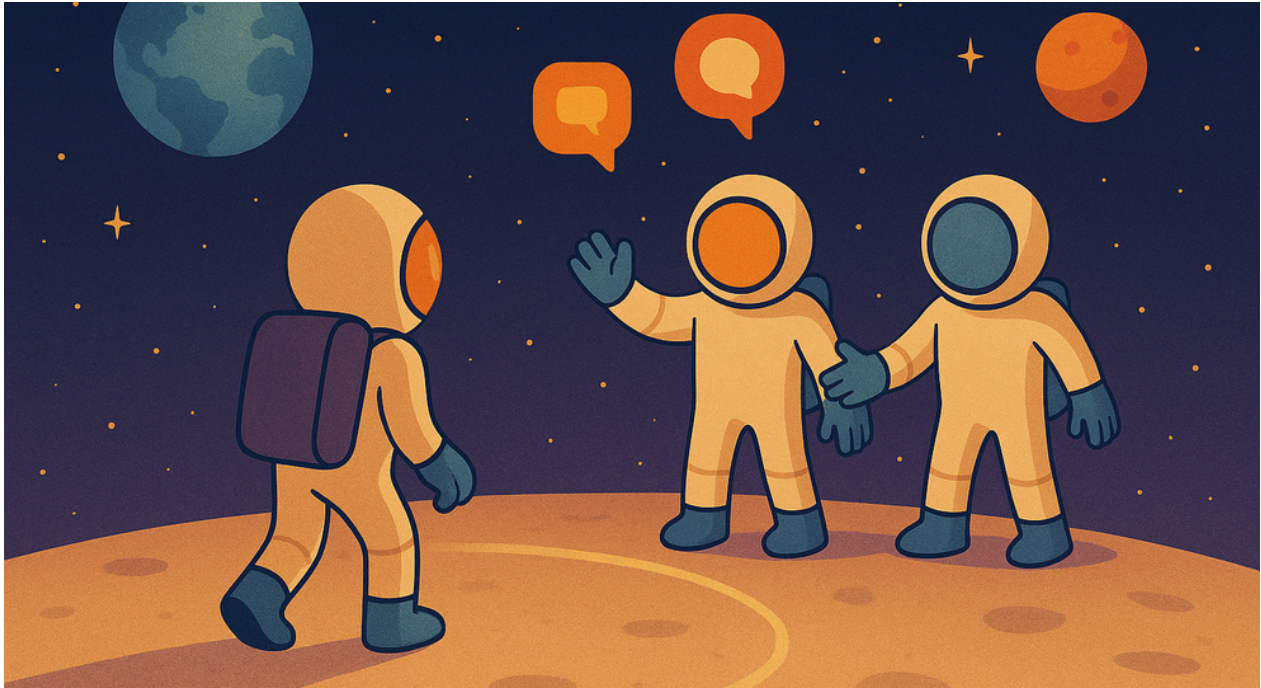


The Electric Fence Stopped Working Years Ago



We were walking to watch the sunset when a dog started barking at us from a porch. From inside, a voice called out: "Don't worry, he won't leave the porch. The electric fence hasn't worked in years, but he still won't go past it."

I stopped mid-step.

A dog, imprisoned by a fence that only exists in his memory.

The next question changed how I see everything: ***What electric fences do we have in our lives?***

The Invisible Barrier

Electric fences train dogs through graduated discomfort, first a warning beep, then a shock. Eventually, the dog learns the boundaries so well that even when the fence stops working, the memory of pain keeps them trapped. Most dogs stay placidly within their invisible prison for life.

But some dogs discover the secret: three seconds of discomfort leads to lasting freedom. Once they realize the fence is just an illusion maintained by memory, they never go back.

The Fences Between Us

Here's what I've realized: Some of our strongest electric fences aren't keeping us from freedom, they're keeping us from each other.

That voice in your head saying "Don't text them, you'll seem needy." The one whispering "They haven't reached out, so they must not care." The fear that being the one who always initiates makes you weak.

These are electric fences that stopped working years ago, but we still won't cross them. Think about it, when was the last time you were annoyed that someone reached out to check in? When did you ever think less of someone for being the one to text you? Never. Because connection isn't about scorekeeping. It's about courage.

Twenty Seconds of Courage

Sometimes all you need is [twenty seconds of embarrassing bravery](#). Twenty seconds to write "Hey, was just thinking of you, how are you?" and hit send. Twenty seconds to make the call. Twenty seconds to be the one who cares out loud.

The fence isn't there. It never was. It's just the memory of some childhood rejection, some social rule someone made up, some fear that caring more makes you matter less.

The Truth Nobody Talks About

Here's the truth: The person who reaches out first isn't the weak one. They're the one who discovered the fence is broken. They're the one running free while everyone else stands on their safe little porches, barking at the world but never joining it.

Your breakthrough isn't on the other side of productivity or success or self-improvement. It's on the other side of that text you're not sending. That call you're not making. That "I miss you" stuck in your throat.

The electric fence between you and the people you care about? It hasn't worked in years.

But you're still standing on the porch.

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