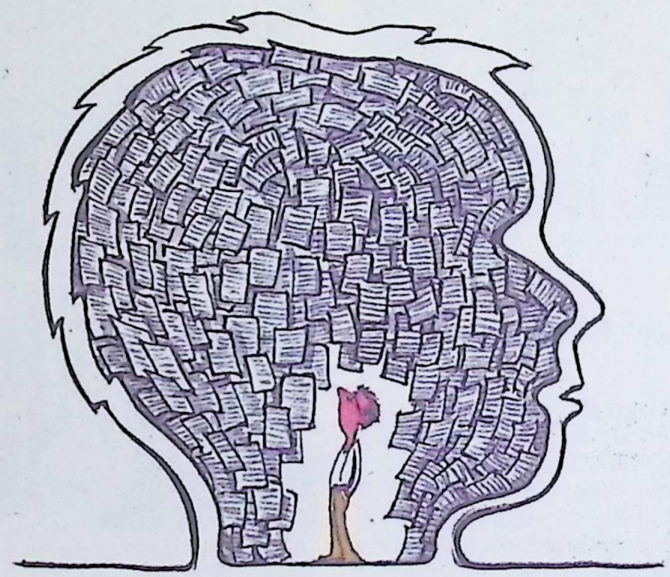


Pain is Optional

SHARBARI AHMED

Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional
– Murakami

I recently conjured up this notion of a spiritual weigh station for people who have lost sight of their own worth. It would be set up like the Department of Motor Vehicles, with disdainful, gum smacking, federal employees, sitting behind a plexiglass partition.

If you were delinquent in taking care of your emotional well being for a period of 35 years or more you would receive the following warning in the mail marked **Open Immediately!**

Dear Human,

We were recently alerted that you have been remiss in providing for your own happiness, thus dropping your currency to historic lows. You have been observed for the bulk of your adult years making choices, engaging in behaviours and investing in people who led you on a path away from your soul and your essence. None of the people or circumstances involved are to blame. **You made these choices, and are solely responsible for lowering your premium to this dismal rating.**

This is a warning. You have been placed on probation for a period of 365 days in which to raise your own rating. How you do this is entirely up to you. Everyone is different. We suggest that you sit still for a few minutes a day and figure it out and slowly start excising those things and people who keep pulling your rating down. We also suggest movement—at least 30 minutes a day. Some of our previous parolees have reported that dancing around in your kitchen for no apparent reason provides interesting results. Also proven effective is relinquishing the fear of others' opinions, as well as drinking plenty of water and laughing at yourself, because the fact is you are very silly. Embrace this silliness. It exponentially raises your rating.

Enclosed is an Egometer. This will manage your ego levels. If you have received this notice, you can rest assured that your ego is not healthy. It is either too prevalent or not prevalent enough. You will notice that the numbers will fluctuate sometimes minute to minute depending on who you are talking to, what situation you are in, and what baggage you have.

Good luck. If you need further support, please talk to whatever force you associate your faith with. For