



A Celebration of Jim

In the past two weeks I experienced a heavy period of depression. This one almost stood out amongst other top depressions of my era: I almost checked into the hospital. However, friends helped me through. I decided to celebrate my survival with a collage of pictures taken of me over the years. I am alive and well! I'm a survivor, praise the Lord.



The sense of loss behind those eyes.

1997



1989 BC



1994 BC



1997 BC



2003



2004



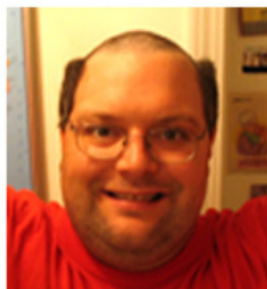
2005



2007



2008



2008



2008

2009
and
the journey continues...



A Celebration of Survival

I have to admit, I've pretty much given up hope. I'm not suicidal, or anything, mind you. But I lack hope. I don't believe I will ever find a productive place in society. It is not that I don't want to work, but my fears and anxieties about work overwhelm me. I don't believe I will find another compassionate employer who can work with my erratic schedule and provide the encouragement I need. Every job I've had since leaving engineering I've dreaded, even though I consistently do a good job. Furthermore, I don't believe I could ever have a wife. My perception of what women want seems permanently scarred by cynicism, let alone my ability to provide it. I'd have a wicked time communicating with her too. Unfit for marriage, unable to hold a job, I consider my suffering and I ask: would I recommend Christ to a friend?

I've heard that suffering produces faith and I believe it. Without Bipolar Disorder I doubt I would ever know God as well as I do (and I don't know Him all that well). But suffering is extremely painful. It counters pride and self-reliance. When the Bible says, "All things work together for the good of those who love Him", it is hard to believe when you are suffering.

I don't know if you share this experience, but my mind attacks itself. These are called "Automatic Thoughts". These are thoughts that tell you that you are no good. They say you can't do it, so don't try. I have found that these thoughts also point out reasons I should hate my friends: one talks a lot but doesn't listen, another makes bad decisions, another reminds me of a micromanager. I also notice that when a person falls out of my circle of friends I adopt the attitude that they don't like me. Not that we'd been on bad terms, but the relationship spoils in my mind with time. These automatic thoughts can be considered temptations, though why I'd want to think negatively is beyond me. After a while, all these automatic thoughts get so overwhelming that I can't escape them. This becomes depression. I lie in bed to sleep them off, but they remain. The reason I almost went to the hospital recently is that these thoughts grew out of control. I believe this is when evil really pushes me to act out. I've heard sometimes criminals feel like society led them to commit their crimes, but I believe it was their inability to counter these out of control thoughts. I'm no criminal, but I can see it.

I have even lost hope with cartooning. I've drawn cartoons straight now for almost 6 months, and it doesn't seem worth it. I don't really enjoy it: it is not terribly fun. Most of my cartoons cover only one subject: bipolar. After almost a year, my subscription base has only increased about 5 people. I have no hope of making a living at this. I consider it my ministry and thought God would give me some source of income to back it up, yet I am still broke. I have lost hope.

Would I recommend Jesus to a friend? Yes, I would. It's an easy answer because the alternative is permanent death. That's such a simple answer though, isn't it? What about the benefits Jesus offers? What makes believing in God worth it? I have seen many good things relating to this. My wisdom has increased so much. So has my compassion. I can now have mercy on people where previously I might have written a poison pen letter or ignored them. I find there is nothing more rewarding than improving another person's day. When you do little things for other people, they have a way of doing big things for you in return. One person I listen to made me the best meal I've had all year. Others have given me many dollar bills to prop up my economy. I listened to a teenager I didn't know completely open up to me. Love creates a connection between people. It is this connection that I enjoy. We all suffer from those negative thoughts, but when we get together we can lift each other up. It combats that feeling of loneliness, of empty space, of purposelessness.

I would recommend God to a friend, but I have no idea how to get them to say "Yes" to God. I think God must be so super-present everywhere that we just can not perceive Him. When I tell a person about God, they may even see His benefits in my life, but have no idea how to reach Him themselves. I would recommend God to a friend, but it comes with one disclaimer: I don't really know what He is doing.

I know people like Etoonin', I get all kinds of complements. But what God is doing with it: I just have no idea.

Thank you for celebrating Jim with me. I know he appreciates it. He is a survivor, with you to thank. God bless you.

toon in'...

Finding an Ally

Aug. 31st, 2009



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Jesus is Lord - John 3:16

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Boston w/Nate's 16 yr old Uncle

Aug. 31^{1/2}, 2009



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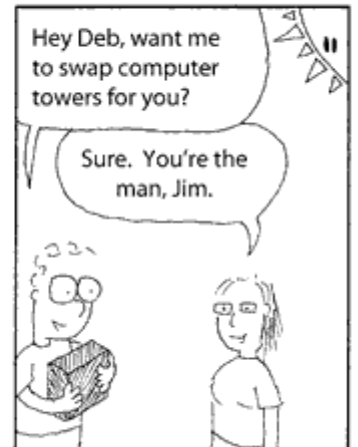
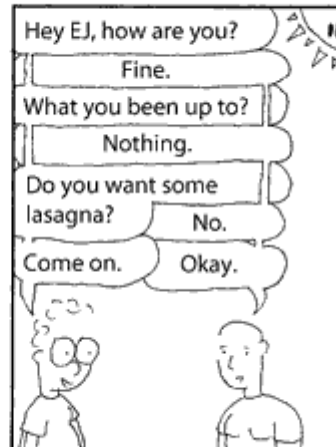
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Celebration of Life

Aug. 31^{2/3}, 2009



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