

Yeah, you can, suck it.

Walk. Walk. Walk. What am I going to do?

A day passes. A month. Even if I can find a job, which likely doesn't exist, I now must work it four times as long to make up for the lost income at this age.

Great, you'll hire me. You want to know how long I can work for you. Well, let me calculate, I lost almost two years of employment at sixty, it's not how long I can work for you, it's: I need to work for you until I'm ninety.

Happy time, sixty-one, "How many weeks of holiday do I get? Great, two weeks to start, and if I last ten years, I'll get three? Sign me up."

Ask family and friends for help?

Family, please. And, come on, friends, when you get older, so do your friends. Can you imagine, hey friend, I know you are seventy now and have put away enough to live another ten years? Can I have three of yours?

Sure, I don't mind dying three years earlier.

Walk. Walk. Walk. Walk. Stop it, brain. The suffering intensifies. I'm lucky, creative, and I have a chance – a long shot – but a chance, nonetheless. Never quit trying. I won't.

People love you; they really do, they mean well, they want to help.

For the first time in my life, I feel old, broken, defeated.

STORYTIME

Once upon a time, there was a young man, full of piss and vinegar. He was going to take the world by storm. His only problem, direction, wasn't part of his upbringing; he wasn't dealt the direction card. That was okay. The lack of focus graced him with a plethora of skills and a delightful, engaging personality. He meandered through life, trying to find his way. A place of belonging. Struggles came, he overcame them; more challenges came, he breezed past them.

He managed to hold depression at bay throughout life, mainly through turning pain into comedy and because he had a gaggle of fabulous friends and acquaintances who paid him a visit during his daily travails. He was a lucky man, rich in experience, struggling in riches.

He kept meandering. He kept trying. Occasionally when things got rough, and he needed to find gainful employment, he'd spend hours upon hours searching the HELP WANTED ads in the local rags + scouring every other outlet for possibilities.

Let me introduce you to depression.

A well-meaning friend(?) handed him a copy of the HELP WANTED section of a popular local rag, with several jobs circled.

Depression crawled into the young man's life for the first time, pulling and tugging at

him, trying to lead him to despair.

Hey friend, do you see me looking at the same paper? Do you see I have a pen in my hand? Do you have anything to do with the companies of the jobs you circled?

He managed to kick depression out. He kept moving, trying, failing, trying, failing, and failing, all with a smile on his face because he believes in never giving up. As for the well-meaning friend, he had to let him go –

As time slipped by, years began adding up. The young man, now middle-aged(?) – well, his creativity began shining through. Life had blessed him much: life experience, empathy, compassion, all while holding depression at bay. Because he knew that no matter what, no matter how much depression tried to sneak into his life through any opening it could, he needed to keep trying + chase the negative voices away.

For the most part, he succeeded.

He kept writing. A local paper saw merit in his words. He became a published Opinion Editorialist – his opinions had found an audience. It would have been great if the views had come with wealth, not yet; he hadn't put in the time, he hadn't cut his teeth.

So, he kept trying. He landed a career he is not allowed to speak of – carving it into a decent career. He was on the path to being able to take care of himself and his loved one(s) and have a wonderful older life, creating and writing, without the worry of where the next meal was going to come from.

And then, the pandemic hit + his career came to an end + all he had was time to think, try, think, and try, with depression walking two steps behind and gaining.

A month goes by, the pandemic still raged on; he's fucking terrified. A plate is filled with his emotions; he eats them. Just as he finishes the last bite, another dish is served; he wants to cry.

He doesn't want his loved one(s) to know the pain he is feeling. He doesn't want them to suffer as well. No matter how much he eats, he can never get full.

He writes, queries, + tries. He must believe in himself.

He keeps writing, pitching, sending out writing and career proposals, sending out hundreds of pitches + submissions.

He fears job interviews. Where does he see himself in five years?

He's not old, but he is turning 61.

TONIGHT, ON GLOBAL NEWS

*We will tell you the story of the sixty-three-year-old-broke-dishwasher –
– who never gave up.*

He keeps writing.

Every day his inbox is littered with job postings. Every day his depression grows when he realizes he doesn't have the right qualifications, + most of the jobs would suck whatever remaining life in him out.

Today, alone, six writing jobs are on the cover of one email; he wouldn't qualify for a single one, especially the Trinity Western posting—a religious, homophobic university.

Why would anyone who isn't homophobic apply?

Hello, depression. Will you be walking with me today?

His loved one(s) don't know what to do?

They want the best, they love him, they are scared as well.

Many of his loved one(s) are decades younger.

This is where the young man, who is no-longer-young, feels old for the first time.

A well-meaning friend, someone he barely knows, sends his loved one a job posting for a cosmetic company; they are looking for a writer. The no-longer-young-man looks at job postings every day, he has a computer, he is turning sixty-one soon.

The well-meaning friend doesn't have a connection at the cosmetic company A. WAY. IN. All the well-meaning friend has done is circle a help wanted ad on a computer screen the no-longer-young-man had already gawked at—how could the well-meaning friend know the no-longer-young-man had already seen the ad? That is not the point.

Does the well-meaning friend need to follow-up to see if the no-longer-young-man applied?

Why didn't the well-meaning friend just Google writing jobs in Vancouver and send the link?

The no-longer-young-man is not angry at the well-meaning friend; he's just hurt.

Can you imagine: A sixty-year-old-man being handed a newspaper with a job ad circled, by someone thirty years younger than he is.

At first, he ate his emotions. Brushed it to the side.

Depression began walking lockstep with the no-longer-young-man. Actually, it hopped onto his shoulders. He doesn't want to cause his loved one(s) any pain, so he pretends it never affected him.

And he is truly thankful the well-meaning friend thought of him, no matter how misguided the gesture was.

Sixty-years-old and he is now being given career advice by people thirty years his junior. People who may not understand the scope of what he writes about and that if he doesn't pursue his passion, depression doesn't have many places left to go.

And then, it is suggested he apply for subsidized housing in an artist's building. He appreciates the sentiment. But reality dictates: first off, it hurts. Even if the suggestion comes from a place of kindness. What reality dictates is just like finding a new career at sixty, becoming a writing success at sixty, and being selected as a sixty-year-old artist for subsidized housing, he's scared, they are all long shots. He feels demeaned.

Depression, where shall we go today?

He lashes out at his loved one. He wears his pain in his eyes. He can't express what he's feeling. He doesn't want to be alone; he doesn't want to cause his loved one pain. He's human.

The no-longer-young-man will never stop trying; he can't. He loves life and his loved one(s); he doesn't want to be a burden.

He must believe in himself.

He will.

Another plate of emotions arrives; he will gobble them down, move on, he doesn't want anyone to know he's feeling —

The one thing he knows for sure, one day, all his effort will pay off.

When they do, we can destroy this story.



Fire me a message on the TALK PAGE of my website: www.lindsaywincherauk.com if you have more suggestions on making our world a better place!

