

“Advice, like youth, probably just wasted on the young: Mary Schmich”

Inside every adult lurks a graduation speaker dying to get out, some world-weary pundit eager to pontificate on life to young people who'd rather be Rollerblading. Most of us, alas, will never be invited to sow our words of wisdom among an audience of caps and gowns, but there's no reason we can't entertain ourselves by composing a Guide to Life for Graduates.

Wear sunscreen

If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it. The long-term benefits of sunscreen have been proved by scientists, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than my own meandering experience. I will dispense this advice now.

Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth. Oh, never mind. You will not understand the power and beauty of your youth until they've faded. But trust me, in 20 years, you'll look back at photos of yourself and recall in a way you can't grasp now how much possibility lay before you and how fabulous you really looked. You are not as fat as you imagine.

Don't worry about the future. Or worry, but know that worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing bubble gum. The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your worried mind, the kind that blindside you at 4 p.m. on some idle Tuesday.

Do one thing every day that scares you.

Sing

Don't be reckless with other people's hearts. Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours.

Floss

Don't waste your time on jealousy. Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind. The race is long and, in the end, it's only with yourself.

Remember compliments you receive. Forget the insults. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how.

Keep your old love letters. Throw away your old bank statements.

Stretch

Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life. The most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't.

Get plenty of calcium. Be kind to your knees. You'll miss them when they're gone.

Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll have children, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll divorce at 40, maybe you'll dance the funky chicken on your 75th wedding anniversary. Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much, or berate yourself either. Your choices are half chance. So are everybody else's.

Enjoy your body. Use it every way you can. Don't be afraid of it or of what other people think of it. It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own.

Dance, even if you have nowhere to do it but your living room.

Read the directions, even if you don't follow them.

Do not read beauty magazines. They will only make you feel ugly.

Get to know your parents. You never know when they'll be gone for good. Be nice to your siblings. They're your best link to your past and the people most likely to stick with you in the future.

Understand that friends come and go, but with a precious few you should hold on. Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle, because the older you get, the more you need the people who knew you when you were young.

Live in New York City once, but leave before it makes you hard. Live in Northern California once, but leave before it makes you soft. Travel.

Accept certain inalienable truths: Prices will rise. Politicians will philander. You, too, will get old. And when you do, you'll fantasize that when you were young, prices were reasonable, politicians were noble and children respected their elders.

Respect your elders.

Don't expect anyone else to support you. Maybe you have a trust fund. Maybe you'll have a wealthy spouse. But you never know when either one might run out.

Don't mess too much with your hair or by the time you're 40 it will look 85.

Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it. Advice is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than it's worth.

But trust me on the sunscreen.

The Many Uses of the Word Fuck

Perhaps one of the most interesting and colorful words in the English language today is the word "fuck". Out of all of the English words that begin with the letter f, fuck is the only word that is referred to as the 'f-word'. It's the one magical word, just by its sound can describe pain, pleasure, hate and love.

Fuck as most words in the English language is derived from German, the word 'fricken' which means to strike. In English, "fuck" falls into many grammatical categories. It can be used as a verb, both transitive (John fucked Mary) and intransitive (Mary was fucked by John). It's meaning is not always sexual, it can be used as an adjective such as (John's doing all the fucking work). As an adverb (Mary is fucking interested in john), and as part of an adverb (Shirley talks too fucking much). As an adverb enhancing an adjective (Shirley is fucking beautiful). As a noun (I don't give a fuck). As part of a word (AbsoFUCKINGlutely or inFUCKINGcredible).

It can be an action verb (John really gives a fuck), a passive verb (Mary really doesn't give a fuck), or an interjection (Fuck! I'm late for my date with Mary). It can even be used as a conjunction (Mary is easy, fuck she's also stupid).

And as almost every word in the sentence (Fuck the fucking fuckers).

As you can see, there are very few words with the overall versatility of the word "fuck". Aside from its sexual connotations, this incredible word can be used to describe many situations and feelings:

Fraud (I got fucked at the used car lot)

Dismay (Ah, fuck it)

Trouble (I guess I'm really fucked now)

Aggression (Don't fuck with me buddy)

Difficulty (I don't understand this fucking question)

Inquiry (Who the fuck was that?)

Dissatisfaction (I don't like what the fuck is going on here)

Incompetence (He's a fuckoff)

Dismissal (Why don't you go outside and play hide and go fuck yourself?)

Greetings (How the fuck are ya?)

Confusion (What the fuck....?)

Despair (Fucked again...)

Pleasure (I fucking couldn't be happier)

Disorientation (Where the fuck are we?)

Disbelief (UNFUCKINGBELIEVABLE!)

Denial (I didn't fucking do it)

Perplexity (I know fuck all about it)

Apathy (Who really gives a fuck, anyhow?)

Suspicion (Who the fuck are you?)

Panic (Let's get the fuck out of here)

Directions (Fuck off)

Disbelief (How the fuck did you do that?)

With all of these multipurpose applications, how can anyone be offended when you use the word?

We say, use this unique, flexible word more often in your daily speech. It will identify the quality of your character immediately. Say it loudly and PROUDLY.

How to Save the Day and Screw up Everything Else

Day 1

This happened somewhere in the dark streets of...

You know ... Superheroes have their own problems. I... I hate spandex. Sure, it makes it a hell of a lot easier to move around, and is just about the only thing I am ever going to be able to fit under my regular clothes, but do you have any idea how sweaty it gets? I mean I am wearing two full layers, like, ninety percent of the time. And it rides up everywhere. I mean... everywhere! But I guess that's got to be worse for the guys, right? How all the male superheroes don't have their dramatic poses ruined by embarrassing bulges, I'll never know. Still, have to admit, I look pretty damn hot in blue. I am thinking „Blue Thunder“ for a name. Kind of fits. I'll see if it catches on.

BAMM!

A Gunshot! Way too loud in my head. Thanks a bunch, super hearing. I have to stop daydreaming.

AUE!

A Bullet! Crap! Got me in the shoulder. I dive behind a parked car and check the damage. Ripped the suit. Damn it. Yeah, to top it all off, spandex is a bitch to sew up. That is going to fray like crazy. Luckily, I am made of tougher stuff. Super... reinforced skin? Yeah, I still do not really get it myself. You know how it is – shit happens and then you have superpowers. And then more shit happens. Like, to take what's going on right now for example, a gang fight breaks out in a very public street, you try to stop it and suddenly everyone's shooting at you. This is not how I had planned on spending my evening.

I still hear my mother's voice: 'You be careful out there, okay?'

Sarah: 'Yes, Mum.'

MUM: 'No, Sarah, look at me. I mean it. You get in a taxi, straight there and straight back and you stay off the streets. Do you understand? It's not safe out there these days. Promise me you'll be careful.'

If only my mum knew, her daughter was out here on the streets, dressed up in bright blue spandex and a mask, fighting off armed gang members because there is nobody else who can. Or, at least, nobody else who will. I honestly don't know if she could handle it.

So I've got to keep this whole double life thing my little secret. Which means constantly lying to my own mother. Fantastic.

To be continued...

Day 2

Bullets slice up the air and I feel the force of every one. Also, I'm quickly learning just how ear-splitting gunshots actually are.

I'm starting to think my superhuman hearing is not an advantage. Every one of them is like a firework going off inside my head.

Need to focus. I've been at this superhero thing less than a month. I have to keep going. I'm not about to screw up because of a fucking headache!

- Got to do something.
- Got to keep drawing their fire towards me and away from anyone who might actually get hurt.

I only need another couple of minutes, at least if I'm hearing what I think I'm hearing. Shouldn't be long until

- Beep-beep-beep.

Phone. Not now. I am busy. I check the number (because, you know, it's totally not like there's anything else I should be focussing on here).

It's Danny. Oh, crap. I am so fucking late. Obviously, I do not have time to answer it. I'm being shot at. I mean, technically the bullets can't hurt me, but still. There is no way my social life is more important than this, right?

'Danny! Hey!'

I hate myself and if there is a Hell, I am going straight there.

'Hey! Um... where are you?' 'I am so sorry. I'll be there in five minutes. Ten tops. Promise.' Oh, nice going, Sarah. Make a promise you can't keep. Well done. 'Oh. Okay. What's going on?'

A gunshot strikes the car. The bullet hole's right next to my head. Might have actually grazed my mask. I turn and spot the shooter at the far end of the street. He's reloading. Any second he'll open fire again.

I grab the rear bumper of the car and rip it clean off. Before he can fire, I send the bumper flying. Swirling through the air, it collides with its target. The guy's on his back before he knows what's hit him.

Boo-yah! Do people still say 'boo-yah'? I bring the phone back to my ear.

'Danny? I'm on my way. It's... murder on the roads.' 'Alright? See you in a bit!' Klick

Yesterday a date sounded fantastic! But I forgot to schedule it around any upcoming shootouts. Because apparently every thug who can lay his hands on a gun thinks he can take on the world. Which is why goodhearted super-citizens like myself have to give up my free time to come out here and keep them in check.

To be continued...

Day 3

Somewhere above me, glass smashes. Of course it does. That's all glass seems to do around here. It was hit by a nutcase in the middle of the road, clutching a machine gun.

I bolt down the road, faster than any other human being could move. He sees me and turns his weapon on me, trigger finger clenched. He's scared, not thinking straight, not realising how useless his bullets are as they crumple against me. It's not working, genius!

Actually, ow. Ow. Ow. Ow. They might not do any real damage, but damn, machine gun bullets hurt. Like, really hurt. Seriously, the things I put myself through for this city.

Ignoring the pain, I keep running at him. One punch is all it takes. His jaw crunches and he's on the floor, blood on his face. Maybe I hit him a little too hard.

But, to be fair, I cannot begin to describe how much I am not in the mood for this today.

The sirens I've been hearing for the last two minutes finally come into everyone else's range of hearing. Of course, it's too late for them to escape now. Police arrives. Bad guys rounded up.

All in a day's work, right? So why is that police officer not smiling at me?

'You in the costume! Don't move!' - For real? Not even a thank you?

Whatever. Like they could stop me.

In a split-second, I dart off down the nearest alley, grabbing the backpack I dumped earlier. I'm out of there before the police even register I've gone.

Twenty minutes later, I've paid the taxi driver with what little cash I had on me.

Now I'm in the bar. The bar where Danny totally is ...not. Of course he's not here. I am incredibly late. Well done, Sarah. Try explaining this one without giving away my secret.

News reports are flashing across television screens behind the bar and countless conversations fill my ears. All I want is for everybody to just SHUT up. I keep thinking about calling Danny, but honestly, what would I say? This sucks. This completely and totally sucks.

Someone turned up the TV: 'Violent scenes emerged here moments ago...' It's some news reporter on TV. 'The violence was interrupted by the arrival of the masked girl'

Girl? Seriously? I take out a whole bunch of armed criminals and I don't even get 'woman'?
Whatever. I've got other things to worry about. Like getting home ... I can't afford a taxi.

A guy is interviewed on TV. 'If it hadn't been for that... that girl in the mask, I don't know what would have happened... I could have died. ... If I could talk to that girl in the mask, I would want to say thank you.'

Yeah.

You're welcome.

Whatever.

The End