

Granola,

I have told stories all my life. Sometimes I knew I was telling a story and sometimes I didn't. I guess that helps to make them real. It's no good telling a story if, at the time, you don't believe it. I've learned that and I'll pass it on to you. If you're going to tell them you'd better believe them; especially while you're telling them. Otherwise it's all too easy, there's nothing at stake. In a world where a life invented does not matter everything is very easy but very, very sad. I have friends in that world and I don't know why they get up in the morning, I really don't. They live only by the evidence presented, only by what they rub shoulders with every day. Their dreams at night are disturbing to them and they can not seem to dream by day. I am glad beyond glad that I came into this world knowing that it's all of our own making. To know that the world is only and truly what you make it is the one thing worth knowing. The rest is someone else's show and, more or less, beside the point.

Let me put it another way. If the world is only what you perceive as real at the moment, if the world is what you wake up to simply because you have not imagined an alternative, you have equated yourself with your pets. I don't mean to be cruel, I mean to challenge you. Sparky the dog greets the same world every day in the same way for the same reasons. Variations, alternatives and changes are not in the picture. It's this way because he's a dog. Oh, when he's forced to he can adjust to something different but he has no power to imagine something different. Left to his own devices and unless you change it for him, his world will be the same for as long as he lives. That's who he is.

We are not dogs. We have the power to look at our lives and say this is what I want, this is what I love, this is what calls me to action and this is where I want to be a day from now, a week from now and when I die. Our lives are ours. We invent, we change, we wish for and we take chances. I know some people who take incredible chances on a daily basis. Some of them are artists, some of them are in business, and some of them are homemakers. I long ago realized that what we do in life, what we do on a daily basis for a living or because people are depending on us, is not who we are. How we do what we do is much more telling.

A lot of folks make the mistake of assuming that living a life which one actually creates is only for those whom we call "creative". You know, actors, painters, musicians and the like. I can tell you beyond a doubt that those people are just as likely to live their lives by rote as the folks we think of as practical and not creative. I invented toys and games for thirty odd years (boy were they odd!) surrounded by some of the most off the wall, on the edge "creative" types you could ever imagine. I tell you this; some of the wildest of the bunch lived their lives in dread of the next day, the next hour and rather than change what needed changing they hid and cried and shouted at the moon. On the other hand I worked with an electrical engineer, model builders and office managers who knew it was up to them, and them alone, to take each day by the lapels and shake it into something worth living.

And you know what? Too often the hurdles we can't seem to overcome are merely habit and the comfort that habits afford us. In some ways it's easier to take what we find and say, "So there it is, I wish I liked it better" instead of saying, "So there it is, what am I going to make of it?" We settle, don't we? We settle mostly because it's comfortable. Groucho Marx used to tell this story, please bear with me.

A guy goes to the psychiatrist concerning his brother. The doctor says, "How can I help you?" The man says, "My brother thinks he's a chicken." The doc says, "It's a classic delusion. Bring him in and I'll try to help him." The man says, "I can't, I need the eggs." Do you get it? The guy knows that there is something wrong, he's tired enough of it to go see somebody but when push comes to shove he cops out and decides to leave things the way they are. He thinks that messing with what he was sure of and losing whatever he got from his brother's condition seems too risky. He chose to stick with the mess that he knew rather than risk the uncertain changes to come. Guess what? We all need the eggs. Every day, in so many ways, we decide to put up with our less than happy situation, our brother the chicken.

How about tomorrow we take one little thing that bugs us, any dumb crumb of annoyance. It doesn't matter if it's in the barn or the office or the kitchen or your kids' manners. Just take that something that needs changing and do something to change it. Fair warning, this sort of behavior can become addictive. It is known to cause smiles, a lighter step, better posture and sweet dreams.

Forget the eggs for once. Try the granola.