

Apparently, there were complaints

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This book is dedicated to J.H. and W.H., my sweethearts. It is also dedicated to that kid Martin in my elementary school in third grade who called me a fucking idiot. LOL, asshole. It is also dedicated to whomever's worn, warm, afternoon hands come upon these pages – wherever you may find them – and that you may remember that the world is conspiring for you and to act in a manner as such.

## Author's Note

These essays are true stories. Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of others. And occasionally, to keep me out of (more) trouble.

The essence of every essay lives in my heart and reflects how I remember things happening. It is quite likely that others will remember something, somewhere, differently.

Rest assured, though: I have checked with my most trusted friends, family, and colleagues to confirm, clarify, and refine whatever I can. To that end, if someone must give me a spanking, it will be because I want one.

## Acknowledgements

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## . Car Issues.

**“Do not save what is left after spending but spend what is left after saving.” —Warren Buffett**

On my way home the other day I stopped at the traffic light and saw a car (Audi Q7) that came speeding around the corner before it stopped. The volume of the music broke my inner quietness and was drowned out only by the squeal of his tires when the light changed. The driver (who looked like my ex) wore a leather jacket, sunglasses, and smoked a cigarette that he casually flicked out of the window.

We didn't exchange any words. I don't even recall him looking in my direction. I don't care about the person or how he acquired this car. I am passing no judgment on him because this is a story about me. When I saw him, a surprising thought entered my head. I told myself, "I could drive a car like that if I wanted. I could purchase a car like this anytime. But I choose not to." There are, I suppose, a few cars on the planet that I could not receive enough credit to purchase. But for the most part, there is nothing stopping me from driving an expensive, flashy car. Except for maybe one thing. I enjoy living within my means. I like knowing I spend less than I make. I mean, I could take expensive vacations, buy this car, purchase expensive clothes, purchase more luxurious furniture but I find a significant amount of pleasure knowing my expenses do not exceed my income. I don't need to rely on working overtime to afford things and pay off my credit card. Staying out of debt means I am not being hunted down by creditors. It means I am not carrying a financial burden from my past while also trying to provide for the present. It means I have the freedom to make choices with my excess income. It means I can save if I want, give if I want, or spend if I want. I enjoy a significant level of freedom that others may not experience. This allows me to sleep better, carry less stress, and live a more calm, relaxed life.

Our society works hard to convince us to outspend our means and then provides a thousand ways for us to do it. And from the outside, a life built on credit may appear the life desired. With its bright lights, bold colors, and flashy impressions we are able to make.

But I will choose something different for my life. I will choose calm and peace and the knowledge that I have chosen responsibly. For there is a wonderful joy to be found in it. I know there is several uncontrollable circumstances that may make this choice impossible for some. Tragedy, medical emergencies, or unexpected career downsizing as examples. But for those who still have the choice, I don't think you will ever regret spending less than you make. I love my life with less.

## . Pet Peeves.

I am generally a pretty understanding person, but there are some things that get under my skin. You know when you are in a “mood” and then something pops out of nowhere and irritates you even further? Those are what I call my pet peeves. They are not cute or cuddly, but rather annoying. Here are just some things that really tick me off. My list of cringe-worthy moments that leave me annoyed and just.... peeved.

- Yell sneezes.
- Loud gum chewing and talking at the same time.
- Chewing with mouth open.
- Anything chewing and loud.
- Someone cracking their knuckles and then saying, “I am pumped. Let’s do this!”
- Extremely slow people.
- Someone who asks for advice and does the exact opposite.
- People who don’t replace the toilet paper roll.
- When people read a text with a question and don’t respond.
- When people are late.
- When people are chronically late.
- People who walk into the subway and stand right in front of the door.
- People who discuss being on a diet while I am in the middle of eating something unhealthy.
- Kids who say the food I cooked tastes disgusting.
- People who use thousands of hashtags.
- People who say “I mean, no offense [...]” as if it downplays anything insulting, they say to me.
- People who say “literally” when what they mean is not literal.
- People who clip their nails in the subway
- Line cutters.

- People who say “There are rules” for rules that can be clearly broken, and nobody gets harmed.
- People who don’t know how to get through a security checkpoint efficiently. EVERYONE knows you have to take metals out of your pocket. At the airport EVERYONE knows to take off the goddamn shoes and that liquids are not allowed.
- When you let a car cut in front of you and the person doesn’t wave to thank you.
- Misspelling my name when it is right there in the email staring you in the face.
- When dog owners leave their dog’s shit anywhere but in the little plastic bags.
- Extremely slow cashiers, a long line in the supermarket and only ONE register open.
- Saying, “Let’s make plans!” then acting surprised when I follow up and make actual plans.
- Misleading labels on food. Food that only pretends to be organic.
- Gluten-free fanatics and vegans who only talk about how healthy this lifestyle is.
- People who talk over you when you are clearly still in the middle of the sentence.
- Passive aggressive behaviour. If you have something that bothers you or you want to say, just say or do it.
- When you are running after the bus, you lock eyes with the bus driver in the rear-view mirror, and they still drive straight past you.
- When you open the door for someone and not only do, they not thank you, they also glide straight past you as if people should open doors for them.
- People who don’t respond when I said “good morning” to them.
- When people repeatedly hit the elevator button, as if that will make the elevator arrive sooner.
- People who constantly look at their watch.

- People who are constantly on the phone.
- Anyone with an inflated sense of their own importance. “Don’t you know who I am-people”
- People who seal a Ziplock bag without removing the air first.
- Clapping at the end of a movie in theatre.
- The word “touché”.
- Receiving emails from a colleague with my boss cc’d.
- When people say, “cool beans”.
- Sponsored Instagram or Facebook feeds.
- People who abbreviate things that don’t need to be shortened.
- People who tell you they ate something really bad yesterday and should really stay home. Just say you are taking a sick day. Nobody needs to hear the details.
- People who say “eh, you know” when you casually ask them how they are doing. A) I don’t know, and B) I want to know because I asked.
- People who send emails longer than six paragraphs. Call or explain in person. Who has time to read through all of that?
- Super-fast 2-hour power point Zoom presentations. Nobody can ever focus or pay attention.

## . Important Stuff.

Buy, don't rent.

Always think outside of the box.

Let any person who considers getting pregnant take care of a new-born child for two days (~~weeks~~). They may reconsider.

Don't expect anything from anyone.

Don't take shit personal.

If people have the need to feel important, just let them be and smile. *Minecraft* will be in any parents' life at some point.

My beauty philosophy: I watch my 7-year-old son and there's no question of beautiful or not beautiful. He just IS. He is always in his body, now, confident, strong. He is natural and hasn't had all the conditions put upon him yet. Beauty is getting back to that natural state, becoming aware of your thoughts, and realizing you are more than your body.

There is no need to get married at all. It is just a piece of paper.

Pornography is the opiate of the masses.  
Dry skin? Drink more water.

Too much makeup will ruin your skin eventually. So will *Botox*.

Everybody lies.

Many pretend.



In Vienna, a small 2-bedroom apartment to buy may cost Eu 1,000,000.

Dog owners will look like their dogs eventually.

Eat your dessert with a small spoon. It will last longer.

Home-made chicken soup is awesome and super healthy.

Don't cover a couch in plastic and pretend it is comfortable for you (or your guests) to sit on.

Don't buy anything that is 100 percent wool or cashmere even if it seems to be very soft and not particularly itchy when you try it on in the store.

Sometimes you just never know.

Sometimes things make no sense.

The plane is not going to crash.

Everything you think is wrong with your body at the age of twenty-five you will be nostalgic for at the age of forty.

Drinking and eating too much will result in a saggy roll just above your waist even if you are painfully thin.

This saggy roll just above your waist will be especially visible from the back and will force you to re-evaluate half the clothes in your closet, especially the white shirts.

Write everything down and keep a journal.

Take more pictures.

You can order more than one dessert occasionally but keep the saggy roll in mind.

You cannot own too many black turtleneck sweaters.

Wear black. It is always chic.

If the shoe doesn't fit in the shoe store, it is never going to fit.

Back up your files.

Over-insure everything. Especially, if you have kids.

There is a point in making piecrust from scratch. Or noodles. Or pizza.

The reason you are waking up in the middle of the night is the large glass of wine of the second bottle.

The minute you decide to get divorced, go see a lawyer and file the papers.

Buy vintage clothes.

Don't share too much private information. Ever. There are secrets.

Don't expect anything.

Back to nature and a big garden is key.

Reading is everything. It makes me feel I have accomplished something, learned something, become smarter, become a better person.

Parenting is not easy. In a nutshell, here is what is involved: You love your child(ren), you hang out with them from time to time, you throw balls, you read stories, you make sure they know which utensil is the salad fork, you teach them to say please and thank you, and you ask if they did their homework. Continue until they are eighteen. Yeah, right. Continue forever.

Expensive lotions and potions for your face and body don't work. Don't buy *La Mer* creme for Eu 1.350,00. WHY is this creme so expensive? Does it contain parts of the angler fish?

Don't care what people think of you. Do your thing.

## . Restaurant Visit After Covid.

Hey, you! It has been a while. What a year, huh? Still wearing that damn mask though. Really nice to be able to see people again. Like real people. Sorry, am I talking weird? I am not? Oh good. I am a little self-conscious about that. A year in isolation is bound to throw off the old social skills, right? Haha. Ha. (Nervous eye twitch) Can we hug? Are we doing hugs right now? I apologize for asking to hug you and then becoming so embarrassed when you said, “No thanks,” that I just did the “hang loose” sign for one full minute at you. I kind of forget how to act around people. Do we have to wear the mask the entire time? But hey, I am really liking this restaurant we are sitting in with our physical bodies. Say, can we talk about how when we walked in here a minute ago, I straight up screamed? I was just so stunned to be inside of a business. You get it, I am sure. No, I am not vaccinated yet. Are you? You got seven shots just to be on the safe side? Good for you, I guess. You got your green passport, too? Wow, that is so great. Oh, you really think I put others in danger because I do not get the vaccine. Others? Why? You have no clue, but you read it somewhere. Ah, okay. Let’s talk about something else okay. And here comes the waitress. I forgot how to order.

Okay, be honest with me. Was it weird when the waitress told me where the bathroom is, I said, “Thanks, I have only gone into two bathrooms for a LOOOOOONG time, so I am not sure where all the other ones are anymore!” Was that a strange sentence? Wow, sorry, I was gone for so long. I must have not been listening when she said where the bathroom is because, haha (nervous eye twitch), get this, I somehow wound up in the bathroom of a completely different restaurant. Is that normal? And men were in the bathroom at the same time. Unisex toilets? Oh, it is pride month. So much new stuff to get used to.