

## 6. JUST SAY NO.

empowering, self-esteem

Saying no to something bad now will always let you say yes to something better later. But standing up and saying no can also make you an instantly recognizable freak, and a target to the people who want you to say yes to something that is hurting you and/or others.

“No, I don’t want to wear a dress,” or

“No, I don’t want to play football,” or

“No, I refuse to support the criminally mean activities of an illegitimate, quasi-fascist corporate government.”

I’ve never been more proud of myself than at those times I’ve said no when I needed to. But saying no is the just the first step. Acting on no is the second, and the third, and every other step along the way.

There are alternatives to saying no when no is too hard to say. You could simply not say yes. That’s called passive resistance. Check out the M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence ([www.gandhiinstitute.org](http://www.gandhiinstitute.org)).

Or, you could get yourself out of the reach of whoever you want to say no to. The Dalai Lama says no to China’s occupation of Tibet like that ([www.tibet.com](http://www.tibet.com)).

You could even run away and hide and get yourself stronger, like Linda Hamilton in *Terminator II*. See #14, Run away and hide.

**ADVANCED MODE:** Use #93, Bring on Goliath, to say no to someone who’s been intimidating you for too long.

## 7. TRASH YOUR PREFERENCE FILES AND REBOOT

clean slate

Outsiders go through quite a few identities, each with its own set of preferences for dealing with different situations. We can change our conscious preferences easily enough, but sometimes it can help to change the things we do habitually or unconsciously as well.

Try this: For three or four days, write down the little things you do that you normally don’t think about doing, including any morning, afternoon, or evening routines, any habits you’ve got, your daily chores, how you deal with things that bore or annoy you, and the kind of music you’re listening to most. Write down ten things you find yourself thinking about without your having chosen to think about them. Notice how you answer questions like “How are you?” and “How was your day?”

Now you’re ready to shut down and reboot. For three days, no TV, radio, internet, music, film, games, newspapers, magazines, and so forth. You can talk with people, but no communication with anything that can’t speak back to you of its own intelligence. Be as aware as you possibly can of everything you say or do on a moment-to-moment basis, and try to make conscious, informed choices about what you say and what you do, without relying on the kind of choices you used to make. Make your new preference files as pristinely your own as they can possibly be.

**TIP:** Keep a copy of your old preferences in your conscious mem-

ory files. Then you'll have a copy to put back in place in case you trash any good preferences by accident. It always pays to back up your files!

**HARRY POTTER MODE:** Use this alternative along with #38, Cast a spell, to devise and perform a cleansing and grounding ritual for yourself.

**8. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.**

§?? t G ??? spiritual, rehearsal

This may be the key to the whole fucking book. Practicing anything will keep you more conscious, honest, and more capable of laughing at yourself. It's based on the Zen principle, *the way you do anything is the way you do everything*.

To get good at something, we usually practice until we know how to do it well. Like walking, talking, eating, or even fucking. Once something works, the things we do become unconscious habits or mindless routines. Like checking our email, doing our laundry, reading the paper, or even fucking. But because the way you do anything is the way you do everything, every single thing you do *could* be a conscious rehearsal for how you do everything else. Especially fucking.

Practice doing things more consciously. Before you start doing things, become aware of your intention to do them. Notice the difference between your intention to do something you already know how to do well, and your intention to do something you don't yet know how to do well.

**30. GET OUT THERE AND BE A STAR!**

§÷÷÷ 5 YG-50 ? thrill ride

Oh, go for it. At best, you'll be the star you always hoped you could be, and at worst, the journey you're going to take in order to get there will have made your life worth living and wouldn't that be a great feeling?

Every one of us gets to be a star in our own part of the sky. The trick to enjoying the pursuit of stardom is simply to brighten, warm and serve the universe around you. On good days I remember to believe that, and so can you. So, if going for stardom is going to fire up your lust for life, get out there and be a star in whatever sky welcomes you. See #58, Serve somebody.

**RECOMMENDED:** The films *A Star Is Born* (Judy Garland), *Waiting for Guffman*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Wee Geordie* and *Cabaret*, as well as the book *Edie* by Jean Stein and George Plimpton, and "The Golden Boy," *Worlds' End*, volume 8 of Neil Gaiman's Sandman series.



31. GET OUT THERE AND BE AN EXTRA!

§§§ ÷ 3 G ??? real life

Wouldn't it be fun to be one of the background cops or whores on TV's *Law and Order*? Well, move to New York and audition. Sometimes, it's a lot easier to let someone else be the star of the film.

Extras rarely get lines or credit. Sometimes all the audience ever sees is the back of their head. Or their face on a mug shot in the hand of some TV detective. But you get paid for that, which is a great big plus to being an extra. The trick to personal fulfillment as an extra is understanding that this is your work, that you're dedicating your life to it, and that, by gosh, you're making your living doing it. Life doesn't get much better than that.

32. GET OUT THERE AND BE AN EX.

§§§§ 5 G ??? empowering

What do ex-convicts, transsexuals, ex-nuns, ex-smokers, recovering alcoholics, ex-gamblers, ex-sex addicts, ex-sex offenders, ex-sex workers, and ex-gays have in common with everyone who ever once was but is no longer extremely rich, poor, fat, ugly, beautiful, working class, or ruling class? These are all people who are better known for what they used to be than for what they cur-

rently are. That hurts, and I'm sorry if that's happening to you. It seems to be the plight of the postmodern identity that modernist thinkers won't let us freely identity shift. Modernist and fundamentalist logic runs like this: if you once were one of those, then you still are, and you've probably got all those same qualities now. Being an ex is about leaving an old identity behind you, and learning how to manage the stigma of what you once were at the same time. It helps to have someone to talk with who knows what's going on. See #47, Find a friend.

If you're having trouble dealing with someone who refuses to see you as you are today and that situation isn't changing, then see #-37, Keep moving on, or if you're feeling more cranky or mischievous, try #52, Be a more frightening monster than the one they think you are. When you embrace being an ex, you can keep or keep available whatever you enjoyed about your past identity. See #7, Trash your preference files and reboot.

**MERIT BADGE!** Write an essay, poem, song or rant, or make a film, painting or sculpture that responds to the following two questions and you'll qualify for a hand-designed-by-me *Ex and Proud Merit Badge* Heck, you can even earn the right to wear this beauty by meditating on these questions for ten minutes every morning for one week.

1. What do the identities listed at the top of this section have in common?
2. What do you have in common with each one?



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**ADVANCED MODE:** You can use your ex status to get yourself some fame or notoriety, or you can make art out of it. See #30, Get out there and be a star! and #19, Make art out of it.

**RECOMMENDED:** *Becoming an Ex: The Process of Role Exit* by Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh.

**33. STOP FUCKING AROUND AND GET TO WORK.**

§... t G ??? real life, empowering

Does it suck being you? Is there nothing worthwhile to do? Does the world owe you a better life than the one you've got? If I said, "Oh, poor you," could you smile?

Say you had a friend, and every day this friend was feeling sorer and sorer for herself, so much so that it was hard to spend time with her. Wouldn't you want to tell her enough is enough? If hearing that makes you wince, maybe it's time to get off your butt. Get back to doing something, anything, any kind of work you can find for yourself. You can always keep looking for a more rewarding job. In the summer of 1968, I sorted bottle returns at a Pepsi plant, drove an ice cream truck, and became a scene designer/painter and a singer/dancer. It was a great summer. I didn't have time to get depressed.

**PARTNER MODE:** Find a good friend, family member, therapist, twelve-step program, congregation, or coven to help kick your

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butt back into the world.

**RECOMMENDED:** Richard Nelson Bolles's *What Color Is Your Parachute?* There's a new edition for teens.



**34. SING FOR YOUR SUPPER.**

§... c G ?? real life

Are you just too freaky for McDonald's, Disney, or Bank of America? Trust me, that's good news. And don't worry about making a living. You can cultivate what makes you freaky to make a much more fun living than what you might find flipping hamburgers, or following some corporate dress code because you think it's your only choice.

Here are just some of the ways I've seen some pretty freaky people make a living without having to hide their freakiness. I've starred the ones I've done myself. This should jumpstart your inner breadwinner.

Accounting, bookkeeping, artists' model,\* pelvic model, motion-capture model, astrologer, Tarot reader,\* tech support rep,\*

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blogger, zinester, journalist,\* bookstore worker, librarian, museum worker, care giver, social worker, sitter,\* companion, courtesan, personal assistant, carpenter, cabinetmaker, baker, musician, adult entertainer,\* circus, freak show, or sideshow performer, corset maker, craft maker,\* game designer, programmer, gardener, landscaper, entertainer,\* erotic dancer, sex worker,\* stage carpenter,\* stage electrician, scene painter,\* costumer, sound technician, light technician, stage manager, barista, food-service worker,\* restaurant worker, nurse, veterinarian, phone sex operator,\* professional dominatrix\* or submissive, black-market operator, professional student, pool player, gambler, priest, priestess, nun, minister,\* scientist, mathematician, physicist, engineer, boxer, wrestler, grant writer,\* grant receiver,\* trades and service industry,\* U.S. postal worker, theatrical producer or presenter,\* artists' agent, slam poet, street/park performer,\* sales,\* telemarketer,\* knitter, tailor, fabric designer, sugar baby.



**GROUP MODE:** Join or put together a band, writers' group, dance team, theater company, bookstore collective, or socialist commune. AND there are foundations, trusts, grants, and even a few government-sponsored programs that you qualify for precisely because you're an outsider. Get your application in now!

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## 35. DANCE FOR YOUR LIFE.

§÷÷÷ t G ?? safety

The ultimate bully threat is this: entertain me or die. In the West-erns I watched when I was growing up, there was always a scene with some bad guy shooting bullets at the feet of some hapless stranger. And the bad guy would always shout, "Dance! Dance for your life!" Martin Scorsese recreated the moment in *Goodfellas*. The language is grittier. Joe Pesci shouts, "Dance, ya muthah-fuckah! Dance!"

Despite romantic notions to the contrary, outlaws and outcasts mostly end up on the wrong side of the gun, both figuratively and literally. Sometimes we have to dance. Sometimes it's someone we love whose finger is on the trigger.

Several of the alternatives in this book will help you get through a bad time like this. You can use #2, Take a deep breath and touch yourself; #12, Send out a distress signal; #6, Just say no; and #14, Run away and hide. I am so sorry if that's the position you're in. If you possibly can, leave now and get to a shelter or even the police. But if you can't leave, keep on dancing for as long as it takes to get out of there and get to someone who can protect you and keep you safe.

36. KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF THOSE MOTHERFUCKERS. (OKAY, NOT REALLY.)

§... a G ??? thrill ride

Have you ever had a murderous thought about someone? I have. A lot of people have. I'm sorry, but the kind of world we've all grown up in makes it easy to have those thoughts. So, get over the notion that having them makes you an unusual or bad person. The urge to kill is completely natural. Like any other natural urge, what matters is learning all the constructive things you can do with that urge once it surfaces. Eventually, the urge to kill can channel your energy into a great number of constructive directions. It can fuel your politics, your art, and your sense of justice.

The challenge becomes how can you fully experience and satisfy your urge to kill 'em all without actually killing anyone or anything? The easiest thing to do is pretend you're killing 'em all. Indulge in the revenge fantasies of movies, books, cartoons, and video games.

And when you're ready to come back to the real world, where you know that murder just doesn't cut it, you can decompress the way I did while I was writing this book. I pulled up the San Diego Zoo panda-cam, and I watched Bai Yun in the birthing den with her new cub. Calmed me right down every time.



**EROTIC MODE:** Hentai is the porn version of manga and anime. If you enjoy playing with violent sex consensually with others, you might want to check it out. Hentai can also be really tender and sweet.

**RECOMMENDED:** The films *Kill Bill I and II*, *Natural Born Killers*, *True Romance*, *Blue Velvet*, *V for Vendetta*, and HBO's *The Sopranos*. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* solves the problem of violence with good fashion sense. Sword, sorcery, and samurai films can provide you with some really good scenes of death to the bad guys.

37. KEEP MOVING ON.

§...? t G ??? clean slate

Everything comes to an end. What no one ever tells you is what to do after that. This is what you do: you move on and you *keep* moving on. It's not as bad as it sounds.

Moving on is the other side of the mountain from death and dying. It's about what you do after the dying and after the death. It's wherever life takes you after the end of something that was beautiful and important or ugly and painful in your life. Moving on

There's an old saying in show business: all shows close.

is what you do after a relationship is over, whether it was a relationship with someone, something, or someplace. Moving on is about continuing your life without that physical presence.

You choose to move on when you stop falling back into an identity that no longer works for you.

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It's a way you can start all over again and put all the painful or joyful good-byes in context with the hellos that always follow. How can you tell when something is over? I'm still learning that one, but usually I get the message when I feel stuck or when I'm in too much pain, and good-bye is one of the very few options left. Sure, moving on can leave you bone lonely, but most of that loneliness happens when you're lost in memories. Part of moving on successfully is learning what to leave behind. See #21, Deal with the dead and gone, and #100, Tidy your campsite before you leave.

Make a list of the last three people, places, or things that you lost or left behind. Which parts of you haven't moved on from those losses? See #9, Make longer-range plans, and figure out how best to move on from those losses.

**RECOMMENDED:** Try the books *Berlin Stories* by Christopher Isherwood, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Truman Capote, and *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse. Or rewatch any season finale of the TV show *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* by Joss Whedon.

38. CAST A SPELL.

§... c G ??? magic, instinct

Are you good at making things happen across the room or across time? Do you travel interdimensionally or would you like to? Do you have your own version of spider sense or women's intuition? Are you a medium or a teller of fortunes? Are you worried that someone is going to dump pig's blood on you at the prom? You are not

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alone, and you are not freaky or crazy for any supernatural abilities you seem to have. There's a whole world of people who practice all kinds of magic. There are books, audio and video tapes, and DVDs on how to do it. There are conventions of people who practice real live cast-a-spell magic. Some of them, but not many, worship Satan. Even so, almost all of these people are very nice to hang out with and learn magic from. Part of the fun is looking for these people in your life. So, go learn some magic and have fun casting spells. Don't poke your eye out with your wand.

**SEX MAGIC MODE:** Throw in an orgasm to fuel your magic. It's fun and easy! Read *Urban Tantra: Sacred Sex for the 21st Century* by my partner in love, art, and magic, Barbara Carrellas.

39. MAKE A WISH.

§... a G ??? magic, comfort

When you wish upon a star, your dreams come true. Did you ever believe that? What made you stop believing? When was the last time you made a wish on a wishbone, a dandelion, or a birthday candle? If making wishes makes you feel better, make more wishes. I mean, duh!

Think of something you'd like. Anything at all. Now, savor the idea of already having it. How does that make you feel? For the rest of the day, do things that make you feel just like that. What you're doing is putting yourself in a



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receptive mode so that your wish might come true. You're aligning yourself with the naturally positive energy of the universe that wants you to be happy.

40. MAKE BELIEVE.

§, a G ??? rehearsal, comfort

When you make believe, you're giving yourself clues to a useful future identity.

Beyond the age of eight or nine, very few people take make-believe seriously. Pretending is a skill we spend years perfecting, and yet we're never supposed to use that skill for any real reason. You, however, can take this skill very seriously and use it to make yourself feel better.

Making believe isn't exactly lying, and it's not a way to "fake it 'til you make it," because when you make believe, it's as real as you can imagine it to be. And making believe isn't delusional, it's completely conscious. How many real-life uses can you come up with for your skill in making believe?

**EXERCISE:** Make believe you're somehow better you than you are right now. Or, make believe you're the kind of you that you've always wanted to be. Use costumes, props, and as many details as you might need to help you make believe that you are that better you. Keep on making believe for as long as you can. Then write down the differences between the make-believe you and the everyday you. Use #7, Trash your preference files and reboot, or #38, Cast

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a spell, to get rid of the parts of you that make you feel bad, and nurture the parts of you that make you feel better about yourself.

**RECOMMENDED:** *Calvin and Hobbes*, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (movie and book), and *Tipping the Velvet* (movie and book).

**WOO-WOO MODE:** #49, Find a God who believes in you.

41. MAKE A DREAM COME TRUE FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

§,§, a G ????? delight

It's been said that the dining rooms in Heaven and Hell are exactly the same. Diners sit across from each other at long tables heaped with delicious food. The only utensils are three-foot-long chopsticks. In Hell, the damned starve as they try in vain to feed themselves with the chopsticks that can't reach their mouths. In Heaven, folks generously feed one another across the table. Making someone else's dreams come true makes you feel great. It doesn't have to be their dream of a lifetime. Leave that to reality TV. Just go make someone's little dream come true with no strings attached.



If this is you with the wings, whose shoulder might you be sitting on?

**RECOMMENDED:** See the film *Pay It Forward* and visit the Pay It Forward Foundation at [www.payitforwardfoundation.org/](http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/).

**42. ACT YOUR AGE OR ANY OTHER.**

§,,, a YG ?? Real Life, mischief

Age-based discrimination is a given. But here's a way you can get around it. No matter how old you are, you can embody an archetype of any age and live at the age that works best for you at any given moment. Most cultures have established archetypes for what they determine to be the four primary ages of life. These are represented in the Tarot as King (elder), Queen (adult), Knight (adolescent), and Page (child). And while those are nice enough categories, they're too broadly drawn to be of much practical use.

As an outsider in a postmodern age, you're free to try out many nuanced identities within, and beyond, each of those four age ranges. You can take on and put off ages as they suit you, using different age models to handle different situations in your life. You can shift identities in order to stay under the radar of someone who isn't hip to what you're doing.

Here's a list of identities I've used that you can pull out of your hat whenever you need it. You can be each and every one of them. Have a great time.

**CHILDREN**

- The Good Kid
- The Girly Girl
- The Tomboy
- The Nerd
- The Invisible Kid

**ADOLESCENTS**

- The Romantic
- The Rebel
- The Freak
- The Slut
- The Sex Genius
- The Dyke
- The Goth
- The Slayer

**ADULTS**

- Mother/Mommy
- Father/Daddy
- The Scientist
- The Nun/Monk
- The Leader
- The Teacher
- The Whore
- The Outlaw
- The Owner

**ELDERS**

- Grandma
- Grandpa
- The Crone
- The Ambassador
- The Curmudgeon
- The Judge
- The Wizard

**AGELESS**

- The Lady
- The Gentleman
- The Artist
- The Lunatic
- The Magician
- The Traveler
- The Healer
- The Monster
- The Student

43. ACT YOUR GENDER OR ANY OTHER.

?? delight, mischief

More and more people are embracing multiple genders in order to accomplish things in different parts of their lives. Sometimes, we need boy energy. Sometimes, only girly-girl energy will do. You get to do what you most enjoy doing, no matter what your body looks like, or what gender you were assigned at birth. When did you learn otherwise?

Growing up in our culture, we learn to narrow down our gender presentation to the same one every day. If you were raised in another culture, your gendered behavior would look very different from the way you're doing your gender right now. It would follow that we have the ability to be lots of genders. But there's never been a practical guideline for shifting between them. Well, there is now. Welcome to g.i.d.g.e.t., the gender identity graphic equalizer tool. You can use g.i.d.g.e.t. to pinpoint both the gender you are being, and the gender you'd like to be. It's easy as pie and it doesn't involve surgery or hormones.

Why play with gender? If gender is an identity that signals our desire and our position in some power hierarchy, then it should be possible to explore the nature of our desire and power more completely by taking on a gender identity more compatible with our fantasies. Wouldn't that be a good reason to stay alive?

Take a look at the chart below. Each column represents a binary

pair of characteristics. Make an X in each column to indicate more or less where you tend to fall most of the time. Modify any words you like. Use the blank column to add any other qualities that help define who you most usually are being. When you're done, connect the X's with a line. Viola! It's a graphic representation of the gender you spend a lot of your day-to-day time in.

Now, get yourself to a nice, safe, comfortable place where you can be by yourself with as little chance of being interrupted as possible. Think of something that turns you on sexually. Just close your eyes and imagine doing it or having it done to you. What does it make you feel like? Write down some words. Take your time and be thorough in your imagination.

REMEMBER: You don't ever have to act out on your own fantasies, or anyone else's. Ever. It's always your choice.

Once you've got a sexual fantasy in mind, go back to g.i.d.g.e.t. and enter a check mark in each column that would most closely represent how you feel when you imagine it. Then connect the check marks with a line that's different from the one you first made. Now you know the components of a gender identity that most closely matches the gender in which you experience your sexual fantasy. And being the clever thing that you are, you can now consciously adjust yourself along several binaries in order to give yourself pleasure. It's that easy. That's how sexual fantasies can lead to personal enlightenment and freedom—even your grossest, most scary, don't-wanna-go-there sexual fantasies.

POWER MODE: Now that you've run g.i.d.g.e.t. to explore your desire, run it to explore the nature of your power. What points

Gender Identity Graphic Equalizer Tool

	Orderly	Insider	Adult	Gallant	Mind	Solid	Light	Reason	Anything Else?
Leader	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
Follower	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1

within the binaries make you feel powerful? How could you become the kind of identity who more routinely feels powerful?

**ZEN MODE:** Zero yourself out in every column of g.i.d.g.e.t.

**44. USE THE WRONG TOOL FOR THE JOB.**

§,?? c G ?? real life



The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.  
—Audre Lorde

So what tools could you use? The wrong ones! You can get really good at using the wrong tools to get the job done.

Most outsiders and outcasts have been on the receiving end of a bully's anger, so we are nearly always at first loathe to use a bully's methods. But after a while and usually under a great deal of pressure, some of us embrace those tools and turn them on our oppressors. I know a lot of people swear by that, but I'm trying my best not to use the following tools:

- Force
- Power over
- Shame
- Fear
- Threats
- Humiliation
- Blame
- Name-calling

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|---|--------------------|
| Hate  | Segregation        |
| Back-and-white thinking                     | Capitalism         |
| The notion that the end justifies the means | Divide and conquer |
| Intimidation                                | Theft              |
| An eye-for-an-eye                           | Greed              |

When you don't use the master's tools, other tools become available to you. These aren't startling new tools. Most of them have been in use for aeons. They're the tools the bullies have tossed aside as forbidden or unworkable because they're too scared to use them.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Magic           | Compassion    |
| Love            | Humor         |
| Anarchy         | Comedy        |
| Sex             | Paradox       |
| Joy             | Nonviolence   |
| Patience        | Seduction     |
| Fairness        | Riddles       |
| Consensus       | Art           |
| Illogic         | Visualization |
| Compromise      | Affirmations  |
| Culture jamming |               |

**EXERCISE:** Add more items to both lists of tools.

**PRACTICE MODE:** Do something nice for the wrong reason.

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**ARTSY MODE:** Make art from the wrong materials.

**WOO-WOO MODE:** Worship God the wrong way.

**MATH MODE:** Solve a problem using the wrong formula.

**SEX MODE:** Find a fun sex toy at your local bakery.

**ALTERNATE SEX MODE:** Find a fun sex toy at the hardware store.

**HEAVY METAL SEX MODE:** Find a fun sex toy in a medical catalog.

**TRANNNY MODE:** Do it the way you did it before you transitioned.

**GANDHI MODE:** Get together with, or help put together, a group of people who agree on which part of the master's house needs to be dismantled. Reach consensus on how to dismantle it without using any of the master's tools.

**45. COME OUT, COME OUT,  
WHATEVER YOU ARE.**

§÷÷÷ c YG/ASS ???? relief, empowering, delight

It's always worth the risk to come out of whatever closet we've been keeping ourselves in. But each of us is entitled to make the decision about just how and when to do it.

We keep secrets about ourselves when we're afraid that if someone knew, they would stop loving us and/or start hurting us. While it's true that some people are going to say good-bye, there will be people who are going to say hello, just because you're being a you

that you've always wanted to be. And you've seen enough television and movies, and read enough books or graphic novels to know that it takes a lot of work to keep a secret about your identity from those who love you. Keeping a secret, staying in some closet, never expressing some loving part of ourselves can drain our energy to the point of exhaustion. And then there's all the paranoia about someone finding out. It makes you jumpy. So, come on out. You don't have to come out to everyone all at once. Start by coming out to someone that other people have safely come out to.

And remember, just because you come out as something, that doesn't mean you have to always keep on being that. You can always come out as something else later.

46. FIND THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE.

§?? t G ?? thrill ride, spiritual



I swear, there's someone out there for you to love. He, she, or they are out there someplace looking for you. But no one is going to love you exactly the way you are until *you* love you exactly the way you are. So, how do you love yourself? Louise Hay says it would be very brave of you if you were to say, "I love you just the way you are" in the mirror three times a day. For more affirmations, see her book *You Can Heal Your Life*.

ZEN MODE: Become the kind of person you want to fall in love

with. Make a list of what's important in a lover, and work on being that yourself. See *Be the Person You Want To Find* by Cheri Huber.

47. FIND A FRIEND.

§?? c G ???? real life

You can do it. Finding a friend is like finding anything else. You just keep looking until someone shows up in your life who's genuinely glad to see you. Then, you take a deep breath, open up, and let someone in at whatever level of friendship makes you both comfortable.

No matter who you are or what you do, there are people who would like to spend time with you. Whenever you're feeling lonely, just take a moment to consider how many different friends are really possible in your life. A friend can be a political ally, a classmate, a mentor, or a lover. You can make friends at the library, a potluck, at a Good Vibrations or a Toys In Babeland store, or in a twelve-step meeting. Just go do what interests you, and before long you'll be doing that with other people who have the same interests.

One of the most difficult things about being a recognizable freak or outsider is the loneliness. It's harder to make friends. One of the *best* things about being a recognizable freak or outsider is that your best friends don't mind, and usually even appreciate, a lot of the weird stuff about you.

PRACTICE MODE: Practice friendship with pets, imaginary

friends, dolls, action figures, stuffed animals, and video games. And you do have a friend in Jesus, as well as in Mohammed, Moses, Buddha, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, L. Ron Hubbard, and any other spiritual guide, angel, or demon who listens and/or speaks to you.

**ADVANCED MODE:** Try to structure your life so it includes friends from a wide range of your life's experiences, and from a wide diversity of identities.



If you were in this picture, who would you be?

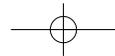
48. FIND YOUR TRIBE.

§... c G ??? comfort



If you were in this picture, who would you be?

would be a wonderful big brother or little brother. You could find a big sister or kid sister. You could even find your evil twin, or a cou-



ple of kissin' cousins. All these kinds of tribal and familial love exist in the world for you. You just have to go looking.



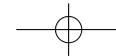
**MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRICE:** Sometimes we give up some of our individuality in order to be accepted into some tribe or so that we can become the kind of person that someone else wants us to be. It's not a good situation to be in for any length of time. Use #15, Run a diagnostic program every now and then and #37, Keep moving on if it comes to that.

49. FIND A GOD WHO BELIEVES IN YOU.

§... c G ??? spiritual, magic, comfort

Postmodern identities that require deities require postmodern deities. If you're thinking that life isn't worth living in part because God doesn't approve of something that you are or that you're doing, it's time you find yourself a God who likes people like you. Look around. There are perfectly lovely deities who watch over nature, science, and art. There are deities who will support you on pretty much any career path you choose to take. As a postmodern identity surfer, you'll find new Gods and Goddesses to bless each new identity you take on. Do be sure to say a respectful farewell to the Gods and Goddesses you leave behind.

Here are some good questions to ask on your quest for a God who believes in you:



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- ◆ Is it possible that there are Gods and Goddesses out there besides the one you've been believing in?
- ◆ Have you heard of any other Gods or Goddesses who give their followers a better deal at life than your God is giving you?
- ◆ Does the culture you live and work in worship a deity or deities who look and act like you?
- ◆ Have you heard of any other deities who do look and act like you? Have you looked hard?
- ◆ Who is your deity or deities, and what are they doing for you right now? In what currency and how much are you paying them for what they do?
- ◆ If your world came down to intelligent design, what is the nature of your God's intelligence? Do you want to be intelligent like that?
- ◆ Who exactly is the God who's being worshipped by the people who are giving you trouble? How does their God want to be worshipped, and what is their God doing for them, do you think, that makes Him worth their worship?

**ZEN MODE:** Believe in no single creator God, but that anything else is possible.

**WICCAN MODE:** Believe in Gods and Goddesses in nature, and in elves, faeries and other wee folk when they give you cause to believe in them.

**BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTIONARY MODE:** Use wild, wacky sex and gender positive nature as your deity. Read *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender and Sexuality in Nature and People* by my friend and colleague, Joan Roughgarden.

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**RECOMMENDED:** *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse and Jean Shinoda Bolen's *Goddesses in Everywoman* and *Gods in Everyman*. Play *Black & White*, the video game.

50. BE YOUR OWN HERO/INE.

§... c ??? empowering, delight



No matter what genre or generation we're talking about, superhero/ines are always outsiders, mutants, and/or freaks. It is their particular super power that substantiates their freakishness. Their ability to navigate the world in spite of their shocking difference is part of what makes them super.

When the universe took away your respectable identity membership card, it gave you a miraculous gift in exchange: the precise super powers you need in order to rescue yourself from suffering and keep living in this world. And like all truly great hero/ines, your life's mission, should you choose to accept it, is to discover your own super powers and then use them to help end suffering for everyone. Start looking for your super powers right now. You'll find them very close to whatever it is that's keeping you on the outside of things.

51. BE YOUR OWN EVIL TWIN.

§÷÷÷ c G ?? mischief

If being good isn't helping you handle your life, then be bad. Your evil twin is the perfect identity to call on when you want to break a stupid rule for the first time. The best evil twins on television and in the movies are always braver, sexier, and lots more fun anyway. Cover your bases safetywise, lay down the don't-be-mean ground rule, and then let your evil twin run the show for a while.

**ADVANCED MODE:** Be you and your evil twin at the same time. See #91, Believe in your own paradox.

52. BECOME A MORE FRIGHTENING MONSTER THAN THE ONE THEY THINK YOU ARE.

§:?? c G ?? mischief

If people knew the real you, would they run screaming from the room? Well, whatever kind of monster they *think* you are, it's probably safe to say, you're really much *more* terrifying. Sometimes we like to look freaky. Sometimes we like to blend in. It's our choice. But shifting from one to another keeps people from figuring out who or what we are. The cultural monster here at the

turn of the century is the shape-shifter. Being an outsider isn't what makes us monstrous. We are monsters because we're so good at either revealing our monstrosity, or keeping it hidden when we want to.



It's when we become something the über-culture can't quite put its finger on that we know we're being a worse monster than the one they think we are. In this culture, that's a crime. You have to match your photo ID. So, go ahead. Be a chameleon. Enjoy yourself. Play safe, and try not to scare the little children.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Write an essay, poem, recipe, film or performance piece on this question: if a culture's monsters reflect it's greatest fears, what does it say about über-American culture that its monsters are for the most part shape-shifters and mutants?

53. BE CUTE OR BE DASHING.

§§§÷ c G ?? delight, empowering

When you spend a lot of your time dodging arrows, it's good to have a friendly way to disarm the archers. Cute doesn't mean weak, subservient, or incapable of protecting oneself. To the contrary, cute is distinctively capable of inflicting serious damage. Porcupines are super cute, but you wouldn't want to fuck with one.

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Cute and dashing are age-free, race-free, class-free and gender-free identities. You don't need any particular look to be cute or dashing—it's cross-cultural. You don't need to spend money on any particular accessories. Like most things, they work best if you don't force it. So, get on out there and be cute or dashing.

**ADVANCED MODE:** Be gracious or be gallant.

**54. BE AFRAID. BE VERY AFRAID.**

§, , , a G ???? clean slate

Use your fear like a compass. Each time I walk toward what's scaring me most—and keep on walking toward it—I end up walking right through that fear to some other side where I am no longer afraid. And every time that happens, there's another fear waiting for me on the other side. And I bitch and moan and then start walking toward this new fear, and it always gets scarier and scarier until finally I'm through to yet another side with yet another fear. It's like a video game. The levels get harder and harder, but you get better and better at playing.

**RECOMMENDED:** *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach and Albert Brooks's film *Defending Your Life*. (Watch out for Shirley MacLaine's cameo!)

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exactly with our low self-esteem or self-doubts, and we'll begin to make someone else's prophecy come true.

So, defy prophecy. Write down everything you can remember that anyone predicted about what you would be, what you would do, or what you would wind up with (or without) by the time you were the age you are right now. Put a star by any of the predictions that came true. Put an X by any that didn't. And by those for which it's too early to tell, put a question mark. Next to each, write down the name of the person who said it. Which are your truest prophets? Which are false?

At the time the predictions were made, which did you think would come true? Were any of these predictions kind? Were any of them unrealistic given who you were at the time? Now, of the predictions that may still come true, put a heart next to the ones that make you feel better about yourself. Write false in big letters through the predictions that make you feel worse about yourself. Write realistic, fun prophecies to replace the false ones. Which are your truest prophets? Which are false?

**85. THROW AWAY MORALS.**

§, , , c YG/ASS ???? relief, instinct, self-esteem

Moral codes are the sociological equivalent of training wheels. Theoretically, all moral restrictions could be lifted once people are traversing the world more or less kindly. People would just be nice to each other. Moral codes are useful only when we have

descended to needing them. The Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes come in handy when we have to make an important decision, or when we're under a great deal of pressure, or when we're thinking about killing ourselves or someone else. We don't have to think too hard, we just remember, "Thou shalt not kill."



The problem with most moral codes today is that they don't have much to do with what's actually good for people. They exist primarily to direct us into predictable and controlled behaviors. People who write moral codes into law don't trust you. They think you and I have to be kept strictly in line. That's called a theocracy, and you don't have to stand for it. It's healthier for your soul to live outside and above a degraded moral code than within and beneath one.

Prior to throwing away morals altogether, put together and live by your own moral code—one that works and allows you to live a kind and generous life. Make a list of all the moral rules you were raised with. Throw away the ones that don't work for you, and keep the ones that do. Once you're good at living within the boundaries of your own moral code, then you can throw it away and simply get on with living a kind and generous life.

**RECOMMENDED:** 1984 by George Orwell, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, and any version you like of the *Tao Te Ching*.

## 86. IGNORE THE GOLDEN RULE.

§?? c G ??? empowering

My girlfriend reminded me that there's only one rule to follow in this book, so the Golden Rule had to go. Besides, everyone else ignores the Golden Rule. Why should you be the only poor slob who actually obeys it?

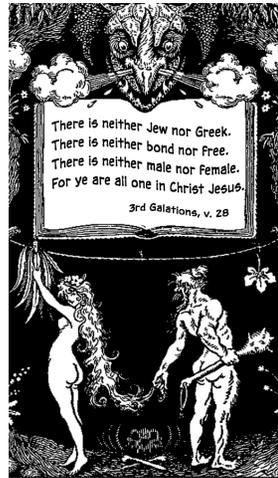
Let's take this thing apart. The Golden Rule is an ethical command, which makes it somewhat more significant than mere morals, which can fluctuate with cultures and subcultures. The Golden Rule is supposed to work for anyone. Do unto others as I would have them do unto me, but which me? And frankly, I really enjoy having things done unto me that not too many people would enjoy having done unto them. How about you? Better to ignore the Golden Rule. If you'd like to follow the spirit of the Golden Rule, just get into the habit of treating people better than they think they deserve to be treated. That ought to make everyone feel just great.



87. QUOTE SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR OWN PURPOSES.

ÀðÄÄÄÄÄÄ c G \_ spiritual, mischief

You can't just dismiss an entire movement or religion simply because part of it is a little batty when it comes to people like you. Part of you is a little batty when it comes to someone else. Yes, it can be more than a little intimidating to find yourself and people like you being railed against in some religious text. If some harmless joy of yours is forbidden or sneered at in some scripture, you can safely assume that the scripture wasn't written for people like you, and you are under no obligation to subscribe to it. Instead, go find yourself some scripture that you do agree with, and quote it for your own purposes. Look at the quote in this illustration. The Bible says there's no such thing as male or female. I love that. You can find something like that for yourself.



**DO-IT-YOURSELF SCRIPTURE FINDING:** Study scripture and write down all the quotes that support who and what you are in

the world, and what you believe in. Use them to make zines, stickers, and posters to your heart's delight.

**ADVANCED MODE:** Join a scripture discussion group of a religion that disapproves of something you do in your life. Try to be as nice and respectful as you can, please.

**ADVANCED MODE, ON THE OTHER HAND:** If, on the other hand, it's simply a huge relief to part with a religion's scriptures and it's painful to review them, then go to #85, Throw away morals, and #48, Find your tribe.

**RECOMMENDED:** *Sensuous Spirituality* and *Omnigender* both by dear, handsome Virginia Ramey Mollenkott and *The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* by Barbara Walker.

88. WRITE YOUR OWN CODE OF HONOR.

§,?? c G ???? real life

There's a lot to be said for a thief's notions of honor, the pirates' code, and even the rules and regulations of old-school sado-masochists. But no one else's code of honor will work for you 100 percent. You're just going to have to come up with your own.

Codes of honor are simply guidelines we develop or subscribe to in order to remind ourselves to do deeds we can be proud of, and to avoid doing deeds we're ashamed of. Why? Doing things we're proud of makes us feel worthwhile, noble, and good. Doing

things we're ashamed of makes us feel depressed and suicidal. So it becomes important to decide whose definition of shame we rely upon as a yardstick. You do not have to obey any code of honor that asks you to kill yourself for any reason.

Patch together a code of honor for yourself from codes that already exist. Study honorable people and deeds of honor. Look for the honor in everyone you meet. Most outlaw subcultures develop their own codes of honor. Try Googling "code of honor" and/or "honor code," along with the name of the outlaw culture you most resonate with. Carry your code of honor around with you and refer to it from time to time, making changes and adjustments as you need to.

89. SHATTER SOME FAMILY VALUES.

§,?? c G ??? spiritual, mischief

Sex and gender outlaws are often accused of attacking traditional American family values. Look . . . Don't kill anyone is a value. Don't be a homo is not a value. Beyond making a few privileged people feel like they've been chosen by God, it makes no positive contribution to society whatsoever. The unwritten, oft hinted at "family values"



that are used to beat up freaks are bogus. They've got nothing to do with family, and you should feel free to shatter them at will.

Here are some alternative outlaw values. The next time you're faced with an overwhelming problem, try this: 1. Pick out one or two values from this list that would most quickly resolve the issue. 2. Pick out the identity on page XXX that you could best use to implement that value. 3. Take on that identity and implement your value.

- |                |           |                         |
|----------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Home/Paradox   | Integrity | Deconstruction          |
| Transformation | Anarchy   | Dreams                  |
| Service        | Seasons   | The dark side           |
| Passion        | Trust     | Unconditional love      |
| Security       | Patience  | Freedom                 |
| Faith          | Death     | Mindful Reconstruction/ |
| Sex            | Art       | Home                    |
| Control        | Humor     |                         |

90. BELIEVE IN YOUR OWN LAUGHTER.

§,,, c G ????? delight, empowering, relief

Laughter alone can make you feel better. Your body knows the truth of your laughter and responds with a release of endorphins that makes you feel great. Even if you are über-grouch or über-Goth, you have smiled and laughed enough times during this lifetime for your body to know this: when you smile or laugh,

something is funny or pleasing, and that feels good. Smile, right now. Go ahead. When I make myself smile when nothing is particularly funny or pleasing, I can feel the echo in my body of fun and pleasure. If this resonates at all for you, try any number of books on laughter therapy, or check out [www.teehee.com](http://www.teehee.com).

What kinds of things make you laugh? Keep a small notebook with you and write them down. Put a star next to the ones that aren't at anyone else's expense. Put two stars next to the ones that aren't at your expense either. Do a lot more of the two-star things than the one-star things. Do a lot more of the one-star things than the no-star things. That'll brighten up yer day.

91. BELIEVE IN YOUR OWN PARADOX.

§, , , c G ???? instinct, delight

What is it that puzzles you most? Is there something going on in your life or around you that doesn't quite make sense? Confusion is how you know you're close to something big. Contradiction is how you know you've hit the nail on the head. Some of the most loving people I know are intense sadists. The most handsome man in my life has a vagina. I am neither a man nor a woman, and I am both. Do you have that kind of stuff going on in your life?



Have you ever followed your curiosity to two different parts of your life, each of which makes sense on its own, but together, cancel one another out? Coming to terms with your own paradox is a jim-dandy way to go on living.

**STEP ONE:** Experience paradox. Pick a question that interests you from the following list. Each one will lead you to at least one pair of rational opposite answers or opposite points of view, both of which are true. Consider that pair of concepts until you can hold them in your mind as true, both at the same time.

- Are cats and dogs children of God?*
- Why are so many scary people, places, and things so tempting?*
- Why do good people do mean things?*
- Can someone be a bad person and still lead a good life?*
- Why is terrorism so prevalent in the world?*
- Is unconditional love possible?*
- Can someone be completely passionate and completely reasonable at the same time?*
- What can account for the fact that the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching bear striking similarities to the structure of the DNA that's inside every single living thing?*
- True or false: if you could stand on the edge of a black hole and look back over your shoulder, you'd see all of time behind you.*

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*Are heterosexual sex and homosexual sex both natural?*

*Why is it, do you suppose, that in a henhouse where there's no rooster, one of the chickens will begin crowing at dawn?*

*Are there friendly demons and nasty-tempered fairies?*

*Can justice be both blind and fair?*

*Can a person be popular and a freak at the same time?*

*Is time invariably linear?*

*Can people be patriots and disagree with or criticize their government?*

*Can a person be attracted to both men and women and people who are neither?*

*Can sex be really vulgar and really beautiful at the same time?*

*Are you both relieved and disappointed that we've come to the end of these questions?*

**STEP TWO:** Experience your own paradox. Work with any of the following questions and concepts, each of which should lead you to some paradox about yourself. Consider that paradox until you can hold it in your mind as neither a good thing nor a bad thing about yourself.

*Is there anything in your life that both gives you a great deal of joy and gets you in the most trouble?*

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*Do you find yourself having to be two nearly opposite kinds of people in different situations or with different people?*

*Is there something about yourself that if you told people about it, it would totally change their opinion about who and what you are?*

*When was the last time you laughed and cried at the same time?*

*Who is it that you never want to see again but wish you could give a hug?*

*Why do some people think you're really bad, even though you're not much of a mean person?*

**STEP THREE:** Put your paradoxes into words. Paradoxes can be frustrating to the degree that we are unable to communicate them to other people. Fill in the blanks about yourself as many times as you care to:

*I am being completely honest when I say that I am \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Am I \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?*

*I am both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and neither.*

*I simultaneously love and hate \_\_\_\_\_.*

*The last time I killed a part of myself, \_\_\_\_\_.*

*The next time I kill a part of myself, \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I'm alive because \_\_\_\_\_.*

**ARTSY MODE:** Express your paradox in the art form of your choice.