



TV SHOW REVIEW

THE FLASH

AKM ALAMGIR KHAN JAMIL

"I know your weakness."

That statement from Captain Cold in episode 4 of CW's "The Flash" sums up the hero Barry Allen AKA Flash for me. Flash the comic character has such a long history that it should be intimidating to do a TV series on him. To their credit, the team (same as the one creating Arrow) has done a fantastic job.

"The Flash" is a humane sort of superhero series. It focuses on Barry Allen, the person. He had suffered tremendous childhood trauma when his mother was killed and everyone thought his father had done it. He had seen an almost demonic speed demon on the night of the murder, but could not convince others. He grew up to be a bookish geek; still positive, still a nice guy. He is, after all, a hero. When he 'finds' his super speed powers after the Particle Accelerator of Dr. Wells goes wrong, it just becomes obvious.

"The Flash" has a rich support cast. Detective Joe West is the family friend who takes care of young Barry when the police take his father into custody. His daughter Iris is the love of his life. Tragedy is, Iris is in a relationship with someone else. S.T.A.R. Labs is a big part of the series. Dr. Wells is the genius who created the Particle Accelerator, and has a lot of secrets. His team – of Cisco and Caitlin – is looking after Barry and helping him cope with his newfound powers. They are also tracking the sudden rise of 'meta-humans' who start appearing after the accident. As the series unfolds, the role of 'the man in the yellow suit', the speedster

who killed Barry's mother, takes centre-stage. We are introduced to a host of Super-villains, including the classic Rogues Gallery from the Flash comics. Comics nerds are also given euphoria with mentions/appearances of Ronnie Raymond (Firestorm) and Ralph Dibny (Elongated Man), as well as guest appearance from Arrow and his cast.

The series has incorporated elements from the classic comics wonderfully. It captures the feelings of wonderment, and exploring the realms of sci-fi as the original '50s and '60s John Broome/Julius Schwartz run. In comics, when Flash 'perished' trying to save the world from the first Crisis (as seen in the secret fortress of Dr. Wells), his nephew Wally West took over the mantle. He seemingly did not have the super-speed of Barry. Also a fan favourite of a newer generation, elements of that Mike Baron/Mark Waid/Geoff Johns run is also present here. Flash is a haven for comic geeks but that does not take away from the fact that anyone should enjoy this show. It is well written, produced well. Stories are fast paced, with character growth in mind. Costume design and special effects are top notch as far as TV shows go. Flash is about the boy-scout type old-fashioned hero. He wants to do good. He wants to save the world. Captain Cold is right; Barry won't risk the lives of innocents in trying to get the bad guy first. But he *will* get the bad guy. He is the hero.

Following our review of "The Flash", published on December 18, 2014, this is a second opinion on the show.

ECHOES BY
ASRAR
CHOWDHURY

New Year's Resolution: Why planning doesn't work

Each night, you write a checklist for the next day. As the day progresses, you check out each task. When was the last time you crossed out each task by the end of the day? You're in a group of selected few if this happens frequently. If promises are made to be broken, then why do we make a New Year's resolution? Why do we usually fail to keep the resolution? Following the 2002 Nobel Prize winning economist Daniel Kahneman's "Planning Fallacy", let's start with your resolution. Keep it to yourself. Nobody will know then.

Completion of a New Year's resolution requires planning. A resolution has a longer timeline than a daily to-do list. May be you've promised to give up a bad habit, or start developing a good habit. This is the bulls-eye (single target) your mind has focused on. You have to achieve this objective. Stop. Isn't life what happens to you when you're busy making other plans like the John Lennon song says? You plan something. Something else appears. It distracts your attention after January. The devil inside

could predict the 2007-2008 financial crash. So, planning seldom works on a large scale. What about resolutions on a small scale? Planning on a small scale tends not to work because of procrastination.

When we set our minds to perform a task, we lack will force. We either focus on the task too much and run out of steam or get distracted by random factors. We procrastinate. Will force is like a dry cell battery. It runs out of power. It needs to be refueled. You need to have a Kit Kat. You need to take breaks and make breaks so you can keep focused on that single target. Unfortunately, the longer the time span, the more difficult it becomes to stay focused on the New Year's resolution you made at the beginning of the year.

Will we end with pessimism at the beginning of the year? Won't or can't we make a New Year's resolution? Instead of spending millions to design a pen that writes in zero gravity, why not stick to the basic by writing with a pencil? 'Keep things simple' and be 'quietly

Thanks for not laughing at my absurdly unattainable New Year's resolutions.



tempts you. Why not?

Random factors appear on the horizon randomly. These random factors distract our attention and the original plan we started off with. Life is a story with ever changing plots. When we plan we normally focus on one fixed target. This has been the method of scientific inquiry since the days of the ancient Greeks. Our thinking tends to not see the moving targets that blur the fixed target. The psychology professor, Philip Tetlock, from Pennsylvania reached a very interesting observation: planning almost never works because forecasting almost never clicks.

Over a period of ten years, Tetlock observed 28,361 predictions made by 284 professional forecasters and experts. He tested the same predictions randomly with a computer. Guess what? The experts performed only a little bit better than the computer. This isn't unexpected. There are more than a million trained financial experts in the world. Many of them are from top universities. Yet, almost none of them

brilliant'. Here's some game theory at the beginning of the year following the experimental psychologist Gary Klein.

Declare your New Year's resolution to yourself. Write a story. Destroy the plot. Make the ending a Persian-Greek Tragedy. The story ends in disaster. This is where your story starts: at December 31 this year. Now work your way back to January 1 of this year. Ask yourself: why couldn't Romeo and Juliet be together in the end? What went wrong? This is called 'Backward Induction'. It will help you to identify the trouble shooting spots in your New Year's resolution planning that may appear. This will make you more careful. Happy New Year! Good health and happiness. Source: "The Art of Thinking Clearly" by Rolf Dobelli. 2014.

Asrar Chowdhury teaches economic theory and game theory in the classroom. Outside he listens to music and BBC Radio; follows Test Cricket; and plays the flute. He can be reached at: asrar.chowdhury@facebook.com