

would have been easier to take what was owed me and move on, but at the same time, I wasn't ready to simply throw away an opportunity to own a part of the business and a shot at turning the relationship around. I promised Tom I would get back to him with my decision in a few days.

Too often, I had done what was considered "right" not because I cared, but rather, to keep up with peoples' expectations and the facade of wanting to appear the same as, or better than everyone else. Suppressing the nihilistic sociopath in me was not easy. From all outward appearances I was on cruise control. Inside, however, I was running on empty. Going through the motions until conditions improved or a better alternative came my way were my only options. What "better" was I had no bloody clue. The late Dr. Thompson said it best: 'Too weird to live, too rare to die'. He had one hell of a ride and offed himself with a gunshot. Not saying I wanted to go out like that, but you can't blame the guy for taking matters into his own hands.

I didn't believe in anything. Religion, politics, love—none of it. I had opinions, but I refused to commit to ideals administered by propaganda created for the many in order to serve the few. The only thing I believed in was me. At least I was real. But I wouldn't even go so far as to call it a belief. I had no confidence. We can't be something we don't possess. The Rubik's Cube of my mind had been turned in every direction, and it was hard to justify the bullshit required to accomplish a relative level of success, that, when all was said and done from six feet under, wouldn't matter anyway. Coasting along was trite. But why move heaven and earth? I tried not to have any needs or expectations, or even feelings. Somewhere between Stoicism and Buddhism someone tried to come up with a reasonable solution, but any "ism", for all intents and purposes, is basically a system of control parading in drag.

Some people believe in fate and some believe in free will. From what I've seen, I would have to say the universe is a combination of both. We are all born into this world and we all end up dead in the end—neither of which by choice—but how we live in

between is up to no one but ourselves. The journey each of us embarks upon is in fact a series of crossroads. When we are on the right path, the fewer crossroads there are. But when our compass is off, the wheel of fortune throws a blessed array of detours in our way to guide us back to where we belong. The more crossroads we encounter, whether we are aware of it or not, the more tightly we are being steered.