

He had just turned thirty in that sort of way that makes one suddenly understand the appeal of suicide.

He voiced this to a 45 year old friend who remarked, "Oh, you are only 30. When you are my age, then you have the right to be concerned."

He countered, "but why must one wait another twenty or thirty years to be disappointed with their life? One should be disappointed with their life at any age they damn well please. Everyone knows the moment their options ran out."

This friend regretted calling him so early in the morning, made a transitional joke, and said his goodbyes. No one else would bother calling him that day.

He found a smattering of birthday wishes throughout a variety of social networking sites he only checked on his birthday. This momentarily made him feel worthwhile and connected to humanity, till he remembered that he himself had used an app that automatically sent birthday greetings to everyone in his network on the appropriate days. He laughed at the idea of all these autonomous profiles wishing each other happy birthdays. He thought he should get on to work.

As he sat in traffic, he half-listened to an audio book. Oftentimes his thoughts would drift, and he'd go several minutes before realizing he'd have to restart the chapter to realize what was going on. He compared this to those times where you read several pages of a book without actually taking in what you're reading. Your mind takes in every word individually, without doing the heavy lifting of putting them altogether. This thought was interrupted by a silver Prius driver drifting into his lane. He noticed the driver texting someone, and gave them a series of quick honks. This caused him to think about how driving is just enough of a burden to be burdensome. For the most part, one can be totally detached from driving. Simply react to things the way we were taught to react.

If you arrive at a stop sign, then you stop. If a light turns green, then you go. If a silver Prius swerves into your lane a second time because the driver is still texting, then you give them an extra long honk.

He realized he'd have to restart the audiobook chapter again to realize what was going on, and wondered if he would have the same problem when all driving was automated.

He parked in the same spot at the back of the parking garage every day. Since no one ever parked there, it made him feel like he had his own private parking space. This was the bright spot in the work day. It made him almost feel like someone important. He'd have fantasies of even putting up his own placard with his name above the space, just to see if anyone noticed. He imagined people being impressed to see him walking out of his car from a space with a placard. Then he realized that none of the people that walked out of placard spaces impressed him. If anything, they infuriated him.

They reminded him of the prime benefit of youth: knowing. He used to criticize professional athletes, knowing he would one day surpass them. He would criticize the writers, directors, and actors of movies knowing he would one day surpass all of them in their individual crafts. And now, every time he sees one of these placard people step out of their entry model Teslas, wearing nice enough suits, he would think about how he would one day be more successful than all of them combined.

“It is so great to have so much potential and know that you will reach heights unknown by any before,” he thought.

After waiting quietly in an elevator for six floors, he had finally arrived at work: a customer service job for a family friendly movie streaming service. It was not the sort of job he had ever envisioned working at, but times were tough. Not in a Great Depression sort of way. But in the way that people with postgraduate degrees found themselves working the same jobs they worked during the summer between high school and college. He mused about how the majority of human beings that ever existed before his generation would have loved to have such a problem.

But his musing did not last long, as he began handling the normal morning rush of calls. Old people would forget they signed up for the service, and say things like “you Jews stole my credit card information!”

Less old people would accidentally leave their auto-renewal on, and whisper things like “give me my \$5, you fucking faggot. It’s my money. Not yours!”

Then other people would need actual help with their service. When he would try to help them they would respond with things like, “I shouldn’t have to restart my computer to watch your movies. What kind of nigger shit is this?”

He was amazed at how bitter, poor, and downright bigoted so many of these people were. The vast majority of the time, he was dealing with problems that people had caused through their own stupidity or laziness. He had learned long ago to try to take nothing they say personally. He was the symbol of his company, and he got paid to take their abuse so the CEO didn’t have to. All the calls would take less than a minute if people were just straight to the point. Instead, the calls would go on for ten, twenty, thirty, and on rare occasions, forty minutes. His mind eventually started to piece together a theory for why this was such an elongated process:

“People can not accept responsibility for their own shortcomings. They would rather waste a day yelling at a stranger on the phone, than believe they made a typo in their email address while signing up.” He wondered if all humans were programmed with this sort of belief in their own infallibility, or if it was just the people he dealt with on the phone?

After the morning rush, his co-workers had impassioned arguments about what rap stars found true love with which pop stars, and how long their marriages would last. In his own life, he was accustomed to debates about the matters of intra-international politics, omni-economics, artistic