

Curiosity, And A Cat It Did Not Kill.

As I pushed my one-speed bike up the steep dirt hill I wasn't thinking about the trip down. No, I was pushing my bike up a steep dirt hill and concentrating so my feet wouldn't slide out from under me. Reaching the top, I turned my bike around, jumped onto the seat, and let the bike coast down. Too soon, I was going so fast that the landscape became a blur, and I held on to the grips of my handlebars, trying to steer the bike straight. Once the bike's front wheel started to wobble, I knew what was coming, and then I was lying on the ground, waking up, not knowing why or how I had got here. But slowly, it dawned on me; I had crashed and been knocked unconscious.

Growing up in San Francisco, I was exposed to a lot of slang. From poets to beatniks to hippies, they all had their slang. One of the terms I grew up hearing regularly was the word cat, as in "he's a crazy cat" or "he's a cool cat." Somehow, the saying, "Curiosity killed the cat," also seemed to have a dominant place in my mind, perhaps because I needed a speed bump to control my impulsive curiosity about life.

My curiosity propelled me forward into my life, and I was completely unafraid to experience anything and everything I wanted, and the speed bump didn't work.

Then, half a century later. I realized the sentence read, "...the cat," and it didn't read "...all cats," so I was safe. I was not "the cat" but simply "a cat."

I remember my thirtieth birthday very well, and my biggest surprise that day was realizing I had made it to thirty. Am I a cool cat, a fast cat, a dumb cat, or just a lucky cat? Certainly, and I'll admit, I am a curious cat, and I started my life with nine lives.

Written by Peter Skeels © 7-29-2024