



4 THINGS THAT AREN'T WORTH THE EFFORT

A reckoning with the most wasteful practices in our
emotional lives

Anthony C McHenry

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A reckoning with the most wasteful practices in our emotional lives.

The surest sign something wasn't worth it is the throbbing afterthought, "I should have quit while I was ahead."



We get caught up. We stay too long. We spend too much. Waste and overcommitment are human nature. But that doesn't mean we can't avoid it.

The pursuit of something more

I was seated at the bar area of an Italian restaurant here in Tampa, waiting for my date to arrive. Her name was Nicole and we'd met on Bumble. I knew the basics: she was a physician's assistant, had a decent sense of humor, and looked pretty.

While I waited, I tried to position myself where I could see her arriving. About 5 minutes later, I heard a voice behind me, "Sean?"

I turned around and was caught off guard: she was stunning. Far prettier than her photos — which was a welcome surprise in the land of photo shoppers.

Her eyes were the color of the ocean, and her hair was dark, silky, and long. She had a smile that could make you forget all of your problems. I was an experienced dater, but I had to steel myself and say, “Stay cool. Stay cool. Just be yourself.”

She sat across from me and seemed quite into it, smiling and blushing. She laughed at my goofy jokes, and we had plenty in common. I left the date feeling hopeful.

I thought, “That went well. Who knows?”

We continued seeing each other, but, quickly, something felt off. She put up an emotional wall. She took forever to get back to me. There was this itching feeling that things were not progressing naturally. I had to work too hard.

Long story short — she wasn’t over her ex. We fizzled out, and she ended up going back to her ex (they are married now). I was reminded of something I already knew deep down but failed to heed: you shouldn’t have to force relationships.

A quality relationship should be natural and magnetic. You shouldn’t be constantly questioning things and second-guessing the vibes you get. Ideally, you should have your hands all over each other. As a general rule, if you have a persisting feeling that this person isn’t that into you, they probably aren’t. You’re better off moving on.

Rethinking our career entry points

My generation had a reckoning with education. We tumbled out of college with skills that were misaligned with the market. Many of us ended up in crap jobs.

Our parents (baby boomers) had operated under the premise that a college degree guaranteed you an excellent salary. They said, “Just get your degree.” And so we did — and many of us struggled to right the ship for years. Today, the cost of college is higher than ever. Don’t assume you need to get a \$60,000 a year diploma to succeed.

You don't need to study engineering. You don't even need to go to a big-name school. But I'd strongly recommend you study something that can help you get a job. The hard truth remains that on day 1 of your first job, where you went to school doesn't matter anymore. Our performance alone will carry you to your next promotion or to you packing your boxes.

The silent success killer

Nothing in this world destroys more collective potential than saying, "I'll do it later." Procrastination chases people into adulthood, killing initiatives and robbing them of a success they didn't even realize they were capable of achieving. You see it even with gym resolutions after New Year's Eve. The gym is stuffed that following Monday. People are cherry-faced and miserable.

Five weeks later, they are all gone.

Gym resolutions die on the altar of, "I'll go tomorrow instead." Five days a week turns into three which quickly turns into zero. We had a rule when I was growing up, "If one person is cleaning, everyone is cleaning." We made it so that there was no negotiating and putting things off. It was a collective rejection of procrastination. It reinforced the idea we should all just do it now.

Treat minor procrastination as a massive threat to overall productivity.

The countdown method works wonders. It triggers your brain to get into action mode. If you are stuck on the couch, count down from 5 to 1. Then watch as you get to 1 as your body resurrects off the couch and jumps into motion.

Needless escalations

Amber Heard and Johnny Depp are putting on a master class on toxic relationships in court. You are seeing two people at their worst, displaying a menu of hostility that is below two people who love each other.

Remember: any healthy relationship is reciprocal in nature. But reciprocity can also reinforce toxicity.

I've never seen anything good come from yelling, hitting, or throwing things in a relationship. All it does is lower the floor. If you can't have an adult conversation without controlling your emotions, leave the room. It's juvenile to be hitting after grade school.

Recap for memory: things that aren't worth it

1. Trying to convince someone to like you.
2. An overly expensive education. High performance is the great equalizer.
3. Minor procrastination — it leads to extended procrastination.
4. Raising your voice with a partner (or hitting). Escalation is a choice, not a requirement.