

Jesse's Inferno

The moment the door blew open, the force of the explosion felt like it had sucked the air out of my lungs. My life flashed before my eyes as an chemical induced ball of flames surged through the small trailer I had been meticulously rebuilding. I just applied the sixth coat of epoxy on the shower base, a task that consumed my thoughts and efforts over the past few days. The stubborn epoxy refused to dry, so I had brought in a small space heater to expedite the process. Initially, it seemed to work wonders. That sixth one was the one that produced the sufficient amount of flammable fumes to combust with the coil of the heater moments after applying it.

I don't know if the chemicals from the epoxy had clouded my judgment or if I had simply justified my carelessness in the rush to get Barb back in her house, and get my ass paid. I had a small fan venting the fumes out, and though I harbored some fears of ignition, I kept a check on the situation, and it seemed to be working fine—until it wasn't.

Suddenly, as I was hanging the final piece of trim for the day, the bathroom door just a few feet away exploded open, and the flames devoured the entire 4x8 bathroom in a matter of seconds. Panic surged through me like a bolt of lightning. I grabbed a nearby bucket of wall mud and dashed out the door, dumping it as I ran towards the water source. My mind raced as I filled the bucket, an agonizing ten seconds that felt like an eternity. When I tried to re-enter the trailer, it was already consumed by a thick, acrid black smoke. Panic gripped my heart as I threw the bucket inside and staggered back, choking and gasping for air.

Desperation clawed at me as I screamed for help, pounding on the neighbors' doors with all the strength I could muster. My eyes darted around frantically until I spotted a garden hose on the trailer next door. My mind latched onto a sliver of hope—I could still save the house if the fire was contained in the bathroom. I grabbed the hose and plunged back into the smog-filled trailer, the thick smoke now so dense I couldn't even see my own hand in front of my face.

The world became an inferno of heat and suffocating darkness. I dropped to the ground, trying to find some semblance of breathable air. I didn't know if there was a propane tank that was about to explode, or if Nara's trailer was going to catch the rest of the trailer park of fire, creating a devastating catastrophe possibly even killing people. These thoughts were vicious in my head, relentlessly screaming at me. The heat of the fire was intense, but the flames were hidden behind a veil of black smoke, appearing as eerie orange glows, like the eyes of a jack-o'-lantern. When smoke is that thick, and it's full of plastics and fiberglass being fuled by strong chemicals, it's a toxic air. Holding my breath, I blindly aimed the hose, hoping that I was hitting the fire, but the smoke burned my eyes, making it impossible to see.

I was holding my breath until my lungs couldn't hold out, and I was forced to inhale. It felt like breathing in acid. A sharp spike in chest, strangled my throat and my mind. It was a corrosive piercing blade of agony. I ran out and fell to the ground, coughing violently, my body wracked with pain. An older lady from the neighborhood rushed over, helping me to my feet and offering me water. As I gulped it down, the only thought that echoed in my mind was, "Poor Barb. I've just ruined her house." The realization hit me like a sledgehammer—this disaster wasn't just a personal failure, but a ruination that would cost Barb and myself dearly.

The agony of my self-doubt and the weight of my mistakes kicked me right in the gut. Was it my

carelessness that had led to this tragedy? Had my impatience and disregard for safety cost someone their home and peace of mind? The psychological torment intertwined with the physical pain was almost unbearable. I had been so focused on the project, so determined to succeed, that I had overlooked the risks, and now, the consequences were staring me in the face.

As I sit here coughing up chunks of blackened burnt plastic and fiberglass reflecting on the winding path my life has taken, there is a pattern that seems to haunt me: every time I experience a moment of triumph, a tragedy inevitably follows. It's as if my victories are always overshadowed by black clouds of despair rolling in. It's a relentless cycle that leaves me questioning: where do you go when you want to run away but don't know where or why?

This feeling, this incessant urge to move, to flee, is perplexing. Is it simply the desire for perpetual motion, the hope that moving will somehow carry me away from my problems? But if there's no clear problem, why do I feel this overwhelming need to escape? The mirror holds the answers. I have to fix myself. Perhaps I am the problem.

Looking at my life from an outside perspective, it becomes painfully clear to me that my actions have had a profound impact on those around me, often in detrimental ways. Am I destroying the lives of people I care about? The resounding answer I have seems to be yes. So, what am I doing? Is the only way to fix myself to "pop a lead pill" and say peace mother fuckers? Nah. I wish it were that easy, but I'm too selfish already. I'm not about to ruin my family's lives further by committing the ultimate act of self-serving.

The fact is, I've made mistakes and terrible choices, but I've also done well and made good decisions. We tend to attack ourselves in the most righteous ways, often forgetting the incredible moments we've had in between those doubts. I feel the worst about myself when I fail others.

Just like the world, I am a work in progress. I am a masterpiece, but it is not complete. My journey is filled with missteps and moments of clarity. The key is to remember that my imperfections do not define me. Instead, they create opportunities for growth and learning. I contemplate the landscape of triumph and tragedy, I must remind myself that every step forward, every act of kindness, and every moment of genuine connection is a potential for positive change.

So, where do I go when I want to run away? Maybe the answer isn't in the physical act of running but in the courage to face myself, to confront my fears, and to strive for a better version of me.

The human mind is complex, and few aspects are as confounding and pervasive as self-doubt and its intricate relationship with depression. The inner dialogue that we engage with daily can be both a source of inspiration and a wellspring of debilitating despair. It's a balance that often leaves us questioning our progress, our worth, and our authenticity.

When I contemplate whether I am truly evolving or merely imagining myself as a better person. This uncertainty can be paralyzing. The fear that I am not genuinely who I portray myself to be—that I am living a facade—strikes at the core of my self-esteem. This dissonance between my internal self-perception and my external representation can be crushing, leading to a feeling of profound inauthenticity. So the downward spiral begins.

It's during these moments of acute self-doubt that the thought of "taking the forever nap" becomes

more than just an intrusive whisper. It becomes a haunting echo, a seductive call to escape the relentless scrutiny of my own mind. It's an uncomfortable feeling, one no one really wasn't a to say out loud but a feeling that is undeniably there. The challenge is to arrest this thought before it trails into a dangerous path. My ability to rationalize and convince myself of the so-called benefits of such an act is in my persuasive nature, but it is a persuasion that must be resisted and redirected. Highs and lows are all we tend to recall, but in the absence of your egotistical self pity, the journeys to those highs and lows are the essential moments that brought your pleasure or pain. Those are the moments that are taken for granted.

The psychology of self-doubt is deeply intertwined with the mechanisms of depression. Self-doubt erodes our sense of self-worth, creating a fertile ground for depressive thoughts to take root. It distorts our self-image, making us overly critical of our actions and intentions. This can lead to a cycle of negative thinking, where every perceived failure or shortcoming is magnified and internalized as evidence of our inadequacy.

Depression, in turn, feeds off this self-doubt, creating a feedback loop that is difficult to break. It saps our motivation, making it harder to take actions that could prove our worth and dispel our doubts. It clouds our judgment, making it challenging to see ourselves clearly and objectively. In this state, it becomes easy to lose sight of our accomplishments and potential, focusing instead on our perceived failures and flaws. Hence the downward spiral.

Mahatma Gandhi's wisdom, "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony," offers hope in this struggle. This alignment of thought, speech, and action represents a path towards authenticity and self-acceptance. It is a call to integrate our internal and external selves, to live in a way that is true to our values and aspirations.

Achieving this harmony requires a baptism of self—a profound transformation where we take control of our thoughts and actions. This process demands self-awareness, self-compassion, and a commitment to personal growth. It involves recognizing and challenging our self-doubt, reframing our negative thoughts, and cultivating a more positive and realistic self-image.

Becoming the "self-control freak" who has everything they want is not about attaining perfection or material success. It is about mastering our inner world, aligning our actions with our values, and finding contentment in our authentic selves. It is about embracing our imperfections and understanding that they do not diminish our worth. It is about recognizing our potential for growth and believing in our capacity to evolve.

In this journey, we must remember that self-doubt is a natural part of the human experience. It is not a sign of failure but an opportunity for introspection and growth. By facing our doubts and fears with courage and resilience, we can break the cycle of negativity and move towards a more fulfilling and harmonious life.

I hope to find peace and happiness, not in the absence of doubt, but in the strength and clarity that comes from confronting it.