



I AM OZ:

The Golden Road To Recovery

By

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This book is a work in process, and that is not just about the grammatical errors you may experience reading it. It's a books about health, specifically mental health. Maybe even more specifically, my mental health. It has taken me a life time to reach a place where I can reasonably communicate the concepts within. It is non-fiction. Though I am capable of writing APA format and making it more academic in appearance, I dispensing with that formula. That is likely more about me than a statement against being academic. I love academia and would love to return to school. This mirrors another artifact in my life; I do not want to wear a suit and tie. In fact, as of now, I am refusing to wear ties. This is me trying to me normal, not pretentiously so- but abnormally normal. As if there were such a things as normal.

May this find you and your family well, in whatever state of mind you happen to find yourself in.

With Love,

John and Loxy

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Prologue:

Anton Petrov opens his videos with the salutations: “Hello there, Wonderful Persons...” I like that. I do not have my own catch phrase. I should like to adopt his, or something even more profound. Perhaps a mission statement read by William Shatner and theme music. Hello, fellow Wizards and amazingly powerful beings...

You probably don't won't magical thinking. I like magic, but I am don't intend to push metaphysical beliefs. I never thought try to write such a books as I am attempting now. I am actually qualified to speak on these matters, as I have master in Community Mental Health, and I hold a license in the state of Texas to practice. I never considered myself worthy of a title, but I here I am with one. Intellectually speaking, it means I know just enough to realize anytime I enter into someone else's narrative- I am walking sacred ground. You really can't get away from mystical thinking when elevate people to where they deserve to be. Elevating myself, rationally, and being reasonable- staying balanced is a challenge for me. I am not likely to be tyrannical arrogance, but sometimes I fall back into old thoughts patterns. In the past, while struggling with my own mental health, I have rejected many overtures of kindness and reasonable insight because of a perceived disparity between what I was given in my family of origin to what I was being given. If you told me thirty years ago that I was a good man, I would have vehemently argues the contrary- and would have had just enough passive aggressiveness to give you evidence. That didn't mean I wasn't trying to be a good man. Hell, most the time my bar was just aimed at being reasonable. I sometimes hit the bar. Sometimes wasn't frequent enough. I have held a great deal of darkness, shame, self-loathing, and, well, an almost insurmountable list of things; even today I will frequently drop into self-deprecating humor. I mean to emulate Joan Rivers; I notice I don't do it well, or at least my self-perspective clashes with how others see me.

Did it ever occur to you that the applicants that came to the Wizard already had what they were seeking? Should it be pondered at all? I mean, it's given. It's right there in the script. If you told the scarecrow that he had a brain, he would articulately argue how you were mistaken. He might even convince you. The same for the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion. They spent all of their

time in their self-dialogue fortifying their illness. Part of their illness was their self-dialogue-their inner narrative.

Having a narrative that doesn't align with reality, perceived, or social, doesn't mean we don't also communicate truth. For example, I am divorced twice. I am absolutely convinced the first failure was completely mine. I don't see the second divorce as a failure, but I can communicate how I contributed to its resolution. I have shared these failures, and almost immediately been reprimanded, figuratively. In discussing it, people remind me it takes two, and ask about her part. Well, I am really not concerned about her part. I am concerned about my part. I can imagine how a person might respond to my part and be less engaged, and how that might snowball in one direction. We are either moving closer as people, or further apart; rarely do we just maintain. Part of my failure was realizing I shouldn't have married 2nd wife. I had a list. I shared it with her. She found reasons to dismiss all of the articles on the list. Interestingly, over time, as we grew further apart, she presented articles to why our relationship wasn't working. Her list was actually my list. It was almost as if she had to discover these truths on her own, and she presented them to me reasonably well. It astounded me that she presented them as if she invented them. I was more amused than perturbed- why be angry at truth- and so, the marriage naturally resolved itself without too much of a fuss. There was more volatility in the making of it than the resolution of it.

People see what they see. They hear what they hear. Rarely do we see or hear truth. There is science that tells us this, beyond a shadow of a doubt. We experience reality in stages. No matter how much philosophy and spirituality I pursued, I could not accept the premise I was a good man. Jordan Peterson offered me the insight that I needed to realize a different view- what qualifies me a man as good is the attribute of recognizing my own darkness. Fuck. I carry some darkness, that's for damn sure. (If you don't like profanity, you won't like this book.) My family of origin made sure I got a backpack full of that shit before I managed to break free. It took me a while to unpack the half of it. I am still unpacking it. And, curiously, I am now in a field where I listen to the darkness of others. I work in mental health. I hear the horror stories of struggles and trauma and every once in a while I am still foolish enough to think, 'fuck, I've heard it all,' and

then, sure enough, Murphy sends in the next client- with backpacks and rolling chests brimful of darkness.

I have had a change of heart. I have decided to own 'I am a good man' with one caveat, 'I am really terrible wizard.'

The story of who we are is a long and winding road. Yes, life is a Paul McCartney song. You may be lamenting that life doesn't take you directly to where you need to be, but as my good friend Loxy would say: "lightening never takes a straight path." Unlike most spiritualist teachings that place emphasis on reducing or eliminating Ego in your life, I suggest that ego and personality are functional constructs for making life meaningful. Life's goal is not to be less you, but to be more you. Not a better you. Better implies who you are right now doesn't have value, or what you're experiencing doesn't have value. We are here, and in that there is celebration of spirit. Saying that doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement. There is always room for different, whether that be vertical or lateral. Where you are on the map is simply where you are. If you want to go somewhere specific, you need to know where you are. Where here now. If you're open, perhaps some the keys to my map may unlock meaning in yours. If nothing else, maybe it can give you insight into the meaning of your own keys.

I am writing this in a very conversational style approach, hoping to make it accessible to a larger audience. I aiming to make this generally helpful. My preference is to write fiction. If I can think of the source as I am writing, I will add it to the text. If I failed to include an important source, forgive me. Again, this is not meant to be an academically written book. If you come to a counselor and they start throwing names and sources at you, well, how helpful is that?

Counseling is about the conversation. Writing is less of a dialogue, but with enough seeds of interest, it can spark a larger conversation. I think people are starving for genuine conversations. People thrive when they have kind, intellectual reciprocity of interaction. How many of us get that these days? I suspect that is one reason YouTube is out performing every other media source: people recognize genuineness- versus contrived, manipulated, keep you where you're at or provocative. If you are curious about something, feel free to ask. If you think I got something wrong, tell me. I am open to conversations. I am not looking for new clients.

Chapter 1 Welcome to Oz

“I am Oz. The Great and Powerful. My authority is impeachable, you silly, sniveling, sanctimonious, side-show excuse for a side-kick want-to-be. Pay no attention to that man behind the computer screen. If humility, meekness, kind words, and beautifully colored and flowery incense flavored smoke worked, wouldn't you imagine Tibetan Monks would be Army Drill Instructors? Have you ever seen a long hair, flower toting Navy Seal bringing a box of tissue to soften your tears?! Grow up, you impertinent, impotent, ignorant excuse for a human.”

Ego much? You know what it feels like when you come across it in others, but what about in yourself? The above parody quote is necessary. It's harsh, but humorously so, contextually- if you're in the right mind frame. You don't become a warrior with flowers, though that does make for a good Geiko Commercial. This book is not mainstream. It may not even find its audience. If you find yourself reading it, it might be something you need to hear. I am partial to the idea that we don't always get what we want, but sometimes, when we try... I suspect, it's something you're not likely to hear randomly.

If you follow the popular culture, or even the more extreme esoteric culture, one of the things you will find more often than not is the recommendation to get out of Ego, kill Ego, or some variation of reduced ego. Ego is compared to a drug. It's addicting. If this is a drug and we can't get people to stop using drugs, then maybe it's time to employ the harm reduction model. Some ego is good. Ego is functional. It keeps you alive and in the game. It's your spiritual signature in the present medium. Through the course of this book, I am going to go further and suggest to you it is an absolutely necessary construct. It is your worst enemy and your best friend, if you cultivate the meme 'the Way of the Warrior.'

I will approach it from a variety of perspectives in order to best illuminate the path I have been traveling. Much of what I will offer is metaphor and analogy. Some things are literal. Something's are both literal and metaphor. It is up to you, the reader, to determine what that is for you. I am a counselor. Hypothetically, if you were my client, I could never give you advice, I can never tell you specifically what you should or shouldn't do, but as a guide I can help you

explore your strengths and weakness and trust the reality of your own map. I am not your counselor. I can give you advice here. I call them experiments. You try it on for size, and if you helpful, great- share it. If not, move on. You could try things more than once. Some initial failures are not due to bad advice, just poor application and implementation. Sometimes the story we were given was not the fit when first tried it on.

Don't make your keys absolute; strengths can be weaknesses, and weakness can be strengths. We all make maps. We are on the map all the time and what we have on our maps naturally reflects how we interpret the terrain. When in the trenches, there may seem to be no way out of a predicament. From the mountain top, we can look down on the valleys of life and see, 'oh, there was a way out right there.'

Jung reports enlightenment doesn't come from sitting around imagining beings of light. If you want to get to the light you must go through the shadows; the light is on the other side. Enlightened beings do not sit on the mountain top shouting directions down to you. You don't get to heaven by following the commands of angels who have never left their clouds. It's hard to trust someone whose white coat hasn't gotten dirty. Seriously, Lucifer in the Bible was often referred to as the 'shiny one.' The attractive one. The real angels are in the trenches with you, getting dirty, walking in the mud, putting their arms around you and helping you walk. They get dirty, they make mistakes, because they, too, have decided to walk the path so that they can better relate. If you dismiss a messenger because they have fallen, then you have judged your book by the cover. Truth is truth. Even a dirty or broken cups can deliver enough water to your lips to sustain you.

In the old days, Plato's Cave was the vehicle that helped people realize what they are experiencing on a frequent basis is illusion. I am not in disagreement with that. I am not going to tell you to forget the old ways. We may no longer fall back on Freud as God, but his work was foundational in terms of raising us to the next level. I will tell you, it's time to update Plato's Cave in one particular way: there are no chains. It is likely I share this with Terrence McKenna, if I didn't flat steal it from him- we come here willingly, the same way you buy a ticket and go to a movie. Actually, that may stem from reading Richard Bach, specifically his book 'Illusions.'

This stuff is old and new and it has come at me in a variety of ways and forms and different messengers. The most recent form is “Reality Transurfing”, by Vadim Zeland. Like Jung, I find synchronicities interesting, spooky, and meaningful in a way that elevates a respect for that phenomena that transcends the materialist worldview. Make no mistake- I experience magic and the paranormal. I think Dean Radin said, or quoted someone as saying, “Magic is Real.” That is my stance. I don’t think it’s paranormal. I think the paranormal is the normal and we’re in a constrained reality frame of our own making.

Most of today’s audience will tune out at the mention of magic. If you hung out this far, but have some problems with the metaphorical relationship to that word, I would have you consider this: it doesn’t have to be Harry Potter magic. I operate from a consciousness first paradigm. If you were dreaming, you have a context for magic. You can adopt this idea directly from “The Holographic Universe” by Michael Talbot. Consciousness and Simulation theory both allow for ‘magic.’ Sometimes things work that shouldn’t work. Some things don’t work that should work. Placebos work and nocebos work, confounding the pharmaceutical companies that want to know if their medicines are working better than chance. Every drug has a statistical number attached to its effectiveness, which you really don’t hear much, and it’s measured in how many hundred people have to take the drug before one person realizes benefits. Number Needed to Treat, or NNT. Interestingly, science has noted a decline in drug efficacy. There seems to be a correlation to an increase in commercials that rush through a list of possible side effects. They’re obligated to disclose risk due to liability. Disclosure of risk clearly minimizes benefits. How could it not? “This drug can help this, but it may give you these six side effects...” Tell me again that we’re not dealing with magic here. How am I supposed to sell any snake oil in this market? Come on!

When I am dreaming, a regular old, normal dream- the dream works fluidly. I do not question the reality as I experience it. I follow the script. I don’t question it. I have a nice dreams. I love my dreams. It is only when I become lucid, dream mechanics start to malfunction. I turn on a light switch in a regular dream, light works. I am lucid- light switch is hit or miss- I turn on the switch- it doesn’t work. If I switch it on and off and I get stuck trying to make it work and I go back to sleep- and back into dream world doing dream stuff. But if I say, that’s weird- “let their

be light,” then suddenly there is light. Sometimes it doesn’t work and I say, “Oh, but I know this is dream and I command you to work” and then it works. I want to suggest to you that reality is like this, with caveats. The book the ‘Secret’ does not work for the majority of people who read it because they don’t understand the caveats. Reality Transurfing actually offers insight into the mechanics of why it doesn’t work for most people. Notice, I am not saying ‘The Secret’ doesn’t work, or that it’s not a valid perspective. It worked great for Rhonda! Yay Rhonda. (Invoke the Beach Boys song, ‘Help me...’)

NLP, neural linguistic programming, works. It has been authenticated and considered a reasonable, rational approach to mental health. It’s not magic. Maybe the ‘Secret’ isn’t either. Here’s an example. Fear and anxiety have the same physiological pathways. Neural epinephrine is the thing that transmits this noise. It’s a signal. I am calling it a noise. Remember this when you arrive at the fear and anxiety chapter. Anyway, you can use breathing techniques to disrupt the signal, to bring down the noise. Breath works takes anywhere from 8 to ten minutes to fully eliminate the noise. You could, however, on recognizing fear or anxiety, say out loud over and over, “I am excited, I am excited, I am excited!” and get the same results instantaneously. It’s called reframing. Interestingly, before there was NLP, there was Dorothy- “there’s no place like home, there’s no place like home, there’s no place like home...” If it comes from Glenda, it’s fucking magic. If it comes from Harvard, it’s science. And we’re in a world where you can’t believe either.

Here is a trick to reading my map. Every time you find yourself in a metaphor, I need you to realize you’ve experiences a floor change. You’re on new level, and you need to own that new perspective. Owning means you adopt that metaphor as the meme to such a degree it becomes literal. As soon as you make it real, throw away the metaphor! Let go. Don’t keep it as an absolute. (Unless you’re a Sith Lord. Or a Jedi. Seriously, ben saying, “Only Siths deal in absolute...” Oh, wait maybe Ben was Sith!) The metaphor was just the vehicle that got you to the new perspective. You now have to map out the world from this perspective and create a new key system and make new connections and analogies. If you’re getting metaphors from dolphins, and you’re land dweller, then you may not derive the maximum benefit. You have to remember, Dolphin World is fluidic and constant change. It’s chaos. One day they see a branch with a

squirrel on it. (Squirrel!) One day they see a plastic container, coincidentally with word 'Tide' written on it. (Why can't take their plastic back to them so they can clean it up and reuse it?) One day they see a beach ball blown out to sea and they play with it. The next day... Keep on swimming might be a good mantra from them, but that meme is not a good thing for people. If you're in a crowded mall and a child falls in front of you- you stop, you don't trample them! You give the child's parent time to correct. The person behind you should also stop, but if they get mad and start yelling 'keep swimming' it's not because they're angry or stupid, it's because they don't have enough perspective to understand you were giving the right away to someone in need. Also, we're not bloody fish! Neither are dolphins. It is also true, people who blow their horn are not stupid- they're just in the wrong frame from driving. They're likely in an anxious, selfish mode which promotes distrust- they erroneously believe their perspective is correct and don't allow for the other person to driving appropriately. It isn't even reasonable to ask yourself, "why is that person slowing down..." The job of all drivers is simply to be aware of environment and respond appropriately. If people would assume someone was responding to something and give them a moment, the matter usually resolves itself. The world doesn't operate on your time schedule.

We tend not give ourselves or others enough credit, or time to resolve ourselves.

That said, understanding that the world is not operating on your time table is part of the dream. The dream is necessary. The delay is either a distraction from waking, or is actually the call to wake up. The emotion you feel is the key to wake consciousness within you. All of life's troubles, the slings and arrows and misfortune, are symptoms of being asleep and call for wakefulness. Resisting or ignoring the symptom results in increased drama and pain. Too much emphasis on the symptoms, celebrating the symptoms, results in more drama and pain. Don't ask 'why me?' Unless you're 12 or younger. Then that's okay. Don't get stuck there. Never analyze the symptoms while in the dream. When you wake up, you can evaluate it. From Jungian perspective, all misfortunes are symptoms. If you hallucinate a demon and you run from it, you guarantee it will chase you. Even if you think you get away- because it is a manifestation of something inside of you, wherever you run, there you are, facing the same problem. Jung is very

clear on this in 'the Red Book.' Stand your ground, face the demon, and ask its name. Ask it what it represents. It will change.

Symptoms are calls to be lucid. It is true if my tires are worn, I have greater chance for accidents. If I don't have money to get new tires, like most people, I delay until I can or am forced to confront the problem. If I remain aware, and I know I am about to drive in inclement weather, I can still remain safe by increasing safety distance. If I drive on autopilot, which most of us do, and I forget to accommodate for the situational environment, I am likely to slide into someone. If at any time in your driving experience you are suddenly called to rage, call someone a name, or experience a near miss or accident, you were on autopilot and you were not as aware as you could have been. You were definitely not being kind if engaging in road rage. Most people are kind- so why is it so many people becomes monsters in the car?

Your rage is not you. This is not 'Fight Club's 'I am Steve's rage' and I need to blow-up the world. It is but it isn't. Welcome to Oz. It is you and not you. When the Wizard is confronted directly, he is much humbler, a little bumbling, capable of erudition and right thinking and kindness- but behind the mask, he is a menace and terror. You, too, are capable of this. What is interesting is that what some people do in their cars is something they would never do in a one on one or a group setting. There are people in online communities that rely on the anonymity of their avatar to manifest downright despicable behaviors, things they wouldn't do in person. They, too, are OZ. (Malkovich, Malkovich.) Yeah, some people don't need anonymity, they're just that contemptuous of social protocol and show no discernment regardless of settings. Most people show discernment. All of us have this nastiness inside of us- and it bubbles out at inappropriate times, usually when we're tired. I have worked in psych hospitals where people were acting complete fools to such a degree the nurses and doctors gave up, called for law enforcement, and by God, police show up and the person, or persons, have instantaneous behavioral changes and start complying. Some of that may be a response archetype. Some of it is the reality that the hospital is a step above going to jail and even a crazy person knows that much.

This path that I am on and will invite you to walk is not an evasion of responsibility for actions, thoughts, and behaviors. It is a call to recognize it is much more complex than you suspect.

Personality is much more complex than people realize. It is not one thing fixed for all time. It's a continuum. It has features and attributes that modify it in real time. It has buttons that are wired to give cokes. Those are triggers that are booby trapped or attached to past events, and when people discover them and push a button, they get cokes. And by god, if you push my button and get a coke, I am going to make you drink it. I am 52 years into emptying the coke machine and turning off buttons. You know it's a trigger to a past event when the amount of coke that comes out is out of proportion to the change that went in.

We need a new theory for personality. No one has a clear grasp of it, and beyond Jung and Campbell, I know of no one that is really trying to tackle it. I see some parallels with Jung and the direction of neuroscience. It is my intent to meander my way there, because it's important... And again, illuminates the spiritual, magical feel to this thing. 'Same above, same below.' Human beings are smart, and some of the smartest of us intuitively define reality for ourselves and others. Some of us touch upon realities we can only speculatively engage. There are cultural barriers to experiencing greater realities. This is not speculative. There are things you can say in French that doesn't translate into English. All languages have a unique treasure that doesn't translate well, if at all. Some cultures have complex emotional states that other cultures haven't experienced. If you don't feel robbed hearing that, you are not grasping how seriously profound that statement is. You may have heard this: the Inuit have a hundred words for snow. Russians have more words for blue, and so by default they can experience a myriad of shades of blue that English people can't. Even within the context of my own language, my artist friends have access to a greater color palette than my rainbow 7. A wine expert can tell you quality, and likely age and origin- where I am like, 'oh, that's nice.' If you can accept that- then aren't you a little bit interested in knowing if you can learn to experience a greater range of emotions than the few you have access to- happiness or anger?

Rumi, Blake, Whitman, they have all given us glimpses into reality that have paralleled and even highlighted what has been discovered in physics. To me, there is no distinction between science and mysticism. The hard science has for too long dismissed the soft science, and completely ridiculed spirituality and metaphysics to the detriment of humanity. We have no faith in anything, not each other, not the country, not science. COVID bears the truth of that.

How many scientist made discoveries in their dreams, or coming at things in non-rational ways? Almost all the major discoveries were this. Even Einstein was daydreaming in a boat when he 'envisioned' his solution. Most people can't touch magic because to do so is to invoke real world ridicule. Some scientists are trying to bridge their way back with ideas such as 'pan psychism.' There is evidence that some scientist are wanting to return to the concepts of an ether, but no one is going to use that term or admit as much. What is zero-point energy field if not the ether? How do we have gravity waves without space-time being a material-ether- a medium in which waves could travel? How many words have we changed to either avoid stigmas or connections to perceived 'negative' associations? 'Retarded' became 'handicapped' to 'handi-capable.' No matter how you describe the 'thing' it is still the 'thing' and all new terms will eventually be used in a negative ways because, let's face it, there are some mean ass people in the world. Fearful people. Stupid people. Seriously, you would have to be mean or stupid or both to pick on someone who is clearly challenged. Heroes protect the weak and disadvantaged, not take advantage of them. You can't run from the thing! UFO's are now UAP. Okay, so, the government didn't lie- by virtue of a technicality? "No, we're not investigating unidentified flying objects. We have, however, been investigating unidentified aerial phenomena." Just saying.

Chapter 2 Fear and Anxiety

Before you can tackle Fear and Anxiety, you have to have a working metaphor. A meme. A framework. I have experienced trauma. I hear accounts of trauma every single day. Fuck, you just have to turn into the news and you get a steady diet of trauma vicariously. How many of our games and movies have trauma? Fighting and warring and action is the world's go to fix. This is not an anti-gaming and movie theme. I am merely pointing out, there are very few non-aggressive pathways illuminated around us. There is some evidence that completely suppressing it, such as not letting boys play rough and tumble, can be harmful. Like, you delay the growth of their prefrontal cortex. You know how important that is for thinking. I refer you to the movie, "War Games." AI comes online and wants to play 'Thermal Nuclear War' with Ferris Bueler with real bombs. (Hence the phrase, Save Bueler, on the water tower.) To short circuit this, Mather engaged AI in a game of tic-tac-toe. AI quickly learns the futility of the game and asks to play chess. Boys are physical first, social second. If you don't get the physical part, you're less likely to have cognitive part. But isn't ironic, we will suppress it in boys- even dope them on narcotics to quiet perceived 'aggression,' but then feed them a diet of gaming and movies that promotes the very thing society is trying to extinguish?

Oh, and while we're on the meme of War Games, how smart do you suppose it is arming robots and pre-AI interfaces with weapons before they have the cognitive discernment not to shoot us? And, did the military people not watch "Terminator?" Do they not know naming their satellite network "Skynet" is a really bad meme? And, are you really surprised that the US Space Force Flag looks a lot like the Federation of Planet's flag, from Star Trek? If you agree the human brain communicates with memes, why are we pushing so many mixed messages?

Squirrel.

Imagine you had a past trauma. Somebody mugged you. They beat you up, took your money, but they didn't kill you. You might come out of that thinking the world is unsafe. And you're right. The world is not safe. Some people have the trauma and then stay home. Did you know, staying at home because of anxiety increases anxiety? Avoidance always amplifies anxiety.

Here's a metaphor. To best access this, it would be nice if you have seen or know the premise of the movie "Speed," 1994, Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock. If you want to take time out and go YouTube the trailer, you can. Not like I am measuring how much you stick with me. ☺ From beginning to end, a movie is a Meme. If you know a meme, it only takes speaking the 'name' to activate the meme. You don't have to know anything else. You don't have to know how your computer works to access a browser- you click on the browser. You don't have to know about archetypes or neural mechanics or psychology works in your brain to benefit from concepts. At any time a person can speak a meme and activate or deactivate something inside you. It happens all the time, and not just with memes. Product placement is a scientifically established fact- retailers will put an item in your face and you are more likely to buy it, even though it's not on your list. Most people don't have a list, and they're always baffled that they bought more than they had intended to get. They just go to the store. Walk into any casino, and the first thing is you discover is-darkness. Eyes widen to acclimate- and your brain just got hijacked. There are lights. And sparkling things. And the sounds of people winning. And you just lost.

"Speed." If you don't know it and didn't look it up, here's the basic take away. You're on a bus. There's a bomb on the bus. If the bus slows below 55mph, the bomb blows up killing everyone on the bus. Also, if anyone gets off the bus, the bomb blows up. Keanu Reeves is the bomb expert, and a hostage negotiator. Sandra Bullock is a passenger that ends up driving the bus because the bus driver got shot. If you have anxiety due to past trauma, this metaphor is for you. You don't have to have trauma. If you have anxiety, you can use this meme as a model for understanding why nothing you have done so far has worked for you.

You are a passenger on the bus. You are not Sandra Bullock. You're not in control of the bus. You're not Keanu Reeves. You're not the hero who will rescue everyone and kiss Sandra when it's all said and done. Not only are you a passenger on the bus, you have the extra misfortune of being able to hear the bomb ticking. It's annoying. You're going to die. That statement is always true, you are going to die. No way around it, you're fucked.

You don't like the noise, so the first thing you do is put your finger in your ears and go 'la la la.' This works. You can block your ears and make enough noise to drown out something you don't want hear. You'd be surprise how many people want to shout over and interrupt someone who is speaking an uncomfortable truth. It doesn't even have to be the truth. People lie. Trying to talk over or shout out the lie usually results in the person lying to get louder- or the audience accepting the lie out of sympathy and embarrassment that oppositional people had a tantrum on the floor. Telling an angry person to calm down results in angry person becoming angrier. At any rate, the technique of blocking ears and making noise works- for a moment.

Real or imagined, if the brain perceives a threat and it doesn't believe it is being appropriately listened to, it will turn up the volume on the noise it wants you to hear. Let me say that again- the brain is an alarm clock and there is a limit to the snooze button being deployed. Ignoring the brain always results in increase in volume of noise. You are not your brain. Your brain is the sense organ that helps you navigate the world. It takes in real data, aligns it with past data, sorts stuff, and it gives you a portion of that data so that you can make informed decisions. You're on the bus. There is a bomb ticking. You blocked your ears. The brain says: "That's interesting. I know there is a bomb here. I need you to pay attention because this could kill us." It turns up the volume. You can now hear the bomb even though you have your ears plugged.

At this point, people turn to one of two remedies, drugs- prescription or otherwise, and or drama. Drama works quite well. People with anxiety will go looking for drama. Most don't have to look for drama, because it just magically finds them. The reason drama works at temporarily killing the noise is the brain can't multitask. It's either tracking the bomb, or tracking the drama. If you're about to get eaten by dinosaur, it doesn't matter what the bomb is doing. You deal with the dinosaur. If you survive, then you can sort the bomb.

Almost everyone who gets into drama resolves it. They go home, they throw themselves into their favorite chair and they say to themselves, "Yay! That's over. I am so done with drama. I am never going to get into that with them again." The brain hears this and says, "Yay. Good for you. Now, here's this bomb noise I need you to focus on." Person: "FUCK, why can't I have a moment's peace?!"

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