

A List of Things to Be Afraid of

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Sample of Content:

One man, one piece of paper, and a lot of memories spilled out between the lines of a list.

Content:

My psychiatrist always told me that mania is a mental illness. In my humble opinion, after the many years I've spent on this shithole of a planet, anyone who still experiences bouts of sanity after seeing the shit that goes on around them suffers from mental illness. I've pushed myself through so much shit that there's just got to be some damage to those delicate think organs. All too often, there would be secret murmurs from a deep conscience, "just hold through this... one day, things will be better..." We're all insane it's all really just a matter of the degree.

Item #1. Never forget... the misery you've had to pull through, like wadding through some shit swamp.

So, I've started a list. A list of things to remember. Because, as hope springs eternal, my little mental notes will one day fade out that will just be my brain making room for alcoholism and disrespectful habits towards my best friends. One day, I'll be satisfied. There will be good friends all around, a good career doing whatever (Iunno... I'm thinking mechanic or some such), and plenty of good times to be had. And, in that future, that dream I stumble on when I cruise these sidewalks, I imagine there will be plenty of things I forget. Among those, there is this: the shitty misery I've been through. I'm sure that the working class proletariat don't need to be told what my life has consisted of. Nine to five jobs, those lovely few months of unemployment when it seems that nobody will hire you, approximately five hundred "just one more time" heroin uses, a note or two about love delivered via bar napkin... Poetic, sure, but misery is poetic. One day, I just want to be 100% sedate.

Item #2. Never forget... when you're in love, you can't trust yourself.

This is a valuable lesson. And, lessons as they are, this one ought to be valued. Sure, people will tell you, "Yeah, she fucked you over, but at least you learned from it." But then again, few people only learn their lesson when the broken end of a vodka bottle rips through their face. Wait, I think it was a gin bottle... Yeah, it had to be. That was her flavor. We were sitting on the couch, drinking, television, insert typical setting component. My memory of the incident isn't too great. I mostly remember the police officer asking me, "Can you see me? How many fingers am I holding up?" For some reason, my mind felt like it had calculated the situation with complete efficiency, and that the reply I was giving fit like a puzzle piece. "Don't worry! I'll show you how to tape the super bowl... That VCR was never really good. We were planning on getting it replaced anyway..." The officer asked me the question one more time, then called for an ambulance. The last thing I remember, she was being dragged away in handcuffs, fighting and screaming. I caught something like, "Fuck you! I never fucking loved you! This was all your fault!" After that, it's all blank. When I got back out of the hospital and came to collect my things (heh), the neighbor told me: "Yeah, you sort of laid down after she was dragged away... You kept saying, 'oh god, oh god,' and stuff like that. Oh, yeah, and you started crying and were like, 'I just need to lay down, please...' Man, you must've been wasted." Oh, that reminds me...

Item #3. Never forget... to get a copy of that police report.

I'm always curious what the real deal was with that. Who the fuck knows... Maybe there's a small piece of wisdom I left behind. Something cliché like, "At 4:30 A.M., the victim kept repeating the phrase 'you have to remember... you can do anything you want to.'" Once I get the police report (I really can't afford \$10 a page right now), I'm sure that I'll be wealthy and with friends, and that little bit of wisdom is going to go a long way. I mean, shit, it might be something that's not so cliché. It might be something practical. I could really go for a, "Hey, you should really check out this jazz album the cops recommended," or something like, "Vodka and beer don't mix well." I'm pretty sure I won't get something like, "When you're in love, you can't trust yourself." That is going to be etched in to my brain for quite a few years. Yeah, that's not long enough hence, this list. Besides, fuck that neighbor. I bet I held up a little better than he describes.

Item #4. Never forget... you cannot outdrink any of the gang members from Hell's Angels.

This, I would like to think, was actually one of the highlights of my life. I mean, how many people get to talk about the time they actually got beat down by a motorcycle gang?

And not just any motorcycle gang. The Hell's Angels. It started with a bar, a motorcycle gang (Hell's Angels, yes yes), and five gallons of cheap vodka. It seemed that I became drunk, beligerent, etc., one of them insulted me, and I just swung. Like my past experiences with violence, either there was so much alcohol and drugs or the violence was so excessive, that most of the memories of the incident are blurred. Fortunately, I am told, I didn't get killed, which was a real risk, I guess. But, fuck that. Any time you can't -- oh, wait, this should be the next item...

Item #5. Never forget... any time you're afraid of doing something, just because you might die afterwards, is a time that you officially have labelled yourself as a pussy. Go get drunk and think about the decision you've made.

Actually, fuck that. I don't need a reminder for that. Maybe I need a reminder on like, getting regular therapy to treat that ideal. But, a reminder for that? Fuck it. Scratch that fucker off...

Item #5. Never forget... anytime you're afraid of doing something, just because you might die afterwards, is a time that you officially have labelled yourself as a pussy. Go get drunk and think about the decision you've made. (I suck. I can't believe I wrote this... sub-item #5: get therapy, heh.)

Item #5. Never forget... always make time to get wasted with your friends.

This is an important note. Any lengthy amount of time during life that does not include getting off in some way or form will first burn, tear, rip, and eventually destroy you. If at any time, you think you've been sober for far too long, immediately take a ride to the nearest liquor store and get some booze. Friends are a plus in this situation. Even if you have to fuckin' mark it on your calendar, make sure you gets wasted with your friends. Whether you do this with an orgasmic game of scrabble, fuck parties, heroin, or plenty of alcohol is your decision. I've done all as a means of associating with my friends, and I have to tell you, scrabble fuckin' sucks. It really is good to spend time with people that you can associate with. It's absolutely necessary. It is in these moments of profound intoxication, forgetfulness, and sheer bliss that you get such beautiful exchanges as, "I'll sell you my soul for a shwill of that beer... and not the bottom part of the beer, either..." to things as interesting as, "I really need to stop killing people this shit is really cutting in to my schedule..." I'd make another item, not to forget your friends and to always be there for them, but that's a part of item #5. Actually, to make sure I don't forget...

Item #5. Sub-clause. Never forget... to be there for your friends when they need you.

There have been some good friends, some bad friends, and not in any way you might recognize. My best friend introduced me to heroin, and that's not why he's my best friend. And, one of the greatest friends I ever had (who I'd like to think was never my friend), is now my worst enemy. It was because he sided with my family members when they tried to have an intervention on my drinking. I agreed to listen, so long as I could drink Bacardi... and so long as someone else was paying for it. That fucker. He was all like, "I don't think that's a good idea that you drink at all." It was his disagreement to Bacardi, his opposition that gave my family more negotiating leverage. I finally did make a deal for a six-pack of generic beer, in exchange for listening time. But still, if I could have gotten a bottle of Bacardi, that would have been the coolest intervention of my life. And for that reason, Joe-Bob-Bill (whatever) is now my worst enemy. This, devoted and trusting reader, brings me to my next item.

Item #6. Never forget... to completely distrust your family.

There are a few sub-clauses, amendments, and "what if" altercations that come along with this item, but I'm sure that I'll be able to fully recall them all if I ever need this list of things to remember for advice. I don't really know what the situation is, you know, different cultures all around the globe with different values and different family relationships, and the way people even in America have learned to evolve and change things. I really do think that your family's implied impressions of you can truly take a very degenerating toll on your mind. For so long, you've been at their mercy. Prejudices, bigotry, hatreds, loves, inadequacies expressed through rage and violence... All of this is passed to you, not just by genes (if by genes at all), but by the way your family acted and behaved when you were just a young tot. I've come to the very clear conclusion that your family cannot be trusted. The natural, mental process, the one that tells you to always respect and honor your parents' opinion, you have to interject that with, "They're lying to you." It needs to become instinct. So, when you get something like, "I think you have a drinking problem," your conscience needs to react: "They're lying to you." Then, you can reply, "Drinking problem? I call this a drinking solution. Ha! I made you look stupid." This instinct needs to act like a filter. So, you can hear a family member say, "Hey, I think your girlfriend is violent and you should break up," your conscience goes off sending you a warning, and then your brain processes: "Hhhmmmm, they could be right." But, I've already got crazy, psychotic girlfriends covered in item #2.

Item #7. Never forget... to not call your landlord a "cuntfoot" unless you have a lease.

This item is rather self-explanatory.

Item #8. Never forget... to forget everything you learned in school.

I'm sure that few people would disagree with me on this point. Children are herded in to these enormous buildings. You can't piss without permission. You can't walk without permission. Those who are independent are punished. It's not education. Real education elevates your mind and creates independence for you. When you can't piss without an authoritative figure's nod, you're nothing more than a fuckin' slave. Forget everything you've learned. Those stereotypes you picked up between smoking weed in the bathroom and juggling numbers in class, that style of living that has you cowering in fear... I could go on and on. Facts are facts, and this will always ring true: if you can't forget what you learn from school, you'll be cursed for life. Everything from your career to your family and your relationships. Fuck school. If you have any respect for it, then stay the fuck away from me.

Item #9. Never forget... there's always time to change.

I suppose that's the ultimate point of this of this list. When I look through these items, I remember every time I've made a personal resolution, a commandment to myself. And, everytime I think of those resolutions, I think about the moments I abandon them. They seem like difficult moments. I hear echoes of family, telling me, "That's because you never finish anything you start," or maybe I'm looking at a police officer through the bars of a holding cell, listening to the same old argument: "I didn't have to bring you in here, but I did." For every promise that I've made to myself and broken, I've made another promise. I guess that's why I've labelled this, "A List of Things to Be Afraid of." Right now, I think I'm going to go out to the bar with my friends, see if I can outdrink anyone, and see if I can fall in love with some stranger. If anyone ever finds this list, I'll

make sure to tell them, "Don't take that advice to heart, kid... Living life like that just isn't worth it." To all the mistakes I've made, I suppose the hardest thing I have to learn is that I can always change.

www.punkerslut.com

For Life,

Punkerslut (or Andy Carloff) has been writing essays and poetry on social issues which have caught his attention for several years. His website <http://www.punkerslut.com> provides a complete list of all of these writings. His life experience includes homelessness, squatting in New Orleans and LA, dropping out of high school, getting expelled from college for "subversive activities," and a myriad of other revolutionary actions.

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About the Author:

Andy Carloff