

Writing the wrong

For the past four days I have been confined to my bed, with the occasional foray into the kitchen in search of food and water and subsequently the toilet. I had a persistent fever that has ebbed but was not so high that it prevented me from thinking about what's wrong with my life. Sometimes a good fever and a few days bed rest is what a woman needs to really ponder things. I have realised that I am not particularly

ambitious, and that is at once sobering, frightening and a relief. Naturally I am comparing myself to others in my milieu, writers, artists, professionals, and naturally facebook helps fuel these somewhat lopsided comparisons. But it's clear; I am not as driven as I thought I was. Now it could be that I am scared of failure and its Siamese twin success, but I really do think I am watching all these people around me, some linked to me

directly, others just floaties, put ambition, material success and mass approbation ahead of love, intimacy, and authenticity and the emptiness of these pursuits saddens me. They are all so busy they have no time to be present for one another or kind or just real.

Insincerity abounds when naked ambition is made paramount. I do admire people with drive but if there is no vision or love behind it, it's just self-serving. What

happens on this treadmill? A treadmill has no destination but those on it are not necessarily about the journey itself. Striving for goals and dreaming big, I also espouse. If I didn't I would not be writing stories or a novel, but that

cannot be all there is. I do think the work itself will suffer if it's insincere, though I am noticing you can trick the masses into thinking you are honest and your work is honest, when in fact, you have no integrity whatsoever, and your main goal is to achieve attention. Imbalanced ambition is usually accompanied by artful manipulation.

All this takes too much energy and time. Why do this when you could be creating and building and living? Plus, it's never ending, it's insatiable, this ambition, its hunger and demands constant. You achieve one goal, and if you have sense, you step back and look behind you and the destruction your drive has left in its wake should stop you dead in your tracks. If it doesn't you keep going for the next brass ring and then what? As a writer, Shannon Kaiser said, "there is no there to get to. It never ends." ■

THERE IS NO THERE

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