



Captain Mark's Way

True Caribbean Stories & Reflections of a Sailing Captain

Everyone Has Their Own Way, This is Captain Mark's



Street sign from Captain Mark's Eco property at Syndicate Falls, Dominica



By Captain Mark Denebeim

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Captain Mark's One Page Wonders

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"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Ride!"
— Hunter S. Thompson

Captain Mark's "One Page Wonders"

Interspersed among the chapters of this book are some of Captain Mark's unconventional but straightforward philosophies for you, dear reader, to ponder, contemplate and "wonder" about. One of Captain Mark's favorite books is **Dune**, by Frank Herbert, a science fiction trilogy written in the 1960's, featuring short philosophical quotes pertaining to the chapter that followed.

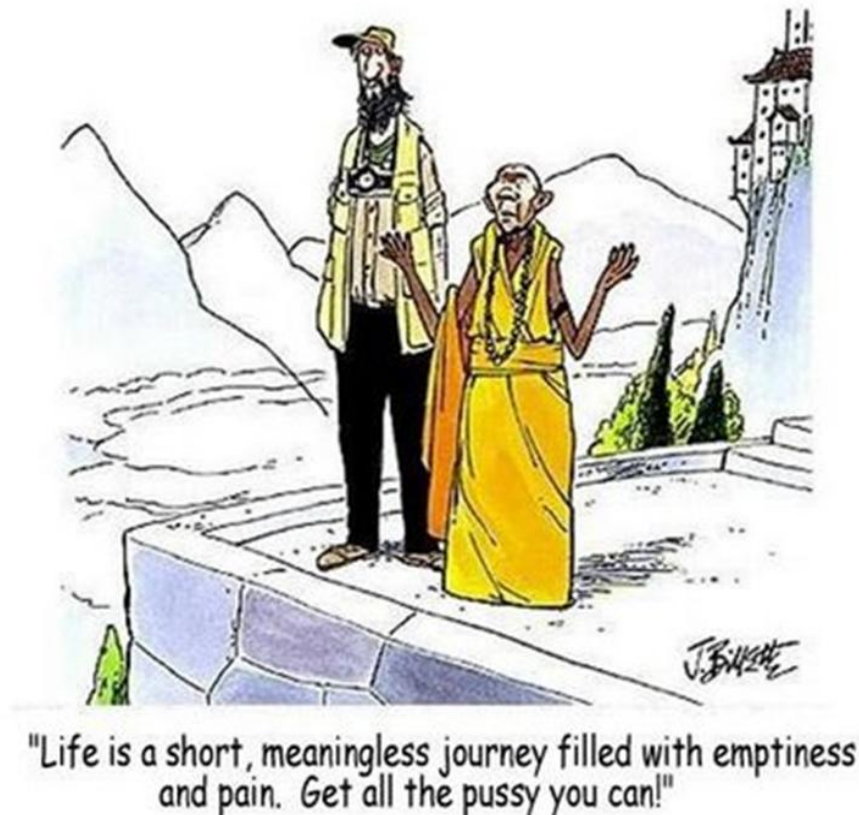
One such example: **"Fear is the mind killer"** precedes the chapter involving young Paul Atreides' lessons of hand to hand combat as taught by the android Duncan Idaho. In other words, once you let fear enter your thoughts, you have lost the battle. I recall this quote often, especially when sailing solo offshore where maintaining composure and focus is vitally important to getting things done efficiently and safely...if I was to let fear enter the picture, it would only make the task more difficult and perhaps more dangerous.

While I don't have enough **"One Page Wonders"**, as I like to call them, to precede every chapter, I have developed some thought provoking quotes and insights that may help you perceive life differently from your usual vantage point. Guests on my Caribbean charters often ask, "What would you like me to leave here with aside from the great sailing, fun beach bars and shopping?" My standard answer to everyone is: ***"That you leave here willing to open your mind to the infinite perceptions of your life that your brain is capable of creating."*** In other words, that you let your wonderful active brain perceive your current life from a multitude of vantage points. Why not look at your life from many different perspectives, why limit yourself to the same routine day in and day out? All you are doing is cheating yourself if you don't examine different evaluations of your current patterns, and a brain is a terrible thing to waste!

There is actual scientific evidence that this approach is beneficial to a longer more fulfilling life. Just like exercise for your physical condition extends and improves the quality of your life, so does utilizing your brain in various alternative ways help keep that muscle from atrophying. A brain surgeon of 25 years experience once told me that your brain actually grows and retains a healthier glow when you think outside the box and mentally explore ideas different from your usual thought patterns. He explained that by retaining the same thoughts and routines is akin to drawing a figure 8 in the sand with your finger, over and over. You feel like you are getting somewhere, but are actually in a constrained and predictable pattern. And to make matters worse, you are digging a rut in the sand; the more you draw the 8, the deeper you are making a hole that will be difficult to work your way out of.

When you allow your thoughts to deviate from the norm, you might realize that you have a great life, not a boring mundane routine one that you have been considering a change...or conversely, you might see your life as going in circles (or 8's) with limited pleasure and that it's time for something different. But you will never know unless you turn your brain loose and see what spills out. Many people do not even realize the type of lifestyle available to them in the Caribbean; **full of simplicity, beauty and grace**. That awareness alone could open the door to the limitless vantage points available for you to observe your regular life, which could then change it for eternity. So go for it!

For your **FREE** online booklet of Captain Mark's **One Page Wonders**, click [here](#) if this is an eBook, or visit www.oceanbreezetours.com/onepagewonders/ and download it there.



One Page Wonder One: Life is a Book, and YOU are the Author

I like to read books, and now I have written one. (See the list of my favorite books in Appendix F.) If you look at your life as if it's a book, and you are the author, you should be able to create a masterpiece. As you turn each page, your life unfolds before you, and as the author, the story is totally up to you. So why not make it an interesting fascinating book filled with diverse and powerful chapters? No one else is writing your book of life, (unless you let someone else and then, by definition, you are still the author), so grasp the bull by the horns and make it a good read. This is your legacy; it is your life as you design and live it.

The beautiful part of writing a book is that there are chapters, so if you don't like the chapter you are living, turn the page and start a new one. What are you afraid of? It's your life, make it happen! No excuses, no drama, no problems. If you let others influence your decisions in ways you are not happy with, then you have given up way too much control of the book, and your life, and you have no one to blame but yourself. The result will most likely be a confused, boring and directionless story that no one wants to read, especially you.

Not sure what to write about, live for, focus on, or share? Well, I wasn't either, but people often suggested I write down some of my philosophies, and others thought my Caribbean stories were worthy of memorializing, thus I came up with the idea for this combination book...my philosophies are too short to fill an entire book, and my stories are too many. So think about your past, whether it happened to you or a friend, as it may be worth jotting down. As my friend and fellow author ("The Hurricane Book") Captain D. Randy West often emphatically declares: "Write it down!"

To make your experience even more personal and meaningful, don't tell anyone you are doing it. You don't have to write a book, you can take up painting or learn pole dancing...but do it for yourself without any interference or commentary from your friends and family. There will come a time when you are ready to share, but for now, do it for yourself, by yourself. Write the chapter, turn the page!

One Page Wonder Two: Selfish is Equal to Truth

Everything you do in life is to achieve maximum self pleasure and therefore you are a selfish person...so admit it and move on. **Selfish is just about the only word that is pure truth!** To deny that every act you choose is for your personal pleasure above all else is a bald faced (where is that phrase from?) lie. It is all about yourself, in everything you do. Think about it; when you help an old lady across the street it makes you feel good, right? Sure, it is a generous caring act of kindness, but it's that very act that has brought you pleasure first and foremost...otherwise you wouldn't have done it. Self is where all thought and action begins and to deny it is to deny our essence as human beings.

John Stuart Mill, an English philosopher of the mid 1800's, eloquently described this concept in a 30 page dictum called "Utilitarianism." The primary premise is that all you do in life is designed to achieve maximum pleasure or to avoid pain, (which by definition, is to achieve pleasure.) Carry it one step further and you could say that pain is a form of pleasure, though at the lowest level of the pleasure scale. Before him, another philosopher, Robert Benham, extolled a similar version of this virtue as well. Thus, this is not a new thought process, but it is a correct one.

None of us--me, John and Robert--are saying that you should be selfish at the expense of another person or living being, but what we are saying is that all other actions are mere layers of social niceties to cover up the real emphasis and intention of the fact that all acts are self serving first and foremost.

Change your preconceived definition of the word "selfish"; it is not an evil word, it is pure truth!

So once this is accepted, just move on! There is nothing more to the story; you will find your life to be full of truth and honesty once you accept this premise. By embracing this in all you do, you will find that you are experiencing more pleasure than ever before because every act is about you and that is a good and truthful thing. It's not a complicated thought process, it's just the way it is, so accept it, relish in it, enjoy it, maximize it and carry it with you as you create life's experiences.

One rebuttal to this premise that I often encounter is that of children. Many people respond that because I am not a father, (that I know of,) there is no way I can understand how the definition of "selfish" changes when you have children. What do I say to that? **Bullshit!!!!** Having a child is THE most selfish act known to mankind. Creating a person in your own image is certainly selfish and everything you do for that child and everything that child achieves in life is bringing you pleasure, right? So how is that not selfish? My brother once told me that you have never felt pain or pleasure until watching your child experience them, and that my friends, is about as selfish as you can get! (Which is not a bad thing, it's just Truth.)

One Page Wonder Three: Get Over It!

People often suggest that I write down some of my philosophies because they are clear, concise and might help free some of the “binds that restrict them”. Thus, this book was created in part to provide a forum in which to share some of my thoughts. One reason I combined my Caribbean Memoirs with my One Page Wonders is because the most important advice I can give would only fill a book with but three pages, with one word per page, and those words are: **“GET OVER IT”**

When you are bogged down by the drama unfolding from an event or pattern in your life, that drama is created by YOU, no one else. People might do something, say something, make something, etc., but it is your REACTION to that act that is the drama you must deal with. Just because your boyfriend says you look fat in that outfit, the resulting drama is not on him, **it’s on how you react to his comment**. You could just as easily consider his comments and rationally digest the information and make a wardrobe change, or you can create some unnecessary drama by accusing him of insensitivity and throwing a hissy fit. Why choose the path of confrontation and aggression; why not Get Over It and move on!?

Another example: When your pet dies, it is a sensitive and emotionally draining experience, of that there is no doubt. But you know you will get over it one day. That day will be up to you, when you are ready and when you have arrived at that place where you can perceive this event in a positive healthy manner...so why not acknowledge this and Get Over It sooner rather than later? I know this is easier said than done but the point is that once you embrace the thought process, then the healing process will come easier, clearer, and with deeper conviction, instead of with potential irrational and reactionary outbursts and drama. It’s all about the process, your ability to recognize and control it, as opposed to letting the event control you.

If you let situations build the drama instead of you controlling the thought process, then you will spiral downward into an abyss of unpleasant confusion and waste a lot of time...is that what you want? Of course not, so just tell yourself three words: **GET OVER IT!**

“Save yo Drama for yo Mama!”

One Page Wonder Four: The Church of Three Words

I am not a religious man; I believe that to keep an open mind and to let my brain run wild with the various possible answers to the great questions of mankind and the universe is to do myself the most good. In other words, why settle on an uncertain and unprovable answer when it's not irrational and is certainly more honest, to just say: "I don't know!"

So I came up with this response when asked my religious position:

"I belong to the Church of Three Words:

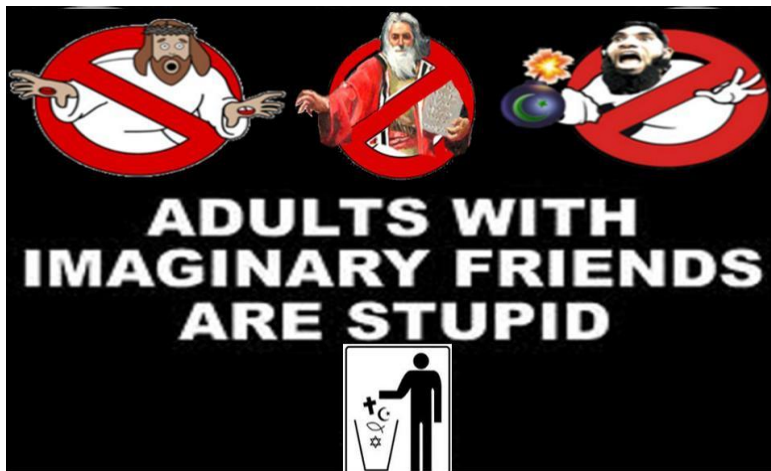
I don't know

I don't care

Leave me alone

Go the fuckaway!"

I just don't get why the vast majority of the world finds it necessary to insist that an imaginary deity exists and then to debate whether their religion is the right one, or to what end their way of life must be forced upon others. If you are so content in your beliefs, then good for you! But why must you be so intolerant and stubborn when presented with other theories and lifestyles? Why won't you even consider other explanations? Why can't you respect the potential validity of other theories and enjoy the brain buzz they create? Sorry, I guess I just haven't been saved.



Replace the religious place in your life with infinite possibilities!

All religions are based on belief, not fact, and that makes all the fighting and bigotry even more repulsive to me. As far as I am concerned, there is an equal amount of logic to the premise that one god created all of this as there is that 12 gods created it all as there is that science can explain it all and that science fiction has some pretty rational ideas as well. To me, that is what is so fascinating about the questions of "Why are we here? How did we get here? To what purpose are we here? Is there a god, and if so,

how did IT get created?" (You can't say that a god has "always" been here otherwise you unequivocally reject the concept of time; which perhaps could stand some review...)

Why limit my brain to accepting just one theory and then devoting my whole life to its rules and traditions when there are so many other interesting, plausible and fascinating thought processes available to consider and expand? Aren't there other things I can devote my life to? Like the fascinating pursuit of happiness when crafting the inestimable journey along the way to death?

Again, why cheat my very own brain?

What's wrong with just saying "I don't know?" And why devote so much time and effort to just one concept? There is only so much time in a day, and I choose to think about tangible, helpful and fun topics, not whether there is a heaven or a hell and what will it take for me to get to one and avoid the other...come on, man! When we drilled into the core of the earth and sent a man into "the heavens," that argument should have ended right then.

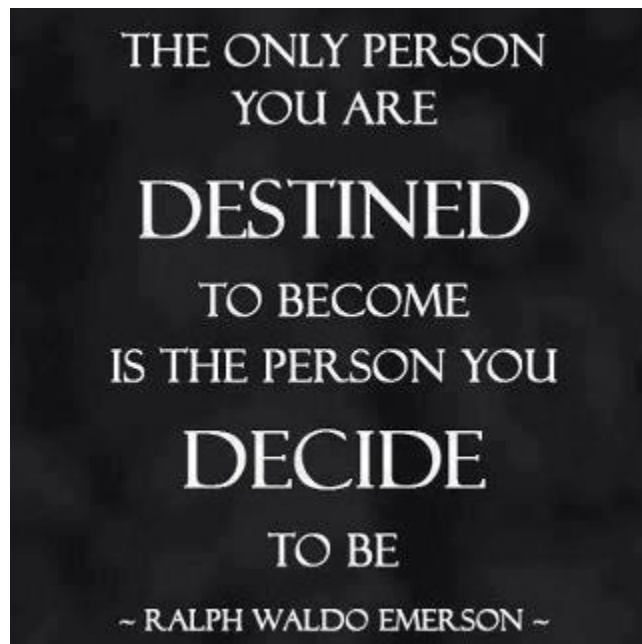
I recently spoke to a Caribbean gentleman who explained to me that the one reason he believes in God is so that he has something to live for. I asked him why he couldn't live to either laugh as much as possible, or for his children, his community or for the infinite number of pleasures life has to offer? His answer was that life is not pleasurable; it is filled with pain and disappointment. You know what I told him, of course...Get Over It! (and try to look at your life from different vantage points.)

Perhaps the cartoon at the beginning of this book has some merit after all.

One Page Wonder Five: You are the Most Omnipotent Force in the Universe!

There is an equal amount of logic in that you are the one who decides if there is a god, or whether god gave you the power to make that decision. It's all about choice. Do you choose you as being the higher power, or do you choose god as being the power which you serve? Either way, it comes down to your personal perception of a belief, not a fact, and therefore, it is YOU that is the higher of all powers since you are the one making this choice and weighing the variables. It really is simple logic, and therefore, it eliminates the gray areas of belief since you now know it's YOU making the ultimate decision. Since it's all on You, therefore, You are the most omnipotent force in your universe!

And since by definition, and concomitant acceptance of such, it becomes an irrefutable premise; so you must honor and love yourself above all else. It is you who is writing the book, you who is making the choices, you who is "getting over it;" so accept that your world is a selfish world, a true world, and celebrate this wonderful freedom. You are the one in charge, so don't waste time in self imposed drama and the perception that you must serve, honor, or follow something or someone in order to achieve Nirvana.



One Page Wonder Six: Belief is the Most Ambiguous Word in the Dictionary

Religion, Politics and Relationships should not be discussed in polite company...Why? Because they are all based on belief, not fact. Yet, most of the world's most contentious problems are as a result of people pushing their beliefs upon others. My father used to say that the most dangerous word in the dictionary is the word "ought"-- It's when you tell someone that they "ought" to do or believe in something that you create antagonism and division.

Think about this: entire nations, entire cultures are ready to go to war over their beliefs, when a belief can change in a moment's time. That is what belief is all about; it's a thought process, not a factual set of circumstances. It's ok to change your belief at any time, since it is a personal thought not a historic fact or situation. Yet, this tenuous, ambiguous and fragile concept is causing so much strife and turmoil throughout the world. Why? Because no one wants to take personal responsibility and admit or accept that there might be other rational acceptable viewpoints, that they are just viewpoints or that it's ok to not have yet formulated a viewpoint by admitting; "I don't know!"

When you were growing up, didn't your Mother always say "you must have something to believe in"? Well, yes as a matter of fact: you must believe in yourself. Because it is yourself that makes the decisions, the choices that may or may not guide your life. To give up this wonderful power to some preconceived notion or rigid belief which cannot be proved or has no way of substantiation is to cheat one's self of the most personal power you possess... the right to change your beliefs, base your approach on knowledge not hearsay, and follow your own path. And to think it was your very own Mother that taught you to abandon yourself before you had a chance to know yourself. Shame on you Mothers out there!

I would like to think that there are a lot of people that would like to question and reevaluate their "belief" systems but they are afraid that if they find out that they have been living a lie their entire life, they would become depressed and unhappy-- what is known as "cognitive dissonance". People don't want to even consider much less admit that perhaps they have been living a lie their whole lives. Who wants to throw away an important part of their upbringing and admit to have wasted so much time and energy on concepts and beliefs that don't hold water, are ancient in thought and circumstance, or don't really work for them? I think this is a huge reason why you don't find people abandoning their traditional beliefs; they just don't want to put themselves through all of that thought process all over again.

If I hear one more person say "I believe this way because that is how I was brought up..." This is the easy way out, an excuse to limit free thought, and the primary reason that many people cannot move forward--evolve--or relate to other ways of thought. This phrase is holding back entire cultures and nations...witness the hatred in the Middle East or the racism of the southern U.S. Why people CHOOSE to restrict their opportunities to learn and rationalize other thought processes is the greatest mystery of them all.

**Sometimes people hold a
core belief that is very strong.
When they are presented with evidence
that works against that belief,
the new evidence cannot be accepted.
It would create a feeling that is extremely
uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance.
And because it is so important to protect
the core belief, they will rationalize,
ignore and even deny anything
that doesn't fit in with the core belief.**

Frantz Fanon

"Cognitive Dissonance is holding back entire cultures"

One Page Wonder Seven: Life is like a Loaf of Bread

I look at life like a loaf of bread; each slice is one year, and we all have about 80 slices—give or take-- to work with. So when I decided to break away from the regular pattern of American life and sail the Caribbean for a couple of years, it was like making a sandwich, filled with the best memories I could pile inside the two slices. I call it my **Caribbean Sandwich!** I can always push the loaf back together again and resume the normal lifestyle available to any hard working American puppet...but I will always have my sandwich.

Can you do something like this too? Of course you can. Go on a Walkabout, or a Sailabout, to a radically different part of the world, or try something you have always dreamed or wondered about. You won't miss TV, I promise. When I returned after my two year Sailabout, it was the same crap in the news and reality shows had maintained their popularity...I didn't miss a thing.

Many people take their kids on Walkabouts, home school them, and make it work for everyone concerned. Have some confidence in your kids and your ability to teach them. They don't need to assimilate "normally" into society every year of their lives; they will be just fine being away for awhile. Many parents think that their child is lost without them, when all they are doing is perpetuating this myth and transferring this doubt to the children; a self full filling prophecy. Your kids can handle themselves; you must empower them and let them make their own path(s)...and mistakes.

I once had a charter guest who had an anxiety attack while snorkeling and rushed back to the boat to put on a life preserver. When I asked why, he said "I had this fear that if something happened to me, my wife and kids would be lost forever." Perhaps he needed a few more days of relaxation and calm on the boat to overcome this erroneous and unnecessary perception...

Is your job keeping you stuck in a rut? Well spend some time researching alternatives instead of watching the game on Sunday afternoon. Take your life more seriously, you only have one shot at it, so don't cheat yourself of the infinite possibilities. It's your loaf of bread, make some sandwiches!

One Page Wonder Eight: Life is NOT Short!

"Life is NOT short, it is extremely fucking long!"—Captain Mark

While I certainly understand the dramatic and apparent reasoning behind the phrase: "Life is Short"-- it is really not true. Life is a long journey outlasting what your own memory can recollect during its tenure. You will live longer than your capacity to remember the vast majority of what occurred during your life. And if it's true that memories are all that you take with you when you die, then how can life be considered short?

Living for today is all good and romantic but it doesn't allow for reflection, analysis and appreciation to set in. Sure, you could get hit by a truck or have a brain aneurism at any moment, so try to pack as much into your "short" life as possible...but the quality and substance of your experiences are minimized and not fully enjoyed if you hurry on to the next act, or thought, too soon. If you follow my suggestion here, you are more likely to retain that particular memory after many years and many other memories have faded away.

Why not stretch out the really good experiences as long as possible? When I make love, I am usually not in a hurry because once I stop, there is nothing I would rather be doing....so why reach climax before I have too? Anything that follows is anticlimactic and pales in comparison, wouldn't you agree? Then make it last all day and all night. If life is short, you would be tempted to get it over with and move on to the next experience... but what else could possibly give you, and your partner, as much pleasure?

So it is with anything you do, or think about, while in the midst of a long life. I really enjoy anchoring in Baie St. Jean on St. Barths; it's great for one night, but it's that much better for a week. That doesn't mean I don't enjoy other anchorages and bays, but they can wait while I spend some "quality" time parked in front of Nikki Beach. Here I am inspired; to write, to swim, to meet new people, to work on the boat, etc. Why move on prematurely? See my article in Appendix C; "Heaven on Earth?" to understand further where I'm coming from.

Besides, if your life does end suddenly, you will never know what you missed-- you will be dead. So why not focus on quality experiences along the way by maximizing each event and then reflecting upon and sharing the best of those times with those you love and respect? Hell, write a book...I did!

One Page Wonder Nine: Cruise Ships Tell the Story

When someone recommends anything to you, anything from a restaurant to a book to a clothing store, temper your level of enthusiasm based on how they answer the following question:

“What do you think of cruise ships?”

If they like them, then consider their level of taste and idea of fun by this response; and vice versa! It's the one question that saves you time and eliminates any doubt as to what to expect from their recommendation.

Personally, I have no use for cruise ships; except to jump off of them as quickly and as high up as possible! Being trapped on a monolithic craft crammed with people, noise and constant activity is not my idea of an adventure or even a good time. Sure, the 3 day Playboy cruise out of Los Angeles, or the rock n roll journeys out of Miami sound like fun, but I am referring to the concept of having everything in excess surrounded by thousands of loud, obnoxious, all you can eat people is the antithesis of what I consider to be a memorable or enjoyable vacation.

Send me down the Grand Canyon in a raft or take me up the mountain in a helicopter to carve some snowboards tracks in virgin powder or put me on a catamaran free to sail anywhere in the Caribbean and you can count me in!

One Page Wonder Ten: Be Addicted to the High

If you have to be addicted to something, be addicted to the high, not the act, item or the drug that helps achieve that high. Rolling Stone Keith Richards claims this axiom is what saved his life. He professed to often abusing heroin but he knew how much was enough to reach the desired high and then he stopped. Others, by honoring the action over the result, obviously end up experiencing an overdose, and lose sight of why they do what they do in the first place.

This can be said for food, shopping, sports, hero worshipping, alcohol and even love. Don't be like Tom Petty wrote and think that "Too much ain't enough." This is not a happy way to go through life!

Don't be addicted to wise words and sage advice, be addicted to the message, be addicted to paradise here on earth. My ex wife was addicted to self help books—instead of embracing one of the many philosophies, and using it to help her cope with life, she developed an insatiable desire for more opinions. One day I had enough and gathered up all of her books (about 20) and dropped them on the coffee table in front of her while she read another long winded tome and declared: "pick one!"

Self evaluation, as with drug use or love addiction, is a valuable exercise, but it is not the goal. It is the means to the end; it is the process to achieve the high. Hopefully, my One Page Wonders are enough to provide those of you who need some guidance to move forward and create miracles without having to reference additional oracles.

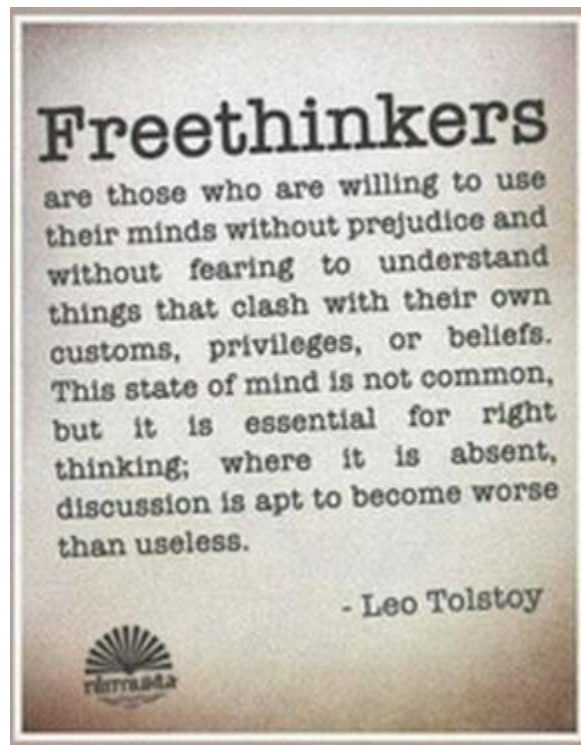
One Page Wonder Eleven: Ignore Those You Don't Respect

If you don't respect someone, why do you let their opinions bother you? That is an affront to your own self love, it is counterproductive and a sign that you are not comfortable in your own skin. It flies in the face of logic to let others control and negatively influence you, especially if you don't like or respect them.

If you do respect the person speaking or acting against you, try to understand their reasoning and either benefit from their wisdom, (since you respect them) or just move on with your life confident that you have digested the information and are now free to continue with your life, whether their comments were meant to be good or bad.

Talk shows that encourage discourse and retribution demonstrate that many humans prefer to confront their adversary in the same manner they are being attacked. But nothing positive comes from returning verbal attacks when a kind patient sensible response is available and is certainly more reasonable in its approach and resulting conclusion to the matter.

Don't honor your adversary by acknowledging their effect on you. Rise above!



One Page Wonder Twelve: Never Lower Yourself

Never lower yourself to the level of your adversary...otherwise how can you say you are any better than him? You must rise above what aggravates you, you must be the better person, you must be YOU! This demonstrates self respect by controlling your emotions and will lead to your feeling more and more comfortable in your own skin.

When I coached teenage basketball teams (nine in all, with five championships), this was the most repeated advice I gave my players. When an opposing player would talk smack or attempt to entice my player into a fight, this is what I would ask him: If you don't like the way the enemy is behaving, why would you want to act like, and therefore be like him?

Many people react similarly to the manner in which they are being confronted, thinking that is the solution to ending the confrontation. Witness those popular trashy talk shows where in-your-face finger waving and simultaneous screaming dominates the interaction. Does mutual reconciliation ever result from this behavior?

A wise woman once demonstrated to me that you can quiet a noisy room faster with a whisper than you can by yelling. Try that someday!

One Page Wonder Thirteen: Time Management

No, this does not address how to arrange your daily schedule. The Thirteenth Wonder is about how you view the measurement of time: Is one minute a long time or a short time? Do you have to react right away to uncomfortable or uncertain or unexpected situations or can you stretch the time to react until other factors and the overall flow can dictate the best time to react...and the best way to react.

If you can conceptualize time within your own realm of comprehension, you can use it to your advantage and therefore avoid time ever becoming a problem. In Herman Hesse's "Siddhartha" there are four elements necessary to maintain balance, harmony and happiness, or what the Buddhists call "salvation." One of these is to develop the ability to be able to "have patience or wait". If you can wait, for any length of 'standard' time, you can absorb all delays and postponements and view them as something to enjoy, not to get aggravated over or view as a setback or waste of time.

By reacting immediately you may create unnecessary drama or provide an incomplete response. Allow yourself enough time to analyze the important aspects of the situation unfolding before you. Don't rush your response; instead, gather your thoughts and determine the proper course of action or words.

The only result that can come from waiting too long to react is that you force the other party to develop a response to your silence. Yes, there are times when a quick response nets you some kind of advantage, but those events are obvious and do not usually result in exasperating the problem. (For example: "Who wants the last beer?")

My father liked to say: "Put brain in gear before running mouth." I think that says it all right there!

One Page Wonder Fourteen: It's a People World!

People love people; they love to spectate the lives of others and follow their adventures. Witness the extreme popularity of reality TV shows. There are very few people that prefer to be alone, with no others close by with which to engage. Those who sail solo across oceans or climb mountains are rare and held in high esteem—both for their physical accomplishments AND for the fact that they did it without other humans alongside.

When people travel, they want to meet locals and other travelers in order to identify with others and become more secure with their surroundings and to enhance their own lives and personalities. They want to make friends and learn about others...the difference and “newness” is what fascinates them. The most popular articles I wrote involve those about people, not places.

Understanding this normal human behavior will help you to become more comfortable in your own world. Ask questions, listen earnestly, learn continually and keep an open and honest mind about those around you and on your travels. *Don't be quick to judge or condemn alternative lifestyles or belief systems, this is counterproductive to advancing your personal development.*

And for Pete's sake, stop talking about yourself! I can't stand it when someone asks me “How was your Caribbean sailing trip?” and before I am able to respond with more than one sentence, they are already interrupting me with some nonsensical over talk like “I know someone who knows someone who has a cousin who's best friend once went on a sailboat...” This type of behavior demonstrates absolutely no real interest in my experience and divulges some kind of insecurity or jealousy for not having done what they perceive to be a similarly wonderful experience. They want to be able to share some trivial unrelated comment...before I have had a chance to respond to their question.

I once told my sister that in order to gain new friends and keep them, eliminate the word “I” from your vocabulary. Your opinion or stories are welcome some times, but most of the time all you will do is alienate people and isolate yourself. In a world of people, you will limit your education and amusement from others by doing so.

Because it is people “that make the world go round” make sure to always respect all people in all situations. You don't have to trust or make them your best friends, but you can allow them to add to your life if you let them into your life...good, bad or indifferent. What harm is there in being nice to everyone...I call it “**Spreading Joy.**” The stories in this book are evidence that by adhering to this positive uplifting principle, interaction with complete strangers throughout the Caribbean is easier and mutually beneficial to all...and a helluva lotta fun!

One Page Wonder Fifteen: Life, the Waves & Brazil

"It is an interesting biological fact that all of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea--whether it is to sail or to watch it--we are going back from whence we came."

- John F. Kennedy

The magic of radio, TV, and cell phones is all made possible because of waves. That's right, waves, just like in the ocean, but in a space we call air. The air is actually water that is so vaporized that the human being can't see it, until it rains or condenses into fog or sticks to a window or mirror. You are almost all water as well, and waves travel through you...goose bumps, nerves, fear, love.

Therefore, waves are life as we know it, a scientific principal. Why do we love to sit on the beach and just watch, or surf, the waves roll in? Because we identify closely with the motion of the ocean, we are one with the waves; we find truth, comfort and understanding in them.

So try to understand how waves affect you and how your behavior affects others through our connection via waves. Most everything you do or say will affect others in some way or form, so think before you act out of respect of those within the range of those waves. A telephone call occurs through waves, so be careful what you say; speaking harshly or with disrespect can start a tidal wave that negatively affects many others and which could circle back to harm you as well.

I once knew a girl who ignored this warning and set forth a self inflicted version of one of those tidal waves: One night while on a date with a woman from New York, the conversation turned to personal health which naturally led to my agreement that a Brazilian wax was a good thing. She turned this good natured comment into my "preference," then into my "insistence" that all of my girlfriends must perform this ritual. She made it clear we might have a problem since she did not "Go to Brazil!" We had a good chuckle over our discourse and continued chatting while enjoying a glass or two of red wine.

Later that week, while sitting at a friend's tapas bar, the woman nearby me mentioned that she owned a spa in town where my date got her manicures. When I asked if she knew my date, she responded, "You must be Captain Mark and the one who insists on a Brazilian?" Apparently, my date was truly upset about my "insistence" instead of viewing the topic good naturedly, (while I had vehemently denied it was a "necessary" trait and thought it was all in good fun.) The woman, who was Brazilian, then texts her with "Mark tells me he likes Brazilians," and signs her name with an LOL. Clearly, we were just being silly with the whole topic.

My date quickly responded by text: "You know what they say about loose lips." I assumed that this was an accusation of my inappropriately sharing the story with the woman, and was warning me to zip it. So I texted back that she was the one who started this "wave" and that I was a good boy and had kept my mouth shut. I asked her to call me later and we could have a good laugh about "Brazil". Her reply: "Lose my number," which certainly confirmed my interpretation.

The lesson: Gossip or "bad waves" can often come back to bite you in the butt. Instead of discarding a blossoming friendship, (she told the nail tech that I was "a really great guy, but I can't get over his thing about Brazilians",) she could have responded in a light hearted manner. Instead, she put in motion a

completely unnecessary tidal wave that ended our friendship! At any rate, it was doomed from the start; she lived with a cat and I am seriously allergic.

The following night I had a date with a younger, sexier and more self assured woman that essentially lasted until two mornings later. And yes, she was from Brazil. Perhaps I DO “insist” on Brazilians after all!

You have heard such expressions as “the ripple effect” and “six degrees of separation” which essentially explain the same thing. Thus, it is clearly imperative to embrace this knowledge and create and ride the waves with as much happiness and joy as possible while bringing others along with you. Clearly, we are all connected...especially with Brazil!

One Page Wonder Sixteen: Just because you are asked a question, doesn't mean you have to answer it!

Not only do I insist that I am not obligated to answer a question simply because I have been asked it, but I believe that there is some merit to being allowed to answer it incorrectly, if I so choose.

Of course, with personal inquiries or questions about my business, this would seem obvious, although in those cases it is probably best just to say "I would rather not answer that" or "Can we change the subject." However, questions are often designed to put people in uncomfortable positions or to detract from what is really important at that time. They can also be unknowingly personal or uncomfortable at no fault to the questioning party.

Parents often scold their children to "answer the gentleman" when asked a question, but why can't the child decide he would rather not talk or that the question makes him uncomfortable, thus choosing silence?

It's OK to remain neutral and refuse to answer a question in many cases. And sometimes it can be fun, and insightful, to answer incorrectly or make something up, just to see what the reaction is, not only at that moment, but in the future. *I think that when you ask someone a question, you are not "entitled" to an answer; and that you assume all responsibility for whatever exchange follows. **And in no way is that responsibility incumbent on the one being asked.*** Who are you to put someone in the position to reveal answers that he may not want to provide?

For example, when someone asks how old I am, they should realize that it is an uncomfortable question for many to answer. Therefore, I find it fun to add ten or more years to my age and see how they react. And then, if they tell others, to see what version of my age gets back to me. Why not? How does fibbing about my age negatively affect anyone who learns of it? I didn't start the process; I just took control of it. And besides, it's all in good fun!

Thus, just because you ask someone a question; don't assume, or expect, their answer to be 100% truthful. They may have read the 16th Wonder!