

## **Once Upon A Time.**

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who had been through a lot in his young life. Of course, he had learned many things, but what was important to him was learning where he could catch lizards and salamanders and that bicycles went downhill faster than up. He learned the eight-mile hike to the ocean from his parents' house and often hiked there.

He also learned about discipline, chores, school, manners, and many other things. What stood out most for the little boy were the things he liked to do. His parents didn't seem to care what he did as long as he did what they wanted. So, the boy learned that vital lesson.

He grew into a middle-aged teenager, and suddenly, the questions being asked of him seemed to carry an existential responsibility, so he needed to answer them. The questions and the required answers seemed so immediate, and he didn't know what to do.

“What to do?” he thought. “What to do?”

“What college do I want to go to?”

“I've been drafted, and I won't go!”

Once the Federal Arrest Warrant was issued, only one choice was left. He dropped out of life for a while. He became a rudderless ship and went wherever the tide or the wind took him. He didn't mind, and he had many excellent adventures.

Years later, his warrant was quashed, and he could return to life as he knew it. But life as he knew it had forever changed while he had been gone. His tenacity forced him to try to fit in, but he kept finding that the things he truly and deeply loved were, within the confines that society offered, rarely important to anyone but him.

The boy was, of course, a young man by now, and he found making money easy. What he found difficult about making money was the boredom it entailed. But he learned that he needed

money, and he needed more money than working every day could offer. He needed to create a recurring income. He set about creating a business that offered him a creative outlet to assuage his predisposition to boredom and one that made him money even when he wasn't working. His new business did well, and his boredom was kept at bay.

But the young man grew increasingly unhappy, and he filled the unhappiness with luxury items as the pleasure he derived dampened his deep desire for meaning in his life. Eventually, however, he realized what he had forgotten, and he had forgotten that this whole plan he had enacted was his way of dropping out for good. This entire idea he had put into place wasn't to be his life, but rather, it was simply a means to the life he wanted to live. Finally, now able to breathe life into his life, he sold almost everything he had collected and moved from everyone he knew, and once again, he dropped out.

He had heard grumblings and complaints from unhappy people all through his life. They complained about taxes and the cost of everything from gasoline to groceries to their mortgage. None of that changed in his new home and location; however, politics was now added as a significant ingredient of unhappiness to the people around him. The man, now well past middle age, would often listen to people complaining and wonder why they complained rather than simply changing their perception of their lives.

Finally, he began to speak up and offered them the advice that he had chosen to follow in his life: "You can, of course, complain for the rest of your life. Or, be a nomad and a loner. Drop out. Then Work, but figure it out. Make a bunch of money. Sell everything you don't need. Drop out again; being alone is not a prerequisite, and hike and fish. Be creative, garden, or whatever you want to do. Lead a good life. Get old. Be happy and optimistic, finally, for you."