

## A CONSULTANT'S GUIDE TO STAYING YOUNG

I'm still consider myself an active partier. I'll go to clubs, bars, house parties. I've been engaging in this kind of activity since I was fifteen. But nothing disgusts me more than seeing a 50 or 60 year old man in my weekly dance club or bar, trying to score with the younger college girls. It really is quite a sight to see the middle-aged men, in their suits or sport coats, tossing their money out on the bar to buy some girl, old enough to be his daughter a drink. Ewwwww, that's just nasty!! Older women, on the other hand, are exempted from this discussion, of course. I'd have absolutely zero reservations with entertaining a sugar mamma at the tender age of twenty-five, were she to cross my path. Now that situation would be the greatest!! But I digress.

There was an episode of *Sex and the City*, where Miranda gets caught ordering the same Chinese meal for a whole week in a row. The lady taking the order on the phone supposedly laughs at her for being such a bore. While the rest of the room started laughing at this obvious debacle, I was not amused. Instead, it got me thinking: I've been going through the same routine ever since I had been living in College Park (I've only been living in Chevy Chase for about two months now). Every Monday it seemed like I was calling Danny's Pizza and Sub Shop to order number 37 on the menu – the General Tsao's Chicken Combo (the sick irony of ordering Chinese food from a pizza shop scares me enough). Yet, seeing that episode I thought to myself how my life could be going through the same downward spiral as some character on one of America's most watched sitcoms. They had my life down to a T, and it was quite frightening.

I'm a Consultant by trade, if you haven't realized that already. That entails writing up proposals, lit reviews, categorizing data, research, talking to clients, and project management. Sounds exciting, doesn't it? Honestly, it wasn't the job I was hoping to have after college. I was a Kinesiology major which meant that after graduation I could either become a physical education teacher, physical trainer, or opt to continue my education and hope to get my masters in Physical Therapy or Exercise Physiology. Could've, should've, would've . . . we've all heard this before.

I chose the consulting route because it was convenient for me. Convenient in the sense that I no longer had to continue my schooling, I could start making money, and I could finally be a man and earn my keep!! Sounded like a good plan to me, but something snapped inside me about 5 months into the job. I was no longer getting up early to be the first person in the office. I started to take more days off and tried to finish up my work (or put it off) to get out of the office before dark. Things were a lot different. Something came over me. That something was boredom. Monotony had finally caught up with me. Would it get any better?

I think about what life would be like if I were to have a job that I could really find satisfaction in. And then I thought about some of the things I really enjoy. I like working on cars, modifying them, and racing them. Hmmm, what if the world were a perfect place and I could be a race car driver? I can see it now. The World Rally Champion: Jason Bengson. Move over Colin McRae!! You'd better recognize!! Now that would be idyllic . . . or would it? Would I eventually become apathetic to the very hobbies that I enjoy and love? Does the very essence of work and the have tos of a job take precedence over one's enjoyment of a particular activity? As much as I'm keen on writing these little write-ups on the cynicism of life, I'd hate to do this on a daily basis if my life's income depended on it. Maybe it is better that I didn't become a race car driver? At least I'd still have something that I could fall back to that I truly take pleasure in.

It's human nature to want change. If that were not the case then we'd all still be living in grass huts or caves and I would not be typing on this laptop. Instead I would be out in the wild, spending most of my conscious day hunting for food, picking berries, or saving myself from being eaten by the occasional bear. But alas . . . there was change!! I'm sure some poor sack saw his friend get eaten while harvesting wheat one afternoon and thought: that's not right, forcing him to seek of ways to prevent such an atrocity from happening again. I tell ya, motivation comes to us in the strangest ways. Fast forward a couple hundred centuries and man

discovers fire and the wheel . . . and now things start rollin.

We live in a society where people are forced to grow up fast. Sure, the kids of yesteryear also had to grow up fast, but they had no choice. Life expectancy was only about 30 years!! You were born and the next week you were dead. If you weren't killed off by the Plague, chances are you would be killed off by some sort of disease that would be classified as the common cold today (take two of these and call me in the morning). These days, you'll find the average person living till they're at least 60 or 70 years old (and that's with heart attack and stroke factored into the equation), yet the kids of today's world seem so mature. I bumped into an eight year old girl in the mall the other day, talking to her friends on her cell phone and couldn't help but overhear part of her conversation: I'm not sure if I'd want to go to Yale or Harvard. Scary to think that she might be my new boss next year.

So what's with all of these older men trying to hookup with girls in a younger club? Are they really looking for someone their 20–30 years junior or is it something else? I see on the television yet another set of 17 or 18 year old kids developing some new software that revolutionizes the computer industry and making millions of dollars in the process. No doubt, these kids are forced to grow up really fast. I couldn't even fathom the idea of having that much disposable income at that age, much less be able to take on the responsibilities of running a large corporation (Bill Gates was way past his prime when he started Microsoft – imagine the possibilities?). Listening to television interviews with a lot of these children shocks and surprises me. They certainly are much more mature than I could ever hope to be when I was younger, let alone right now (now where did I put my GI Joe action figures?)!! Which makes me wonder: are these old men going to younger clubs or are the younger kids just getting that much older?

Some things never change, however. It's funny in that bitterly–ironic kinda way, how children will always want to be adults and adults will always want to be children (whoever said that the grass is always greener on the other side hit the nail on the big fat head). I've come to the realization that my life has gone by way too fast for me to realize I even lived it!! The younger me was always too busy trying to become a man in my own right to notice that I never really took the time to be a kid. It seems like only last year I was just starting college. I miss those days and I wish I could go back just to relive them and appreciate them that much more. A pipe dream, I know. But at I can dream . . . So while those dirty old men are trying to pick up their younger college babes I'll find myself sitting in front of the television watching Gladiator for the umpteenth time, shoveling spoonfuls of General Tsao's chicken combo, number 37. The nostalgia brought about from the sweet battered chicken will be my college girl. It tastes good, it keeps me young, and that's all there is to it!!

Written by: Jason Bengson, September 6, 2002