositional knowledge on a certain topic (for example, knowing whether or not you're not dreaming right now), the claim must be true (i.e., you must not be dreaming right now).
- b) It cannot be proven, or we cannot know, whether or not we are not dreaming right now. This is because, for example, our senses have deceived us before and they could again, or people have thought that they were awake before when they were actually in a dream and this could be happening now, or because people can have dreams that they are dreaming and "Life" (as we refer to it) could merely be one long dream.

c) Therefore, since we cannot know if our claim is true, we can't know if we have knowledge pertaining to whether or not we are not dreaming right now. In other words, we do not know that we know we are not dreaming right now.

Furthermore, it can be argued that premise c of the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge in this example cannot be achieved, for it may not be possible to acquire full justification (even if partial justification may seem reasonable enough). Some possible examples for justification will be given later, but it will become evident that although they are reasonable justifications, they do not give full justification. Therefore, one cannot be certain that they ever have true knowledge. This can be shown as follows:

- a) In order to have true knowledge, one must be fully justified in believing that what they claim to know is true.
- b) Concerning the question of knowing whether or not we are not dreaming right now, full justification cannot be provided.

c) Therefore we cannot have justified true knowledge about whether or not we are not dreaming right now.

Some possible rebuttals to this argument may lie in the original argument second premise: "When it comes to answering the question of whether or not we are not dreaming right now, we cannot fully answer or prove claims 1 or 3 in the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge." Critics may state that this is unsound and that it is possible to know the answer to be true or "yes" (premise 1), or that we can be fully justified in believing their conclusion to be answered affirmatively (premise 3).

In stating that premise 1 in the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge can be true in this instance, a critic may assert that through tests of brain waves, breathing patterns or REM monitoring, differences can be proven between awakened states and dreaming states (because awakened states possess different body functions and patterns than dreaming states). A possible reply to this, however, could simply be that the subject dreams that these tests exist to differentiate sleeping/awakened states. Other arguments could be given, but because this

argument alone shows that there is doubt in this proof, no other argument is needed.

Other critics may state that premise 3 is possible to achieve-- that it is possible to have full justification in believing that one is not dreaming right now. The fallible person would probably claim that full justification can be justification which is possibly uncertain to a slight degree. For example, Descartes' depiction of an "evil-genius" is unreasonable, and unreasonable accusations don't necessarily have to be taken into consideration when considering full justification. To make the point clearer, let us suppose that we have a large jar full of 10,000 marbles. We cannot see into the jar, but is it safe to assume that after pulling out the first 5,000 marbles and seeing that they are all green, the next one we pull out will be green? Without a doubt? After 7,500 marbles are pulled out-- can we be sure then? What about 9,999 marbles? Can we be sure that the next marble pulled out will be green, and that there is no chance that there could be a marble of another color in the jar? A fallible person may answer "yes" to any one of these questions; however, the definition of full justification entails having no reason to doubt. No matter what the chances are that the next marble pulled out won't be green, no matter how thin they are-- there is a chance. Therefore there is a doubt. Therefore there isn't full justification.

Therefore, we cannot have true knowledge about whether or not we are not dreaming right now. In summary, this can be proven in the following argument:

a) In order to have true knowledge, the following three conditions (from the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge) must be met:

- 1) what the subject claims to know must be true,
- 2) the subject must believe that what they claim to know is true, and
- 3) the subject must be fully justified in believing what they claim to know to be true.

b) When it comes to answering the question of whether or not we are not dreaming right now, we cannot fully answer or prove claims 1 or 3 in the Justified True Belief Analysis of Knowledge.

c) Therefore we cannot have true (propositional) knowledge concerning whether or not we are not dreaming right now.

Although this argument may seem unreasonable or outrageous in the respect of considering even unreasonable (or almost impossible) possibilities in the achievement of its goal, it is ultimately not farfetched at all. In an endless universe, most anything could happen-- and, more importantly, everything has the opportunity for happening. Even if these ideas seem far-fetched, it doesn't matter. For as long as there is a slight possibility that there is but a shred of doubt, then that shred of doubt must be taken into consideration.

In light of this argument, Descartes' conclusion seems only appropriate. "This very amazement almost convinces me that I am dreaming."

Driving to Champaign

Driving To Champaign

I'm in the car now, and Eugene is driving, and we're going to Champaign. We stopped by Taco John's for some burritos and potato olè's, and now while Eugene is driving he's also adding hot sauce to his burrito and eating and he's steering with his knees and we're on the highway doing 75 miles per hour and it's got to be relatively unsafe to be in this car, I'm sure, so if I die in this car, I better write something down with some meaning.

So: if this is the last thing I ever write, what should it be?

Oh, they're playing Depeche Mode on the radio, and it's always nicer to hear a song you like on the radio instead of playing it on a tape or something, it's like a present when you hear it on the radio, even the quality of the radio sounds better than a cassette, and you want to hear the whole song and cherish it because if you skip past it, like you would to the next song on a tape, you won't have the chance to go back and hear it again. This is your chance to hear it, you've got nothing else. But now I'm typing through the song, and not really enjoying it anyway.

They said on the radio that they were going to play Depeche Mode, but apparently Eugene didn't hear that, and so I said I wanted to hear Depeche Mode and he said that they wouldn't play it. And when the radio did play it within five minutes of my asking Eugene was stunned. "They never play this!" You know, I've done that to him a lot, and he never catches on.

Oh, wait, that wouldn't be the last thing I wanted to say, you know, if I was going to die in this car. I forgot that's what I was writing about. This is most definitely not what I would want my last words to be. I don't know what my last words would be, though. Live every day like it is your last. Try to smile more. Try to think more. Value the people who choose to spend their time with you. Take a chance. Go different places. Don't have regrets.

Now Eugene wants to hear my Depeche Mode tape and I can't find it in the car. I've checked the space between the seats, I've checked the glove compartment, and he still won't let it go. He keeps saying that the tape can't have just disappeared, that it has to be here somewhere, that this really perplexes him. Now he's reaching around and under his seat behind him, and the car is not staying staying in the lane. In fact, he just grabbed some tapes to re-read the case to see if I just missed it, if I'm blind and can't recognize my own tapes, and while he was at it he almost ran us into another car on the highway and I had to yell at him to make him look at the road again. Now he's flipping through the stations, you know, because he can't just listen to something, being as much of an ansy, impatient person as myself, so he's scanning through the stations, and of all songs to stop on, he has to stop on "Once, Twice, Three Times a Lady." So maybe I do want to die in this car.

And all I keep thinking is that we're supposed to be meeting Sara and Scott at Garcia's pizza in Champaign, even though we just stopped for Taco John's, because Eugene just had to stop for tacos, and now we're running late.

Okay, Now Eugene found another equally crappy song to play, I think it's Eddie Money or something, and really, I think he's doing this intentionally to drive me crazy. Okay, he's clapping along now, like it's the seventh grade cheerleader tryouts, and I now want to take the steering wheel from right out of his hands and run us right off the side of the road.

Oh, right, so I'm supposed to be writing what my last words would be, if I actually did die in this car. But it's hard to do that when Eugene does that hacking sound that he does, I mean, has this man ever heard of a tissue.

Okay, if I died. I suppose I'd tell people to not dwell on those silly little details that will always get you down. You know, those details will always be there, there will always be something that can potentially

bring you down, you can always find something to pick on. But the thing is, you should just let go of those things, that's why they call them details anyway, so don't let them bother you. Just try to love life a little more.

You know, I've gone through a lot of crap in my life. I had beers with a friend tonight before I got on the road to Champaign, you see, that's why Eugene is driving and I'm sitting here typing about it. And as I said, I was having beers with a friend earlier, and we each got our own pitcher of beer, she got limes to add to her Miller Lite, and when the pitchers came, before we poured our first glasses, I told her we should toast and drink right out of the pitcher, I mean, why not, right? Well, I went out drinking with her because she was down, because it's her wedding anniversary today. She's not down about missing her husband that she left just a month ago, you see, she's down because the concept of a wedding - her wedding - is now destroyed to her. She thought this marriage was going to be good, and what she went through was so bad that she had to pack up her things and leave. And I told her that I had a bad anniversary, too, and it makes me feel bad every year, and that you just have to go through it. That it's okay to dwell on it today if you have to. But I also thought that she should keep in mind that she has 364 other days a year to revel in the fact that she now has control of her life and her happiness. That when she was in a bad situation she took her life into her own hands and now she's free. That she should know that if something doesn't kill her it will make her stronger and that she can say she's a stronger woman for going through this and she has learned something from this. She likes herself now, and she wouldn't be who she was if it wasn't for what she went through.

You can decide to be a victim or you can decide to learn from life, make the most of it, and be happy. So love life a little more. Make yourself the best that you can be, and never look back.

Okay, Eugene changed the station when they said they were going to be playing Phil Collins next. Maybe things aren't so bad.

strength



freedom & strength

you can't be free and strong until you can speak up

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