6/11/2016

A bunch of things ringing around my mind.

What helps improve thinking – walking.

1. Walking definitely.
2. Not drinking
3. Writing
4. Baths
5. Showers
6. Exercise

That’s not a bad list, although of course it would be better if it were a prime number of things.

The network here is unreliably (quelle surpreez) and I haven’t brough my phone with me. I’ve managed (although it wasn’t what I was trying to do) to reinstall windows 7 on my laptop which means that it’s again relatively fast and has reasonable battery life compared to running windows 10 which had straight-forwardly made it unusable.

I was meaning to write 1000 words a day in November, following on from my failure to walk 155 miles in October. I my defence, I was ill at the beginning of October, so it took me a long time to get going. Then at the end of October we had company for 2 weekends and I really struggled to get out and do the necessary miles when there were people in the house.

So the idea of writing 1000 words is day is to just write about anything that comes into my head. I know that the Terry Pratchett idea is that they should a page of publishable text a day, but I’m rather going with the Gerald Weinberg idea of just writing and writing and writing and then doing something which what gets written. I’m especially interested in combining this with the idea from Zen in the Art of Archery. That if you keep doing the practice, eventually you won’t be the one who releases the shot, “It” will be the one that releases the shot. Of course this is really you as well, but it’s not the conscious you. It’s the whole of your intelligence, which has a better grasp of reality than the conscious you.

And maybe something like that can happen with writing. I think that’s what I’m going to try to do in November with my writing – which after all, most of the time, let’s face it is just going to be for half an hour on the Metropolitan line every workday morning. What I’m going to do is to try to right about absolutely everything that comes into my head and to just write and write and write so that I can get into the habit of being there, waiting to hear what there is to write about, ready to write it down.

What do I want to write about just now? I want to write about the fact that I just did some research to see what the current state of seduction is and that ten years on from when I was first looking at it it doesn’t seem to have changed.

I also noted that Neill Strauss has written a book saying that he thinks that he pursued sex at the cost of relationships – which makes me wonder if paying for it really is part of the answer. And when I was lying in bed this morning I was thinking about all the erotic moments in my life (none of them are paid-for) and I was thinking, as I often do, how enduring they are, after all these years. Another thing that became obvious, that I’d never thought of before was how successful I’d been with Oriental women (not *that* successful obviously).

I don’t like some of the clientele in here, which is a bit annoying. It’s a café that I would really like to have a good ambience, it’s just North of London fields in Hackney.

There’s a whiny, I can’t make up my mind whether he’s Northern Irish or Scottish, but he’s a fucking whiny Celt sitting on the shelf by the window. Boy is he doing some complaining.

Then somebody’s actually bought a screaming baby in here. Because when you’ve been stupid enough to have kids, you have to make absolutely sure that every other fucker also gets to suffer. Uh oh, exactly 666 words better keep writing, I don’t want to pose at that word count. And they brought a whippet, of course they fucking did.

And someone else who’s annoying me – I’m glad that there’s no one here to hear my annoyance. I can hear someone saying – well you say you like Hackney, you say that you like hipsters, so why do you complain about it. OK – so some things that I do like about this place. I think the waitress is really sexy. She’s skinny and neurotic, but she has a very nice bum.

Poor woman having to listen to all of that complaining from the whiny Celt. I don’t want to be that whiny Celt. I really don’t.

So what is the answer to being married and horny? Not seduction? What about paying for it? *Somebody’s paying for it.* When you search for it online you find it. It’s clearly a big business. How weird was thing in Liverpool of warning that you need to book well in advance if you want “company” for a football night?

But maybe people want far too much from marriage. I know that I’ve not kept up with my friends, especially since I’ve been working – since the end of 2009. And so I’m both missing sexual experiences/satisfaction and company.

God, I’m horny. And I know that it’s something to do with doing the training. It’s something hormonal. All that stress seems to make me \*very\* horny.

Let’s just leave the skinny neurotic woman in the café as a fantasy. Part of me wonders why I even bother trying to write the truth about my sexuality. It feels like it’s forbidden. So much of what men \*actually\* think/want from women. Is simply shouted down. OK that’s nearly 1000 words. The hottie in front of me is picking her nose and eating it (that puts even me off) which I’m taking as an indication that she’s not that into me.

Two other things that I need to do as well as the writing. And I think the writing is very important, and it seems to be flowing very well today – even though I’m completely knackered.

As well as writing, I need to re-write. To edit to polish and as well as re-writing and editing and polishing, I need to read, I need to research.

I just thought of Augusto Boal’s title for his book – Games for Actors and Non-Actors.

What about games for writers and non-writers. Games for seducers and non-seducers.

It seems that what you need to be doing when you’re writing is very similar to what you’re doing when you’re seducing. You’re leading someone down a path. Of course, to lead them down that path it has to be enjoyable. But if you didn’t put the work into leading them down the path, they wouldn’t come.

Also, what about the idea of refactoring text. Just going through it and doing one thing – tightening the language. Improving the linking between paragraphs.

07/11/2016

I’m reading a book by Neill Strauss, after yesterday’s investigation into the current state of seduction.

He’s in a mental hospital undergoing treatment for sex addiction. Some of the things that the “therapist” were saying were very disturbing. She says that any mention of a “girl” rather than a woman, she is duty bound to interpret as being child molestation. Also they make Strauss sign a contract saying that he’s not going to have sex for 12 weeks and this includes masturbation!!!

Masturbation. You’ve got to be suspicious of anybody who tells you not to masturbate. I’m sorry but you have.

I think I could have a conversation every morning on the tube if I wanted. And I think that some of them would lead to interesting places. I wonder what I would do if I were Neil Strauss (I can’t decide how many “L”s Neil has). One thing that I was thinking was that when I was spending a lot of my time doing seduction stuff, one of the reasons that I didn’t actually sleep with anyone was that at the last minute I would lose my nerve (with Marina, with Hiroko). Why was that? Was it that I was a coward? Maybe or maybe it was that in the ultimate calculation I didn’t want to risk what I had with Themis. And this all makes perfect sense form the “mutil-dimensional sub-conscious” point of view. Of course when you flatten things into a single line of reasoning they don’t make sense. But we’ve got a hugely complicated brain (and an endocrine system that’s working semi-independently). This is so that we can have competing urges. That’s not a fault of the system, it’s a feature.

I thought I was going to get the bus home from Footnotes last night but no bus came. And I couldn’t make up my mind which was more annoying. The bus not coming or the elderly couple with their son and his girlfriend complaining that the bus wasn’t coming. So I took the overground from Hackney central. I wasn’t exactly sure where I would need to go, but I thought if it were running it would be preferable to waiting for the bus. Turned out that there was a train to Stratford, so I got on that. There was a black woman on there. She was annoying me because was playing videos on her phone with the sound on and no headphones – who does that? And then she was on her phone several different people.

To one she was talking about needing to have a smoke before she went to bed. To another she was saying that her money would be in her account but later, “later, later” and she didn’t have money for the electricity and she needed to do her laundry.

Then I got on the central line from Stratford to Mile End and there were some Essex cunts on there. One putting his feet all over his girlfriend. They were having a very important conversation about the length of shirt sleeves. The other one was fucking enormous. Enormous legs sticking out of his shorts like Iberico hams. Uneven holes in the lobe his ear from many piercings, now removed.

There were making a lot of noise and talking utter shite.

I made eye contact with the woman sitting next to me, blonde, 40’s. I could have started a conversation with her. It would have been easy, and it would have been risk-free. I was getting off at the next stop.

Then on the bus from Mile End to Pixley street there was somebody shouting downstairs, I don’t know what about. He sounded Indian/Pakistani and maybe elderly, I don’t know whether he had grounds to be shouting or not. I was on the top deck (which was nearly empty). I shared a conspiratorial smile with an enormous black man.

I didn’t sleep that well. But I remembered something that I heard when I was listening to “The Iron Flute” – the idea that you \*should\* think about your problems when you’re meditating. I really like the idea that your problems are a “rice bag” – they’re something that sustains you. You will never run out of having them to think about.

At the same time I think that one of the things that I like about walking is that you don’t have to be thinking about your problems all the time. Things don’t necessarily take care of themselves as a result of the walking, but things get taken care of.

Let me write something about this particular porn series that I’ve been watching. It’s got a terrible title, it’s called “desperate amateurs” and some of them do look genuinely desperate and they definitely look amateur. But what makes it different from other porn is that when they’re having sex the women look as if they’re genuinely having fun – some of them actually look like they’re coming. The other thing is that they use a lot of larger women. Women that you probably wouldn’t give a second look if you saw them on the street. And the sight of those women having sex and enjoying it – having a ball, so to speak – is genuinely exciting. Or I find it exciting.

I’m sorry, but I find it difficult to think of sex as an addiction. I can see that it has some similarities, but I think it has some differences as well. Right of the top of the tree is that if we didn’t have this reckless and dangerous attitude to sex there wouldn’t be any people. In fact, if you believe in evolution, those people who had a sane and safe attitude to sex – they died out.

People walk down the train as we roll into Uxbridge. This is yet another thing that annoys me, especially since they tend to catch me sitting here, with my knee sticking out into the corridor and my laptop on it. I think the guy sitting opposite has got that paranoia that sometimes people get that I’m writing about it. Well, I am now. The battery life on this laptop isn’t what it used to be. I wonder if the batter is going? It’s easily fast enough to write with though. And I think this idea of writing and writing and writing is a very good one.

08/11/2016

So I’m wondering if I need to get another battery for this laptop. I left it charging all night and it isn’t fully charged. It’s firing up fast enough - in the space of getting off the Jubilee line train and getting on the Metropolitan line train. But I don’t know that the battery isgoing to be reliable.

I’m reading a book by Neil Strauss about relationships. It’s got to the bit where he’s started to reveal that his mum was very strange (in ways that aren’t entirely unfamiliar). I’ve thought about writing about my family experience, but I realise that I can’t do anything with that – can’t make it public, can’t have other people read it, until my mum is dead. And then, what would be the point?

One of the things that they tell Strauss while he’s in mental hospital for sex addiction is that sex addicts have controlling mothers and distant fathers – I read something very similar once saying that that was the recipe for schizophrenics.

I said hello to the woman who was sitting next to me on the tube. She was kind of snide and shitty with me, but if I’d had the confidence and I was in practice, I’m sure that I could have at least got a conversation out of it. I said goodbye to her as well. And again, she was snide and shitty. She wore way to much jewellery, but she smelled great.

When I got on the tube this morning I was right up close to a woman wearing a “baby on board” badge. She looked really hot. Really sexy. This is something that I got from reading the “girl with a one-track mind” books. A lot of sex isn’t the actual act of sex, a lot of sex is looking at people in public and thinking about having sex with them. Is remembering looking at people (for me, 99.9 percent of the time, that’s women). Looking at women who’ll you’ll never have sex with remembering erotic moments, porn. That’s sex.

One thing that I think it’s very important to bear in mind is that there’s no reason from an evolutionary point of view why male and female attitudes to sex should be compatible. From an evolutionary point of view all that’s important is that our attitudes to sex should make babies. That’s what I find so upsetting a lot of the time about reading articles by women about sex. The either edit out, pathologies or criminalise the aspects of male sexuality that they don’t find convenient. What if the best way of making sure we have babies that grow up to maturity to have other babies is by giving us incompatible sexualities that don’t make us happy?

They’re trying to give me even more to do at work. I’m hating what I’m doing at the moment because I have absolutely no idea what I’m doing. I just realised in the middle of the night that I’ve been giving the people that I’ve appraising 4’s – thinking that 5 would be the best, but in fact it’s the other way round – 1 is the best. So I have to go back and change all of them. The last time I had so little idea what I was doing was when I was in Kansas when I was doing the ABC workshops.

There’s aren’t many things that bring on the “fight or flight” response quite so forcefully. But I’ll get through it and even if I get the scores wrong, I’m sure that they can be corrected.

So today, I actually missed another chance to say hello to a woman who say next to me, and tomorrow I will, I promise I will follow it up with a little bit of conversation. It’s a counter-intuitive thing, but the shittier they are with you to start with, the easier it can be, because you’ve moved straight away into the shit test. Beautiful, good-mannered women don’t respond with attitude, they either ignore you or they respond with so little energy that there’s nothing to work with, nothing to respond to.

It somehow feels bad and wrong writing about porn. But the only rule on the Metropolitan line in a morning is that I keep writing until we get to the end of the line, or I manage the 1000 words for the day, whichever is sooner.

I’ve been watching this series of porn films that feature this guy (actually, I think it’s several different guys, but it’s POV, so you don’t get to see them) who has a camera in his glasses. It’s a secret camera – it can’t be seen. And then he pays women on the street to sleep with him and he also rings up hookers. As I write that sentence I realise that I should probably password protect this file. Not that most of the time Themi makes a habit of reading what I write. But you never know. I’ve got into trouble for things like this that I’ve written in the past.

Anyway. When he rings up the hookers, there’s this delicious moment when they knock on the door. That’s my favourite moment. And some aspects of them undressing are quite good. But the rest? The rest isn’t that erotic compared to a hell of a lot of what goes on on the tube, or what goes on at work. A lot of genuinely erotic moments aren’t in the bedroom, and they definitely aren’t paid for. I think a girl arriving at your door who’s definitely going to fuck you is erotic. But a lot of what goes on after that – especially the bit where she goes to the bathroom to “freshen up” – reminding you of how many men she’s had sex with. That’s not so erotic.

There’s a smell on this train of bad fried food. I wonder where it’s coming from. I don’t think it’s me. Writing this I’ve just realised that the previous document I wrote like this and password protected, I’ve probably forgotten the password. Oh well, I’m definitely not writing this for publication, so it doesn’t really matter that much. I’ve written a thousand words today. Yesterday afternoon I wrote to Alastair, the HR (although that’s not how he likes to think of himself) at giffgaff. Writing to persuade people, writing for money is a definite skill and it needs practice.

9/11/2016

A day that will live in infamy I’m guessing – it’s looking like Trump will win the US presidency. It’s clear now that we’re in for a long haul of craziness. After this anything could happen. Nuclear war? Definitely a possibility. As with the Brexit there are people on the platform talking too loudly. Some people will be pleased with this – at least half of Americans. And it makes the likelihood of true horrible Fascism in the UK far higher.

I want to block it out with lechery but I just can’t seem to. I suppose it’s fitting that it’s such a miserable day here in London. Icy rain. I’m reminded of what L. Ron Hubbard said – what we all have to do is survive. That’s the first duty, to ourselves. But also to our loved ones. At least I only have Themi to worry about (I didn’t tell her this morning before I left). It would have just woken her up and made her miserable. The English-speaking world has gone mad, jumped the shark, lost it’s mind. We’re in for some very interesting times. Times we might not make it through.

I’m reading this book about relationships by Neil Strauss. At least he’s got out of the place where he’s been seen for sex addiction. But as part of that it became obvious how weird his mum and dad’s relationship was. His dad had a fetish for amputees and married his mum because she was a cripple. I’m looking up in the train and there’s an advert for “urbanmassage.com” – I could really do with that now, today. I could really do with holing up in a hotel room and blowing some cash. Maybe on a real masseur and then on a hooker. A look at my bank account tells me that this isn’t a good time to be doing that kind of thing. Themi’s got her cousin coming at the weekend, so I have to be somewhere else, both Saturday and Sunday nights, or come in very late.

I don’t have any bright thoughts today. It’s difficult on the day that the Americans elected president Trump to have any bright thoughts. All I can do is keep writing. I did have an idea for something that I could write today about the Agile conference that we went to.

I really didn’t like Antony Marcano’s talk about not having a job title. What I realised while I was listening to it was how threatening and hostile this must be to so many people. People need status and people need territory. By taking away people’s job title you’re taking away both. And technology is complicated. Getting good at any bit of it takes enormous amounts of effort. Job title is kind of a reward for that.

I’m reminded of a book that I read about stage magicians – disappearing the elephant. It said that there aren’t really any “all-round” magicians. Magicians specialised in a particular kind of trick. To broaden their repertoire they might either buy a trick or get help from someone who had a different kind of specialty.

This is how I’ve come to think of myself when it comes to Scrum Mastering. I’ve only really got one skill and that’s figuring out what the bad news is that everybody knows and no one wants to tell – and telling it.

If you really want people to step outside their comfort zone you need to make them comfortable with their comfort zone but reward them for stepping out of it, make it very clear that when they step out of it bad things won’t happen. There are also a bunch of things that will definitely make people retreat into their comfort zone, clutch their job title and insist on only working within their area of expertise. These are all the usual bad things that crop up in software development projects.

Blaming, shaming. Ridiculous deadlines that everyone knows are ridiculous. Associated with this are old-school performance appraisal techniques – setting objectives at the beginning of the year, job descriptions.

Alasdair the HR/too cool to be HR person at work has been going on about various both of those values for giffgaff. One of them was “curiosity”. And the previous week, the value was “grit.” Both of those values make me think of Lawrence Lessig and his work on learned helplessness and learned optimism. If we try to step outside of our comfort zone and be curious and we get smacked back, we’re very likely to not try again. Some people “don’t know any better” and will continue to be curious and do things which aren’t inside their job description – and those are the ones who are optimists.

But most people will retreat and stay safe.

The other thing that I wanted to write about was the last talk that I went to when I went to that day of conference. The last talk was about treating the top team like a Scrum – and he talked about having the CEO as a Scrum Master, which didn’t sit quite right with me. But what I did realise is that somewhere like giffgaff there is a lot of conflict which is unresolved. It’s passive aggressive. I found that out when I talked to John Bassel about what was going on in money and he immediately put in an email and sent it to Rich A. The people in the top team aren’t on good terms with each other, but they have conflicts and these conflicts aren’t resolved which causes so many of the problems that we see. And now I think about it, this was exactly the same at CPP – and it’s the big problem with SAFE – where’s the feedback? Where does the bad news go?

This is what giffgaff needs, it needs somebody to facilitate/highlight conflict at the top table. And this would be difficult/risky because the situation as it is stable. That’s the real difficult with a lot of situations like this. They’re in a stable state. It might be a local minima, but it’s stable.

10/11/2016

So as yesterday, I’m having to shrink down the size of my text because I’m sitting up-close-and-personal with people looking over my shoulder.

It’s simultaneously almost impossible and very difficult to know what’s going on with the new Fascism. It’s of course very closely related to the ideas of Matte-Blanco. Our subconscious just “knows” certain things. As a mob, so it seems, we “know” that all the bad things in the world are the fault of foreigners. Just as women, as a mob just know that all the bad things in the world are the fault of “bad men.” Nothing of course is our fault.

In general the mob is in favour of locking up rapists and killers – unless they’re really important. The beast in all of us seems to be winning at the moment. Maybe part of the reason for that is that it’s been a while since we’ve really seen what the beast can do.

And so, as humans, we’re faced with the question of what we should do. Go along to get along? We’ve tried that and very bad things have happened. Point out that these things are Fascism? That seems to make absolutely no difference whatsoever. Join ‘em? That might be what we have to do, just to survive.

Take up arms and take to the hills? It seems perfectly possible that it could come to that. What I really want to do is to just bury myself in pussy. But that’s just an avoidance strategy.

The two things are that rattling around my head are this – “forms which one perfectly masters no longer oppress” – which is from the alleged Nazi Eugen Herrigel.

And “What you see is all you get.” – which is from Daniel Kahneman.

Maybe voting for Trump and voting for Brexit is in some sense rational. To go with a total cliché, if you’ve got nothing, you’ve got nothing to lose. Christ, it’s a lot easier writing about women I can see on the tube that make me horny. There is also the notion of creative destruction.

To use yet another cheesy metaphor, if you’re playing a board game and you’re losing, one way of dealing with this is just to throw the board game up in the air. That seems to be what the electorate of most of the English-speaking world (pace the Indians) has just done.

And I suppose the objection of those who didn’t vote for this (which is perceived to be the middle classes, although the actual figures from status suggest that it was the middle classes that did vote for Trump, more than the poor) is that somehow they’re going to benefit from the shakeup. I suppose the objection of the people who voted Brexit and Trump is that even if this shake-up comes to pass, it will only serve to entrench and cement the position of people like Trump and Murdoch.

Another huge problem for the people who didn’t vote for Trump, or the Brexit is the racism. And I think it’s important to admit, at least to yourself, that isn’t because you don’t understand the feeling. EVERYBODY has this feeling at some point. Everybody of every race has this feeling that things would be simpler if the outsiders would just go away. If those people who do things differently, or don’t get how we do things could be rounded up and taken away.

In this case (as I suppose in almost every case barring one where pirates have actually taken over your ship or bandits have invaded your house) being mean to immigrants won’t make \*any\* different at all to the economic situation – there’s certainly no way that it can improve it, although I suppose there are a wide number of ways in which it could make things worse.

Another couple of quotes that are running around my head right now. Two of them from neuro-linguistic programming (yes, that discredited rubbish). The first is that everyone works perfectly. This is without doubt a really annoying thing to say. But it’s worth thinking about.

The second is that the meaning of a communication is its effect. And so that the meaning of the Hillary Clinton’s campaign for a lot of people was “don’t vote for me.” Yes, I know she one the popular vote and blah blah the electoral college.

This is the really tricky bit. The forms that you have to master are the forms of sociopaths, they are the forms of psychopaths. They are the forms of strutting bits of fucking nothing like Trump and Farage. And what’s make this especially hard, at least in the case of Trump is that he actually believes this stuff himself. That’s not an act.

And battling the nonsense is HARD. It’s exhausting. It’s just so much easier to not bother.

The nonsense is terrifying and it has huge energy. It has huge energy because for the great majority of people on the planet, it’s what they think when they’re not thinking. And really, really clever people – let’s not think they’re stupid, because they really aren’t. In fact, maybe in these discussions we should stop thinking about clever and stupid, maybe we should just think about effective and ineffective communicators.

OK – I haven’t quite made the word limit this morning. And I’m going to have to stop there and go and do my day job. I have to a performance review and I have absolutely no idea how I’m going to do that.

Dealing with the nonsense is my day job. As I write that, I can feel the knot forming in my shoulders. And I’m reminded of another idea from Richard Bandler – that all the contradictions that people tell you are somehow stored somewhere in your body.

I’m glad I wrote this though. Because fighting the nonsense is the only fight that’s worth having. It reminds me that I’m often tempted to respond to the worst kinds of sociopathy with nonsense inductions. This keypad is really annoying me – I need to get that program that shuts the keypad down when you’re typing – OK, I think that’s 1000 words. Muddy thinking, no doubt, but I’m glad at least that I focussed on the issue in hand.

11/11/2016

Humph. I don’t want to start writing today. Bad argument with Themis in bed last night. We’re both frayed and fraught and knackered. I think would have rather just has finished my crossword (I was doing well and might be able to finish it later today if I get the chance).

Just there I went off on a thought about obeying orders. This performance review is a monstrous pile of shit and if you’re of an awkward, contrarian bent and given the current climate it makes you ask a lot of questions. To what degree do you follow such an horrendous practice. This one isn’t doing anyone any real harm. But there are a lot of processes around which are doing people real harm. In the next few years whether or not obey orders is going to become a real big deal.

I think doing this writing in a morning is a really good idea (even though, I think it means that by the end of the day I am \*totally\* knackered).

I really wish that I had a job where I could throw a loyalty card day. It would be good just to spend a day trying to relate and connect. I realised in the argument with Themi last night that I don’t have any friends any more. Of course this is my fault and not in any way connected to having ruined my life and my health by having to work so fucking hard. That’s the problem with the situation that I’m in at the moment. All the solutions seem to involve doing more and all the problems stem from the fact that I’m doing too much already.

It’s like there are these too shadow Stringers. Or maybe even more. One that is doing lots of improv and yoga and stuff like that and another that’s doing lots of interviews. Man those interviews that we did in Brighton were good stuff. We should have grounded them in theory and knocked them out of the park. Themi’s right, I should get off of Facebook and twitter and actually talk to some people. But at the same time it’s very annoying to be told to stop going on social media as if I were a 10 year old. And again, it forgets why I’m on social media – because I don’t have the time or the energy to actually form relationships in the real world because I’m working.

It makes me realise that there would be a good role for me at giffgaff just walking around and talking to everyone. At the moment, I think I’m really guilty of sitting there and not talking to anybody much. One of the best things that I ever did was walk around when I was at Wiley and introduce myself to everyone.

I’m socialising less and less and it’s making me more and more miserable. But it seems really difficult to stop it happening.

What about an “ethical loyalty card day”? Where I don’t try to chat up women, I just start conversations in coffee shops. If I got a contract, I suppose I could do that.

Of course a contract wouldn’t be a panacea. It’s possible that I could get a contract and then not be able to get any time off.

At the same time, I really don’t want to go out to dinner tonight. And that’s a recurring problem. I keep thinking to myself that I should do some more comedy, or I should do some more improv, but when it comes time to do it in an evening, all I want to do is to go home and collapse in front of the telly. Weirdly, when I could go for a walk at the end of the day, I felt better. I don’t quite know why that was. Maybe it woke me up. Maybe it was that thing that seems to happen around six miles (that all the ranting seems to stop, or at least quieten down). Maybe it was just the raw fact of that section that goes behind the houses and then pops out at – I dunno, one of the Ruislips – West Ruislip? Ruislip gardens? Why are there so many Ruislips?

The other thing about doing this writing is that it seems to make other writing possible. Even though I felt the most useless I’ve felt in a long while in the middle of the day yesterday, I did put together a slide that I think could be part of a presentation relating to the book. I think I’m coming at it from a different angle – talk about it – then write it down.

There’s a girl about half-way down the carriage who has a very deep voice. I can’t decide whether it’s sexy or annoying. Maybe it’s both.

Naturally, I’m starting the presentation by talking about commitment and consistency. And I suppose that the revelation that I’ve had just recently is that you can commit to something. You can commit to maintaining and sustaining a transparent empirical process – this is actually a much bigger deal as a commitment. The very same people who will tell you that it’s important to honour your commitments, will keep quiet about bad news.

I’ve just had an idea for an activity involving chocolates. We could have an activity which involved some people negotiating to give some other people chocolates. There are a number of different chocolates. Maybe different flavours at different prices. They negotiate a deal. Then they come to me and give them the chocolates. But I don’t give them the chocolates that they were promised. I maybe give them some different chocolates – any maybe some other things. Some oat cakes. An onion. Then we can talk about everybody felt.

And then we can talk about if there’s anything else we could have committed to which would have made us feel better. We can talk about doing the best we can with the knowledge we have at the time. We can talk about the empirical process.

13/11/2016

I didn’t write yesterday. No matter, everybody needs a day off. If I manage 1000 words today I’ll be averaging over 500 words a day and that will be just fine and anyway. It’s not about the count. It’s about just writing. And already at work, I’ve seen the benefits of just writing. And just walking. I wish I could figure out some way of using these for eating. Maybe – the idea that I’ve had is to sit down and write down what I’m going to eat the next day and then just eat that. Would that be possible?

I’m very angry. Why is that. An man who isn’t getting laid is an angry man. So there’s that. Maybe I’m experiencing the kind of impotent rage that a lot of the angry men who voted for Trump feel. A feeling that their voice isn’t heard.

I walked to the Thames barrier this morning from my hotel, which was good because it gave me some views that I hadn’t seen before. Walking around the Thames barrier park would have been great if I hadn’t have had my bag with me. But there was a nice (from the outside) looking café immediately at the entrance to the park. I’ll admit that I was looking for an English breakfast. But as I went in, I could tell that it wasn’t the kind of place where you would order anything that wasn’t in a packet. So I resigned myself to having an espresso (I know even before I’ve drunk it that it will be luke-warm and taste like coffee-flavoured soup rather than espresso). The other thing that could tell you that the place was moribund was the speed at which the overweight blonde dye-job waitress was sweeping the floor. So when I get to the counter there’s a sign covered in transparent plastic stuck to the top of the counter saying “Cash Only”. Well, ok, it doesn’t look like somewhere where you’d eat something that isn’t cellophane, and the espresso will be tepid. But I’m still gonna do this – it’s flooded in sunlight, with a view of the Thames barrier gardens. The tables and chairs are weirdly scuffed, and there aren’t really as many of them as they should be, but still. I am going to do this.

I look in my wallet and take out a 20 pound note. The woman behind the counter – who even though there was nobody in the café (except for the glacially moving sweeper) I still had to make effort to make eye contact with – looks at the 20 pound note with horror – as if I’d just un-trousered a monster cock. Don’t you have any change?

This is how money comes out of the cash-machines. I had a similar problem a couple of weeks ago when I tried to pay for a 5 pound cab fare with a 20 note. This is the 21st fucking century. How can you *not* be set up to take money off people if your business model involved, y’know, taking money off people? So I said **“**forget it” and I might have also said “cash only and no change? That’s ridiculous.” And I might have said it in a loud enough and angry enough voice that the dye-job was ready to come to the waitress who can’t make eye contact’s aid and hit me with the broom. Although of course, I was in no real danger. If her sweeping speed is anything to go by, I would have had maybe 6 months to get out of the way.

So grumpily I got on the DLR – and I couldn’t go directly to Canary Wharf because repair work, so I had to change and the official end of the world – Canning town. And then getting off the train in Canary Wharf on the Jubilee line somebody got on the train before I got off. And I called the bloke a cock which was very stupid and could have got me killed.

I just read a thing in the “The Week” which was an obituary of one of Graham Green’s biographer’s. It said that he was so concerned about revealing what actually went on his life that he went to the trouble on some days of writing two accounts of his day – one that involved a nice trip out meeting a friend for a cup of tea and another that involved an account of his trip to visit a prostitute.

There’s, for me, terrific appeal in taking a room in the Travelodge in excel as a way of taking a holiday – it’s not a long way to get home. You know the town, so you can go to the restaurants and the hookers are cheaper.

So, that angry, after the no change episode and the man getting on the train before I got off episode, I went into Carluccios at Canary Wharf. There was a queue of about 5 or six people waiting to be seated, but the restaurant itself wasn’t actually \*that\* busy. There was a woman in her late-fifties-early sixties fussing behind me saying “I wonder how long it’s going to take us to get seated.” And the girl who was with her kept pushing at my backpack.

God, I was in a bad mood wasn’t I?

But finally I got sat down. There was a bit of a breeze to my back, but apart from that it was fine. And my waitress was a totally hot super petite little number. I ordered the big breakfast with a double espresso and an orange juice. The espresso came and so did I nearly. It was transcendental! Piping hot and with all those top notes and base notes that come from actually understanding how to make an espresso.

Bother. I’m typing this with a headache that doesn’t seem to go away, even when I’ve taken all the pills that I have with me.

I’ve been thinking about bullying and political correctness. So let’s just think about this. The idea behind political correctness was that by calling people by different names, we would remove the nasty behaviour that was associated with those words. Want to get rid of racism? Make “The N Word” so beyond that pale that right-thinking person would ever say it. Well, how well has this worked? Whaddya think?

Let me tell you a few reasons why it hasn’t worked.

* It’s just lazy and it’s kind of prudish. Rather than really trying to understand how racism works, why it’s so prevalent, why it’s so powerful, how we can temper racism’s worst effects – we’ve just hidden it.
* It bullies the ignorant – and you may think that that’s OK. But it also bullies the people who don’t have access to education. And at the same time it gives the racists who do have access to education a chance to hide their racism. If you’re a billionaire bigot, you can afford college. Of if you’re a really ignorant billionaire bigot, you can afford people who’ve to college.
* This is the biggest problem with it – it doesn’t fucking work.

OK, this is another slight problem. I’m fucking horny as a DOG! Again! And this is after wanking 6 times yesterday.

You never miss your water ‘til your well runs dry. Well, the well just ran fucking dry. I’m not sure quite what was in the well. The milk of fucking human kindness? Maybe. The Illusion that the white men who speak English are normally the good guys? Definitely.

OK, the headache’s still there. Got to pack up now do a bit of shopping in Marks and Spencer and then go home and make a Sussex pond pudding for Efi’s daughter.

14/11/2016

So I cocked up. I thought that I had my PDI with Dolo today but it turns out that it’s no Thursday – when I’m in “Chechia” – wherever that is.

Is it possible to complain about things now? Because nothing is bad compared to full-blown Fascism and that’s what we’re going to get now. This is complaining of a very different calibre. Trump has said that he’s going to deport or imprison 3m illegal immigrants. This is very bad – to put it mildly.

I’m in the Holborn office. Which I hate. There are desks at a normal height which it would probably be relatively pleasant to sit at, and then there are desks that are deliberately set at that uncomfortable height – you know like they do in bars and cafes so you don’t stay too long. What possible reason could there be for doing that with people that you’re actually \*paying\*?

I got to see Efi and the kids yesterday. The kids are beautiful. And very beguiling. How on earth can Frederique abandon them? And especially to their crazy mother. I can understand how he might want to leave her. But this complaining over money and not wanting to spend time with them. Of course, I would probably be the same, but that’s a very big part of why I didn’t have children.

I’ve got a review at 11. I should probably take a look at what Faith has written before we do it. I’ve done two other reviews now and they’ve been mmm. OK. But I’m wondering if I need to get out of the business of doing Agile and into the business of selling Agile consultancy. That’s what Steve can’t (or doesn’t want) to do. It’s what Jeremy Renwick has done absolutely amazingly.

Is there a way of doing it that’s honest? Probably. What’s the route to it? Well, I’m thinking I could do more of it in giffgaff. I really liked doing “The chocolate game, and I see it could be improved for next time.”

Well, I suppose this office is a clean well-lighted place. There are some weird fuckers in weird beards knocking about.

The whole Trump thing makes so stark the difference between Herrenmorral and Sklavenmorral. He’ broken every rule (pretty much) of Christian morality, yet the Christians still voted for him.

The interesting question I suppose is to what degree can you shit a shitter? Do the sociopaths really understand what they’re doing, or are they just going with what works? And what do those of us who are non-sociopathic do about it?

As I’m sitting here – it’s very pathetic – I’m wondering what timesheet code I’m going to book today to now. What I’m planning on doing is doing this review with Faith and then going home and filling in my expenses. I’m guessing that I can charge some of that time to Darren at SLC for prep – because that’s what it is, prepping the case for the next outing. But I’m nervous about that. I’d actually rather charge the whole thing to admin for commercial because that’s what I’ve been doing with all these management calls and the PDI-reviews. I would hate to have an argument about it, but there you go, I might have to.

I drank for the last three nights in a row, and I’m feeling the dead-headedness of that. But at the same time I’m remembering this time last year when we were in Moscow and I was following the Gerald Weinberg approach of writing down absolutely everything that came into my head, which is kind of what I’m doing with this, and I remember really vividly sitting in that café in the centre of Moscow and leching after various women.

I think that writing like this – which is the way that’s recommended by the woman who wrote “Writing down the bones” – Natalie Goldberg – is a lot like mediation and like meditation, it really doesn’t matter what comes out and in what order it comes out. Because what you’re really doing is taking a tour around the block, the multidimensional block of your mind, which doesn’t just think in 3 dimensions, or even 4. One of the things that I remember most clearly from the audiobook that I’ve been listening to about Koans is that meditating on your problems is a “ricebag.” It will give you something to feed on forever.

So what are my problems. Well, as always, I’m fat, I’ve not had enough sex and I could do with more money. I think two of those might be regarded as “problems” no matter how much I tried to solve them. Being fat is a bit different, especially since there’s a possibility that it could really powerfully affect the other two.

Being fat hasn’t – so far – affected my health. Well, that’s not entirely true.

I was thinking about putting together a website and an app called something like “take control”. It would help you take control of your finances, your presence online, your career, your education. It would also help you make your presence felt politically. There’s somebody the other side of the office yelling like a cunt.

I don’t want to be yelling like that when it comes to doing this review with Faith.

I’m wondering if there’s anywhere better than this that I could sit to do the review.

The thing about this “take control” app is that it would be like staring up your own arsehole – the extreme version of googling yourself.

Mmm. I think I like sitting on the Metropolitan line and tapping away furiously rather than sitting here. The place is like the grave.

I was thinking on the way in this morning – what are the 6 books you could read that would improve your career. And I think there’s a few ways that you could go. You could perfect the possibility using git and github, maybe for document production (it struck me that maybe you could use something like either Bamboo or Hudson to create pdfs).

The other thing that you could do is something like this – the writing – but rather than the writing, you could do a daily coding exercise. I’ve already thought of a title for the publication on medium.com – Programming is as easy as ABC (Always Be Coding).

Well, this is ABW – always be writing. But I’m wondering if it’s like coding in another way – that it’s fine just to write code and write code – but what you should be doing is focussing on getting something that works. In the same way with writing. It’s fine to be writing and writing and writing, but ultimately you need to focus on writing that works getting your writing to work. And in order to do that you need to edit, research and publish as well as write. And those other things, I’m not so good at. I’m wondering if what I need to do – in the manner of Agile is to make those other bits explicit.

And I’m tempted to make them as easy as the writing. I’m wondering if the way to do that is to think of them as “just”. Just write. Just read and re-structure if you feel like it. Just read stuff that’s related to what you’re writing about. Just publish what you’ve written (I dunno, maybe after three times around the loop) I dunno, is three enough times around the loop – maybe it’s 30? I should try to go round the loop sometimes, that’s for sure. Anyway, that’s more than enough today. I’ll have a look at Faith’s PDI now. Ho, hum.

15/11/2016

Well, that’s a turn up for the books. I missed a plane. I gave in and decide not to go at Shirley o’clock and then realised that I hadn’t checked in. And Themi’s right, I probably could have checked in on the train. But in my head I was imagining that you’d just have to be there a half-hour before the plane takes off. Oh well, it just goes to show why I don’t try to leave it until the last minute when it comes to catching trains.

I think we were both feeling like this this morning – knackered. I found that the ratings that I give for the people that I reviewed weren’t the ratings that I was supposed to give them. It would have been a whole of a lot simpler if I’d found out what those ratings were before I gave the appraisals. The other thing is that I’m thinking now that if I put anything like the effort into job applications that I’ve put into doing management appraisals then I would have another job.

Fuck, I’ve just seen myself reflected in the window. I’m huge! What can I do about it? I’m not walking at the moment and I’m not doing any yoga. All I can do really is eat less. Eating less would be good. Is it best to pick the days when I just eat fruit and soup as the days when I’m doing a “normal” working day.

I need to have a plan for self-improvement that I plod through gently. This is what I do with teams, and it works really well. Why do I find it so difficult to do with myself?

How about this for a plan. Every Sunday night I take an inventory. What happened this week? How do I feel on a scale of 1-10? How in control do I feel of Love, Money, Career, Health, Weight. Clothes. This shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes – after all, it’s only you. And then every 4th Saturday I should do something.

I’ve already got something in the diary. I should do that rather than try to do something different.

This train is taking so long that I might not have more than 12 hours all-told at home before I have to get out again. Wow. There’s a real tiredness coming over me. I should definitely try to get some sleep tonight before the car comes for me. I’m wondering if the machine isn’t working so well, or maybe I’m not working so well. Maybe I should get the snoring CD’s on my phone and make sure that I do them every night. Even if they don’t stop me from snoring they might make sure that my airways are good and clear before I go to sleep.

Yes, that’s where we are now. My airways are blocked with fat. I was thinking last night as I went to bed about the idea from that book on Koans – that I should go to bed thinking about my problems. You’re fat, you’re poor (well, you’re not rich enough to retire, and at some point you’ll have to – if the fatness doesn’t get you and there’s Fascism). There’s almost nothing that you can do about Fascism. But you can do something about your weight. Well, maybe you can do something about your weight. And you can do something about your wealth. Well, maybe you can do something about your wealth.

St James’s park – it’s not far home from here. I need to give up being angry with people on Facebook and on twitter. I sent someone outside of my filter bubble a picture of a death camp this morning. He was crowing about deportations.

I’m gonna ride this sucker all the way to Mile End. What could I do to take control of my money? Well, I could get out of my phone contract for a start and I could put the money I saved in a special account somewhere. I don’t think there’s any downside to this. I could stop Skype taking 3 quid off of me a month for what reason I have no fucking idea. We could top the telly part of BT which we don’t use at all. I could stop my amazon prime subscription, my Google music subscription – oh, and my audible subscription, sweet Jesus and my “The Week” subscription. I might be able to save getting on for a hundred pounds a month if I give up on all of those – and that could go into the premium bond account.

What could I do to take control of my health and weight? Well, you started to do it by walking regularly, you could keep doing that. And on top of that you could make some small changes to your diet – how about no sugar. In anything. As a start. No sugar in anything and 3 miles a day walking. How about one month 3 miles a day walking and then the next month no sugar?

What I absolutely don’t want to do, is to suggest something impossible, or something that I won’t be able to do. It’s alright to be challenged, but that’s not \*much\* beyond what you’re absolutely sure that you’re capable of. Especially when you’re doing it to yourself. One way to make sure that I slept well tonight would be to go on a good old walk. But of course then I have to make sure that I get up in time – set the alarm on the clock and the alarm on my phone, I should be alright.

I know that this isn’t “down in the cellar” writing (as Stephen King calls it). But it’s still good to do it. That’s the thing. If you want to be something, well then, do something. If you want to be a writer, write every day. If you want to be a stand-up comedian, well, do stand-up every day. If you want to be an internet comedian, well then put something on the internet every day. In a sense, it really is that simple.

16/11/2016

So it’s 5:25 in the morning. I’m thinking that this is the best way to fly – I’d started to think that it wasn’t that it was better to fly at a civilised time, in the daylight hours. Being a thin black man looks like it might be cool. There are a couple of them at work who make out like bandits. Yes, I know from my point of privilege I’m blinding myself to all of the problems.

I’m just observing. That’s something interesting about this time in the morning – somehow you feel freer. I’m an hour and a half early for my flight – Shirley o’clock. The challenge when I’m away in Brno, is to get some good quality sleep – and that means not drinking. I’d had this idea that in November I would do the Shivasana every morning – I’ve done it once. It certainly gets the heart pumping and the lungs working.

I can hardly muster any lust this morning. Maybe it’s because I wanked so much yesterday. What was that six times again? Is this sex addiction? I think I’ve gone off of Neil Strauss a bit after reading that book because I’ve realised that the women that he gets involved with don’t seem very appealing. He doesn’t seem to like them much.

It’s funny how your outlook on these things changes as you get older – probably as the testosterone subsides. A beautiful woman now looks like an expense and management-heavy overhead.

As Felix Dexter puts it so vividly (although I don’t think he made any claims to the originality of the idea) if it flies, floats or fornicates – you rent it.

I need a pattern for total rest which doesn’t involve overeating. And it might be that the overeating is connected to the wanking. When I’ve finished wanking I want something sweet – is there a drastic drop in blood sugar right at that moment?

I had this idea of living like a Buddhist monk. Of course, I have absolutely no idea what that actually means. But it might mean eating simple, vegetarian, even vegan food and not wanking. Although I tend to get very bad-tempered when I don’t wank. The wanking keeps the sexual cravings – which I’m not sure I want to really go away – to a low roar.

The wanking also seems to be directly related to how much stress I’m under. Not the worry that world’s going to end kind of stress but the pressure to deliver kind of stress. When I’ve been doing training, I’m desperate to do nothing but wank (and eat really high-fat, high-sugar foods) for the whole day afterwards.

Truth be told, if I’m not careful, I think this might be the end. I had a thought last night, which I put out as a Lenin quote: “No man of our generation expects to live to be old, or to spend long in prison and this changes everything.”

The heel of my hand is hurting again – is it heart problems? Or is it just leaving it outside the duvet and letting it get cold.

I should seriously talk to Themis about this. I’m clearly not a manager – at least not in the mould that Sopra Steria want managers. Am I a consultant? Can I sell consultancy?

Steve’s problem was that he couldn’t deal with having people more talented than him in the organisation (and Marc and Don weren’t really that much more talented). Oh, no, I’m not saying I was. But he didn’t seem to be able to arrange things so that we could do good work. Could I do any better? I think that I could. And part of doing better would be spending more of my time selling things. Steve doesn’t sell. He develops things which people hear about but he doesn’t sell.

And although we seemed to able to coordinate developing the course, we haven’t really managed to coordinate developing anything else.

I’ve just had an idea – when I have my PDI review with Dolo, maybe I should suggest that I get some kind of chance to sell Agile and to do some development of material. This would involve getting some time away from giffgaff.

And what if he says “no” – well then I think I need to think about doing this on my own – it’s interesting that you don’t really see that many jobs doing this. But of course, the payoff from doing it successfully could be huge – it would be a satisfying thing to do, and it would also, if it were done the right way, be God’s work. Maybe what I need to do is to team up with someone who’s a pure salesman.

But if I do make this proposal to Dolo, it has to be fairly definite. How about suggesting that I spend Fridays doing this for three months? 12 days’ worth of development of material and development of business. I actually quite like Caroline’s attitude to business development. And that would be a good first step – talking to the people who handle the existing accounts and figuring out if there are any opportunities.

Well, it’s been a struggle to write this morning, but I think some useful stuff has come out of it. This is the different between writing for publication and writing for – for what? For myself I suppose. This might be what Stephen King calls “writing with the door shut.” But I think I call it typing mediation.

Anyway, I think it works. And I think I know what the rules are now.

1. Write whatever comes into your head, and in order to be able to do that, you need to absolutely certain that no one else is going to read it – password protection seems to have made that work for me.
2. Whenever possible keep going until you’ve done 1000 words, or an hour, whichever is the sooner (I think I might actually have taken longer than an hour to write this this morning).

That’s it. No other rules. Wow, I just checked and including the date, that was exactly 1000 words. OK – it’s time to go and find out the gate for my flight (I still have 50 minutes before I fly).

18/11/2016

I read to the end of the Neil Strauss book. It’s very sobering. Although not that literally sobering. He goes through all of this stuff and then he finds that he wants to be with one person. And the book ends with him marrying the woman that he cheats on at the beginning of the book and announcing that he’s going to have a son – Tenn they’re going to call him. But there are some real worries that I have about this “happy” ending.

1. Hi wife is totally messed up. Her father tried to kill her mother, and then her stepfather kept her like a slave. I’m not sure that you can get over that.
2. I’m not sure that total honesty can work. Can you really be totally honest with someone \*all\* the time? It seems like an extreme measure to me.
3. I think it may well be true that you only meet damaged and crazy women using pick-up.

I feel like I don’t know anymore. I don’t know about anything. I also feel like me life has been more chaotic that it’s been for a long time and I’m wondering if that’s something to do with drinking. It was nice to go out and get drunk with Themis. But I can go out with Themis and not get drunk, can’t I? I don’t think it’s a good thing that I discovered spirits.

Quite literally, if I carry on like this, I could be dead in 5 years, maybe less.

I don’t feel like writing much, but that’s because I’ve been drinking yesterday.

I’m a bit worried that everything is in chaos. I ended up disconnecting from Money just at the point where it went live. I think the commuting has been having more of a toll on me than I thought. The walking was working in a sense (and I have fond memories of walking along the river Pinn, when literally the light faded out of the evening, and out of the year). But I seemed to put on weight because of it.

One interesting thing about Brno (important fantasy that comes with travelling – does everyone think like this?) is that it’s cheap as chips. And this is the big town. I wonder how cheap it is if you rent a room or rent a flat, somewhere out of town – maybe that would be a step too far. But maybe I could hole up somewhere like Brno for a month, a couple of months, 3 months and write a book, would that be possible?

The political situation in the UK, and now of course in the US, is terrifying. In the UK they’re deliberately breaking the health service.

I told Dolo that I’d told the people that I manage that I didn’t know what I was doing in the performance review. He didn’t seem very happy about that.

I talked to Themi about the idea (that I had last time I was doing this kind of writing) that I should ask Dolo for some time to do some Agile sales – I can’t see that they’re going to go for that. For all his faults, Steve was someone I could work with – we picked each other out I think. And looking at that now through the lens of reading this Neil Strauss book, I’m wondering if that was healthy. Isn’t Steve on his second marriage? Isn’t he raising someone else’s child!?

What I’m doing now is that I’m sitting down trying to think of someone “healthy” that I know and I can’t think of anyone – Themi? Maybe, although she drinks a lot. And I’m worried now that sometimes as well, she’s eating to much. But yes, Themi. I want it to be Lydia, if I’m totally honest, but she doesn’t have the low hum – she’s marrying that guy from Essex! Who’s a clever guy, but, I dunno.

If there’s anything in that idea that you’re primarily a feeling, hearing or seeing person (which I’m not sure there is) then I’m a hearing person.

I’ve left enough of facebook and twitter to have me marched away and put in a camp, if there’s ever something the equivalent of McCarthyism (New Gingrich says that he want to re-start the House Un-American Activities Committee). I know, I know, I’m all over the shop writing this. It’s not the focused writing of 500 words of publishable stuff that I did in May. I haven’t even looked at that.

I don’t feel like writing any more – it’s been a real struggle this morning. I was just thinking though how delicious the sleep was on the way to the chateau that we went to see yesterday morning – I was deep asleep when we got there – and without my mask. Maybe taking a nap like that – sitting upright – is one way of being able to sleep without the apnoea? Themi said that I wasn’t snoring.

One idea that I got from the Neil Strauss book is trying to do things that make you more healthy rather than trying to do things that make you less healthy. Walking made me more healthy, and I think it was a good way of relaxing – the big long walk at the weekend is a very good way of relaxing.

Drinking lots of sweet drinks is maybe not so healthy.

Masturbating 6 times in a day? That can’t be healthy.

It’s worrying that the October/November combination of Nigel, Nick and then Efi, combined with training courses and other travel has knocked us so off-kilter.

I realise that at the same time as I’m reading the Neil Strauss book, I’m also reading “Humble Enquiry” which is really about trying to honest in a work setting.

Is everybody fucked up? Is that just the way it is?

I want to write honestly about how I’ve avoided the confrontations with Rich A. And immediately that I try to write about it, I want to make excuses for myself.

Why is the way that project management talked about – even inside the Agile community so inauthentic? I would like to go on and explore that right now, but the drinking for the last two days has left me without the brain power. Themi’s asleep, I’m going to try to get some sleep for a bit.

I think that’s a very big part of not living chaotically – more and better quality sleep.

19/11/2016

So I’m relatively warm, having coming in out of the rain – which isn’t quite icy, but isn’t that inviting. I’m sitting in Café Falk. I’ve got about 1200 crowns – which my calculations is about 40 quid. It would take me a while to tunnel through much if a double espresso is about one pound sixties. There’s nobody here, I think this must be an evening place, it doesn’t seem to so much for food.

The women are stormingly sexy, dark-eyed. Themi caught me wanking this morning – or starting to wank anyway. I wonder what she feels about that? Is that like being unfaithful? That’s certainly what the sex-addiction people would say. But the sex-addiction people seem fairly keen on turning everybody into a sex-criminal.

Men on women on men on women. Isn’t there are crucial aspect of it that if you understood it, then it wouldn’t be it. I know I’m babbling, but isn’t that the same with Zen Buddhism. If you think you’ve understood it, then that’s not it.

I think my work is done at giffgaff. Mm. I don’t think this is a food place \*at all\* - flies buzzing around me – in November! Maybe another espresso here though. I could try to go to café liberty and have either the breakfast sausages or the gnocchi for lunch. The only thing that I might chance from here is something from the dessert cabinet. Maybe, but the waiter looks like he’s having too much fun having a gay urban lifestyle to actually bother about keeping his hands clean enough to serve anything other than coffee.

What would a week of anhedonia look like? Well, it would involve no coffee. Some very basic food. Instant porridge for breakfast – and a banana. Cheese sandwiches and an apple for lunch. Soup with just a couple of slices of bread for dinner – and a grapefruit. Just water to drink, tap water, not sparkling, no tea. No coffee. No wanking. What would that be like? Would that be good for the soul? Would it drive me mental? OK, I’ve been traducing the barista, but I could murder the same again, another espresso. And what about combining it with no TV and no social media?

I am feeling like withdrawing from all of these comforts – why? Because I feel that they’re killing me. They’re compensations for working. Because working takes so much out of me, I eat so much. They’re compensations for what happened in my childhood. I’ve had an idea that I could go to that place that we were at last night that was closed and have lunch there – would that work? Well, it certainly wouldn’t be anhedonia, but so what, I’m on fucking on holiday.

A though that keeps drifting through my head is that as things change very quickly there will be opportunities, but the only way to exploit those opportunities is to somehow \*up against it\* up against the leading edge of what’s really happening. On the front line. Always what you’re fighting is the front line.

That’s the terrible thing about the Trump victory I suppose – but is it really terrible? Because it’s the truth. Might is right. Herrenmoral beats sklavenmoral. I don’t suppose that it’s so clear that fast thinking will beat slow thinking. What we need a lot of now, to survive, to thrive, is slow thinking about fast thinking. We need to figure out how to talk people out of the stupid.

I’m just thinking about the idea that the future is here, it’s just unevenly distributed. This used to be a reassuring thought. But now both Britain and the US have voted for Fascism, it’s not reassuring at all. You can see that it’s also going to happen in France. Where else? In the Scandinavian countries? Is something else going to happen that surprises us?

There’s a veritable swarm of flies around me know – little black ones, not bluebottles or anything serious. I think it’s the sugar in the espresso that they can smell. I’ve put my espresso cup at the far end of the table, but they still seem to be coming for me! Maybe it’s salt that they want – I am quite sweaty.

I do like this conversation with myself that these 1000 word discussions have turned into. I \*think\* that’s healthy. I went down to breakfast this morning, but I didn’t talk to anyone, well, I did talk to Anthony the weird curator, who goes on about how he loves his wife – it’s weird that I knew another Scotsman who did exactly the same thing. Maybe it’s because a lot of Scots are brought up I households with aggressive, violent fathers, and they want to go out of their way to be the opposite of that.

I’m reading a series of fables by Stanislaw Lem – a Polish science fiction writer (who, interestingly the American science fiction community utterly loathed – it seems that Philip K Dick tried to tell the FBI that he was a spy).

Some of the fables are very resonant – I was just reading one where there was a tyrant who wants to have everybody killed. There’s another where the two central characters – whose names I can’t remember – create a machine that knows everything but insists that two plus two is seven. This machine is as big as an eight-story building, but it end up chasing them and trying to kill them – this seems a lot like Facebook to me.

And that got me thinking last night – and this morning lying in bed, that maybe Agile Koan is the way to go. I’m tempted not to call them Koan, because if I do, some dick who either has read/listened to more about Zen that me, or someone who’s qualified as a Zen master, will contradict me, and that would be very annoying. But I like the idea of having Agile stories, with commentary. If you have a commentary, you can have someone who’s an Agile zealot, and then you can also have a “fool” character – who shouts bollocks at various points. And you could use them for teaching – you could use them as the source material for a discussion as part of coaching. And then, in the notes for each story you could point to further reading.

By doing this, you can highlight those \*points in the tunnel\* where someone who’s trying to practice Agile has to do something different from what would normally be expected. This might be a way to point at what’s really going on with software development, this might be a way of showing rather than telling. Because the problem with the telling is that it just sounds like whining.

I’ve just thought of a crazy example – remember being asked to role-play a stand-up and having problems. And then the fucking clown “Agile project manager” saying “yeah that always with Agile, that’s why I don’t like it.”

I think that’s one way of thinking about those points that I want to write teaching stories about – the points that fill you with rage and exasperation. It’s also those moments, when the wrong behaviour occurs like snow dropping from a bamboo leaf. Like Dolo giving me more work the minute he realised what grade I was. Or a manager talking about breaking up a team the minute that he hears that it’s doing well. Or a manager asking why a team’s velocity isn’t 50 the minute that he hears it’s 25, or trying to compare the velocity of one team with another.

I suppose what Agile is \*trying\* to do, is having the right things drop off of the bamboo leaf. The idea is that if you create the right kind of transparency, allow for the right kind of inspection and adaptation, then a lot of what is needs will “drop off the bamboo leaf” rather than having to be pushed or scraped.

That pushing or scraping always reminds me of a butter bean that we had in a yoghurt pot on table 2 (my teacher in primary school ordered everybody in her class according to some score of behaviour and ability, the good kids clever kids sat at the back. The thick and badly behaved kids sat at the front.

On each table was a yoghurt pot with a wad of cotton wool in it and a dried pulse – a pea, broad bean, a butter bean. Over a period of time the idea was that we would dampen the cotton wool (I’m guessing Mrs Sykes did that with a watering can, I can’t imagine that we were trusted to do that by ourselves). When the beans were being grown, I was on table 2 – later, I ended up on table 1 – I don’t know who got moved down so I could get that exalted space.

Anyway, table one’s bean grew. And ours started to grow, but then we poked it so much that it died.

This idea of snow dropping off of a bamboo is a good one.

20/11/2016

So I’m in the downmarket café in the marketplace. But it’s OK. I’m right. That idea of snow dropping off of a bamboo is a good one.

The music’s strange. It’s a Country and Western song which seems to be about Casio – maybe he really likes his calculator – or his keyboard.

I like the Agile Teaching Tales book idea (which I’ve kind of had before). One thing I particularly like about it is that I can see how I might finish it. I can also see how I might start it. A nagging voice says that it’s not a \*real\* book because it isn’t a thesis and it isn’t written in the open grand style. Well, that might be the case, but maybe I’m like the guys who came up with hip hop – they couldn’t afford instruments or lessons.

One of the things that “drops straight off of the bamboo” is not telling superiors bad news. I’ve given up doing it on Money. It’s such a natural thing to do, that you don’t even think about it.

At the same time I’m reading various things telling off the “elite” and saying that it’s their fault that the Fascists have one. This is pretty difficult to take. I’m wondering what the argument would look like.

1. The people who voted for Brexit and Trump are exactly that: people.
2. They should be acknowledged as such, and it should be acknowledged that they have a right to an opinion.

As I write this, I realise that it’s bollocks. The deal was that we provide for these poor people and they don’t vote for the Nazis. The interesting question is what happens now that they’ve vote for the Nazis? I think the Greens and the Liberal democrats have kind of decided that they’re going to pretend that these people don’t exist.

Some people have genuinely fallen on hard times. But most of the people that we’re talking about haven’t fallen on hard times, they’re just too stupid to understand the advantage of education. And as I write this, I’m wondering if we’re demonising the right people. These are the people I’m scared of. Are they really the people who voted for Brexit? And the people who voted for Trump?

Lots of middle class, educated voted for Trump. Lots of middle class educated people must also have voted for Brexit. That’s the thing that it’s difficult to process. They’re intelligent people, in their heart of hearts, they must know that racism is bollocks – they know that as part of slow thinking. But what about fast thinking? At what point will being run by nihilists start to be problem for these people?

My brain doesn’t seem to be working very well this morning – maybe that’s because I’m still on my first espresso. I should order another. Could I give up my job and write this book? Could I get it done in a year? I’ve been thinking about doing a book since 2011? What I should do is focus on finishing one. It doesn’t matter if it’s not the perfect book. Books lend credibility.

And I like the idea of using them as teaching tales. I’m wondering if I could do that with some people at giffgaff. I should really do the pizza game with the people I’m training this week. I should also do the Willy Wonka chocolate game.

There’s a coaching model which says – read through the book. Pick out a tale that interests you and then we can meet up and talk about it. Each tale should have further reading associated with it.

Actually, it would also be great if I could have an illustration for each Koan. But maybe that’s pushing it too much – and maybe that would detract from the text. When I wrote the before, I had a cast of characters, all of whom were named after clowns. When I do it this time, I should do the same thing, but also I should somehow include the names of female clowns. Lucy (as in I love Lucy) Victoria (as in Victoria Wood), Jennifer and Dawn. Miss Babbs. Mrs Overall. Bubbles. Can you get carried away with this? Possibly.

Would it be better to just give them all names from a list of most popular baby names for this year.

KOAN 1

I’ve just thought of a koan. Harry is the head of IT at a medium-sized bank. He has hired Chloe as an Agile coach to deliver an Agile transformation for a development team of several hundred developers. Harry tells Chloe that he wants to know exactly the steps that are required to transform his team into an Agile team and exactly how long it’s going to take. Chloe tries to explain that this isn’t really how an Agile transformation works, but when she tries to explain this, Harry gets furious. He says that he thought that Chloe was an experience professional. If she’s a professional, he doesn’t understand how she can be telling him that she literally doesn’t know what she’s doing.

KOAN 2

Wolfgang is asked to take over as Scrum Master on project Gecko. Abigail used to be the Scrum Master on project Gecko, but she literally ran screaming from the Gecko Building in tears last week. Jade is the Chief Executive of the Gecko spin-out organisation. In their first meeting Jade tells Wolfgang that the project needs to go live in three months and she needs his promise that this can be done. Wolfgang answers truthfully that the doesn’t know whether it can be done or not.

Jade hints that if Wolfgang can’t promise that the project will be delivered for that date, he might not be the man for the job. Wolfgang wonders if she’s right.

Wolfgang runs a series of workshops with the team and gets and idea of the size of the backlog that still needs to be developed. He realises that there is three to four times more work

21/11/2016

So I’m a bit worried that now I’ve had the idea of the Agile Teaching Tales, I won’t be able to write the stream of consciousness (because that’s what it is, isn’t it?) stuff that I’ve been writing in November, which I think has been so beneficial.

KOAN 3

There is a telephone meeting about a new project, at the meeting, Gregor who is the chairman of the company and has been brought in because he knows how to get things done, asks everyone who is on the call to promise that they will deliver the project on time. Mary Anne is the Scrum Master for the project. When it’s her turn to promise that the project will be delivered on time she says that she can’t promise that. She only knows enough about the project to know that there is a considerable amount of uncertainty about some of the things that need doing and also some serious barriers to completing the project in a timely manner. The best she can do – she says – is to promise that she will be tireless in trying to remove the obstacles that the project faces, and will be as transparent as possible in showing progress and predicting likely delivery dates.

Gregor is furious. He says that he has never heard anything like it in his life and slams the phone down. He hangs up on the meeting.

KOAN 4

Mary Jane has been reading a number of books on Agile project management. She has also just taken a new job as a Scrum Master with a small company. The company struggles with all the problems of software development that she’s seen at other companies – insistence from customers that time, cost and scope are fixed; senior people in the company insisting on “aggressive deadlines”; senior people in the company forcing junior people to work through the night. The list is long. One day Mary Jane is riding on a tube train on a line which runs both underground and overground. As the train comes out of the tunnel into the light she has a realisation: most books about software development and project management are about doing it right. The have lines and boxes and pristine principles and practices. They explain ways of making sure that projects are on-time and to-budget and please the customer.

Most real life projects are not like this at all. Most projects are vague, late and over budget. When they deliver value they don’t deliver it in the way that they are expecting. Most projects cost far more than they will ever deliver. Some are unexpected hits. They have real-world problems that seem too mundane to admit – not enough furniture, no passwords to the test environments, nobody from the customer who wants to talk to you. Mary Jane would like to read a book that talks about this side of project management, and how to deal with it.

KOAN 5

“One should always be asking ‘What is it?’ says Taiichi Ohno” The famous process improvement guru.

“I have no idea what that means” says Gary, the product owner on a greenfield project.

24/11/2016

I don’t think that I’m going to write any Agile stuff today. But I think it’s good to be writing. I think it was a good coarse and I got in a second attempt at the chocolate game and I also got in an attempt at the Pizza game – which one of the attendants said “blew her mind”. And we only did two of what I think are three rounds of it.

I think I can finally retire that whole section on soft skills. And I can add a section on “Agile Teaching Stories.”

I’ve just had to tell some cunt to turn down the sound on a video that he was watching. Fucking explosions and gunfire. All of a sudden people think that can do what they fucking like. I was just on a tube when a woman, I’d say in her late 30’s early 40’s ate a sweet and then just left the paper on the tube. I know these seem like small things – because let’s face it sometime in the next 20 years some of the most appalling abuses are going to become obvious. But it seems like there’s this thing now that nobody cares. And in a way who can blame them? The government are trying to destroy the country and its people, there’s much evidence that they are all kiddie fuckers. Why bother about litter?

I’ve been dreading today – which is not a very Zen thing to do is it? But we’ve got the Xmas party this afternoon – and some fucking giffgaff fannying about before it. And somewhere in and amongst this stuff I have to have my end of year review with Dolo and I also have to tell Ted and Faye that they’re not going to get the score on their reviews that they thought they were going to get. And Morufat is going to get a “4”.

Part of the problem here is that I’m trying to do 3 things at once – and then along with that there’s always the 4th of trying to keep the Sopra Steria administration something like right.

What I’ve been doing mainly for the last month is training. If I’d focussed on that, how good would the training be now?

I’ve also realised that there’s a way of updating the Guardian case study so that it comes right up to date and also has a publishing angle, by talking about GDS – and I’ll bet that there are lots of things online that you could use that say how awesome the GDS model is.

I’m feeling horny – I always do when I’ve been doing training. But there aren’t many babes around for me to drool over. Of course there will be in the office but that always feels so creepy.

Oh, and I have to take Johnny Depp out as well!!!

What I realised is that I could do something like I did for the Agile Foundation course and turn the powerpoint into a pdf and then turn the hand outs into pdf and glue them together – and that would allow me to use the one-pagers from the Agile Course.

Something else that I should definitely start doing from now on is making sure that I get everybody’s name and email address – they can tell me if they don’t want me to mail them, but I should still get it.

I’m just wondering if there’s a way of doing the pizza game so that rather than having some arbitrary scoring system for the pizzas, we just say that we want them to be as fresh as possible.

For ones that aren’t delivered we have a penalty time score.

But it’s worth playing with it again – and I’m wondering if I get work it into the Agile Foundation course, I think we could.

It’s getting so I don’t want to open my SopraSteria email because there is so much unadulterated bullshit in there.

26/11/2016

I was lying in bed listening to an audiobook of koan when I got this idea.

KOAN 6

The trainer of an Agile course tries to wake up his students after their lunch break.

He says “Here is a simple game called ‘pointing at things and saying what they are.’ Walk around the room – or around the space where you are if you are outside and point at things and say what they are.

“Now here is a more complicated version of the game, called ‘the last thing you pointed at’ – so I point at the table, I say nothing, I point at the chair and say ‘table’, I point at the carpet and say ‘chair’, I point at the picture on the wall and say ‘carpet’ and so on.

“And now here is another version of this game, which is easier than the previous one, it's called ‘pointing at things and saying what they're NOT.’

And finally, there is a game called ‘mind.’”

27/11/2016

I’ve been doing the Guardian crossword – I don’t know from which day. I think it’s interesting how I’m scared of the hard ones. For instance, I thought about doing the everyman crossword which is in the Observer – the Sunday Guardian. But I’m a bit frightened of it. Last night when I was staring at it, I thought that I would get absolutely nowhere with the Guardian one – I got one anagram, and then I was stuck. But slowly, slowly, I’ve struggled until I’m just trying to fill in the bottom left-hand corner.

And it’s worth thinking about how I go about solving the crossword problems – I look for the ones that jump out straight-away, and then I get stuck. And I kind of panic sets in. I keep looking at the clues – and reading them in the same way and getting nowhere. What really seems to help is writing things out. Especially coming up with synonyms, and I keep pushing at it and pushing at it until something shakes loose.

I’m thinking about the problems that I have in my life. I think I have four main ones (“What a rice bag!” they would say in the Iron Flute).

Money: money isn’t such a problem at the moment, but if the country’s heading where it looks as though it’s heading, it could well be in the near future. I simply need to understand a lot more about pensions and savings than I do at the moment.

Food: I’m over-eating. All the time now – or whenever I get the chance. This is really bad. I don’t really have any obvious health problems at the moment. But I don’t think that that can continue for much longer unless I make some fairly fundamental changes to how I eat and what I eat.

Love: I’m very lucky to have Themis. There’s no “but” about that. It is very difficult though to just want to have sex with one person – I wonder if we’ll have an update from Neil Strauss about his marriage. It’s fine going in to say that you just want sex with one person – what about 10 years later? What about 20 years later? And what if you still want to love and be loved by the person that you married all those years ago? What if they want to have sex with someone else and that means that they won’t love you anymore? And on, and on.

Work: There seem to be two problems here worth solving.

1. The technical problem of how to do continuous integration, continuous delivery and continuous deployment and the swathe of technologies that it seems to require.

As I’m writing this I’m thinking about Steve Sweale’s weird passive aggressive requests for reporting. I’m also thinking about the idea of understanding technologies – like git, github, Jenkins, bamboo etc. “transparently.” And that’s a lot of work, but it’s worth it, to maybe stay employed in software development for the next 10 years at least.

1. Dealing with kings, babies and nonsense.

It’s been really interesting reading “the Cyberiad” by Stanislaw Lem because it’s the story of two seemingly infinitely gifted engineers. But even though they’re gifted, they have seemingly infinite trouble with their creations? Why? Because they have clients. Clients ask for the impossible – e.g. an animal that can’t be caught for the purposes of hunting, they try to get work done without paying for it. They want lots of money, so they seek out the wealthiest (and therefore the most powerful) clients. Would it be possible to avoid clients altogether? Just have lots of relatively powerless “readers” or “users” none of which are particularly powerful or dangerous, or even if they are, they’re kept at a safe distance.

That seems like an extremely good idea – and I think it’s what Mark Zuckerberg thought he’d managed to do, although now it turns out he’s got half of the planet complaining that he’s lied to them.

And it brings it back to this Taiichi Ohno notion of “what is it?” What are you actually selling in those different cases. When you’re dealing with tyrants (which is every customer) what are you selling really? When you’re dealing with punters (people who pay their money and take their chances and you don’t have direct contact with them) what are you selling?

What I’m really selling at giffgaff – and it’s what I was selling at CPP is a grumpy and uncooperative version of reality. And even to the people who are pushing at utter bullshit version of events (programme managers) this “ground truth” can be useful. But that’s the bit that I’m good at.

It’s at a point where the snow drops off of the bamboo leaf for other people – i.e. don’t tell your bosses what’s actually happening – my snow sticks. What I’m essentially doing is changing what there is. And because the way we think is “What you see is all there is” (WYSIATI) putting different things in people’s field of view changes their thinking.

So, what do I do? I put things in people’s field of view that they’d rather not see, but that they need to see, and deal with, in order to get what they want. Wow, this has been really difficult today.

I think the truth is that I’m still pretty much frazzled from the last 4/5 weeks.

Anyway, I feel I’ve got enough energy to walk back – which is good. I might even have walked the magic 6 miles by the time that I get back. I’m going to walk past the shop that sells all the different kinds of beers, but I won’t indulge. I’m still not much of a solitary drinker. I’m wondering if maybe I can get some fresh dill somewhere and do those beans for tea. That would be good.

KOAN 7

“You can either make money or sense.” – R Buckminster Fuller.

KOAN 8

“What you see is all there is.” Daniel Kahneman.

KOAN 9

“It’s important to understand the difference between ideas and reality,” says Groucho.

So what I want you guys to do is to write down something that you could have done yesterday, but didn’t do. I don’t want it to be anything too crazy and out of the ordinary – no rocket ships or jet packs. Just something ordinary that you *could* have done. But didn’t do.

Now what I want you to do is write down something that you *did* do yesterday.

Now look at these two things in your mind. Look at the thing that you *did* do and look at the thing that you *could* have done. What differences can you see between the two? How do you *know* that you did one and didn’t do the other?

KOAN 10

“Why the hell did it take so long?”

28/11/2016

I don’t feel like writing at all – I feel kind of exhausted. But I think I should. One good thing is that I set out to write 1000 words a day. Well, that hasn’t happened, but I have written 17000 words – over 500 words a day in about 22 days.

I developed my Agile Koan/Agile Teaching stories idea by writing back to sociopathic David.

I’ve just been to the hospital to get my machine looked at. There was a woman complaining and it made me totally miserable. She was 90 – I don’t even want to write about it. She was being racist – while talking to a Cypriot. That’s such a big divide isn’t it? It’s so difficult to be nice and relate to racist people.

But of course, the truth was that there was no one for her to talk to, she was lonely and that’s really why she was complaining.

I’m trying to eat no sugar today. The interesting thing about that is that it means I’ve bought a lot more fruit. And I’ll probably buy more now before I go back to the house.

My airways are aching. I suppose it could be cold. I think the secret of working at giffgaff is to spend at least one day a week at home, and walk and do the crossword.

It’s just dawned on me that if write for half an hour every weekday morning, that’s still only 2.5 hours a week. And then maybe I could give it an extra 2 hours over a weekend. If I were really going to make one of these things click and drive it home, I would have to put a lot more effort than that into it.

Anyway, they’ve upped the pressure on my machine, so we’ll see how that works. And they’ve suggested that they’ll give me a variable pressure machine if that doesn’t work. This is never a good hour of the day for me.

One positive thing is that I’ve found the book that I was working on in May and retrieved it from google docs. What I was thinking I could do in the run-up to Christmas was work on that on that way to work. Print it out. Put holes and treasury tacks in it and edit it, like I used to do when I was writing academic papers.

David the sociopath asked me what the Future of Agile is going to be in 5 words and I gave him 5 words.

I should go home. I’m not feeling the desire to write at all.

29/11/2016

Maybe it’s my imagination, but I think the quality of my sleep might have been better last night, even though I woke up a couple of times. They’ve change the pressure on my machine and it could be that. I’m hearing music this morning and that’s not happened for a while. For instance, I just got my laptop out (pathetically I’m excited about it having a new battery). And the tune that came into my head was “look at me I’m dancing” (look at me I’m typing).

So I think I’ve got a little bit more energy than I have had other days.

One thing that I know for sure is that if I don’t go out at lunch time and walk, I’m toast in the afternoon. But on the whole, I think this idea of just writing my brains on the Metropolitan line has been a very good one. I just distracted there for a moment by the thought of being able to type like this, and then, with the push of a button being able to publish what you’ve typed to a blog – or with the push of another button, being able to output what you’ve typed as a pdf and all of the other epub formats.

I have to talk to Morufat today about giving her a four in her performance review. I’m really not happy about this. I don’t think I can show her the email that Dolo sent me, but I think I’m going to have to go through all of the points that he makes in it and give her a chance to respond to them.

And I know we were supposed to have the review done by the end of November – but we didn’t know that we had to do one until very recently and so I’ve got no problem with that running over.

It’s very annoying how much time I’m spending on training, on chasing training expenses, on management, on fuss and feet mark and argument around management.

What’s particularly galling is that none of this either helps my client (in fact, I’m short-changing my client) or brings in new business.

An idea that I had just now is to talk to Krishna. Simply because I think Krishna has the right kind of idea about how to go about making more of being an Agile coach than just having a contract.

I was on the bus a couple of nights ago and there were two guys talking. One of them had a weird Amish under-beard. And he was talking about an idea that had. It was some kind of financial thing to do with approaching banks, and he was saying to his mate “I have to do something, I can’t just go on getting cost-of-living pay rises.”

And I’m thinking about it now as I’m sitting here. Why am I in this “secure” job? So that if I’m ill I can throw myself back on the tender mercies of Dolo?

It’s not going to happen is it? So what I’ve been thinking is that I should be putting all of that effort into getting another job and/or making myself more employable.

A pair of guys trying – probably somehow illicitly to refill their vaping machine – in the middle of the tube train. Now they’re talking really loudly in a middle-eastern language (is it Arabic, is it Persian?). And a woman on her phone having to shout over them.

No hotties in sight. Which is a shame because what I could really do with this morning is just to lech after a hotty. There’s a woman sitting opposite me – how old is she? Mid-late thirties. She might have been quite sexy ten years ago, but the bloom’s gone off of her. Was she ever really dirty in bed? What you need to do? What would make her dirty? How much of an asshole would you have to be? Would money do it? These are still mysteries. I just moved towards her and she moved he legs away.

I’d be able to form a better opinion if she’d take her gloves off. I’ve decided that I’m very prejudiced about women based on the quality of their nails. And of course I could see if she’s married. She’s married. She’s just let down her hair. I dunno, maybe she’s sexting with someone.

I could start a conversation. No ear phones in. But I think she might jump out of her seat if I did.

I just thought of an opening line that I used all those years ago in Brighton – making fun of a girl for having a very carefully posed photo for her bus pass. And that made me think of that debacle of the female barrister outing a male barrister for complimenting her linked in photograph. And that made me think about what I was listening to last night. So much of what goes on between women and me is unspoken. And when you try to put it in *logical* words, it comes out all wrong.

And something similar is going on when you do project management.

30/11/2016

Last day of the month – I’ve been paid, and all I can see is how broke I’ll be at the end of the month. Amazing sunlight streaming in. I’m the Metropolitan line.

Bad row with Rich A from giffgaff yesterday. As I was arguing with him, my mouth was going dry. He’s all of a sudden (from my point of view) decided that he needs free credit report by the end of the year. He’s also decided that the team aren’t working hard enough.

I think we should have made clearer to him how things were going – but the emphasis has been on getting loans out of the door, and now it’s not. Loans doesn’t seem to be a big thing anymore. I thought that the idea was to lend to people who otherwise wouldn’t be lent to, but that doesn’t seem to be thing. I suppose that’s the problem with software. It’s at the play of chaotic forces.

Maybe I’m in the wrong. Maybe I have let them self-organise too much. He’s been talking to Howard – who of course says that the whole thing would have taken 10 minutes if he’d done it.

What else have I learned? That if the shape of the Scrum team is wrong you should continually push for it to be put right. Because a big team is hard to manage from a point of view of keeping everybody busy all the time – which seems to be what Rich A thinks is most important – reminds me of what Bill Murray says in Ghostbusters to the secretary at the beginning before they suddenly get busy “type something will ya? We’re paying for this stuff.”

How does my reluctance to push for release tally with “working software” – maybe it doesn’t.

I certainly thing that I should ask Steve to reduce the team size. If he doesn’t like looking at Umer, well then, he shouldn’t look at Umer. I also think I should at least ask Steve if he’s thinking of getting rid of me – or if he thinks it might be an idea to move me to another team and give another Scrum Master a go. Hazel seems to be quite good at keeping the team busy and focussing on the delivery at the end of each sprint.

But something that’s comforting me is reading the Stanislaw Lem book – the Cyberiad. Kings and babies. That’s the job, dealing with kings and babies. I don’t know whether this king will have me executed or not. I mean let’s face it – if I did get kicked off this project – and even out of Sopra Steria, would I not find a job? That doesn’t seem likely as long as I was well, I mean as long as I had my health. And I wouldn’t have to commute all the way to Uxbridge. I think I might as well say that to Steve. It’s a long way to come t not be wanted.

I should definitely sort my expenses out this week. Especially if there’s a chance that I won’t be with Sopra Steria for long.

This new battery seems to be working well.

I’ve definitely got a cold but it doesn’t seem to be as bad as the one that I had when we came back from Greece. I was just thinking that in Greece I was walking every day and walking up the hills – and even running up some of them.

There’s a frost outside, and bright sunshine. I’ve not been sleeping too well, I could have been up early and have walked from Ickenham to Uxbridge. Maybe it’s a good idea to keep up the walking, even in the darkest days of the winter – only three weeks to go now until the shortest day. Because the kind of thinking that comes from walking seems to work and help with other actions. And now that I’m not walking – look at me! I’m in a right old tangle.

I dread to think the kind of project that commercial would put me on if I weren’t working for giffgaff. It would probably be miles away and it wouldn’t be nice.

I totally fluffed verbal self-defence yesterday. I should have acted concerned, instead I got defensive. This is pretty basic stuff. Everybody gets their ass handed to them sometimes, but surely there’s more that I can do to make sure that I do something better than getting angry and defensive in these situations.

Is there any way of making verbal sparring fun? I’ve thought of doing it before but you really need a cohort to practice with. I could tag it on the end of the two-day training that I do with PTC (which I need to raise an invoice for). This is where I got to *last* time I was in a situation like this – and that was a long time ago really, with the dragon lady.

I don’t *think* I’m feeling like just giving up and walking away today, but who knows. Certainly not feeling “let go lightly” like I was when I gave up at Sussex University.

The other thing that I was thinking was that maybe I should explicitly be looking for training jobs rather than Scrum Master jobs. I know they wouldn’t be as well-paid but there’s a chance that I would enjoy them. Then again, did you see the guys who were running training at QA?

Richard A certainly doesn’t regard me as a trusted advisor. And that’s something that I’m partly responsible for.

01/12/2016

Well, what I said I was going to do today was start to look at what I wrote in May. But I don’t feel like doing that at all. I just feel like writing.

I counted up all of the holiday that I’ve taken in 2016 and it looks like I’ve take a day too much. I’m going to let them tell me though. I don’t know why I find that quite so depressing, but I do.

I had discussion with Dan who’s the new test manager and he told me that he thinks things could be being done much faster. I don’t know, maybe they could.

This has been an exhausting year for me. It’s only now that I’m lifting up my head and realising that I’ve been doing this commute for a whole year. It’s caused me to lose my confidence, like I did when the dragon lady attacked me. No so much when I got kicked off of the project in Reading.

I’m wondering if Dan is pissing in Richard A’s ear.

The thing that I really need to get sorted, before anything else, is sleeping. I’m only sleeping 4-5 hours a night, and I’m not sure what the quality of that sleep is. I know at the moment I’ve got a cold, and that makes it worse.

I’ve got that flat on my back feeling. I thought things were going fine, and now all of a sudden they aren’t. Oh and fuck. I’m not whether there’s blood in my poo – I’m going to have to keep a close eye on that.

And really, at some point very soon I’m going to have to get to grips on my expenses.

I think actually that this new setting on the machine will work better – remember that the first day that I used it I heard music. It’s just that I’m getting through this cold.

I don’t feel like writing at all this morning. I was thinking that what I should be doing at work is writing a Scrum Masters Log every day, letting everyone know what’s going on on the project. And it would be a good way of me getting to know as well.

I don’t think I’ve managed to go on any kind of course this year. No clowning, no improve. I did manage to do some comedy, but not much.

What can I do to make things better? Well, I could just resign and take some time off. I could resign and take some time off having done a bunch of courses that might make me more employable – SAFE, whatever the Cynefin thing is called these days.

Also, talking to Dan really made me think. What does a hyper-productive team look like? Could you really have one somewhere like giffgaff? Am I just making excuses?

I was thinking that you could put together a list of stories. I’m actually terrible at doing this for myself. Is this a case of a cobbler with a hole in his shoe? You could put together a list of stories that you do in any continuous integration and continuous delivery environment, that you use to familiarise yourself with that environment.

1. Write a recipe for the environment that the code needs to be run in.
2. Apply that recipe
3. Write tests to make sure that an environment is set up properly
4. In any language write unit tests for Roman Numeral
5. In the same language write acceptance tests for Roman Numeral
6. Put all of the code, for the environment, for the tests, for the code in a source code repository
7. Build everything from scratch from the repository

I don’t have anyone to talk to. I can talk to Themi a bit, but she’s as knackered as me. Was 2006 really my best year? It was the year I got married, it was the year I did my most sarging. Let’s not dwell on the irony of that too much. But I remember going through a phase where I determined to speak to everyone. We went out for a meal just recently with this friend/work colleague of Themi’s and this wife. He talks to everybody, his wife thinks it’s stupid.

One of the things about talking to everybody I suppose is that one way of doing it safely is by lowering your status. And I suppose that’s especially difficult these days when it comes to trying to talk to everybody – politics.

Part of me just wants to resign and take a month or so as holiday. After all, being self-unemployed, apart from the bit at the end where we completely out of money, was brilliant, beautiful, restful, dreamy.

02/12/2016

Maybe the key to all of this is sleep – I got a good 7 hours last night and I feel good this morning. And the secret to that is getting to bed early, so you’re nice and relaxed by the time that you actually go to sleep – I think.

I managed to finish the Evening Standard crossword off this morning – even three words that I didn’t know. Cavan (the county town of County Cavan in Ulster), Sateen (like satin but with spun threads rather than filaments) and Erebus (Greek got of chaos and the pit).

And then I’ve done most of the Metro crossword this morning.

I’ve got lots of things running around in my head. It’s really bad that Rich had to lose his temper like that. And reading “Managing the design factory” he has a very valid point – that work fills to occupy the time allowed – that *nothing* is ever early. I’ve always been resistant to pushing for particular deadline, and I definitely don’t like people staying late. But what seems to really annoy Richard is the lack of a sense of urgency.

And I suppose if you’re pushing Scrum, that’s exactly what you get, a series of “fake” deadlines. I am not going back to having emergency meetings that run over emergency meetings.

I’m seized with a weird urge to say rude things to beautiful young women – “you’re very beautiful, I would really like to fuck you.”

“I would really like to go down on you and keep licking and kissing and sucking and pushing until you’re begging me to fuck you.”

Is it my imagination, or does just having these thoughts have a strange effect on the people around you?

So we’ll see what happens with giffgaff. 12 months is a long time to stay on any project anyway – too much blood under the bridge. And I sense that the team are very fed up about something. Maybe we should take an opportunity in that last week before Christmas to have a “drains up” retrospective – with someone else running it. If we don’t do something like that I’m afraid we’re going to have another blow-up. I also need to talk to Steve about how we might go about reducing the size of the team, if Rich asks for that.

I think I should sign up for a couple of courses in the New Year – the SAFE course (though it galls me to do this) and the Cynefin course.

I’ve also got this idea of writing blogs that are about the size of Seth Godin’s – what length are they? 100 words? 200 words? They’re a length that no matter how knackered you were, you could probably summon up enough energy to write. And you could link to something else at the end of them.

Yeah, the more I think about this, the more I think I’m going to have to initiate action with Rich A. We can’t go on not talking, that’s going to end badly.

So this woman in front of me, she’s not wearing any makeup (which I find sexy) and she has well-manicured, but unvarnished nail. Which I also find sexy. Dyed hair. I’m guessing Polish. But I can’t find anything about her to actually get a handle on and find sexy. She’s doing that thing that women do when they want to be observed – the vampire victim thing. Showing me her neck.

Tope was a better Scrum Master than me – let’s face it. Lots of people are better at being a Scrum Master than me.

A fat man in a claret hooded sweatshirt tucking in his trousers his thick tongue, about the size of an egg flitting around outside his mouth, like a manic slug, or a bald mouse. Nowhere near a thousand words today.

03/12/2016

An obviously mad woman – early 20’s beautiful. Talking and laughing to herself. The guy that I see frequently at the Pixley street bus stop. He can barely walk now. Easing himself onto the step on his house to drink his half-bottle of cider. How far away from that am I?

Maybe she’s talking to someone on the phone. Maybe she isn’t. Maybe she just got my breakfast. Yes, she just took my breakfast. God I wish I headphones. Last week I had headphones. Last week I had a seat next to the window.

What on earth am I doing at giffgaff? Shouldn’t I just resign? I don’t want to get kicked out of there. That would be just too bad for my self-confidence. The other thing of course is that I’m knackered. And that’s not good for my self-confidence either. The evening standard crossword was harder than usual, and I’ve brought a Guardian one that I think I might have managed just one clue.

Maybe I just need to do something physical. Although I can’t think what just now.

God, this woman is annoying, but then again, I think everything is annoying me at the moment.

What should I do next? That’s the thing that I should be meditating on.

I’m going to break this week’s sugar ban – have a bun. And then I’m going to walk along the street and have a look at what might be a bakery that specialises in cheesecake. Hmm. I could make something like a cheesecake, or a curd tart for dinner.

I’ve decided that I’m going to sit here and write at least 1000 words (need more coffee) and maybe more that that. Maybe this is the time for a writing marathon. What would it be like to spend all day every day writing? Would that be good? I realise that we could travel up to Yorkshire and back on the bus if we wanted – it might even be better than going on the train – or we could hire a car, which might be cheaper than both of us taking the train anyway (and would give us an escape route if my mum cut up rough).

I’m going to walk past the shop that sells the interesting beer, but I don’t think I should buy any. I should do chickpeas tonight. I’m bleeding from my arse on occasion (I was going to write periodically, but that’s not quite right is it?).

When I see that man at the bus stop in Pixley street I feel so bad, I feel that I’m not a good human. But what can I do to help? Simultaneously every atom of him seems to be screaming for help, whilst at the same time, I think I’ve tried to help him before and he doesn’t want help.

The week started well with me cooking on the Agile Koan idea, and it’s finished with me cowering in the shadow of client-zilla.

I’ve just spend £16 or so on brunch. And I might have signed up for a subscription for a proxy that I don’t need (this is to do with da government deciding that it’s going to keep a record of your webhistory).

I realised that something has changed in the way that I look at women. I used to look at *all* the attractive women and imagine our lives together – you know like those montages that they have in movies. Now I look at them at think “How crazy are they? Would they be a financial liability? Would I measure up in bed? What would they expect from *me* financially? And you know what that is? It’s just the hormones fading. The hormones that basically made me want to fucking *anything* no matter what the emotional and financial cost.

So maybe I got off lightly being so useless with women. And I was lucky in the one that I did get – apart from her nasty habit of nagging me when she’s got nothing else to do.

Wow. It’s been a struggle to write for the last few days – maybe it’s this cold. I thought it was fairly light compared to the one that I got when I came back from Greece but it’s holding on for longer than I expected and there’s a cough that’s come with it as well.

What would it be like having to sit at a desk every day and write and write and write? I know that’s what Terry Pratchet did – and look what happened to him! No – there’s no reasoning in that.

One thing that I was thinking was that I’m prepared to get my ass kicked in an argument again – and it will happen again, but I’m not going to get my ass kicked without trying to defend myself using some kind of verbal martial arts. Maybe this is like that moment with the guy who did Aikido, where he was pouring water over himself and he had a revelation – although that video of the Turkish wrestler taking the Aikido dude repeatedly pretty much did for Aikido in my mind.

The problem is that you can’t do the job of Scrum Master without someone at some point shouting and screaming “I want my stuff! I want my fucking stuff! I’ve paid for it, I want it now!”

And so you have to be able to defend yourself against that.

05/12/2016

So after talking with Themi over the weekend I’ve tried to arrange a meeting today to talk through Rich A’s concerns about the release – which is how I should have dealt with his complaints in the first place. This train is busier than usual – wonder why?

Started to re-read a book by Phillipe Petit – the guy who tightrope walked between the twin towers – last night. It was very comforting. It basically sees creativity as a thing that you have to do in secret. And it reminded me very much of my days in Brighton when I was learning seduction. Reading things like NLP books with tremendous enthusiasm. It also reminded me that I should make the thing that *I* want to make, not the thing that I think will please other people. And in a way that’s the big problem with writing about software development. The way that other people write about it is so different from the way that I want to write about it.

But the thing about Philippe Petit is that he *does* things.

I think I’m back where I was with that guy at Fry IT. He’s wanting me to give a commitment, and I’m refusing to give that commitment because I know I can’t give it. The question is I suppose, why does that feel so bad? And why does it make people so angry?

I actually don’t think I’m going to be able to do much about it in this case. I think the relationship is probably already ruined.

Which begs the question – why aren’t I just walking away? This is a busted flush. Why don’t I just walk away from it?

I’m not writing anything interesting at the moment. Very sensitive to noise the schoolboys talking in a group behind me. A hottie talking on the phone as gently as she possible could be.

Mmph. I’ve just come into Harrow-on-the-hill station and remember coming here to do some work for Rachael – Mmm. Can’t remember her name.

I like Phillipe Petit’s idea of building a cathedral – build an edifice in your mind, *fantasize*. Also, he said that before you do that you should make lists.

Make lists and draw connections between the things on the lists. He says you should use a pencil, but I think I’m most confident using a keyboard. I’m feeling good using this one – aside from the guy yelling in my right ear. OK.

So what’s in the list?

* Commitment and consistency
  + Robert Cialdini
* Clarity, legibility and illegibility
  + Seeing like a state ( James C. Scott)
* The logic of the unconscious
  + Seeing things flattened (Ignacio Matte Blanco)
* Fata Morgana/the hiding hand
* The inside view and the outside view
* The OODA loop
* Profit centre and cost centre
* Timing
  + Event time and calendar time
  + Decay and attack
  + Positive effects of deadlines
* Herrenmorral and Sklavenmorral
* What you see is all there is
* Trade-offs and equilibria
  + Nashian equilibria and game theory
* What actually happened
  + The past is less vivid than the future
* Verbal Self Defence
* The Second Circle – Presence
* Illusion – disappearing the elephant.

07/12/2016

Fuck the Jubilee line was warm this morning. As always it took me far too long to decide to take me coat off. I’m struggling to type – the laptop is slipping off of my knee and I can’t cross my legs because I’m sitting next to someone. It’s Wednesday, it feels like this week is taking FOREVER. The only thing really to cheer me up is a girl with knee-high stockings and a short skirt. I was thinking that I don’t do that thing that Philippe Petit talked about – acquiring a secret skill, but maybe I do, I did it with seduction – to a degree – I’m doing it with crosswords. God, that sounds so feeble.

I’m doing it with Git and Github and the Virgin controllers. Fuck it’s been an uncomfortable ride to work this morning. The Metropolitan line is busy because the Piccadilly line is borked.

There’s a guy sitting across the aisle reading an academic paper – something to do with social care. I don’t know quite how to explain this but he has the most condescending look on his face. Academic.

And anyway, I committed one of these “crimes” that Philippe Petit talks about didn’t I? OK, not on the scale the he did – nowhere near. But I gave up with academia and did Agile. And I’m wondering if it’s time for another adventure.

OK – I’ve just come up with a brilliant title for a talk – “How to kill your boss.”

Something that Philippe Petit said that I think is very interesting is when he was talking about Bullfighting. He was saying that when you let a bull into the bullring, the bull picks a part of the ring to defend as its territory. It doesn’t stay there, but that’s where it goes back to. If the people who are trying to annoy the bull get in between where the bull is and the patch of ground that it’s decided is his, the bull will lash out in all sorts of unpredictable ways. And those are the opportunities to attack the bull.

Then Philippe Petit says something really interesting. He says that his “crimes” are always a deliberate transgression – like getting between the bull and his territory.

This makes me think about the whole verbal self-defence thing. What about verbal attack? What about deliberately getting into other people’s territory.

Most people avoid conflict most of the time. And I’m thinking of how I got into the particular situation that I’m in at the moment at work.

What conflicts did I avoid? I didn’t push back against the idea of having a huge Scrum team. I didn’t push back against the scope. We’ve got lingering problems with test environments – we know the whole of ops is a problem – we KNOW that they don’t want anything to do with DevOps.

Man! This is a really good exercise to do as part of a verbal self-defence class. What difficult conversations are you avoiding? Why are you avoiding them? Is it because you lack the skill to negotiate those difficult conversations?

09/12/2016

The other thing that I realise is that the next time that I do my digital project management course I could try a bunch of this stuff.

What I would have to do is to make the afternoon of the second day completely different from the other bits of the course and do proper improve-like warm-up exercises. And then, go into some theory of how to deal with difficult conversations and then do some exercises. Of course these exercises could be very dangerous – it’s really easy to say something about people’s appearance that pisses them off. I’m wondering if the first thing to do would be to have a conversation that’s totally scripted. And we could have a conversation that goes badly to start with, and then a conversation that goes well.

And also we could have a go at the game where everybody loves very idea that you have. I was just wondering if you had a brainstorming session where you played a bunch of games when you started – what sorts of ideas might you come up with?

Well, today I’m going to take part in my first “Hack day” – as with all of these things at giffgaff I feel totally ambivalent about it. But I’m falling back on the improve idea that it’s good to be in a situation where you don’t really know what you’re doing.

Who knows what’s going to happen with money. I think Rich A might be fantasizing about firing us all. And I think he might have put so much pressure on Rich K that it’s made him sick. God I’m horny. I don’t think I’ve had an “expression” since last weekend.

And for some reason it’s unbearably hot on the Jubilee line. So when I get on in a morning and I’m getting excited about the various gorgeous women on there, I’m dripping with sweat. Lots more people will get on here at Rayners Lane – the Piccadilly line is still borked. There’s a large wanker sitting opposite me. Sweatshirt, sweatpants. He’s got his feet on the seats. Cunt. But now I’ve discovered Lydia and Hazel do it – can I really get that worked up about it? There’s a hottie sitting directly opposite me. Sexy nails. I don’t know where this has come from – it’s a new thing. But I’ve started looking for well-tended, but unpolished nails. Maybe in general that’s the kind of woman I’m looking for. The woman sitting opposite isn’t wearing any makeup. She’s a natural blonde, but I think her pubes would be wiry. Not the gorgeous fluffy stuff. I could do what Philippe Petit recommends. I could keep a journal – for a hundred days say – about my efforts to talk to women. The Metropolitan line is quite a good place to do it – it doesn’t really feel like a tube train. It feels more like a normal tube journey – it wouldn’t cause that much upset just starting a conversation here.

I really like this idea of acquiring a skill secretly. Which other skills could I practice secretly? Improve my Greek? Improve my German? Learn how program from scratch?

I keep thinking of the walk from Uxbridge to Ickenham. Writing like this, no doubt is very good for the mind and the soul. But I think the thing about walking is that it’s non-verbal meditation. I’m not sure that sitting still would be as good. I’ve got a callous on my left little toe.

Yeah the Philippe Petit book is very interesting. One of the things that’s very interesting about it is how intellectually uninteresting what he does is. He goes on about being creative, but is he? Really? Not from an artistic point of view, not from an intellectual point of view.

Tell you something that does piss me off. These people who walk down the length of the train to get off. There are some really sexy black women here. I bet they don’t have plain, unadorned nails.

11/12/2016

I feel the need to be French about what’s about to happen. People’s sexual requirements will never align with their sexual requirements. There will always be brutal, bestial people in the world. There will always be kindness.

I’m tempted to write a book, or even a blog post entitled? “If we’re so smart, why aren’t we in charge?”

There’s a story on the net that Amazon employees are sleeping in tents at the back of the warehouse. Yet still, I don’t want to desert them. How could I?

I had a thought that I was going to write as an FS on my email – I never go back to them. I really should. Is that the secret to getting something out of my writing – that seems to be what the “Fieldstone” method is about.

I was thinking about “Presence” and the 2nd circle. Is that really what Agile is about? Being in 2nd circle? Being present to what’s going on right now.

I keep thinking of my attempt to turn that into an audio book. How far through it did I get?

I “filled the tank” this morning in anticipation of having sex with Themi – and then it didn’t happen which means that I’m dog horny right now. In a way it’s a comfort that I feel so totally “locked and loaded”.

I keep meaning to start talking to people, but I don’t. There are some hot babes in here (I’m sitting in the Footnotes café just North of London fields.

A feline brunette. Sitting with somebody I’ve decided is a rich man’s son. He turned up with what looked to my untrained eye like a fancy camera – and now he’s sitting at his table with two hot babes. I don’t think the feline one is the one he’s fucking. Feline brunette has tiny pert little tits. I wouldn’t mind her edging me.

The world has photo fucking crazy. I was standing looking at the books in a bookshop window and noticed a callow youth hanging around behind me? What did he want? He wanted to edge me (and not in a good way) out of the way so that he could take a photo of the fucking window!

The world has changed completely, as I said it would when the net natives hit the workplace – and not in a good way.

I need to stop growling when I see a hot babe – sometimes I’m doing it out loud. Sometimes I find myself saying “great breasts” out loud. Well maybe not out loud but with voice. I’m feeling the need to resurrect my blogging software. I wonder why?

Weird vibe between the rich man’s son and the other (non-feline) brunette at the next table. I she with him? She just ran her hand over his shoulder as she walked past him. Is she with him because his father has money. Those weird stranded relationships that rich people have.

An “older” blonde at a table near the till. Late 20’s? Early 30’s. Clearly bonkers. Such a lot of it about.

12/12/2016

So I didn’t want to write on my blog today – having spent a lot of time yesterday getting it working again. Every now and then I keep “seeing the matrix” as they say.

People believed a ton of false shit in the middle ages – we gloss it as religion, but it was a ton of false shit.

The other thing that I think we need to admit is that we’re flat on our back (with Brexit and Trump) it’s not that we committed to a move, it’s just that we did what we always do to stop the working class getting uppity and the psychopaths from getting out of hand. We tried to ignore them, we assumed that someone else would bat them away and then nobody did.

So now I think it’s acceptable to take stock. And also, to quote someone who’s terribly uncool – Richard Bandler – if something doesn’t work, it’s perfectly acceptable to try *anything* else.

So here are some of the things that were bothering me before we all found ourselves flat on our backs, but I just couldn’t be bothered to do anything about.

**Political Correctness**

**Baroque Piety**

**Everybody is a little bit racist**

**So much of what we’re reaping now was sown by “n**

**Neo-liberals”**

**Safe spaces, feminism and middle classification**

**Food banks, work capability assessments and JAMs**

15/12/2016

#A Foolish Consistency

>>A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A man is walking out of a toy shop on New Year’s day when he meets his neighbour. They rarely bump into each other, and are pleased to have a moment to stop and chat.

“Hey Ted! That’s so weird! Didn’t we bump into each other here last year?”

“We did Bob.”

“Weird huh! We don’t see each other all year, and then we bump into each other here again on New Year’s day.”

“I don’t think it’s a coincidence Bob.”

“Really? How not?”

“I’m guessing you’re here to buy the robot dog.”

“I am, how did you know?”

“I just got one, there’s a whole pile of ‘em right inside the door.”

“Thank God! I promised Jimmy one for Christmas.”

“I know.”

“What do you mean you know?”

“And then when you went online, and when you went to the store, they were out of stock right?”

“You been spying on me?”

Ted laughs. “No, well, yes, kinda.”

“Ted?”

“I used to sell toys for a living. I was a marketing executive at BigToyCorp. Every year we’d make sure one toy was the must-have. The one all the kids were talking about at school.”

“OK”

“And then every year we’d also make sure that there was a short of that toy in all the stores at Christmas.”

“Really?”

“Really”

“So what happened to a lot of parents, they promised their kids THE toy, whatever it is - let’s say it’s a Robot Dog - for Christmas. Remember, they promise. And then it turns out they can’t get that toy for their kids for Christmas, not online, not in the stores. Nowhere. So what do they now? Well, the kids have got to have \*something\* on Christmas day, so they buy them something else. But that doesn’t mean they’ve kept their promise. And then come new year – guess what? Suddenly new stocks of the robot dog have become available.”

03/01/2017

So the tea break's over - it's back on my head. I'm into the 3rd day of my New Year's eve hangover - it's really quite scary. Any New Year's resolutions? Talk to people. What I really want my New Year's resolution to be, sitting here, right now is fuck all the women. Man am I horny. And the quality of some of the pussy on this train is fine. There's a blonde just standing a few feet away. Man the lips on that. And then a super tall dusky maiden - I think she might work where I work. Man the legs on her.

So I'm still feeling dizzy from New Year's eve. But also, I've been reading the Patsy Rodenberg book about second circle and wondering how I can keep that in mind even after I've stopped reading the books. It's an interesting thing that I can manage to listen to an audiobook over and over and over. Far more times than I could ever read it.

The train is busy and it's annoying. No elbow room. No room to cross my legs and rest the laptop comfortably.

One of the things that I was thinking before I got this hangover was wondering what I'd been doing the last two years. Scrum Mastering. That's all I've been doing. And it's not enough. The challenge, maybe this is just my challenge, but I don't think it is. Is to stay in second circle with the world around you. That essentially what hypnosis is. Pacing and leading is second circle. That's why I didn't get laid all those times, because I didn't stay in second circle.

I need to change my shoes, I need to change my knitwear. Second circle is what the NLP people call "Up State." The challenge is to try to stay in up state/second circle as much as possible. It's also the state that you have to be in to win the "Hat Game" in Improv. What pushes us out of second circle? Well, I've been thinking of what pushes me out of second circle with Rich A. Part of what pushes me out of second circle with him (mostly into first circle) is fear of the stupid, repertorial shit that he's going to say next.

That's why we got into such a bad state in that chat. He third circled me and so I third circled him. We ended up yelling at each other and no information got exchanged.

This third circle shouting is very similar to Suzette Elgin Hayden (I think that's her name)'s "blamer mode."

What we need, all the time, is strategies and methods for getting back to this second circle, up state, leveller mode. From both first circle (when we've got in on ourselves) and from 3rd circle (when we've started posturing and shouting, partly so that we don't hear other people).

And what \*I\* need is some kind of strategy for reminding myself to get back in this mode when I slip out of it. And here's the terrifying thing. I can slip out of it for months, if not years. I'm seriously starting to wonder if I haven't slipped out of this state for two years at least - since my dad was in hospital with the heart attack.

Walking and the crosswords. That's all first circle. The interesting thing is that the only kind of writing that will talk to anyone is second circle. And of course, this is writing that paces and leads.

Oh well, at least I've got something out of this time off, I was worried that I hadn't had time to reflect on anything.

But it's terrifying when I wake up like this. It's like when they wake up in Red Dwarf from the video game and their hair is long and their nails are long.

It's like writing those notes in Momento - "Wake up! Try to stay in Second Circle!"

04/01/2016

Some fucker is taking the piss. Not even trying to conceal their music. Not a good night last night. Dizzy again lying down and woke up to find Themi had gone next door. I said I would get in touch with the lung function people and tell them that I'm snoring, and I will. And I probably need to go to the doctor about the dizziness.

On the train, all the women's handbags need a chair.

The mortgage is going up. Everything is getting more expensive. Imagine how terrifying it would be if I couldn't work. At the same time I need shoes, I need clothes. I need a new cardigan.

Yesterday I wrote about the importance of staying in second circle. It is important. But maybe one of the things to understand about it is that you can't be in second circle all of the time. You're only going to manage moments of it. But if you just manage a little bit of it every day with the people around you that will make a huge difference.

I've turned on the internet on my phone so that this keeps up to date with my mac - I thought that they'd stopped me accessing dropbox, but they haven't. I think if I'm going to do any more stuff on DevOps I'm going to have to get a fancier laptop. This poor thing just can't handle it.

There's a situation here which I really don't like. A woman has refused to give up the seat that her handbag was occupying, even when someone sat down next to her.

Feel that there's a cocky funny way of broaching the subject that would result in some second circle contact.

But what about second circle contact with Themi? Is that even possible.

The problem with commuting is that you feel permanently shitty. It exhausts you in ways that are difficult to notice.

It's a but unnerving how much of a conclusion you can draw about somebody from their nails. Especially when you realise that people can do the same about you.

And I need to do my taxes.

To be equal-opportunity, bloke across the way - whose phone is making all manner of annoying fucking noises - has his bag on the seat next to him.

I can write text on the train - but I can't edit here. It seems to need more bits of the brain.

I should work from home tomorrow and go to the doctors. And that's what I need to do now really, take the ideas that I've got and work them and work them until something really new comes out of them.

And there are two things that really need to come out of them. One is how to communicate them to people so that they almost don't even know that they've been communicated. The other is actually provide practical actions that make these insights useful.

I can't decide if I'm feeling any better than I did yesterday or not. This cardigan smells of the belly pork from yesterday - I left it in the kitchen.

I think it's good to keep writing. And one of the things that's good about keeping this up to date with dropbox is that I can write it on my Mac when I'm at work.

There's a guy wants to talk to me about a training contract. In one sense I think it would be a good thing to do - but is it getting out of Agile coaching? Is that a good thing? The other thing is that at the beginning it would be a very steep learning curve - it's not Agile - it's Java.

The blonde opposite, (it's bottle blonde) the one whose bag still needs a chair, even when there's someone sitting next to her. I bet she really needs to be dominated. She really needs to be shown whose boss.

Does someone like that give you an immediate way in to how to seduce them?

Ten years ago - 2006 was a good year for me. May 2006 was when I went to that party and chatted up Shu Fan. Remember that Asian girl in boots - putting her under an hypnotic spell. God, if I only had that kind of energy now. If I only had that kind of time!

The blonde opposite is interestingly boho in the way she's dressed. I bet she's bad with money.

I've written over 700 words today, but I don't think they've been very joined up, or sensible. Still, it's good to write. It's good to keep writing about absolutely anything that comes into your head.

With someone like the fake-blonde opposite, it would all be about the first touch - first talk I mean.

06/01/2016

I'm feeling better. Thank fuck. The last few days - in fact all of 2017 - so far has been a nightmare. I talked to the doctor (on the phone) and she said it was probably labyrinthitis which is causing the dizziness. I think she's probably right.

But I'm on a semi-fast train to Uxbridge and things feel OK. And I have a plan. A walking plan. The idea is that in January you walk 31 miles, in February you walk 56 miles (2 a day),in March you walk 93 miles (3 a day) and so on until you get to June. In June you walk 180 miles (6 a day) in July you walk 186 miles (6 a day). Then in August you slack off to 155 and so on.

Jan - 31

Feb - 56

Mar - 93

Apr - 120

May - 155

Jun - 180

Jul - 185

Aug - 155

Sep - 120

Oct - 93

Nov - 60

Dec - 31

If I've worked that out right over the whole year that's 1279 miles, a non-too shabby 3.5 miles a day. If I could do that, I bet I would be fitter. And I bet that things would come out of that "It would shoot." Like doing the crossword did.

Wonderful frosty sunrise scenes out of the window on the metropolitan line. Northwick park often looks photogenic.

So lots of other things drifting around in my head. I'm distant from Themis, and I don't want to be. Yes, I look at other women, but I don't really.

I need to sort my taxes out. We need to sort the mortgage out.

I'm reading a book about finite and infinite games which is very strange, but I think it's the difference between what Boyd called "To Do" and "To Be". Finite games are about being something, infinite games are about doing something.

I need a computer with some poke and the time to investigate/understand the whole devops thing.

We need to sit down with a horse and figure out how to not scare it.

Some other things that I want to do - I want to write a thing that allows me to keep tabs on my walking, \*really\* simply, but also produces a blog that looks beautiful.

I want to write something that does essentially what the lean pub site does - takes markdown from github and makes it into a pdf or the epub format of your choice. And I suppose it would be good to do that in whatever is the langue du jour, rather than just in perl - again - a laptop with poke would come in handy.

There's a proper wanker on the train. Blowing bubbles loudly with his bubble gum and then glowering when anybody looks at him. Sides of his head shaved. A proper wanker. You don't get many of those on public transport these days.

10/01/2016

I know it's the 10th because I'm also keeping records of how far I've walked. January is easy - all you have to do is walk a mile a day. I was thinking about this Phillipe Petit idea of getting in the way of the bull, getting between the bull and it's territory. It's a very interesting idea. It goes back to when I first thought about seduction, all of those years ago. And a story about someone interviewing a bull fighter. The person who was interviewing the bullfighter (probably an American) asked him if he had to do lots of exercises and training in anticipation of fighting the bull.

"Perhaps there is a misunderstanding?"

Said the bullfighter, "I do not wrestle the bull."

I suddenly had the realisation this morning that that was why I spend so much of my time when I'm commuting getting annoyed. It's Immediate, it's second nature. When people get into \*your\* space you're annoyed with them. Whether it's because they're putting their handbag on a seat, manspreading or playing their music too loud.

But it's the same with seduction. Why am I even bothering about writing about this any more? How long is it since I did any decent seduction? 10 years. It's certainly 10 years since I hit my stride doing all of that pickup in Brighton. And how much actual sex did that lead to? But was that even the point?

Who knows.

But I think there's something similar going on in a work setting, you have to get outside your own territory - you have to get in the Bull's way - to be a success. And that's very different from being very good at what you do. And to be honest that makes a big difference to how you write the software. What's interesting about this is that it means that there are several different ways up the mountain. Because as I'm writing about this I'm thinking about snapchat - which facebook bought (according to Bruce) because of the quality of their messaging system.

People who walk down the train, I fucking hate those people.

So you can get successful by occupying a space that no-one else is in. And if you do that, well, then, it's like a dog that can walk - nobody's worried that he's doing it so badly because they're amazed that he can do it at all, but if you get in that space as a walking dog, then you're very vulnerable to accomplished bipeds - the queue for second place as Ian Smyth describes it.

The other thing to bear in mind here is that only reason that someone gets in the way of the bull is that they've got a very sophisticated plan for how to get out of the way of the bull and kill the bull! In order to get the bull to expose it's vulnerable areas where you need to stick the swords to kill it, you have to get it to charge. And that's the other thing. It's not a plan, it's a strategy.

Just imagine if as a seducer, you waiting for the shit tests, because you'd worked out how to pass them. So that you strategy was, evoke shit tests, and attempt to pass them.

Just imagine as a Scrum Master, you strategy was to get in conversations like the one you had with Rich A rather than \*not\* getting into conversations like that.

Monday 16/01/2016

Even by the relatively light target for walking in January, I’m still behind. I had some ideas for “Think Like a Bullfighter” and I suppose that I should just go to that repository and write them down. I’m typing this on the train. I was going to write something about a good exercise being to assert yourself just slightly by asking to sit somewhere where someone had their bag. But sitting opposite me is a man who has his bag next to him. He has obvious, unabsorbed cream on his face which is very disconcerting. And he’s sitting with his legs so far apart they could be in dfferent home counties. I am not going to fuck with him.

24/01/2017

Oh man yesterday was blue Monday. I had a fight with a woman on the tube and then I was arguing with on Twitter about Brexit and I was feeling dizzy. I feel better today.

I’ve got an interview at 2 o’clock. So I suppose that before then I have to decide whether I’m going take it or not (it’s on the phone). I’m struggling on the train to find enough space to type.

This morning – man, aren’t my thoughts all over the place. I was wondering what a plan to escape England would look like. I’m thinking somewhere like Luxembourg or even Lichtenstein. What I definitely want it to be is somewhere where there is socialised medicine and rule of law – I’m starting to thing that there’s going to be neither here in the UK for much longer.

And part of that has to be keeping my skills up to date. It’s like Richard said, if you’ve got the skills on your CV, you get the rates.

I don’t want to do this interview this afternoon – it’s for Ford in Essex. As I write that, I’m not sure, if I do want to do it, I’m going to have to phone in sick from the train and go back home and blow the whole day off, which feels like the wrong thing to do. Of course, this is part of the problem of commuting, you’re knackered the whole time and you’re time poor. It would be a shorter commute, but everything about it screams “Old men.”

I like writing like this. Even though I often start off a post by saying that I don’t. What I tend to shy away from is re-writing. And I know that re-writing is what I need to do if I’m going to write anything that’s other people want to read.

Maybe yesterday was a day of unpleasant truths. I lose my temper far too easily on public transport and don’t come out of it well. And I also read a post by someone who’d written self-help books, who was disillusioned. In a way it was a useful story to read. The irony of someone who was writing a book about only need to work a few hours a week, writing every hour that God sends. And it quashed a fantasy that I have – that I could write those kind of books – and I suppose you could argue that “Think like a Bullfighter” is one of those kinds of books.

But the post also reminded me of something I read a long time ago about a woman complaining that she’d married a professor and he’d turned out not to know as much as she thought he would know. This is the thing with self-help books, what people want is the Fata Morgana – the shiny shiny, the deceiving fairy. If you’re not going to give them that, there is always someone who will.

OK – here’s a decision. I am not going to go for the Ford job. But I am going to keep applying for jobs. And the main criteria is that they are interesting – so the Ford job is out (and, truth be told, so was the Thomson Reuters job).

I’m wondering if I was so aggressive yesterday because I’m finally recovering from whatever it was that struck me down in January. That happens sometimes, when I’m recovering to full health I get very stroppy.

One interesting thing about the whole self-help thing is that it’s classed as non-fiction. Would it be more honest if it were fiction? So that you tell a story about someone who behaves in the way that you would be advocating if you were writing a self-help book, and maybe in the story they do tremendously well, but you don’t specifically advocate what they do.

Man, my guess is that there’s a lot of pussy about, if you have even the slightest skills.

So by that rational, my book wouldn’t be called “think like a bullfighter.” It would be called “The Bullfighter.”

And it would be about someone like me, in a going-nowhere job, beaten down. Who latches on to some principles and then – then what? Does well? Gets his ass handed to him? Gets laid? Gets fired? It’s starting to sound like a more interesting and more honest book.

27/01/2017

Today’s been a bit of a disaster because of my duffle coat – it’s too big for this commute. It’s not cold enough to leave it on in the train and it won’t fit in my bag. I need a mac.

After going on the SAFE course for the last two days I had a blog post that I wanted to write – or I at least had the title for it.

“SAFE IS POST-FACT AGILE – BUT HOW COULD IT BE OTHERWISE?”

One of the interesting things about going on a SAFE course is that quite a lot of people who were sent on the course didn’t know anything about Agile. Several of them were still struggling with the idea of what they perceived as the uncertainty of an Agile delivery. One of them talked about Scrum being chaotic.

One guy gave a little speech (when we’d talked about estimating in points) about how if a developer had estimated in hours that a task would take a certain amount of time (we hadn’t talked about estimating tasks in hours) then if half-way through the task he found that it was taking longer than he thought, well, then he should just go faster. He seemed so please with himself for saying this.

Successful programme management as faster typing.

SAFE is about playing to fallacies.

But it’s also about pretending some things which clearly aren’t true. One is that the people working in an organisation are working for the goals of the organisation.

This came out when one of the questions asked something about someone misbehaving and the tutor said “Well yes, but you can’t protect against delinquent behaviour.”

Really? Well, we’re talking about delivering in big organisations. Some people, quite a lot of people think that large organisations are, by their very nature pathological. If you’re really talking about getting success in these kinds of organisations, then you are talking about Game Theory, and the shortest path between two points not being a straight line.

The other thing is that the set-piece of SAFE, which is Programme Increment planning, is a weird, anti-lean thing. Lean is about small batches, programme increment planning is about a HUGE batch. Lean is about pull, programme increment planning is a massive push.