

Motivational Nonsense

Self help blogging from a Rebellious Nobody

By Ina Disguise

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A GOAL IS A DREAM WITH A DEADLINE

One thing since my family disaster in the form of both parents getting dementia has been the death of the personal deadline. I should be concerned about this, since I have traditionally been fond of work deadlines as a method of avoiding the rest of my life.

I am going to fly in the face of any motivator and tell you the truth – deadlines are no good for quality. I have got much further since I abandoned the deadline. I do things when I feel like it, for as long as I feel like it and the rest of my time is pretty much eaten up by 24/7 responsibility for my mother and her property.

The fact that I am trapped in the house by her illness and the lack of support has meant that I have no distractions in the form of looking after or enjoying myself, and so I feel I can afford the luxury of time. Some of the first batch were being thought about for over a year before they were actually completed, and I can honestly say this has made my work better.

The work went into the 3rd dimension only after a personal crisis brought about by an event outlined vaguely in Best Scandal Ever. Finding out that I cannot expect even the smallest amount of respect from a desk jockey agent when trying to help somebody basically caused me to decide that nothing mattered, and the removal of time and the restraint of ambition has meant I have all the time in the world to perfect this one thing that I can confidently say is unique to me.

So much for your standard motivational garbage then. A disaster of rejection has led to me finally doing what I probably should have done in the first place – ignore everyone and do whatever I feel, whenever I feel like doing it.

NEGATIVE FEELINGS ARE HELPFUL

TwistyHeadedMan is staying in my spare room at the moment, he is extremely helpful when I am lost in my creative funk, which both last year and this became oppressive in June/July. I guess I have a touch of seasonally affective disorder, since I seem to become unpleasantly obsessed with work during the summer, when I really should be out in the gardens.

Last night, I got him to take a look at my post on Wolfe. 'Grumpy but positive' I said, is that OK?

'That's how you always are.' he said. I really am turning into my father.

It is often very difficult to find a positive spin to put on an extended period of unadulterated misery, especially when it involved binning two years of hard work, but I have found over the years that it is sometimes wise to be floored by the punches rather than rolling with them. Were I to publish my classical academic work as Ina, I would at least get a few people to read it now, as opposed to sweating blood over an ignored epic under my own equally ridiculous name. World events since 2011 have proved that the academic book is not only necessary, but essential whether the object of my devotional work likes it or not. (see other posts)

I could look on it, rather angrily as four wasted years that could have been easily avoided, but it is no big deal. I am well used to being underestimated. Ten years ago I was involved in a corporate scandal. The company involved simply could not believe that one scruffy woman would have the audacity to call them out. Since then I have lived an extremely quiet life, but I learned a lot.

Back in the days of my feverish research into the raw food movement, I used to become irritated at the insistence on positivity circulated by the more popular speakers. Positivity is all very well if you do not require your brain to be engaged on critical pursuits, but it is as useful as a chocolate teapot when you need to be more strategic or analytic. It is almost used as a weapon – J P Sears has a rather good video on New Age spiritualism which concurs with this view. Please allow me to let you in on an apparent secret – no feelings are truly unnecessary:

1. Grief is fine, and if you ignore it it comes back and bites you in the ass. It lasts as long as you decide it needs to.

2. Jealousy is a mammalian construct, any owner of multiple dogs or cats will tell you it is not exclusive to humans and is inbuilt for survival. Whilst it is not much fun experiencing it, and I personally have chosen to reject it as useless, it is not unnatural to protect yourself from pain.
3. Sadness, often misdiagnosed as depression, is entirely natural. Depression needs to be clarified by definition as irrational sadness, often physical in nature, and can be alleviated first by dietary means, and then by simply giving yourself the time to pinpoint your repressed anger.
4. Anger is fine. It is much better to allow some flash fury than pretend to maintain your cool and become depressed later. And so on. My work as Ina depends on the ego, particularly the wounded ego. If I was to pretend that everything was fine, Ina would not exist and no work would get done at all. All feelings are fine, all feelings are productive. Nothing in your life should be wasted.

STICKING OUT FROM THE CROWD

Today's entry is on an entirely different subject, although I hope readers of the previous entries have given some thought to moving their money.

I had to do a lot of temporary contract work throughout university and afterwards, not only because I was older than everyone else, having had a previous career, but also because my pesky mother point blank refused to go to the doctor to deal with her heart problem and my father already had dementia by that point. I was a late baby.

I could not help noticing that every office that I worked in seemed to contain a den of bitches, male and female, who seemed to regard me as bit of an alien.

Being a loner, this did not upset me as much as it might, however I came to believe after a few different offices that there was something seriously wrong with me, which made me retreat into my shell somewhat after having worked extremely hard to scratch my way to the top of my previous male-dominated career.

Employment agencies presented a range of similar problems. The women who decided whether to put you forward for jobs were completely different animals from me, and could not seem to wrap their heads around the idea that someone who had run their own successful businesses had retrained.

This meant that the education that I had spent time and money on was pretty much meaningless in terms of gaining suitable employment from these people, and so I was scuppered on both counts. Nevertheless, I managed in my obsessive, compulsive way to keep myself in work by spending 7am to 11pm looking for jobs whether I needed them or not. This went on for about 6 years.

My last job was as a banking consultant, a job which paid unusually well but involved working 3pm to midnight, six days a week. Not satisfied with the idea that this was a result, I took on another two jobs, one as a government research interviewer, one as a corporate researcher. I viewed this, after the years of gypsy wandering, as the prudent way to go, so at one point I was making calls over breakfast, visiting people in their homes at lunchtime, feeding my father in the hospice, and then racing across the city to the bank to work until midnight.

Since I had always had quite a lot of control over my lot prior to gaining my additional education, it did not occur to me that there were rules associated with working in banks which had not been in place elsewhere. I had had a couple of problems with large companies previously, when I had taken it upon myself to suggest changes which would save the company money and waste. You are not supposed to do this. You are supposed to be so petrified of losing your job that you say nothing even as several hundred, or in one case thousands of pounds per hour are being squandered right in front of you. It was at one of these companies I was jokingly referred to as 'the economist who hates money.' I could explain why, but that would be another lengthy story. I would rather be referred to as 'the geek that hates waste,' to be honest.

Anyway, back to the bank. I was in a room alongside probably two hundred people, all earning a fairly vast amount of money, ranging from 1000 to 3000GBP per week and doing fairly basic clerical work. As the deadlines were quite tight, I can confirm that it was fairly hard work, however I have worked as hard for minimum wage, if not harder. The problem arose when one of the printers broke down, and the entire room was left to cope with a vast amount of paperwork and only one functional printer. As you can imagine, the queue for this printer became hot and very unpleasant extremely quickly, and so I took it upon myself to go to the project manager and request another printer.

A few minutes after I had done this, the well dressed and obviously well heeled team that I was working in expressed shock that I had done this. Hadn't I gone to the supervisor? I was not supposed to talk to the manager. I was also comparatively scruffy and regarded as something of an exotic flower in this team, since I did things other than banking for a living. They were impressively shocked.

I don't mean to sound quite such a grumpy old lady, but since I have been making this same point since I was quite young, it is not strictly an age issue.

What on earth has happened to the world? The 1950s working generation were the most economically successful generation in world history. Nobody is ever going to match the achievements in their lifetime. People like my parents had choices, of where to work and how to work, and got respect for what they did that would be scoffed at now, and yet we are less efficient than ever. We pretend that technology has made all things possible, and everything more efficient, and yet in productive terms, and in progressive terms, we have actually declined in efficiency.

The 'blame' and 'yes sir' culture is what caused the Bernie Madoff situation in banking. Guys in suits shaking hands with other guys in suits and not actually examining what they were doing. And why oh why has nobody joined the dots about the banking crisis which immediately followed? They talk about the problems with sub-prime lending but nobody dares mention that this happened at exactly the same time as the Madoff scandal. Far be it from me to point out that the bankers were following orders, and have been made scapegoats to the alleged crisis, but to me the real issue was the cultural issue, of stupid employing stupid and doing business with crooked.

If, like me, you stick out from the crowd. If, like me, you don't like waste and you don't believe that your level of oiliness should determine success above your level of actual talent, then do not be ashamed of it. You may never be rich in today's cultural climate, but perhaps you are made for better things.

INTROVERSION IMPROVES CONFIDENCE

Do you ever find yourself saying what you think people want to hear? Do you cringe at what you have said and wonder why you felt you had to say it? Are you the hardest worked life and soul of the party you know? Do you regard yourself as over-reactive and try to compensate with over-generosity or putting even more work into making people like you? Do you ever fall victim to 'running your mouth?' If you answer yes to any or all of these things you may be an extrovert introvert.

An extrovert-introvert is basically an introvert who chooses to appear as an extrovert. This may be for a variety of reasons. Work was mine. Head chefs in particular, may think that they are necessarily loud, big personalities who dominate the space they are in because it is expedient for the purposes of getting the job done under pressure. eg. Gordon Ramsay, Marco Pierre White etc. Some of the best chefs I have met, however, were actually shy, quiet people who worked to greater technical specification and gained more respect from the art itself. eg. Anton Mossiman, Andrew Fairlie.

I remember when I was very young, saying that I could not cope with any more crowds as I was getting tired from having to be six or seven people. Quite apart from the callow and impressionable youth, I was expressing my introversion. Living in a very large house, I had always had the luxury of several hours a day with no-one bothering me, which I would spend reading or making things, since music was frowned upon, but that is another story.

If you frequently find yourself beating yourself up over stuff you have said or done, it may be time to admit to yourself that you actually prefer your own company and spending some time ALONE. It is almost certainly better for your health than constantly tripping over an overactive tongue, and may save you future problems with your existing relationships. I certainly found that after I became a recluse, the people who wanted to see me badly enough to seek me out, were doing so to get some sort of guidance that I had no idea I was providing. You are nearly always stronger/brighter/quicker than you think.

After ten years away from my old friends when travelling, I was astonished to find that the vast majority of them had done nothing apart from seek validation

from each other since I had left. This seemed to me to be very sad. Now, as an unashamed introvert, having distanced myself even from them, I achieve a lot more and am better rested and considerably more confident than I ever was as a bad tempered, brusque chef who was always in charge.

It is wise to conduct a cost benefit analysis, and figure out if you can squeeze yourself some time alone. Make it a priority and find out who you really are. I can tell you that almost all of the time, you are better off without the advice of even the most well-meaning friend, and you are certainly better off without the warped role playing advice of your family.

WIDELY SPREAD LIES

Anyone can be anything they want – no, they cannot. Life is a series of trade-offs, for a variety of reasons associated with their mental capacity, commitments outside work including geography, family and social. People select the best available option, they do not get to choose from a wide variety of options in many cases.

Avoid negative people to get further in life – unless you choose to be alone most of the time, this is not really possible. Negative people can be helpful in unexpected ways. Where would Eeyore be if Winnie the Pooh, piglet and Robin acted like that?

You cannot avoid your family – yes you can. My mother's children certainly aren't people I would choose to associate with. They are greedy, irresponsible, dishonest nasty people and I refuse to parent people who are quite a bit older than I am.

Your destiny is your responsibility – this goes with anyone can be anything they want. It is a lie. See previous answer.

Friends are important – no, they are a nice-to-have. They are expensive, time consuming and assume undue influence on your life.

Love conquers all – no it does not.

To give is better than to receive – again not true. As someone who has spent most of her life being told that it is somehow unacceptable to give away my work for a variety of reasons by a variety of unworthy people, I can tell you that giving is often used as a reason for making you feel bad.

It is selfish or negative not to capitulate to a majority in a social situation – nope. I had to again put my foot down today as I was being railroaded. Even working from a chair in your own home involves standing up for yourself, apparently.

Karma – this does not exist. Bad people will probably not ‘get what’s coming to them,’ and as I have hopefully begun to demonstrate, bad people are not necessarily bad if they are simply not doing what you want them to do.

Famous people are special, separate from the rest of the population, more attractive and more pleasant than the rest of the world – no, definitely not.

Celebrity ain’t what it used to be, and there does not appear to be a school for gracious stars to tell them how to handle themselves.

Superficially, we seem to be creating a heavily Americanized culture of what I would term obese superficiality, in which we tell each other the same lies every day. Not everyone is going to reach their star, and it is just as well because if they did, it would not be worth reaching. Talent takes work, for most people, and there is a world of difference between someone creating a persona and someone actually having the quality they would like you to believe that they have.

So, what to do when you discover that no part of your life is going to be even slightly pleasant? Change direction. Sometimes the direction will be unclear, sometimes the goal will be blurry, not everything will work out. All you can do is try. I once made the point to a group of students that the emphasis on lending money to small businesses was somewhat spurious, and led to thousands of people a year losing their future prospects to failed ideas. If you reconsider your ideas, generally there is a cheaper way of starting out on almost any project. To demonstrate my point, I started a business with ten pounds, and by the end of four weeks had made eleven hundred.

Flexibility and determination is a lot more important than capital investment. Not believing the bullshit you are fed is more important than blindly believing anything in the hope of gain. Never assume that anything is as it appears, and you will not only become a more critical thinker, but a happier person and then, and only then, we can all get along much better and not sit posting the lies of the powerless rather than actually getting a life.

KINDNESS IS A SIN

Businesses do not exist to take care of people, they exist to extract money and provide something that the customer wants. The businesses that tell you that they are taking care of you are often the worst of the lot. Take the cuddly advertisements for chemical companies, which often use childlike graphics to persuade you that they are doing something good for you, your family and your immediate environment whilst doing the exact opposite.

Until this point in global history, governments have been, with the exception of very unusual circumstances, bigger and in possession of better credit than businesses, and people have trusted them to take care of their welfare. TTIP and TIPP seek to reverse that. I foresee several developing nations collapsing entirely, jobs going to the ASEAN nations whilst America and Europe become rather backward regions where most of the population exist at the mercy of the very few. This will be enhanced by modifying education and the media to enable people to genuinely believe that money means merit. A scanty look at the people you know will tell you that the smart ones are not the same as the rich ones. It is a matter of priorities as well as your ability to look convincing when you say yes to anything said to you.

As I have mentioned in several previous articles, it is in your hands. You as the consumer, could reverse this progress tomorrow if you stopped feeding the companies large enough to control governments. You probably won't do it.

Why? Because you have a busy life, scraping your living from your employer, who requires you to say yes in order to pay for the roof over your head etc etc.

This makes, for example, going to the supermarket more convenient, which in itself precludes you from starting a grocer's, deli, goods store etc because everyone else is, like you, going to the supermarket to hand over their money to the same people. It is as much a question of convenience as it is belief.

It is not complicated to think that if you do enrich smaller businesses, it puts them in a position where the barriers to entry to compete with larger businesses in a hugely monopolistic situation are more manageable. I would like to know what happened to Anti-trust laws, now only non-cronies appear to be prosecuted for creating situations in which small versions of large supermarkets, for example, put successful corner shops out of business. Another example was Remax, who had the employees pay for over-expansion to reduce their competition. We all live in an inherently corrupt society, where we are told that

we have no power because we have little money and we sit back and believe it whilst sustaining a system that cannot work well for us.

In the event that you have a problem, the simple answer is to pick up your wallet and go elsewhere. That is the nature of capitalism. There is now no other way of rebelling against a system that does not suit us, because we allowed businesses to become bigger than government, and the trade agreements that America is conning our middle management politicians into signing will nail this to the wall. Never trust a corporatist. America is a corporatist country. Mussolini had very interesting things to say about corporatism, feel free to look it up yourself.

In contrast, I wake up with a list of things I would like to do to help people every morning. Many of those things make no sense to anyone but me. I do not think that it is odd to do this, it would take more effort not to. I explained this to many of my friends before I removed them from my life. Why did I remove them? I was told that this was a crazy way to live, that you should always consider yourself first. When it comes to parting with my money I understand this, but not when it comes to giving people what they actually want.

What everyone, no matter how scatty, longs for is a sense of becoming what they dream of being. There is no shame in asking for what you want, however oddly this is presented. There is shame in rejecting what you want when it is offered to you.

My personal system of responsibility is entirely different from someone who has other wishes, for their children's future, or a new car, or their parents to be neatly tidied away rather than free to make a mess, keep them awake and generally tell them they are awful. My responsibility is to the soul. I think there should be more people like me, and less corporations who exist to take your money, your future opportunities and those of your children for their own growth, in order to dictate the future of a declining planet. I am goddess of my own personal religion. I do not ask anyone to join it, but I do care to point out that my crazy, kind little niche is a lot more pleasant than the current future of the Western world. I do not play by the rules, because the rules are wrong in the first place. Dreams are real. Reality is transient. I plan to remain defiantly kind, even if it means my inability to tug my forelock or respect the cash means that I will be financially poor.

WHY AREN'T YOU HAPPY?

Getting the work out in time for the Supermoon was very tiring, however I stayed awake for 44 out of 48 hours to do it, because although I am not at all superstitious or into astrology, the theory with a lunar event is that it causes change. Very possibly this change is entirely in your imagination, but what the hell, let's have some of that. The icon is also based on the idea of switching polarity, and so far, it seems to be working, because I am losing my fear of self-exposure to my pre-determined and rather limited extent. (I do not intend to embarrass Wolfe by becoming a public figure) I did crawl back under my stone with some relief, however, after a couple of chaotic days ensuring that there were new items to put out in the next couple of issues of Tatler.

Many years ago I retrieved a copy of 'I'm OK, you're OK' from the box room and I have to say, I found it one of the most helpful self-help titles that I have ever read. Transactional analysis, carried to its logical extent even when dealing with your own emotions, is extremely helpful. In recent years, however, I have noticed a flaw in the motivation market, stemming quite possibly from a misunderstanding of how the 'I'm OK' part really works.

You are supposed to self-examine before you decide that you are OK. It is not sufficient to simply decide that your wish to make a billion bucks/get promoted/marry at least four times/stop speaking to people you don't like is OK.

If you aren't happy in the first place, no amount of weight loss, money, women/men, moving on from unfinished business is going to help. Happiness is very much a decision that you make. The difference in Eastern philosophy and Western is said to stem from this decision – Western philosophy, and in fact economics, stems from the premise that you spend your life seeking happiness, where Eastern stems from the premise that you are born with happiness, and your duty is to preserve and protect that happiness.

From an economic perspective, you can see why Western economies have performed better, and you can also see why you just aren't happy. Happiness does not keep you shopping to make yourself feel better or replace all those belongings that you lost when moving on from that unfortunate person you got tired of. Many of the thoughtless masses suffer from this inbuilt sense of something missing, since they have been educated, particularly in recent years, to purchase rather than create things that make them happy.

Persuading us that we are unhappy with our appearance means that we spend money on clothing, surgery, makeup, diets etc. Persuading us that we are unhappy with our partner can mean that we spend money on cars, houses, meeting a new partner, socialising, and changing our appearance. Can you see how this works? Happiness is bad for the economy. Introspection is, therefore, also bad for the economy, because we cannot have people self examining to the point where their happiness means that all those lovely purchases, and all these charming new people become meaningless.

My grandmother apparently used to joke that 'man must strive,' an open ended but meaningful statement which covered everything from seeking work to nagging. What we should really strive for is the sense of inner contentment that we lack through the constant bombardment of reasons why our adequacy could be improved by the next new person/object/bit of gossip rather than the development of our inner self or skillset.

In my case, the very thing I was so ashamed of, having romantic feelings, is now the thing that defines me and in a huge respect develops me as a person, despite there being no positive outcome to look forward to. Paradoxically, the thing that should make me unhappy, is now the thing I will be most known for, in my anonymous way, and despite the constant driving sense of stress, the current path leads to a better developed outcome. This idea makes me happy. When I compare it to the happiness of your average, thoughtless, high earning couple, destined to divorce when he spots a younger model, or she spots a sugar daddy, I wonder to myself whether I am not far luckier than they are, despite my limited, lonely and despondent life.

Why aren't you happy?

PASSIVE AGGRESSION AND SELF ESTEEM

A few years back, my boss at the time told me that I was a very unusual woman, because what I wanted was always absolutely clear to him. He had difficulties with his comparatively feminine wife, because she would flirt around the topic and he would be expected to guess. I replied that as a former head chef, who had worked my way up in the industry when women were a tiny minority, and as someone who has habitually avoided other women in the course of my life because of my family, I had something of an advantage in that respect.

Women are guilty of expecting themselves and each other to compromise, which is why they tend not to have been as good at perfectionist roles in the past.

Relationships that I have had with women have always involved a lot of social jostling, which I have never had to worry about with my male friendships.

Where men will talk about sport and how attractive women are (regardless of their own attractiveness) women use minute social interactions to tell each other who is boss, often playing dirty over very small things to get the edge. If this is the type of power that they seek, they can take weeks or months to batter you with information that you did not want, faux flattery included.

Ironically my sick friend, male, is the most feminine dude I have ever come across, with a side order of passive aggression. He is blissfully unaware of this, because when he is not spiralling off course, he is a helpful person and reasonably good company. The problems seem to arise on a time basis, not really associating with anything that is actually going on. I have learned over the years to escape this part of the relationship by opting out until it goes away. To give you an example of this – one time I admired a large well dressed lady we had spotted, he assured me that I was tiny in comparison, and later on the same week when I was unusually well dressed in a public place suggested that I was far bigger. This is very minor stuff, but when you rarely see anyone, it really affects you. Currently he has decided to use my home as a stick to beat me with, which means I do not feel like inviting him back. Since I never get to go anywhere, I do not feel like having my home (and impending loss of fertility) assaulted so that he can get his jollies, whatever they are.

Passive aggression takes many forms, and can be very subtle. I, being of a rather exuberant nature, do not really have time for it anymore, having fallen victim to

it in the past. The gradual wearing down of your confidence and general self-esteem is even harder to take than your siblings getting in your face and assuring you that you are worthless even as you out earn and out work them. I used to be very laid back, but since this has led to, in some cases, years of misery and doubt about doing anything at all, I am now more careful about extricating myself at the first few signs of trouble. I also avoid messages if I think they are likely to rock my little boat. I can only imagine how upset I would be if I got a 'Who are you?' from Wolfe, rather than his taking the time to actually do some background research.

By far the biggest problem with passive aggression is that the perpetrator rarely has anything to replace your perfectly adequate judgement with. They just want to be on top, with no actual content whatsoever. It would not be so bad if they had fun, complex and intelligent contributions to make to your life, but in my experience, they never do. They are inevitably far more lost than you are, which is why they sought their little bit of power in the first place.

I suppose that this ties in with all those memes suggesting that you should rid yourself of negativity. With my creative hat on, this is no use to me. I like constructive discussion, if there is a useful idea, I want to hear it. If something isn't working, even if I am rather annoyed at wasting a month, I need to put it away and think about how to improve it. By all means, get rid of the passive aggressive behaviour, get rid of the abusive people, get rid of the jealous and unusually moronic. Keep the ones that are just a bit down, however, because they tend to be quite useful, and they probably need you.

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