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Standard Edition

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Apologies, Apologies

So I've finally gotten the January edition which I promised in January, out in **mid-February!** Can you believe it? So allow me to make one last apology. Please forgive me for my tardiness. Truth be told, things are really busy on my end and I'd rather be late than release a sub-standard edition. So I'm not going to be able to keep up my regular monthly releases as scheduled, though I will try.

That said, for those of you who get tired of stopping by and checking only to find that there's nothing new, please just [register](#) on the blog. I don't use your emails for anything and I certainly don't send spam, plus *you get notified every time there's a new edition!* Saving you the hassle of checking so often, and the disappointment of finding nothing. Alternatively, you could also just "Like" our [Facebook page](#) and get notified via Facebook. So if you really don't want to register, just do that.

I do have some good news though. Part of what's been eating my time is the new design for The Red String™! I hope to have that complete by the **end of March**. So look forward to a brand new Red String this 2012.

A Fresh Start

January! A fresh start to a new year. Like a new day, it's a new beginning. Another chance to do all those things you didn't do yesterday... All those things you didn't do last year. You *could* make new resolutions or devise new plans but if you're anything like me, then chances are your old plans are yet to come to fruition.

I'm excited to say that in the first hour of the first day of the first month, I took my first steps towards realising an age old plan of mine: To write a fiction story and get it published. Remember **the full cup of inspiration** I mentioned last month? Well that's what I woke up with on the eve of Jan 1st and subsequently spent the rest of new year's day writing a story inspired by a girl I know (but hers is a story for another day).

The story is called *The Cat & The Rainbow* and just the other day I took another step forward by submitting it for the **Glimmer Train Very Short Fiction Award**. Depending on how that goes, I may be well on my way to achieving my goal. So wish me luck, and I hope this motivates you to complete something you meant to do last year as well.

The House of God

“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?,”

- Hebrews 12:7

Another interesting product of New Year's day, was the New Year's House party run by Oxygen. I'm not talking about a follow-up to the **Christmas Party**, but rather an all-day marathon of my favourite television series: **House**, on the Oxygen channel.

For those of you who are not familiar with the show, House is about a brilliant diagnostician called **Gregory House** who only takes on medical cases he finds interesting and diagnoses them perfectly. He is like the **Sherlock Holmes** of medicine, and his **Watson** is an oncologist named **James Wilson**.

Of course, the show is about more than just the two of them. But for the purpose of this discussion they are all that matter.

To learn more about House visit: <http://www.fox.com/house/about/>

The House of God

Now the interesting thing about House & Wilson is that House is a jackass while Wilson may just be the kindest Dr. you ever saw on TV. But what really lit the bulb for this article was this conversation between House and Wilson from one of the episodes that day:

“As long as you're trying to be good, you can do whatever you want.,,”

“And as long as you're not trying, you can say whatever you want.,,”

“So between us, we can do anything. We can rule the world!.,,”

- House | Wilson

It was the part about ruling the world that really did it. Because that got me thinking about God and what I believe about caring. You see, I believe that House & Wilson symbolise the two extremes of caring. I believe that when you truly care, you constantly run the risk of becoming either too strict or too sympathetic.

The House of God

For example if you care about table settings and you worked very hard to learn how to do them, then it would bother you to see an improperly set table. As a result, you could be that much more strict when you teach others to set a table. But on the flip side, you might also be that much more sympathetic to mistakes because you also, struggled through them.

Naturally our personalities tend towards one of these two extremes, and most of us end up somewhere in the middle: Sympathetic towards some things, and strict towards others. But very few end up as sympathetic as James Wilson, and even fewer as strict as Gregory House. Now everyone loves sympathy, so Wilson-type characters are easy to love and accept. But as you will find should you watch House, the strict ones are much easier to hate. In fact it is a rare episode where House's caring is appreciated - and even then, only at the end of the episode.

Still, it is undeniable that it often takes both House and Wilson to solve the difficult cases. House makes the tough calls, and Wilson brings the humanity to them. So if the same dynamic applies to real life (which I believe it does), then it only makes sense that to solve all life's problems, an equal amount of House and Wilson are required.

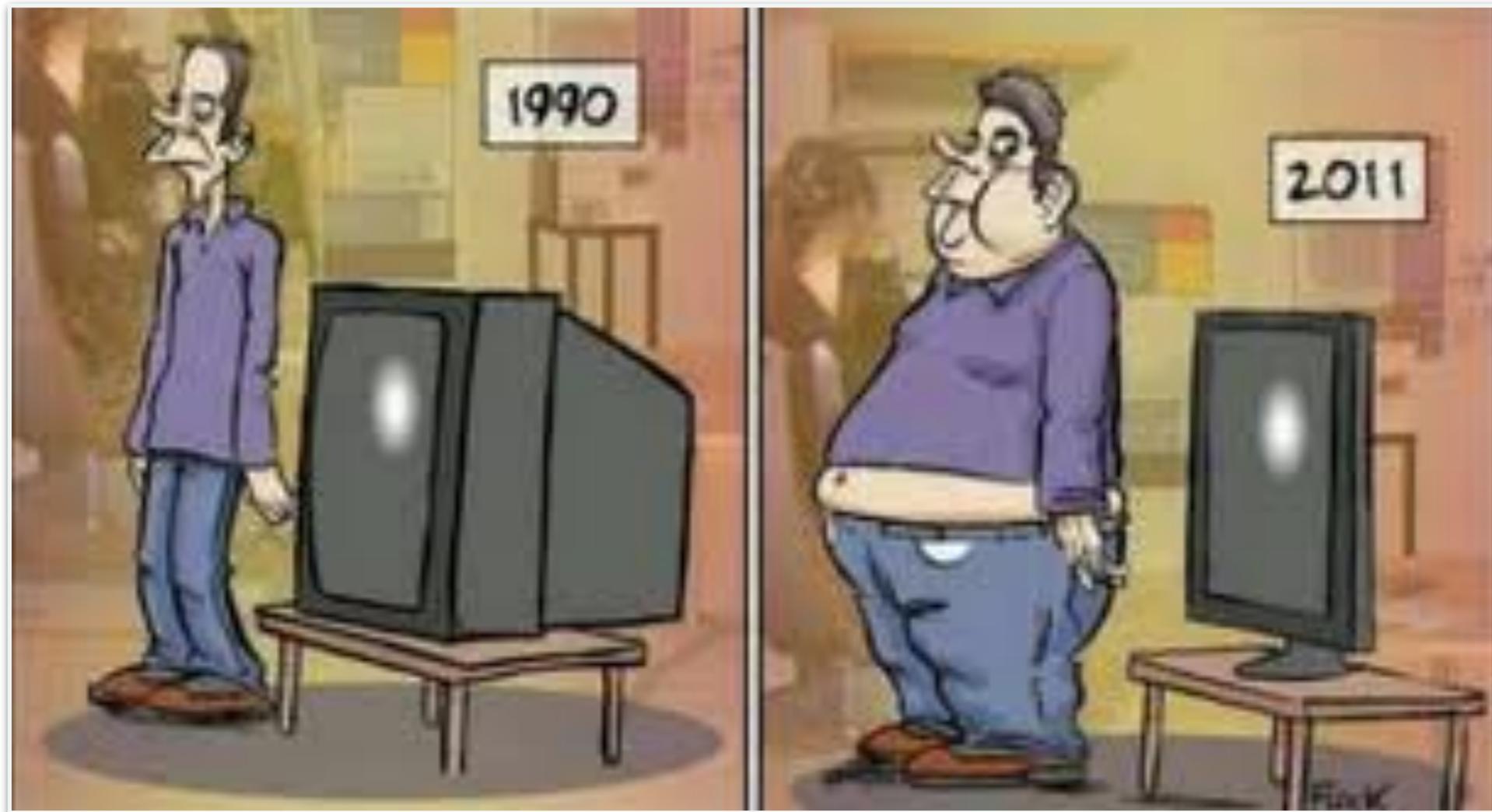
The House of God

Yet, this is where things get complicated when it comes to God. Because people like to believe that God is only Wilson, and that He is never House. That because He is all powerful, He never needs to be strict - and yet we in our everyday lives, see the benefits of strictness. As parents, as teachers, as managers, and as leaders, we know that a certain amount of strictness is required to guide fellow human beings onto the right path.

This is why I inwardly laugh whenever aethiests say "I will never believe in a God that would do X, or Y, or Z. Isn't He supposed to love us!? How could He love us and do something like that!?" as if it is unfathomable to love and be strict. When in fact the opposite is the case. Just as our parents beat and punished us when we were kids, so too must God beat and punish us every now and again.

So if anything, I would say that with an unfathomable amount of love comes an unfathomable capacity for compassion *and* for austerity. So when we think about the hardships of life, we should also remember **Hebrews 12:7**.

Technology Makes Us Stupid & Fat



Some time ago, I was brainstorming with a friend to help her decide on a topic for her English paper, and the topic we came up with was the above. She felt it was too antagonistic and so decided to use milder phrasing: "Technology has done more harm than good" or something like that. So I've decided to write the same article myself... the way it should be written.

Technology Makes Us **Stupid & Fat**

Now as you all already know, I love technology. But there is no doubt in my mind that the ultimate goal of technology is to allow us to be **stupid** and **fat**. Granted, saying it *makes us so* is a bit of a stretch. But if you could sit on your ass all day and still accomplish all the things you want to accomplish in life, wouldn't you? I know I would.

Put simply, advancements in technology make life easier for us, and by doing so each successive advancement encourages us to be lazier. You see it's unavoidable. We improve technology to make complex things easier, and impossible things possible. But it is those very same advancements that make the simple things of life even simpler.

Better communication devices have led to less moving around, better transportation devices have led to less working out during moving around, and next generation video games, high definition TV's, and on-demand *everything*, have led to less of a desire to go anywhere in the first place! So you're really only fooling yourself if you think people of the future will be any more physically fit than we are. That is, unless they develop an exercise-free way to work out your muscles...

Slim Away



...And here you have it! An exercise-free way to work out your muscles - and proof that not only are people getting fatter, but they must be getting dumber as well. Because if these guys believe that using a stiff material to enforce body shape is a "modern invention", then they must be just that.

To learn more about SlimAway visit: <http://slimaway.com/>

Slim Away

Introducing **Slim Away**, a modern reinvention of the *16th century device* known as a **corset**. I saw the ads for it during the commercials after the House episodes on New Year's day and I was so appalled that I could not but laugh.

“Diets Stink, Excercise Takes Forever, Start Looking Great Now!,,

- [Slimaway.com](http://slimaway.com)

So I decided to stop by their website and see just how a corset was supposed to make you lose weight. Only to find the picture at the beginning of this article with the tag line:

“Wear It While You Excercise To Shed Water-Weight Faster,,

- [Slimaway.com](http://slimaway.com)

Now besides the fact that the ad suggested otherwise, don't those two statements mutually contradict each other? Why Excercise if Slim Away's going to lose weight for you? Why? **Because it's not.** Every so often I make the mistake of watching late-night paid programming on TV, and it never fails to amaze me with these kinds of commercials. So while I believe technology will eventually make us stupid & fat, It may just be, that it has done so already. 🤔

The Nice Guy in the Middle

Sometime last year, I stumbled upon an article originally written by **Fu-Zu Jen** for the *Wharton Undergraduate Journal* and it was titled: **Ode to the Nice Guys**.

As I read the article, I began to feel a warm and fuzzy feeling inside. A feeling of being appreciated, and of being gratified. **Finally!** One woman somewhere on this planet has realised the most common error of her gender, I thought. Finally, someone has acknowledged the all too common female practice of taking the nice guy for granted.

I reminisced about the many conversations I had had with girls who complained about their wayward boyfriends & love interests, the many times I had told them point blank what the problem was, and the not so many times I had been that nice guy - the one who got "friend zoned," who was "too close for comfort," and who was "too good of a friend to risk losing."

The Nice Guy in the Middle

Thus I was originally planning to write a simple encouraging article for the nice guys, the guys who are still being jerked around by the fancies of their female friends... but then I stumbled upon another article called [The Nice Guy Dilemma](#) by **Susan Walsh**. She unlike me, had had an entirely different reaction to the article. As had another blogger called **Matt Savage** in his piece titled [Why the "Ode to the Nice Guys" Is Complete Crap](#)

As you can see, Matt wasn't too keen on the ode at all, and his article albeit valid, focused on a specific *type* of "nice guy" - a nice guy born of low self-esteem. While Susan focused more on presenting the facts and allowing the reader to make up their own mind. However, in the process of addressing nice guy fallacies and eschewing their opinions, they both neglected to address the majority of guys who face the nice guy dilemma: the people that Matt calls the "Good guys," that Susan calls the "Beta Males", society calls the "average joe", and I now call "the nice guy in the middle." For this nice guy lies somewhere in the middle of Susan and Matt's discourses.

The Nice Guy in the Middle

Because this nice guy's dilemma is not entirely due to cowardice. Nor is it due to "friend zoning" but rather, it is one caused by a misconception: The misconception that "getting the girl" is a selfless act...

You see, while it is true that being nice involves acts of kindness and that kindness is an attractive quality to women, those in the middle must realise that this only applies in the general sense. When it comes to showing that you like them, women want to see more selfish tendencies. They want to see that you want them above others, like them above all others, and prize them above all others - and if you do like them, this should already be the case.

But because this starkly conflicts with the altruistic tendencies he naturally shows to be attractive, this nice guy faces a problem. How does he come clean with his emotions without pulling an entire 180° that will scare the girl away? This dilemma coupled with a fear of rejection and separation is what separates the jerk from the nice, and the nice from the spineless.

The Nice Guy in the Middle

For the jerks are quick to show their selfish tendencies, the spineless are quick to hide them, and the nice are forced to make a choice: Be a jerk for a minute, or a coward for a lifetime? Because the choice is one that must be made within a time limit, and the longer one takes to decide, the closer they are to being friend-zoned forever.

That said, making the choice to be bold and go after what you want is still not itself a guarantee of success. As there are no guarantees in the world of human relations. Still a move must be made despite the risk; Not because one is prepared to fail, but rather because succeeding is totally worth it.

So as we say goodbye to valentines day, I hope that some of you made the right choice. I hope you were a total jerk, and you went all out to show her how you feel, how much she means to you, and how much of an asshole you are willing to be... for her. ❤️