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Everyday Matters

An Illustrated Journey

An Illustrated Life

A Kiss Before You Go

What is the monkey? What does it want?

- We all have a voice in our heads that provides criticism and “guidance”.
- That voice is not you. It is not your friend or to be trusted.
- Coming up with a separate identity for that voice helps remind us that it is not us, a fiction.
- That’s why I call that voice your “monkey”
- The monkey comes when you are briefed on a project, when you are developing ideas, in the middle of the night, before a presentation, even after the work is done.
- It will suggest a direction for you, then switch. It is unreliable.
- The monkey is the childhood relic of guidance and directives from our parents.
- It is protecting you from all **risk and novelty**. It is so longer very useful for adults. In fact it is destructive.
- The monkey is especially hostile to creative people. Change is our job.
- The monkey can turn creative people into drama queens and gossips. It can make you procrastinate. It can make you hold back.
- The monkey can give you busywork that interferes with the creative process.
- Creativity necessarily involves change and risk and destruction and rebirth. That riles up the monkey and he fights to keep you in place.

So, what do we do?

- Recognize that you and the monkey are different. Then...
- **Option #1:** Fight the monkey: let him air his criticism, then dissect it and show yourself how inaccurate and worthless it is. Follow his logic to the extreme and see how over-the-top it is. Then tell the monkey you have heard him and you are moving on. If you find anything valid in his

critique, act on it and improve yourself and your work. Then disengage from the voice.

- **Option #2:** Keep working. Just start making something, anything and postpone judgement until you have accumulated a body of work. Tell yourself that even mediocre work is better than none.
- But know that the more you make, the more you will produce things of quality.
- And the more you work, the less headspace you will give to the monkey.
 - **Suggestions:**
 - Just start. Make anything
 - Let's not talk about it. Creative blocks are an illusion. Don't name them. Just start making *anything* and it will melt away.
 - Give him a banana. Bribe yourself to get going.
 - Get your lazy ass up. Set the alarm half an hour earlier. Get to work making something (not answering email). The monkey sleeps in. By making things first thing, you will roll right into a productive day.
 - Do something you definitely suck at. Be an amateur. Stave off the critique by practicing brand new skill. Your creative engine will be stoked.
 - Stock your own arsenal. Assign yourself a new list of solutions if these don't work for you. Make it a creative project.
- **Option #3:** Be driven by passion and a sense of purpose. Recognize that your creativity is a gift to a world that desperately needs it.
 - The Lion also lives in your head.
 - He represents the part that brings you ideas. The creative force, inspiration.
 - Work hard at just creating and soon he will appear with great ideas.
 - The lion can't be forced to work. You must wait for him. You must trust him to show up.
 - Your job is to feed the lion. With raw work. But also with creative experiences. Books, films, museums, adventures.
 - The lion is a cat. He doesn't like gloom and rain. Stay optimistic.
 - We feed the monkey with disappointment, fear of the unknown, worry.
 - The monkey is terrified that we will ride off on the lion. (Good!)
 - The lion requires you to have purpose and a goal in life. Decide what you want to achieve, how you can be of help to the world. Focus on that, rather than the monkey.
 - The world need creativity and great design more than ever. Don't let the monkey rob us all. (Remember George Clooney!)
 - Ride the lion and shut your monkey!