



The Imperial

Dread Sea

T H

Scrolls

THE IMPERIAL DREAD SEA SCROLLS

By

The Dread Pirate



DPebooks

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**These scrolls are dedicated to those who don't know the
meaning of Quit.**

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Introduction

The Imperial Dread Sea Scrolls were created for a very specific reason. As personal navigational charts, they are log entries if you will, of waters I have sailed. The scrolls have been called things like, “philosophy with a nautical flare”, “wonderful!”, “original and intelligent”, “Most excellent”, and even “brilliant.....absolutely brilliant...”. In truth, they became a way for me to motivate myself. When the waters got rough, I wrote a motivating entry so as to keep my spirits up and to allow me to remember that a motivated sailor is a happy sailor.

This led me to the realization of why I continue to write this unique collection of reflections. If I can spew forth a bit of rhetoric that makes both you and I sit straighter or think in a positive or more productive way... I feel that I have accomplished what I have set out to do. I will admit that my point of view is skewed for more than one reason. I will also state for the record that others often look at my brine-impregnated point of view as completely random and disjointed. But, once they begin to reflect upon the words I scribe they have often told me that they begin to see things a little differently. That my crew, is the sole purpose of the Imperial Dread Sea Scrolls. If I can excite the electrons within the cranium into some sort of frenzied highly motivated response I have been victorious!

As sailors of life we are sapped of our strength and our feelings through multitudes of daily duties and relentless negative stimuli. We have become so incredibly immune that we sail through the uncharted waters of life like unfeeling, unseeing zombies. If my words can snap something within you to *FEEL*, oh, what a success I have been! My writing may well force the mind to wander outside the normal comfortable parameters of the mundane. This is exactly what I have set out to do for myself. I share these revelations with shipmates in hopes that the entries within these scrolls will motivate and invigorate us both to greater heights.

Twenty first Century Piracy is all about motivation and understanding who we are, what we desire and how we intend to attain our goals. Motivation can come in a variety of forms and content but ultimately, motivation comes from within. The Imperial Dread Sea Scroll will foster positive mental attitude, self-motivation and accountability.

How to read the Imperial Dread Sea Scrolls.

I have compiled what I feel are the best of best of over two years of entries. This document can be read straight through. But note that you will find certain parts redundant because they were originally written over time since 2001.

I took the liberty of reediting most entries so as to allow for more of a flowing document. However, I feel that part of the original charm of the work was that it was broken up into separate scroll entries to allow the reader time to ponder each entry. I suggest that you read the Scrolls in short sessions. This will allow you the intended flavor as well as time to ponder their implications in your life. I believe that motivation comes from understanding who you are, what you desire and how you intend to attain your goals. Motivation can come in the smallest package or the simplest contest. Motivation comes from within. It need not be given to a shipmate in a bound volume three hundred and fifty pages thick.

Additional Information

Some additional scuttlebutt that may help you understand the Imperial Dread Sea Scrolls follow. The Scrolls were originally daily entries in my personal web log. Each entry may have been written days or in some cases, weeks apart. If they seem disjointed this is the reason.

In the web log community I belong to they allow users to create web log rings. These rings are for like-minded people to join so as to build a greater sense of community. I created such a web ring and named it The Destiny's Quest. The name and web ring has become home to over one hundred and fifty highly motivated individuals. To create more of a sense of community I named the Dread Pirates ship *The Destiny's Quest*. It will be mentioned frequently throughout the scrolls. Please consider yourself a shipmate aboard the virtual pirate ship of the Dread Pirate. Welcome aboard shipmate! On the deck of the *Quest* it's all about truth, positive motivation and the joy of living as we sail on... sail on!!!



Treasure Chest One

One Highly Motivated Individual....

Crew upon the deck of the Destiny's Quest may ask themselves what constitutes a highly motivated individual? I know I frequently ask myself, "Dread, what exactly is the proper mindset of a highly motivated individual?" The scary part is that I attempt to answer this query myself because most of the shipmates that I sail with are often distracted by life's events and can not help me research the answer to this question. Well, today as I walked the deck I overheard a shipmate and her words burned into my mind and acknowledged something that I have been silently contemplating for quite a while. Like a bolt out of a pink lined cloud it came to rest upon me. The very words she had spoken have been cloistered away in the far reaches of my mind. Those words I understood all too well.

"I *try* to look at each situation as if each person is doing the best they can with the abilities that they have, and that they are being honest in what they see as the truth." This quote by far is the very way I have come to view the relationship I have with people around me. I have also come to believe that this is one highly motivated and beneficial outlook. Of course we are not perfect machines that function within preset parameters. Thus her emphasis on the word 'try' was absolutely necessary and well thought out. The overall statement is well thought out and absolutely necessary for a sailor of life to take to heart I believe.

I have come to believe that perception varies so greatly from shipmate to shipmate that it is almost impossible to fully understand the exact position of another under normal circumstances. It is with this in mind that I feel the given motivational outlook has such astounding ramifications that it can change a corsair's life forever. First you are giving the individual credit for doing their best in a given situation with the abilities they have. Second you are holding them to a higher standard by taking their words as honest per *their view* of the truth. As far as I am concerned there is no greater compliment to the individual.

A motivated individual with this mindset will then work within the parameters of the given stimuli (assessing the individuals abilities and recognizing them for the outstanding effort made in mutual truth you are both working towards!) to come to a beneficial conclusion. There are more forms of motivation that one can shake a marlinpike at. I believe however that a shipmate holding this ideal close will ultimately run ahead of the wind while at the end of the day making the navigational path desired much easier to sail.

Remember that a motivated sailor is a happy sailor. I believe that the corsairs who continually ask themselves the hard questions will grow and prosper on their personal voyage of life. I believe that a highly motivated sailor will not only ask the questions but experiment with their theories as we...
Sail on... sail on!!!!

**Disclaimer: I speak of this motivational outlook toward those of us we *know and love* vs. an acquaintance or stranger.

A motivated sailor is a happy sailor...

Her sails are struck. Anchor is weighed and the Crew is ashore. After the decks were swabbed and gear properly stowed the crew could stand it no more. Some shipmates dropped the ship to shore boats over the side and a few just dove into the brine and swam to shore.

I run my hand over the wooden rail of the forecastle and I realize that the wood is clean and soft. It has been cleaned by brine and thousand of sailors rubbing down the rails with soft cloths. The wood is silky to my touch. I look up and the sails are bundled and tied off with precision grace. Under my bare feet I can feel the hard yet well worn deck of the beautiful ship. The scent of 'land' passes my nose only for a second. I look at the main deck and see that everything is in place and properly stowed. I think only a sailor can understand the need for such obsessive attention to detail.

I smirk as I move across the now quiet deck. The usual hustle and bustle of the crew combined with the pitch and roll of the deck usually makes it impossible to walk a straight line from the forecastle to the quarterdeck. Gently climbing the steps of the quarterdeck I am not disappointed. The ship's wheel is polished and blocked. The brass gleams in the sun with a brilliance that makes my eyes find refuge. She is a beautiful ship. She is my Destiny's Quest.

I know that below decks are just as ship shape as topside. Boson runs a tight Crew. And the Crew is the most motivated on the high seas. They currently happen to be the most motivated Crew ashore but that is of little matter. Motivation in one aspect of life spills over into other aspects of ones life. It is supportive, inspiring, driving, stimulating and a source for continual enthusiasm. Motivation attained in any aspect of a sailors life can and will affect all other aspects of their life. The smallest successful task is the seed to continued motivation. Each subsequent goal reached creates a keel from which the rest of your life will prosper.

As my eyes fall upon the rogues, corsairs, buccaneers and seadog frolicking on the white sand beach I know that a motivated sailor is a happy sailor.

It could be you...

Hero: A person noted or admired for nobility, courage, outstanding achievements, etc. Pretty damn broad spectrum of a "definition" if you ask me. I admire Sean Connery for his outstanding achievements as an actor, but a Hero? In my book there is a very fine line between courage and stupidity in most cases. I am not sure that courage alone qualifies a person as a Hero. Nobility is defined as, nobleness of character, mind, birth, or rank. Nobility is far too subjective for me personally to rate a fellow a "Hero" because one of these quarks may or may not have been met.

What then makes a Hero? I would venture to say that a person who faces insurmountable odds within himself, and then overcomes those odds exhibits the qualities of what it means to be a hero.

Example and clarification:

A marathon runner, who has trained for months for a race, runs it and wins, not a hero.
A pair of laborers who are working out on the back forty and one falls into peril, the overweight, three pack a day individual who runs five miles to the nearest phone to summon help, Hero.

A businessman who closes a multimillion-dollar deal, not a hero.

A handicapped individual who opens his own business, Hero.

A Harvard grad that makes CEO, not a hero.

A homeless man who gets a steady job and an apartment, Hero.

I am sure you can, by example, see where I am going with this concept. So in closing I will say that a Hero is an individual that overcomes some hurdle within to achieve a goal. It may be a shipmate, realizing that time is man-made and that she is constrained only by her own thoughts of time. It can be the Dread Pirate himself who must search deep within and see the good, and not be shackled by the ghosts of the past. Or it could be you.

Sink or Swim...

I stood on deck and whirled about in confusion. Over three quarters of the crew had been lost in the storm. Washed overboard or abandoned ship for fear of continuing onward. Only a steady few stood their post. I could see the faith and understanding in their eyes as I frantically glanced from face to face. Left were only the ones that were able to understand that one does not always take the easy route to a far off land.

Those that still graced my deck were no longer crew but brother and sisters in arms. Equals and faithful companions. As the waters calmed and the storm faded they each went about their duties as nothing though had happened. It was then that I realized that the tattered Jolly Roger still flew from the mast. I turned and stared ahead into the mist. Understanding washed over me like warm sea spray. My confusion subsided only for a moment. I realized that those who choose to stand by us are our true family, and the rest of the scurvy dogs can sink or swim.

Various shades of blue...

I wake, shocked and frozen in place; the dreamscape is shattered into multifaceted shards by the morning light. As the last shards of the dream slip away and I mentally lunge for them. A bit of memory from the past, or perhaps a jaded warped wish of my long lost youth? My body stiff, I remember that I must breathe. Air rushes into my lungs as I take an unsteady breath. My thoughts reel and I wonder if the shards were a glimpse of some future event. A premonition or a fantasy I harbor in some deep place.

The dreamscape may be an extension of my own mind, or perhaps a nightly fancy of my imagination. An ocean of feelings and images stored in a place I can only find during slumber. I turn my head and look out of the windows that cross the back bulkhead of my cabin to see that the sun has graced me with one more day of light. I squint and the feelings of the night, the memories, and the vivid images fade from my mind as though chased away by morning's fresh light.

As I open the portal to gull song and fresh air I see that today's sea is calm and clear. I can see through it's depths to the bottom of the ocean floor. The sea's color and feel are much like the days we traverse. The water may be various shades of blue, some odd shades of green and yet others black and foreboding. Like the days we endure and the nights we pass... Each its own color, each its own unique journey on this voyage we call life.

Keep that ship moored to the pier at all costs!

As I have sailed through the oceans of words, feelings and contemplations of life I have noticed a small consistent trend. People have a propensity toward the dark of night and the dark side of humanity. Being *the* Dread Pirate I concur with the masses and their sinister mindset.

Down with being a unique individual! Slay those who are happy with themselves and show it. Who are they to be proud of themselves and show the rest of the world their joy? Life is supposed to be random darkness punctuated by bursts of gray. Who would enjoy standing on the bow of ones own ship with the rays of the bright sun warming you to the core? Forget the ocean's mist dancing across your skin and the fresh salt air filling your lungs!

Shatter the tranquility of the day and the gull song with a volley from port. To hell with the calming peace of the ocean and her inhabitants. Scream to hear your voice, scream to hear your own anguish. Bring the adrenaline to the boiling point for the sheer joy of the rush. Who would desire a stable confidence in their actions punctuated by continuous serenity?

Why would one enjoy the wondrous composition of symphony and Metallica when they could listen to the internal sounds of family and societal dysfunction? Stand and deliver no matter the cost I say!! Draw saber and pistol and stand fast in your black mood. Fight no matter the cause or the reason. Just *FIGHT*. Who would rather make a point with pen and intellect rather than blade and bullet I ask?

Stand fast in the belief that all convictions are evil. Stay inside the circle of one's own logic. It moves in continuous unbroken logic to provide the backbone of your sanity. Do not expand the parameters and the boundaries of your thoughts. Under no circumstances should you listen. Listen not to the lessons that you may learn from others, printed matter or your own experiences! Who would want to better themselves by learning a new way? Why would you ever allow new information to jade your thoughts and feelings? Keep that ship moored to the pier at all costs!

Stand within the darkness and see not. Notice not the flight of the gull, or the splash of the whale's tail. See not the brilliance of the rising sun. Let pass yet another hideous sun set. Ignore the imbecile dolphins that play at the bow. Use the flying fish for target practice. Cocoon within your own vacuum, and become lost in your own insanity! For it is far better to sink into ones own self-made hell than journey forward into the unknown.

Mentally manufactured mind masquerades...

Leaning against the rail on the bow I perplex. What drives a soul forward? That is the thought that slowly meanders through my skull. Sea spray gently washes over me, and for some reason I continue to propel myself forward into the unknown. With sails unfurled and anchor weighed, I drift upon the currents. And yet I know not why. What continues to drive an individual forward day after day, year after year?

Is it perhaps a memory from the past that allows us to face each new day with vitality and curiosity. Could it be the memory of a sweet everlasting kiss? The memory of some past treasure, whether real or imagined, that may drive some of us forward. Do we live in memory of those who have lived before us? Perhaps we live for the present in hopes of regaining the past we so dearly miss. An evening on the beach, a warm fire with good crew, silence, or maybe a simpler age that has passed into the fog of time.

Or do we live for the future. Do our daily and nightly dreams fuel our desire to continue on in the fashion of the buccaneer? Would it not stand to reason that these tid-bits of treasure could entice us to continue forward into the unknown with only a shard of hope and a recorded image within our mind's eye? Perhaps these mentally manufactured mind masquerades allow us to motivate into our own oblivious future undaunted.

Have I mistaken a truly free spirit...

To you young one I ask this; to you that moor your brigantine in harbor and remove its sails, to stow gear and batten the hatches, what sort of skullduggery is this? I find no reason within your logic. I believe that you are both educated and talented. You are one who wields the abilities and gifts that you possess with casual precision. I find that you are a wonder, a natural at music, writing, teaching, and theology.

And yet, you place such restrictions upon yourself that my feeble mind cannot begin to phantom. I, being free of foot and spirit, cannot begin to understand the boundaries that you have placed upon yourself, your life, and your future. What you see as natural and logical, I see as restrictive and a slow death of the spirit. Could it be a binding contract with a perceived reality? To shun the ability to cast off and run free. How can one not make or be anything of their choosing. Somehow you turn down these

choices for reasons my infernal mind cannot begin to understand. Sitting on the quarterdeck I shake my head and scratch my beard.

How is it in this day of schooners and clippers you believe that you are restricted to a specific area of this water-covered rock we call home? The great oceans have been crossed again and again, each time with more speed and confidence. The coasts are well charted and depths are accurate and complete. We can run the gauntlet faster and safer than ever before. Distance is of little matter to a sailor. Each of us can travel faster and more efficiently with each passing day.

Our communication is more advanced than ever. Signal lamps have been replaced with wireless capabilities. The earth is one huge web of connected strands that can be interfaced on a multitude of levels. In this age, while out to sea a sailor can attain a G.P.S. position or an email within a splash of a whales tail.

Your brigantine, fresh and new sits unused for what reason I ponder. The reason perhaps is proximity. For clan loyalty is of paramount importance to some. But how could they matter? Are they not the ones who left you to live in a bullet-riddled crack house? In my addled mind, I tell you I cannot see with your eyes! Death comes to us all. It is and always will be a part of the cycle of life. For generations it has occurred. For generations it will continue to revisit. Do you in some way think your presence can ward off the inevitability of their extinction?

Stop, for a moment let me follow another thread. Perhaps is it another reason all together. I would say that in my mind's eye, I would love to see your mast off port. My heart would swell knowing that you sail with me through calm and rough waters. The answer I seek may be within this grizzled old skull of mine yet! Deep down I know you sail the waters. You have sailed all over the country and not once have you dipped your flag in my direction, not once have you chosen to run the gauntlet with me. Have I mistaken a truly free spirit as one moored pier side? Could it be a perceived reality of my own that hides the truth?

So far apart, and yet, so alike.

May the wind always fill your sails and the sun always warm your soul.

Sail on, sail on!!!!!!

Dread on financial security...

Ahoy mates! I, the Dread Pirate am here. Sailing the uncharted waters of the sea seeking out ships to stalk, gun down and plunder is very hard work. Surprisingly it does take some amount of cunning and time/resource management. Regretfully my log has taken the brunt of my workload in absence of entries. One would think that all a man does these days is wander the decks in hopes of stumbling across some hapless ship carrying the correct cargo and with little to no armament. Long gone, if ever they existed, are the days of board and sack. Then you have the small problem of dealing with those who call you friend captain until such time as they decide that you are no longer able to fill that billet. Somehow in a flash of inspiration they come to a mutinous attitude and you are left to walk the plank, or find yourself new crew. I am not sure which is worse to be honest. I

have taken a swim with the sharks and creatures of the deep, and to be honest find them relatively civil in comparison to some humans I have had the displeasure of dealing with. I have come to the conclusion that society as a whole, is in complete and total degradation. Adults have lost the simplest of manners and their children have even less. But that is a topic for another time.

I took the time to let the sea foam tickle my ankles. I find the simple pleasures in life the most rewarding. Yet it does not stop me from dreaming beyond the realm of the rational. I desire pieces of eight to fill my coffers and wealth beyond ever having to worry about money again for any reason. And I am not talking about a million or two. Oh, no. I have personally watched an individual piss away a million dollars in less than three years. I have first hand knowledge of how little one million dollars actually is. What I speak of is money beyond your comprehension. I can hear the words in your mind now. “But money can not buy you *“fill in your words here”*”.

And to you I say Balderdash! That very line of thought is pure and simple rubbish. The root of all evil is not money. In some cases the evil comes into play within the actions that man will do to attain wealth. Being financially secure is in no way evil in any form. (If it were, people like the Catholic Church, the Jewish faith and many others would be steadfast within a sin of their own making!) What I desire is money, plain and simple. Financial security is what I crave, pieces of eight and more of them, and funds growing daily.

Happiness...

I sit atop the last keg of beer listening to the minstrel in the galley. The seas are choppy this day. A brisk wind roughs the surface of the water into a white-capped froth. The gentle rocking motion of the ship relaxes my body and somehow calms my soul. The lovely flute and six string melodies only add to the contentment that swirls within my mind. The tall ship cuts a wake for the dolphin to play in and I come closer, minute-by-minute, to some distant shore.

As I sip my black and tan I muse. What is happiness? I reach for the text that helps me to understand the meanings of words. This particular word is defined as a feeling or showing of the feeling of pleasure or contentment, fortune, lucky, pleasing. I continue to ponder. Would this not then lead one to believe that this emotion or feeling is completely subjective? Could one individual be happy while another in the exact same situation not be in grumbling misery? I startle the crew with a resounding yell of “Yes!!” But they are used to my off the wall comments and uncommon musings. They think I am cheering on the players and raise their cups of rum in salute to the musicians! Oh, those salty buccaneers.

I stare into the depths of my glass and think even more. It is the truth of things that there are those of us who love the sea, its waves and its loving caress of our vessel. However are there not others who loathe the very water that we so covet? They hang their heads over the rail and feed the fish all the while cursing Neptune and his watery world! There are those who could not find pleasure in the life we lead as corsairs simply because

they have never sailed a mile in a schooner or even a fishing boat. And yet, all can be happy, or its opposite, when thrust into the same circumstances. This “happiness” then must be, all things considered completely and totally idiosyncratic. In a moment of crystal clarity I come to realize that it might be up to each of us find his very own feeling of bliss, ease, affluence, or good fortune!

As the ship takes a soft roll I grab at my sliding glass as if were second nature. My body sways with the roll as if it were used to the action of one million rolls just like it. I see however our guests, the makers of music, are not so at ease with the ship’s movement. I see their bodies go rigid, and hear their missed notes as the play on. What I take in stride they have not yet gained the understanding of. They have not the sea legs that I have acquired over the years. For have I not walked on the bulkheads in the North Atlantic? Ha! These merry makers probably think of this as rough seas!! My view of this theatrical event prompts me to further understand my prior subject of muse. What I take for granted and have become used to as “normal and acceptable” they have yet to begin to understand! I sit here atop my keg and am perfectly at home and content. But these poor fellows are at complete odds with the environment they find themselves in.

Happiness must be incredibly difficult to put into a specific hole. It therefore must be completely and totally different from sailor to sailor. I hum along to a familiar tune and smile through my beard as I realize that some see me as the deranged scourge of the high seas, a crazed half-wit who has lived the life of hardship and mayhem. I wonder if anyone would ever see a man content with his craft and crew. Would they ever be able to understand that I am at peace?

I stand and raise my glass and bellow out over the heads of my beloved crew, “Therefore I say, allow our sweet memories, whether real or imagined, to drive us on into the future!”

Treasure Chest Two

Perspective...

The morning's light falls across the water like a golden splash. The wind is alive but just barely granting tiny puffs to let you know that it still graces your sail. The flying fish are in a mood to fly so they rocket out of the water all around me. Their bizarre antics must have something to do with the whale that just lifted out of the water sideways. His tale fades away with a slap somewhere into Poseidon's world. *Destiny's Quest* moves forward and onward no matter what goes on around it. How many yards of canvas sail reach out to caress the wind into service I wonder as I stare up into the rigging.

Life, just like the cycle of the day, has its dark side and light side. A balance is struck somewhere in between and the cycle forever moves on. I smile in that knowledge. I also gladly accept the reality that life is not always a peaceful merger of thoughts or actions. Simply put, there is always some opposite reaction that occurs to an action. Combine this simple truth with Murphy's Law and presto! Life.

I find myself grappling to no end in my attempt to understand the quasi-quagmire of human actions. Place five people in the exact same situation and odds are you have at a minimum of two separate and distinct reactions. At most you have five complete different reactions to the same stimuli. I am not a psychology major for a reason. I cannot get past the basics. Simply put, I lack the ability to understand the human race as a whole or in part.

This morning I stand upon the quarterdeck of a sailing ship that is on a rolling ocean that is placed upon a spinning planet that rotates within a revolving solar system that is housed in an ever-stirring cosmos. My mind can fathom this in its entirety and yet what I "know" could not fill a thimble.

I stand upon the quarterdeck of a sailing ship.

This ship sails on a rolling ocean.

An ocean that is upon a spinning planet.

This planet rotates within a revolving solar system.

A solar system that is housed in an ever-stirring cosmos.

Thimble.....

It's all in how you view the cosmos around you.

Marble filled...

On this day I sit in the great cabin of *Destiny's Quest* and marvel at the view through the aft portals. For a day or three I have been thinking about the term, "Thinking outside the box". One would think that its generally accepted meaning might be, if one thought outside the box that is, that your ideas are not of the normal protected traditionalism.

Musing further I ponder if it is possible to "think outside the box" on a normal and day-to-day basis. Is it possible for an individual to continually think outside of generally accepted parameters? Further, could a rogue think outside the box and do so in all topics or just a specific few? The perplexity of such a concept is rather daunting at first glance.

The first of the two queries is probably the most interesting to contemplate. As the Dread Pirate I find difficulty in relating to, or even communicating with, most individuals in both oral and written efforts of communication. For lack of a better example, it is like speaking in a different language than the intended victim can understand, *most of the time*. There are times that a random thought or muse falls within the cloistered confines of normality and I find myself understood by the masses... (Or at least I perceive that I am understood by my intended audience.) But more often than not they stand fast and look at me as though I have either lost my mind or speak at them with a mouth full of marbles. I find that interaction with others of my species taxing, frustrating and often quite unsatisfying. (Accept for my beloved crew of course.) So the conclusion that I must gather after years of research is that I "think outside of the box" continually.

The second issue I reflect upon is whether it is possible for a sailor to think outside the accepted rational confines of society's mean in all areas and not just a few specific subjects. This subject is just as easy as the first to answer. Without a doubt this is possible. Our history is littered with people who have stood apart from the rest for a variety of reasons. A number of these unique thinkers were hailed as genius. A few found comfortable corners in asylums to curl up in. Some of them were cursed as rogue. But I suspect they each in fact held the capacity to think beyond the standard accepted parameters of the local populous. For better or worse...

Having concluded that it is in fact possible to rationalize subjects differently than others at any time and on any subject... I must then take the intention one step further. If an individual is not able to think within the cosseted precincts of our civilization, then he must look to remedy the situation. But what if, by some fluke of nature that they could not train their minds to think like "others"? Then this individual may feel like a square marlinespike attempting to fit into the circular hole of a rigging block. This feeling I can assure you is not a pleasant one.

So then we must look to a new solution. A solution must be found that *conformity* must, by no means, enter the solution equation. Looking at the solution from a rational generally accepted logical point of view would only confuse the matter worse than what it should be. Simply put, attain a solution by "thinking outside of the box". If all of the current solutions adapt to constrain this individual's mental capacity then would it not be

logical refrain from such action? So to this I must pose, in humble suggestion, that we allow the individual to live, think, and act, “outside the box.” He must find a place, far away from the marble filled mouths of the masses and....

Sail on... sail on!!!

Vantage point...

So here I am, viewing the world in a topsy-turvy upside-down sort of way. While climbing the rigging of *Destiny's Quest* I must have had a momentary lapse of clarity. From my current vantage point I would suppose a single mental mishap allowed a misstep leading to my present inverted position. My right ankle seems to have taken a liking to a bit of ratline. This is not such a bad thing considering the fact that if my ankle had not come in lust with this particular piece of braded line my fall may have been a bit further and may have ended when my skull meeting the deck of my lovely lady. So here I dangle, twisting in the wind like some long forgotten marionette.

I swing in the wind and roll with the motion of my much-loved lady of the sea as I contemplate my mental state. Upon reflection of this precarious situation I find myself in what I may consider a state of anguished amusement. How is it that a man can walk through life with little understanding of his purpose I muse? No, I propose that is not the main twang that I wrestle with in my suspended sate. What I find taxing is trying not to judge an individual, that I perceive is walking through life with little understanding of his purpose. In my elevated inverted state, the world as I see it on a day-to-day basis looks rather different. But I question, even though it is different looking... is it still not the *same*? Again, I fight a tangent.

What I find taxing this day is trying not to judge an individual whom I desperately want to judge. As I swing freely from the rigging I fight not only with a fear of my ankle falling out of love with its current desire but with my non-understanding. But what is to understand? An individual walks out on his family. Succumbs to the lust of his loins and his addictions. From this position of inverted crucifixion I cannot play at some game of “holier than thou” self-righteous upper-handed judgment. The world may be different for some, some may think out of the box and some may play out side of that box as well. But this day as I swing from the main mast I know that my past and my present experiences allow me to form an educated opinion of a man who would follow such a path.

Sail on crew... Sail on because I need to see the world from this vantage point for just a little longer.

Get up!!!

The day is cool but the breeze slight. My ships move slowly though the flat black glass. I love the feel of the sun on my face, the smell of the ocean. The gulls swirl about aft looking for some morsel to feast upon. *Destiny's Quest* is in perfect shape from bow to stern, port to starboard, keel to crows nest. I sail upon absolute perfection.

Perfection of course is subjective. What one sailor finds as near excellence another may well scoff at the very notion of the idea. The state of perfection can only really exist with the parameters of ones own mind. I dare say this beautiful day it is perfect. However elsewhere someone is sick, another hurting from some real or imagined hurt. The day may be perfectly dreadful for them perhaps. But alas I spew forth rhetoric that you already know and yet you politely read on as though enthralled with some foreign notion. What could be the motivation of this action? I muse that perhaps you hope to catch a glimpse into the life of some poor wretch so that your meager life and existence will look far brighter?

Look no further sailor.

Log off.

Get up.

Get out and...

Sail on... sail on!!!

Love & Money...

Greetings my silent but ever present crew! The ship under my feet is firm and steady. The wind lightly buffets the waves into frothy white-capped swells. The sails are pulled taut and we move along the surface of the ocean as though we are part of the very fabric of the scene! Silently and swiftly we travel over the nautical miles. It is a fine day to feel the mist of sea spray upon your face.

A question has been cast at the Dread Pirate that I would like to ponder upon for a moment. The query came from the statement:

In the acquisition of Love and Money;

Enough is never Enough!!

The question that was asked: "but tell me cap'n... is it really possible to acquire love? the term acquisition conjures images of purchase... not something i really believe can happen."

Where to begin? Let us look at the definition of the word 'acquisition' first. 1: the act of acquiring. 2: something acquired or gained. Lot's of help there ha? Let us then turn back the pages to the root word 'acquire'. 1: to get as ones own. 2: to come into possession of often by unspecified means. 3: to come to have as a new or additional

characteristic, trait or ability (as by sustained effort or through environmental forces) and finally 4: to locate and hold (a desired object) in a detector (~ a target by radar).

Oh boy, we are just the educated one today! Nicely done. In attempting to expand upon this simple statement I would leave out money. But alas, as you will soon see that is completely impossible! Now crew I do ask that you all put on your rational thinking caps and stand by for heavy rolls.

But first, I do agree that the word acquisition often conjures the implication of business mergers were hundreds of thousands change hands or perhaps you recall an acquisition of an antique for all of your 401K and a kidney? Understood. However the context in which it was used was, "to come into possession of often by unspecified means." Note here the choice of the words *unspecified means*. I do so enjoy the wonderful mystery of the English language! So to reword the phrase using the given words, "To come into possession by unspecified means of Love or Money, Enough is never Enough!" I must say that this is a truth.

But upon reflection of your question I do see the rationale behind the musing and it is there that I find an odd twist that I would like to delve into. Let us play with these semantics I say!! I believe that you are simply stating a belief that one cannot purchase love. (And even if you are not...work with me here!!)

One cannot purchase love. Falsity.

Oh, the attention is focused now I assure you! Flat out and simply stated that is Whale excrement! Love is bought and sold every day around the world like a commodity or stock certificate! Think my lovely crew, think I beg of thee, think.

No, I do not speak of a brothel kind of love. I speak of warm attachment, enthusiasm, devotion, admiration, affection and yes, sexual desire kind of love. I say that this is purchased every day and will continue to be so for as long as we are human. (Or at least until we evolve beyond our current knuckle-dragging Homosapien state!) Some of you are nodding and saying yes. Cheers my mates, cheers!

To those of you who just knocked back a shot of rum to gather your thoughts for a moment, please, just one more moment of your time.

We eat, sleep and dream. We shower, shave, primp and pop. We adorn, accent, color, frost, cut and sparkle. We drape, wrap, place and fit. We accessorize. Then we might be ready to face humanity! Is all of this free I ask? Hell no, the price of soap alone is a damned crime. And how about the cost of the favorite scent you must wear? You say acquiring love is free? I am just warming up here and already I have spent your month's wages. Allow me to continue. Do you actually intend to leave the house? You probably own transportation of some type correct...bet you did not get that free. Now that you are on your way, lets say you have a magic ship that does not need fuel...(The cost of fuel alone to get you to your potential lover is a solid argument within itself!!) I know you can see were this is going. I need not show you every step of the way do I? You have to ability to connect the steps you incredibly intelligent crew of corsairs. I have faith in my crew.

So you do purchase Love. No matter how you slice it, no matter at what angle you look at it you have spent money to acquire love. Not only have you spent money to

acquire love but also you will continue to spend your medium of exchange to keep love. The simple fact of the matter is that money and love are inseparable. Still don't believe?

You purchased food to eat and you are in search of love. You spent money to search for love. You spent money to acquire love! So in answer to your lovely question; Yes, it is possible to acquire love!!!

Again I say:

In the acquisition of Love and Money;
Enough is never Enough!!

Sail on... sail on!!!

Destiny...

I must admit that the day is beautiful and yet, there is something hidden within its length that I find ominous. It has been a wonderful trip these past several days. I have sailed through storm and through oddity. Journey is so interesting at times. Never quite know what to expect as the day slides onward. Mysteriously, perilously and forever onward!! Like trying to push the ocean back with your bare hands. A fruitless endeavor it is to attempt to stop the forward motion of our waking moments.

We are all captains of our own destiny. And yet I have more musings than ever before if I am in control of anything remotely resembling my own destiny. As I move into tomorrow I realize all too soon that I encompass little control if any of the actions that will occur. Fully understanding that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction I plunge into the headwaters of life with the hopes of a fruitful summation and some small victory over some perceived evil. But do I? Perplexed I seem to be this day, and yet, not.

Scheduled events, organized time, and the plan of the day continue to spread out before me. How then can I not possess control or direction in my life? I know that I will be doing specific things on the morrow! Will I not eat, sleep, drink, drop anchor and read blogs? Of course I will. Will I do most of them for the foreseeable future? Again, yes.

Might I suggest that one must find a meager equilibrium within one's life? This balance must harbor elements of the past, the present and the future. It must contain optimism and pessimism. It must be tempered and polished. And the stability must exist between the microcosm of one's life, global consciences and beyond. Must I become a 'Renaissance man' you query? Perhaps.

All is balance my mates. My ship balances upon its keel in this great ocean. Is there not a balance between the land and the oceans that I sail upon? Is the earth itself not a balancing act of a rock spinning in space? Is the solar system not a balanced group of body's spinning and floating masses dancing in synchronicity?

What was the original question? Destiny? Yes. I know it.

I stand upon the bow of my *Destiny's Quest* as the craft slices through the wonderful salt water. The ocean spray lets me know that I am alive. The sun warms my face.
Destiny?

Yes.

Dead ahead.

Sail on... sail on!!!

The Secret.

Today crew it struck me like grape shot from a canister. Part of the secret of success came to me while eating grapes and staring at the history channel. The reality of it came like a thunderous cloud burst and still rings in my ears. Learn what you can and if they don't want to strive for greatness, take what you have learned and move on. That's right, pack the old sea bag and jump ship. Why stay? Why reside in a hell of your own making? Jump ship I say!

Some sailors are feelers. Some of us are able to do the same job day after day for the same pay year after year and enjoy it. But some sailors are thinkers. We continually come up with new, fresh and vibrant ideas that are continuously downplayed, ridiculed or dismissed. Do you think I have lost my patience with the established way some American companies do business? 'Losing patience' is an understatement. American business's are to damn dumb to survive and that is the very reason why I so enjoy a free market economy. The strong survive and the weak fall into some deep dark hole of obscurity never to surface again. Deep six the bastards I say and good riddance!

There are those of you who are motivated thinkers. Unique individuals that think outside of the box and know there is a better way. You mates know who you are. Your blood boils at the thought of stepping away from the stupidity of the mundane. Life becomes worth living only if you are on the cutting edge of the known and unknown. Work and play often become synonymous. Type 'A' personality with an attitude and an adventurous streak a mile wide. I am sure you know the type, tenacious and carefree.

On this Labor Day I think back to a day that yours truly was called into the office of the Vice President about two years ago. The man with three signatures sat behind his overly large oak desk and beckoned me to sit. I did so. He then began to spew forth such utter and complete idiotic rhetoric that I sat and stared at him as though an anus appeared in the very center of his forehead. The man was sitting there and in complete sincerity telling me that I was too happy at my job and that I had to stop being so upbeat. I blinked and contemplated handing him a roll of toilet paper. I continued to stare at him so long he began to squirm in his leather high backed chair. Only when I knew I had his full

attention did I smile and ask him “Do you actually realize that you told me that I am too happy and enjoy my job too much?” He nodded yes like a complete moron. But then after a moment of more silence I could see the reality of it connect somewhere behind his dark eyes. His own stupidity dawned like a breaking wave. I took full advantage and told the now confused VP that I could not work for a company that knowingly tried to stifle the joy of their employees. I tendered my resignation and walked laughing down the long hall to freedom.

This day I ask that you look at your situation and evaluate. Evaluate the life you lead and the job you pursue. It is after all a day in which we are supposed to contemplate the fruits of our labor. Do you sail on a fine yacht or a garbage scow? If you find yourself among the thousands that hate the environment they spend one third of their life in please look to the many other options that exist. Life is too short to force your self into mediocrity and a mundane masquerade of misery.

Tell me can you truly, in the center of it all, begin a new beginning?

Sail on... sail on!!!

New Perspective...

The icy wind that crosses the deck brings tears to the eyes of any sailor topside. Tears that obscure one vision, tears that make you bat your eyes like on of those young ladies of so long ago. Tears stream from the corners of my eyes as I move off the quarterdeck.

I stand amidships now and stare directly at the main mast and ponder. Do I climb or do I retreat to the warmth of the galley and a cup of warm tea. My arm reaches for the first rung and my answer is made for me by an irrational appendage. Damn.

I climb the rigging and navigate the course with all the grace of a drunken one-legged man with an equilibrium problem in a china shop. Grace personified. It is my manner. To look like a man who never before climbed the ropes, and yet I have done it all of my life. You would never know to see me climb them now. Unskilled, ungraceful and almost comical, and yet upward I journey.

Then I am there. I stand in the crow's nest and the wind rips at my face with some unseen and unsane determination to throw me from my perch. There are no fair winds to caress my cheeks this day. I have to turn my back to the wind in order to open my eyes. Somehow I feel as though I should face the opposite direction in defiance. And yet I stand atop the main mast in a far to small basket as it sways above the main deck.

The view however is different from up here. A different perspective is gained from this vantage point. Things look completely different. And yet, all is the exact same. I make this climb once in a while to remind myself that you can often seek a different vantage point to view something. You do get a different perspective all the while staring at the exact same object. Fascinating.

As *Destiny's Quest* forges ahead through the chop I glance around in hopes of gaining some new insight, some new perspective that will allow me to understand. Some may see a new solution to an old problem. A few may even see an entirely new world. Then there are some that have made the climb perhaps too often now. I see the difference in the new perspective but I seem to gain no new understanding of the challenge. Damn.

The wind changes direction and slams into my face. My eyes water and vision blurs. Only then do I see a new view. A three dimensional waterscape that has almost a fourth palpable dimension added. I see an original view, a fresh perspective, and an innovative vision.

But do I understand?

Communication...

The human mind is an incredible thing. Interpretation, understanding, discernment, perception, insight, awareness, and sagacity all are completely different in each individual. The belief that each member of the race is completely unique and different from all others is widely accepted. Hence the word "individual" branded upon our skulls for lack of a better term.

Then we add communication to this mix of individual awareness. I can count on one hand the number of people I know that can effectively communicate. They however must be lumped into the class of Homosapiens just like the rest of the masses. I find this a sad and frustrating complication within humanity, but that is a blog for another day. I give you this example. Edgar Alan Poe was a drug addict and alcoholic. Insane by all accounts, and yet my literary teacher in high school believed him to be a "wonderful cynic." At the time I no more understood the man's writing than hieroglyphics. The ranting of an insane drug addict I mused. Were the man's works literary genius or just the recorded day mares of a man on eternal narcotics? I would find in later years that his works are brimming with humor and fascinating thoughts. But only after I had grown and lived just a little more than most.

Understanding is often subjective to most individuals. Hence the phrase "we agree to disagree". In communication there is often no direct understanding of what the other individual is truly attempting to convey. Therefore man has devised an evil way to document an individual word, feeling or idea for eternity. The recorded word, thought, feeling or action came into being. Writing. For the purpose of taxing poor sods into submission written documentation came into being. Damn the man.

However even this firm and unyielding form of communication came into question. The interpretation of this form of communication was just as misconstrued as the spoken word and still is today. Entire assemblies of individuals work together to transcribe the written word of the past into present day application. The judicial system, religious institutions and the IRS are but a few examples of these convergences. This on-going dilemma of being unsure of what is meant by an individual's word has spawned

simple things. Education, religion, government, as well as freedom and a variety of diversified beliefs are but a few of the results of communication.

And yet, most individuals have no concept as to how to communicate or convey a clear message to their target audience. They attempt in vain to correspond their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. One primary part of in the exchange of ideas is the key concept of 'exchange'. Ever hear those folks who start their exchange with... "Let me tell you something..." Not a good way of attempting to begin a two-way exchange of ideas. Another way of derailing the communication process is to presume. If in doubt of the given idea, concept or meaning attempt to ask rather than project your opinion upon the subject immediately. I am sure that you can see the wisdom in this action. Teachers, professors and clergy beg for questions for a reason crew.

It is far better to ask a single question than to fail in understanding a concept that may change your life forever.

Success or failure...

Success or failure I muse, is there really anything else? Do we not as rogues upon the high seas seek a series of successful events so as to fill our coffers so that we may retire to the warm islands and live in comfort? The frustration of not fulfilling these goals is often more devastating than a "no" from that certain someone.

But my mind takes a turn as it is prone to do and I ponder. Is there another outcome that can occur from our actions? We go about thinking up wondrous adventures that will bring us to some great end. I know of only a few who have set out to run a gauntlet of actions in order to not succeed. Raise an eyebrow, but the truth of the matter is that our very existence is measured by our success or failure. Never has there been one measured by something *different*. Always the same two ends of the scale seem to claim the deeds of an individual. I do agree that success and failure is completely personal. I worked for a man who made several million dollars a month and thought the venture mundane and boring. Most individuals would have smiled so much and so broad their faces would continually hurt. And yet I have spoken to the homeless and they find their nomadic lives perfection of the highest degree. Success or failure is a most subjective matter.

I digress, is there another way that we can measure ourselves? Must it be as a success or failure? Might there be another genre that humanity holds as a prize? In a society that rewards success and punishes failure I try to see another avenue of travel. There are millions that have passed into obscurity having done nothing of notable worth. And yet, have their lives been truly worthless?

By what measure do you measure your own life?

Treasure Chest Three

Diversity.

As I sit upon the forecastle and feel and warm tropical breeze upon my face. Warmth. Odd how the simple change in climate and the change of location makes the blood flow and the mind sing. As of late I have come to the odd *feeling* that there can be a single answer to all problems. Now as completely impossible as this sounds I cannot seem to shake the sense that this is a truth. Can it in fact be possible to have a simple answer to all of the possible questions that accost us?

Part of my logical mind says no. In no way can the myriad of questions have a single all encompassing answer. But what if there was a single concept that would either answer the question or lead one to a viable solution? Might this be possible? I have struggled with this concept for quite a few weeks now. The solution that I have come to is that there is a single answer/concept that will suffice. Now then, I will restate that I believe that there is a single concept that will either answer the question or lead one to a viable solution.

I have come to the conclusion that Diversity is the answer to almost every single problem that one may have. Diversity or diversification can suffice as a valid answer or concept that will lead one to further understanding. This seems so odd and incredibly simple that I am sure that you may not fully understand or agree with this idea. Take time to ponder the implications of this solution/concept. There are a host of questions that can be answered simply by the word diversity. My sex life sucks—diversity. The house is too small—diversity. War—diversity. Peace—Diversity. You are a moron.—diversify. I am sure that you can continue with the line of thinking and progress faster and more efficiently than I can elaborate here.

I admit that there are highly specific problems that exist. The square root of 549721 divided by 4 to the sixteenth power multiplied by pi. Well damn the man. Looks like I am going to have to diversify my understanding of the problem (mathematics) in order to achieve the answer. My dryer does not heat up. Diversify. Hang the clothes outside, use coin op. or just forget washing clothes! I digress; must I not diversify my knowledge about the operation of a dryer in order to better understand its lack of proper operation in order to solve my dilemma? Should I enter into a relationship with an individual that I know only via the Internet? Again, it looks as though I must diversify my thinking and understanding of relationships in the present time.

Having only begun to ponder this newly formed idea it is, as always open to discussion. Think upon this concept for a while and feel free to share your findings with me. I would like to think that I have come to find a concept that has universal application. I do acknowledge however that there are far greater minds than I in this world. So if you contemplate a flaw in this concept feel free to speak up, the distance from the end of the plank to the water is not that great!!!

Challenge...

It is often difficult to navigate the waters of your journey. I however say that it is just a matter of attitude and perspective. Each day becomes a new and unique challenge to meet. There are often times that life's little torments become so overburdening that one feels as though they will buckle under the pressure of it all. To give in, is not the way of the rogue however.

The way of the rogue is much different than that of the land dweller. Our world is in continual movement and flux. The sailor is used to constant change and interchange. They learn at an early age that life is a state of perpetual movement and that one can not become grounded lest the tide rise and drown the offending fool. Buoyancy is good, anchors are bad.

Change can be accepted with an attitude of welcome and curiosity. It may then be used to create and inspire new and exciting dynamic use of this change for fun and profit. (Please reference your Ferengi rules of acquisition #89; "Ask not what your profits can do for you but what you can do for your profits.") Make note of the change and immediately begin to contemplate how you can turn this new event into profit. You are a rogue of the high seas. Profit is paramount only to be followed by wine, sex and song.

Perspective is the other tool which to turn change into a useful status. Change is often nothing more than a new or different perspective. Think upon this for a moment and you may well understand the concept. War is evil, unless of course your perspective changes after three thousand of your countryman die in a sneak attack. Then it is an opportunity for profit. (rule of acquisition #35; "War is good for business.") It is also an opportunity to learn about the world around you and the events (change) that go on around you as you blissfully sail through life with your head down and your eyes closed. Perspective can mean the difference between a tear and a smile, sanity and insanity.

Each day is nothing more than a new and unique challenge to meet. Sailors, Rogues and their kind ride the tide to meet these challenges head on and with zeal. Fear not the change, embrace it and use it to your advantage by Neptune!!!

Luxury...

"It is a luxury to be understood."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A luxury indeed! Fear not those who have no idea as to what your reasoning may be my friends. What did those who first saw/heard the works of Einstein, Edison, Mozart, Nietzsche, Eliade, Otto, Freud, Durkheim think? Mocked, laughed at, ridiculed, and dismissed some of the great individuals of our race have been dismissed. "Misunderstood" if you will.

To attempt to communicate an idea, reason or opinion is no easy task. If it were simplistic there would be no college, no educational institutions, no use for teachers. Understand that it is not just you who battle the odds to be understood. It is in fact a

miracle against the odds if you are able to get your point across in an effective manner the first time. It is, and forever will be, a luxury to be understood.

Unspoken and unsaid...

It is a beautiful day topside. A soft warm breeze flutters the canvas and the sun warms the skin. It is crisp, clean and clear. We are in sight of land so it is time for a port of call. The rogues have eaten all the stores and every drop of spirits is gone. Time to replenish the galley and lose our sea legs for a day or three.

But before I step on land and lose what little clarity of thought I have, methinks I shall ponder on a specific subject that affects us all. Or at least I perceive that it affects us all. The unspoken. Now, setting aside the argument of what exactly truth or falsity is; let us explore an odd and yet highly used tactic that has come to hallmark so many of my fondest memories. I dare say that, a direct given truth or falsity has caused far less chaos than a single unspoken or hidden fact. In my opinion, the value of the hidden comment does not matter. As we all know, truth and falsity are subjective. And yet it seems to be the current trend of humanity to sweep the relevant into the obscurity of silence. “What they don’t know won’t hurt them...” The three monkeys practice; see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. “If you have nothing nice to say, don’t say anything at all.” I can fill a thimble with what I have learned through the nice things that have been said to me. I can fill volumes with knowledge that I have learned from the not so nice things said to me.

What is the point of divulging selective information? I dare say that the unsaid has come back to bite more individuals in the hindquarters than their spoken counterpart. I find it interesting what people do not say about their person or do not say about others. I have grown to learn to listen to the silence. More often than not you will learn more about an individual from what they do not say as compared to what they say. As odd as it sounds, you can learn by what is not there. We glean from what is *absent*.

This concept is not as off-the-bulkhead as it sounds. The silence, the absence, has an incredible worth to you whether you realize it or not. What is unsaid is incredibly valuable to you. For a moment, speculate on what you could do with all of the knowledge you have not been told! This very point drives home the value of this phenomenon.

The rage to “let sleeping dogs lay” is growing. I have no doubt that you have already been victim to this wave of oddity whether knowingly or un. It is a part of the game we humans call life. The trick is to attempt to diversify and think around what is said. To note what is unsaid. Do not dismiss the silence but wrap it around you as a cloak and understand its meaning. Learn to understand the absent and cherish it as your oldest friend.

Attain profit in what is not there. If you are able to attain some small degree of excellence in this ability you will be surprised what you gain in the absent or unspoken silence of another. It is within the silence, unspoken and unsaid that we can attain the answers that we seek.

Attribution Theory.

My travels have taken me around this globe we call Earth. I have seen lands that some only dream of. More water has passed under me than most know exists. I have seen more than most people want to see. My world, of course, is not as large as yours. If anything it is getting smaller by the day. I have, in my travels, noted that shipmates that are well traveled and make the effort to educate themselves often have a smaller world. Case in point: recently I found out that the process of trying to understand why people do what they do is called the attribution theory. People usually don't have all the information they need to fully understand a situation and yet this does not stop them from attempting to make sense of it. We know that shipmates make educated guesses based on external cues and things they think they already know. The problem is that most act as though these guesses are absolute certainties. People don't like not knowing, or maybes, so they make explanations for what happens. The process of trying to understand the causes of social events and behavior is called attribution theory¹.

I have often wondered why shipmates will come to the most uneducated, simpleminded reasons why people do things and then give them full and complete credibility and sail on their merry way. Enter attribution theory. People are very likely to attribute behavior to something that must be wrong with a shipmate rather than understanding the real reason behind the behavior. Does anyone else besides me find this incredibly uncomfortable?

This does however explain a whole lot about how certain persons are accepted or not accepted in our society. Just for a moment imagine a shipmate with a hidden disability having his behavior attributed to being rude or dumb rather than the accurate and truthful assessment of being handicapped. Just for a moment think upon how many people you have met in your life time that have made educated guesses on external cues about you that were completely inaccurate!

How can we, as sailors of life, limit this inaccurate observation of others? I would think that first we must open all our senses to who and what is around us. Secondly, I believe that education, either self-motivated or scholastically driven is paramount. The more educated you become the more tools you have at your disposal to help you understand societal events and the behavior of others. And finally, refrain from snap, based on limited understanding, decisions or guesses about those around you. All too often, in our search for knowledge we grab the easiest answer that pops into our mind. As old salts, we know that nothing worth having comes easy and our understanding of our shipmates is no different. Take time to gather more information than you think you need, and reserve that hasty knucklebones decision and you may find more to treasure in the long run.

¹ Taylor, S., Peplau, L., & Sears, D. (1997). *Social psychology* (9th ed.) New Jersey: Prentice Hall, P. 55.

Strategy...

The warm morning sun warms the face. Even the water stays warm year round here in the tropics. With such warmth that abounds both above and below it is a wonder anyone would ever want to leave such a place. The white sandy beaches and the lush tropical flora are as pleasing to the eye as any sight I can conjure within my unlimited imagination. It is a good day to sail with the dolphin and do nothing more than enjoy the view.

The difficulty that one faces is to know if this is a wise action. Is any action wise? How do we determine the value of a given action and its validity to our person? This question has haunted humankind from the moment *after* the first mistake was made and will continue to do so until the end of our time as a race. But might there be a way to provide a guide that might lessen the under-valuation of an action and also determine its validity to you? I suggest that there might be a way that this may be done. Strategia.

A careful plan, a clever stratagem, the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal. Strategy. But, could it have been possible to divert from that one catastrophe that scarred you for life? It is, at the least, possible that if a strategy was in place, contingency plans created and waiting, that the situation might not have been as bad as perceived. Why you ask? You would have taken the time to think out a variety of possibilities that could have happened. You then would have most probably had a contingency plan to deal with that specific action. The action itself would not have been so unique, bold and unexpected.

In creating your strategy you begin to expand and expound upon the possibilities. These possibilities then begin to take on value and validity within the mind's eye. Once this action has taken place they are no longer foreign, new, unique, bold and unexpected to you. Thus, a well thought out strategy opens more doors of opportunity than it closes.

Complexity...

Complication. A simple word and yet a concept that some find so incredibly difficult. A paradox I would think. Take for example the complicated simple matter. Math can be an example of this paradox. Some find the field of mathematics a challenging and incredibly simple field of study. And yet there are others that find the simplest of mathematical equations the height of complexity. The height of the main mast is directly proportional to the size of the sail. Complex and yet very simple.

This paradox can be found in a variety of subjects. The complications of birth, and yet...the act is incredibly simple all factors considered. We may take the incongruity further into the realm of the human psyche. The simplicity of love is obvious as a base emotion. And yet, more than a measurable amount has been written on the complexity of the subject. Hate can also be a crude base emotion and yet, given any variety of circumstances we can view the sentiment as complexity beyond understanding. The ideal

can be carried into almost every aspect of feeling and emotion and one will find that the paradox stands clear as a black sail upon the horizon on a clear day.

I pose that complication therefore only occurs when a series of events, actions or emotions are brought to light in a jumbled mass of confusion we have conveniently named 'complex'. As a race we do not live in a vacuum. We must, as an individual take in a variety of stimuli each and every moment of every day. This stimuli is not assimilated within the context of a vacuum and therefore will affect a variety of other stimulus within our lives. The complication comes when a variety of stimuli collide in the mind and become entangled within the psyche. It can be equated to attempting to focus on the face of your timepiece after three mugs of rum. A very simple 'complex' endeavor.

The mind then becomes overwhelmed with a variety of related and unrelated topics. It would therefore be of great help to understand this concept and be able to use it to assist you in your daily life. Understanding that the barrage of stimuli has caused you to become unfocused and over stimulated can be a great asset upon the field of battle. The stimuli can of course be mental or physical. Physical ailment or pain can also drive mental stimuli into overdrive. Understanding the simplicity of complication can save you hours of frustration and grief.

When complexity overwhelms, take a short moment to focus. Begin to strip away the layers of both internal and external stimuli that have managed to enter the process that are unwanted and unneeded. Make pure the relevant stimulus and contemplate only upon the simple. In short, focus on the relevant and discard the irrelevant in order to make the complex simple.

Human nature...

In a wonderful discussion between crew it was noted, "that is *human nature*." These two words are defined as: the nature of man, the complex of behavioral patterns, attitudes, and ideas which man acquires socially, the complex of fundamental dispositions and traits of man. Within context of the conversation it was noted that rulebooks, books of guidelines about the psyche, child rearing and family were meant to be written, published and placed upon a shelf and admired from afar. I was surprised to hear this and it has become the center of this day's scrollwork.

Realizing that human nature is not a static event is paramount. Within the definition of the pair of words we find that mans' nature is composed of behavioral patterns, attitudes and ideas. We would be rather safe in presuming that these behaviors are continually in flux. The nature of man is forever within the ebb and flow of the tide we call *human nature*. Behavioral patterns, attitudes and ideas are continually in motion within the society in which we live. It is within this fact that I base my analysis.

We can accept *human nature* as is. Wrap the concept around us as a warm winter coat and feel secure within its confines. Or we can update the coat through out the seasons. We change outerwear with the seasons, why would we not change our own *nature*? As humans we all change. It is a simple truth. Our behaviors, attitudes and ideas

change us on a continual basis. This change can be found in the mass volumes of text we produce every year. It is a written history of what has occurred and what was learned. Note the second of the two occurrences. We log what was learned. I dare say that we do this for a reason. A few pop to mind such as survival and blackmail but you can glean your own I am sure.

Human nature is exactly what we choose to make it. It can be nothing more and nothing less. If we choose to write, publish and place on a shelf then that is an option. But I being the ever thorn in your side suggest thus: aspire to greater things! Why wallow in the quagmire of complacency and the mundane when you can rise above and achieve? Your *human nature* is your very own to mold and shape as you will. It is one of the things that you and you alone can destruct or construct at will!!! Have you ever said to yourself, "Well I guess I am going to have to take a step down..." or perhaps, "I must rise to his/her level." and being crew I know you have said, "Neptune! Must I step down to their level?!" I know you have had these thoughts as if by magic. So much for the study of the human psyche...

As corsairs and as crew of the fine ship *Destiny's Quest* you also must aspire to greater things. Buccaneers dreamed of the possibilities of what could be. They lived on the edge of the law and war in aspiration of it. The men and women who sailed the seas for no other reason than gold and exploration are just as guilty of aspiring to a better day! This brings us to the point of this long-winded musing my crew. Mates of the *Quest* must aspire to better things, they must hold themselves to a higher standard. If you are to leave those useless guidelines upon the shelf you had damned well better be writing your own all the while possessing the logic, experience and validity to back up the *human nature* you so challenge!

The *crew* must aspire to higher goals and far deeper aspirations than those land lovers that wander about within their zombiefied haze of mundane and every day frustrations. You must stand tall and proud, shoulders square to the bow and sail forward to glory and goals that only you can see but when achieved, will affect the rest of humanity.

Knowledge is power...

The stars glow and the warm wind gently caresses the sails. The night sky is nothing less than incredible in the tropics. It is under this umbrella of glittering planets that it is easy to become lost within ones own thoughts. And rarely do I have a thought that I have not been able to put down in words given time.

One aspect of man that has always fascinated me is their quest for titles. The formidable epithet that must lead or follow ones name. We seek a label that distinguishes our person in grand fashion. Not just the customary and usual Miss, Mrs. or Mr. No these titles will not do. It must be far more expressive, more flattering and far more prestigious. We aspire to be Lords, Ladies of some long forgotten family lineage. We search for ways to grab the brass ring and attain that title of Vice President, President or some other tag of notoriety. Even if we cannot attain the rank or title within business, we look to the trades

to make us a journeyman or master. Need I sally forth into the realm of organizations where a man who cannot even read or write may become Grand-Pooh-Bah for no other reason than purchasing the most rounds of beer prior to elections?

This obsession is rather astounding all things considered. I find that, in my mind, when given a title I immediately conjure a vision of the stereotype. The title of President summons forth a white collared stiff backed elderly gentleman (or middle aged female dressed the same). Tenure a chap professor and I see a tweed jacket, beard and ruffled hair. Label a lad master of a trade and I give you a middle class sod with rough hands and a propensity for the drink. Elect an individual into an organizations rank of officers and I give you an individual who may or may not be able to perform as expected.

When this vision passes there stands an individual with a title that may or may not fit the template laid out for them to fill. They are proud of their achievement in that title and it matters not if they fit the typical norm of the standard. They are secure within their designation. This most of all baffles me to no end. People are complacent within their own title. They are satisfied to wear their nametag that clearly states: Journeyman Plumber. This dub has given them some sort of inner peace that I cannot grasp.

Would these titles not place a restriction upon them? Labels, I cannot understand why anyone would desire to slap an M.D. behind their name and call it a day. Do these terms not pigeon hole the bearer? Who would hire the Grand-Pooh-Bah of local 666 to be Vice President of Accounting simply because of his title Grand-Pooh-Bah? Titles; I dare say that I cannot phantom the restriction they place upon the individual saddled with one.

Looking at the societal use of titles makes me wonder if they are not more self important than socially acceptable. And example of this may be when a friend introduces you to a colleague by title and name and they immediately return with, "please, call me Dick." Does this individual realize that the title may be constricting and not fully explanatory of his abilities as a person? Most likely this is the case. Titles are like anchors; they will weigh you down and hold you fast. For those who wish to be stagnant within their world may I suggest you attain a title and wear it proudly?

For those who desire to aspire to greater things may I suggest that *knowledge is power*. There are many who have never held a title in front of, or behind, their name and have amassed more knowledge vis-à-vis freedom than most who do. Yes, there is a direct link from knowledge to power and then freedom. Nowhere in those steps will you find a need for a title. To sail the waters of life one does not need a title. One however will need understanding. This comprehension of the facts will lead to far greater things than a title.

Tomorrow...

The fine Lady *Destiny* glides upon glistening waters this day! The sun is high and bright splashing diamonds across the waters surface. The white reflections hurt the eyes but it is so hard not to stare at its beauty. It is warm and a slight breeze, just enough wind movement to tickle the skin. This morning I sit in the fore topcastle. My legs are curled up under me as I sit and grip the rope sides. The view forward is unobstructed and I can

feel the wind better up here. From my vantage I swear I can almost see tomorrow from up here.

There is always tomorrow. I grin as I think that. Are we not so optimistic in such an assumption? I can remember an old sailing mate I had one time named Zeno. He was so used to being below decks that he sneezed when he came topside into the sunlight. Rarely seeing the light of day the man was surprisingly full of inspiration. One of his sayings was to never put off tomorrow what you could get done today. As a young sailor I am not sure I fully appreciated the old salts words. And yet, on this day I could not agree more with the man.

I do understand that there are times that we can not seize the day in the manner that might cause undo grief or frustration for others. But I say that one may well consider careful planning and execution of dreams, desires and deviations. I have known not one but two men in my life who died less than a week after their retirement!!! They worked all their lives and lived for the moment of their retirement so they could finely 'do what they wanted'. The Grim Reaper took away their tomorrows before they could have them. And whom do we blame? I cannot blame the hooded spirit of demise. I must point a finger to those who failed to live within the now. Damn the man.

There is always a tomorrow for someone; that individual however may not be us! How can we not see this with the utmost of clarity? Death is as sure as these virtual words! Stand fast my crew, fear not the future because of this impending happening. Take hold of your own destiny and live for each day. Live each day to the utmost fullest. Do not put off for tomorrow what you can experience today. Be known by your friends and family as a mover and shaker. And as a personal friend of mine once said, "This above all: to thine own self be true. And it must follow, as night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Treasure Chest Four

Dignity, manners and confidence...

I retreat to the sanctuary of the *Destiny's Quest*. People on shore have lost their minds, manners and motivation. I cannot even fathom living in the world that they have created for themselves.

When growing up I had the distinct honor of being expected to act like I had at least an iota of manners. The statements, "thank you" and "please" were beaten into me from the beginning. Every individual older than me was to be addressed by the title of Sir or Ma'am. There were no exceptions to these rules. None existed that I was privy to anyway.

I am continually amazed at the lack of polite conversation or mannerisms in today's American society. As I sat in a restaurant this weekend I listened. That's right, I listened to the conversations between the patrons and the wait staff. I could give a rat's ass about the meaningless converse between the parties sitting at the table. There were no pleases and sure as I type this no thanks given for any courtesy. Only demands and direct statements were made in both directions. This behavior was not from some twenty something but from older retired individuals. They were downright rude. Amazing, so soon has the generation that beat manners into me forgotten what they held in such esteem.

This trend has spread like a plague through American society. Polite conversation and manners have fallen by the wayside. From children to the elderly there is not a please or thank you to be found in the bunch. Polite conversation has also become a thing of the past. While walking the campus yesterday I came alongside a student and politely asked if she had ordered the wonderful weather. You would have thought I asked her for oral pleasure or uttered some other blatantly evil suggestion. She literally stopped in her tracks, looked at me with wide eyes as though I were Jack-the-Ripper. I laughed aloud and said, "Oh please do pardon, I meant not to make polite conversation." I continued to stride down the walk with a grin from ear to ear. Underclassmen are such poor sods.

Lets take it a step further and touch on the subject of confidence. Methinks that the erosion of manners and polite society has diversely affected the fabric of courteous confidences held between friends or even acquaintances. When was the last time you told someone a tid-bit in 'confidence' and actually felt secure in doing so? More to the point, when was the last time you told someone something in private only to hear about it via an unexpected source at a later date? I subscribe to the school of thought that the "buck stops here". Perhaps it is some warped Rogue code of honor. Or perhaps a long misplaced sense of respect for the time honored tradition of gracious understanding.

It is rare to find this quality in people today. They want to jump on the "he said...she said" bandwagon, the first corsair on ship to have a new bit of 'dirt'. A few individuals thrive on the world of intrigue and rumor. I find that in its entirety one gains little true knowledge from such sources. And why fall victim to rumor or distorted truth when you can build a reputation that may allow you to know the *truth*? Loose lips sink ships mates.

A true pirate aspires to far greater things than a bit of scuttlebutt. Dignity, manners, confidence and polite attentiveness will gain you the advantage you need to attain your goals far more efficiently than rumor. Aspire to honor and truth and both shall reward you in spades.

Team...

Crisp, clear and calm. The bow of the *Quest* slowly parts the clear blue waters of the bay as we prepare to drop anchor and go ashore. Replenishment and a change of pace are in order. We all have our sea legs now, just a few days ashore to acquire stores and see the sights are in order.

But before the fun and games there must be a bit of teamwork. Teamwork is a concept that completely eluded some individuals. They have no concept as to how to act as part of a machine. Yes, I equate team with machine. Both should have parts moving in synchronicity to achieve a specified output. Therefore in my mind the concept of team is closely linked to the efficiency of a well-oiled machine.

The point that I desire to make is that there is no 'I' in team. This escapes most individuals. When a person makes the obligation to enter a team they bring unique qualities and viewpoints to the group (funny, no 'i' in that word either!). They are a unique part of the machine that forges ahead to achieve some common goal.

What amazes me is the selfishness of some people. But should this really surprise me? I mean should I be taken aback by anyone being so self absorbed that they can not get over their own pathetic preferences in order to become a working member of a team? I think not. One of the biggest reasons morons fail out of boot camp and the military in general is because they cannot become *team* when they have to be. One of the most common reasons people are not promoted to management or quasi-management positions? You guessed it my ever-vigilant crew. They fail at being a team member.

I can feel the musings of certain crewmembers. Let me guess... How can you be you when you are part of a team? How about the individual factor? I want to be me!! Not a cog in a wheel you scream. Well damn the man, I hate to be the one to break this to you but if that is your game, may I suggest you move to some mountaintop and live a life of seclusion. This will in fact secure your individuality as well as challenge your sanity but hey... its all good. If you enjoy talking to yourself and masturbation...

Out of all the hardly acceptable drivel that has appeared upon the Dread Sea Scrolls this is no doubt one of the most well founded and most studied concept of humanity. We, as Homosapiens are without question team oriented. Like it or not genetics has played a cruel joke on you. Individual yes, but team... always. Get over it, understand it, learn it, and then use it to your advantage. Don't be a complete ass and make yourself a royal pain because you want to do it your way. Guess what, the collective minds of the group are far more superior to your simple-minded musings. No one finds much use for an individual who cannot become part of the team that allows us to forge ahead in this warped game we call life.

Impressions...

As the sun sets spilling brilliant colors over the horizon I gaze into its depths and reflect. Reflection, musing, pondering, and thinking, you would think my mind would get tired at some point. On it drones, to yet another topic that I shall spew forth like a whale shoots air from his blowhole. Duck and run, lash thyself to the rigging, or just sit and gaze off into the sunset, its all good.

It happened years ago now. I had gone to the barbershop with a friend and he volunteered to pay for my cut but only if I would get it cut as a flattop. The gauntlet having been dropped and a free cut in the balance...flattop it was. I had always worn my hair in typical 80's fashion, medium in length and thrown over to one side. The flattop was actually shorter in length than I had worn when I was in the navy.

Immediately after the cut I noted a difference in how people treated me. Granted I wear a close-cropped beard so the combination is rather odd one would think, but the looks and the way people treated me changed drastically. No, they did not throw bottles and scream obscenities. Just the opposite occurred in fact. I received nods on the street, woman gazed just a tad longer and children got the hell out of the way. The hair cut had a direct correlation on how I was treated. I was noticed and treated in a more respectful manner. I would have never believed that the way you wear your hair could affect the way people treated you. But the fact of the matter was that I had noticed first hand the truth of that misconception.

Since that time and on a parallel subject I noticed that several of the students in the business department at the college I attend dressed nicely each day for class. I listened to what the student body and faculty said about these individuals over many semesters. They had, by their dress, separated themselves from the general populous. Students and faculty thought them 'smarter' and more successful in their scholastic endeavors. They had dressed their way to success. The odd part was that I had been partnered with more than one of these individuals for group presentations, group projects, etc. and I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that some, if not all of the façade was just that, a grand façade! They were no different than the student who wore torn shirts and shorts to lectures. (Just like yours truly.)

In the spirit of learning by fieldwork I changed my style of dress this past semester. I wondered if I could elevate my status or if would be treated differently if I made a change after so long. Would the change be so drastic as it had been with my fluff to flattop experience? I began to dress 'business casual' each day for class. Almost immediately I noted a big difference in the treatment I received by both the student body and the faculty. I was astounded when a teacher nodded to me in lecture and asked, "And your analysis on this *Dread*?" The first time it happened I blinked and rattled off an answer that opened eyes around the table and managed to place a grin on the professor's mug. It has not slowed down or stopped since. Students approach and ask questions between classes. Other students wave or nod as we pass on campus walk. Almost a cult following. Damn the man. Faculty say hello in the corridors of the academic buildings and make time to chat a moment after class to answer a question or two, and all because I changed my style of dress. Amazing.

So crew the next time you hear, “dress for success” or “dress to impress” know that it is in fact a reality that the sharp dressed individual gains an advantage over the rest. This simple tactic can come in handy in a variety of arenas. All of which can afford you the edge over your competition or maybe just gain you that smidgeon of attention you have been attempting to gain but never quite managed to attain.

Within my grasp...

As the ship slowly makes wide circles I ponder. Yes, Something new here the musing, the pondering, thought, wondering, rumination, reflection, deliberation, contemplation, cogitation, even the consideration of yet another subject. What pray tell is the point of so much thought? Do I glean an answer that someone else has not already attained far in advance of my meager musings? I think not. And yet my thoughts roll forward like a frigate in full sail with a twenty-knot tail wind.

Personally I had not thought it possible to be honest. There was no way that the situation was going to come into full completion. Unlikely at best, unattainable at worst I felt. How could such a manner become involved? The likelihood of such a rapport flourishing from such a simplistic source was unimaginable. Complete and total balderdash I was convinced. No more a chance than a man with his foot caught in the anchor chain as the anchor release is pulled.

And yet, time has passed and even though I gave it little chance and relatively no thought to the possibility of validity, I have come to the realization that there is in fact a glimmer of a chance. What I had taken for nothing more than a fancy, a fantasy if you will, is now within my grasp. A phantom that has eluded me over a lifetime has appeared and now stands before my unbelieving eyes, available for the taking.

I have the ability to reach out and take what I desire. To grasp what has been so incredibly elusive over the span of my life. I have but to still my heart, firm my resolve and take but a step forward into the future. And yet I question. Is the phantom that is before me real or is it just a figment of an overactive imagination spawned by years of questing? Does it matter?

Wait is a four-letter word.

There is something about sunsets that strike me as odd. They signal the end of the day or perhaps the end of the light of day if you will. But is it really about the setting sun? The colors change and the shadows grow long. Darkness falls and we never notice the change. Rarely do we note the change as we forge ahead in some self-important fashion. It's not about the beauty we pass up each day but why we pass up the incredible. Or better yet why do we wait for the incredible when it is all around us. Yes by Neptune, there you have it.

We wait for something better. Patiently or impatiently, it matters not because we still wait. This is the truth of the matter. This is also my bane. Why do I wait? I have never been good at the waiting game. I am one who forges ahead no matter what the reason to attain the goal that hovers before me. Forever the master of my own destiny, and forever the reckless seadog with no other purpose in mind other than to attain the goal. Wait is a *four-letter word*.

I wait for the other brass ring. I wait for fame and fortune. I wait for health. I wait for a break... It would seem that after a bit of reflection that I do more waiting than I would have thought. Perhaps it is because I am in the forward process of attaining and thus, because time is not stagnant, I must wait for the proper time to seize the moment.

Or perhaps it is because I now refuse to pass up the colors of a sunset. Nor do I miss a chance to watch the shadows grow long. Perhaps I stop and note that something that is self-important *really is important*. And maybe I refuse to pass up beauty today for potential beauty tomorrow. Yes, that is correct, why wait for the incredible when it already surrounds me?

Unlikely teacher...

And yet we are granted one more day of perfection at sea. I find that sailing on the ocean blue affords such wonderful tans and clear minds. Time spent aboard the *Destiny's Quest* is priceless. Hard work builds the body and long watches clear and sharpen the mind. Sailing is the ultimate in physical and mental therapy.

It is through subtle tones and light philosophies that I attempt to pass on light lessons that I have learned over time. I attempt to share the things I have learned for a variety of reasons. But the first and most prominent is that I believe in communication and I also believe in the power of the combined collective mind. We can in fact learn through the experiences of others if we are afforded the opportunity to communicate with them. Why re-invent the wheel, make the same age-old mistakes or get caught without a marlin spike in a knot untying contest if we do not have too? Yes my crewmates, I see those eyes twitch and jaws clench. How can we attain the 'flavor of life' you ask? How can we learn to recover from mistakes and move on you ask without making the age-old time honored 'mistakes' we all make, you quip. And I look at you and suggest that there are plenty of other mistakes that will occur in uncharted waters that will continue to teach the new generations of adventures the same lessons that have granted us our sea legs. Mistakes, sidetracks and complete and total humiliation wait the generations that lay dormant within your genes. Fear not crew, just because they do not make the exact same stupid mistakes that you have made does not mean they will not meet other challenges!

Thus I speak of age old, biblical in proportion, tried and true lessons that are discarded by each new generation that braves the 'new' world. You know the ones, you have learned them and still continue to test the waters of your findings to this day just to ensure that they still in fact hold true. Yes crew, intoxication combined with romantic setting and mood still equals sex. Damn the man! Those basic laws of nature and physics still apply! Lets just make sure one more time you say. I cannot understand the need of

some to push the envelope over and over only to come up with the exact same result only to forge ahead to once again relive the exact same experiment. HINT: Change the stimuli, parameters and components.

One lesson that I learned from another was what I thought was a simple and basic law of respect. As a child I had been taught to respect your elders. It was taken further in private catholic school to respect all individuals. For twelve years I had been programmed to afford others the respect 'they were due'. It took many years of being used and young lady named Bernice to change this "law" within the confines of my mind forever. Bernice was no normal lady. She was about 4'7" tall and had the loveliest chocolate brown skin you have ever seen on a person. Bernice used crutches to walk with. She was the product of a childhood surgery accident that left her crippled and stunted for life. I worked next to Bernice for over a year. It gave us a lot of time to talk.

Bernice did not like the engineer we worked for. As a matter of fact she would cuss the man to his face. The sad part was, most of the time... she was right. One day I made the distinct mistake of asking her if she 'respected' anybody after a long series of battles between the engineers, plating, electrical test and floor management. (Being quality control is a mutha.)

She looked at me with eyes full of energy and anger. Then I watched them change, she grabbed her purse, reached for her crutches, then summoned me to follow with but a single glance. She was like that. We took an unauthorized break in the company break room and she slid her tiny body into one of the bench seats and beckoned me to sit across from her. The first question out of her mouth was blunt and simple, "What the hell do you mean respect?" Bernice was a good Baptist girl, sang in choir, and damned if that little thing could sing. For her to use profanity was not unique but interesting to say the least. I smiled and began to regurgitate the rhetoric on respect that I heard as a child, managed to be reinforced with in the military through the rank structure and now held near and dear to me. Our discussions on religion helped others find the door and kept people far away from our workstation. I liked Bernice. She liked me. We were polarized opposites that somehow found catalyst in each other.

She shook her head in the middle of my narrative and blurted, "There is no way you actually believe that shit!" I blinked. I fell silent and cocked my head. She had the adorable habit of wiggling her ass in her seat when she was about to pounce. Sort of how a cat digs its rear claws into the ground before the vaulting spring. I grinned, here it comes I thought to myself. She looked me in the eyes and smiled. "Tell me really," she queried, "do you really respect all people?" I gave a curt affirmative nod. She sat back and stared at me. "Well that explains that." She said as she began to rummage through her purse for yet another package of cheese crackers. That purse held allot of cheese crackers. Cases some days.

I sat and smiled at her as she carefully open the package and offered me one. I took two and nodded. She laid the package on the table before her and returned her gaze to me. My mouth was full of cracker when she began. "You can not do that *'Dread'*. No way in hell can you respect everyone. No wonder so many people take advantage of you." I stopped chewing. She continued to gaze at me. She held up her had and placed her index finger and thumb forward and opened and closed them in rapid succession. I began to chew again and she nodded. We had a relationship like that, it was spawned from working in a very noisy plant. Hand signals said volumes at times. I chewed and she

continued. "I have known you for over a year now. I have listened and I have watched you. I know you better than you think. I am not going to pretend I know you well but I know you well enough to tell you that you have been used." I stopped chewing and swallowed, she flicked her finger and I popped in another cracker. She smiled, I smiled, she continued. "You are one of the strangest men I have ever met. The owners *like* you, the management *likes* you, and the employees *like* you." She spit out the word 'like' as though it were a four-letter word. Bernice had been with the company for over ten years. People did not like my little Bernice and Bernice returned the favor. "You walk around here in your own little dream world as though you don't hear what they say about you behind your back." I stopped chewing again. She motioned and I started chewing and she began speaking again. "People think you are a push-over, that because you eat lunch with Tom you are gay, and because you do not work overtime, the other camp figures you are pumping the owners wife Wendy." I blinked and the cracker became very dry in my mouth. I slid out of the booth and moved to the sink. After the cup was full of water and I returned to my seat. She acted as though I had never left. "Charlie is a damned moron and lets garbage go out of here because he has no spine and does not give a rats ass about product quality. He tells you to push garbage through on his signature for no other reason than his monthly bonus. He is an ass." I spoke for the first time, "Gay *and* doing Wendy?" She nodded and continued, "The same people you are so damned kind and courteous too are throwing daggers at your back every time you turn around." I never felt anything hit me. Damn the man. "Look * Dread * , respect has to be earned. You can not just go around life thinking that people are by nature respectable." She threw her hands up in frustration. "Well" I said, "I respect individuals until such time as they prove to me that they do not deserve it." She let out a long breath and put both arms on the table between us and leaned forward. "Are you gay?" I shook my head no. "Are you fucking Wendy?" It was the first time she had ever used such a word in my presence, I was making this little lady go to hell because I was being a rock. "No ma'am." She sat back, "Tell me why again why you respect these people."

I sat there and looked at her. I must have sat there digging for an answer for a long time. I heard the break room door upon and Bernice face contorted and she picked up a cracker and threw it over my head. "Fucking Charlie." she mumbled as I heard the door click shut. My mind was scrambling a mile a minute but the only answer that I could come up with again and again was simply because I had been told to, time and again by parents and teachers. I sat there and tried to gain some foothold on the defense that I had to mount.

Bernice looked at me and softly spoke. Her voice could take on a musical quality at times and it almost made me melt. "You can not keep walking around life respecting everyone just because it is what your parents told you as a child. You are not a child, far from it. You are a man and people must earn your respect. People will take advantage of you in a heartbeat if you give them the chance. If you automatically afford them the gift of your respect you are leaving yourself wide open to one hell of a lot of grief. Respect is built after trust is gained. You are trusting them even before you know them! Do you hear me white boy?" I smiled. She continued, "You can not trust people you do not know. How the hell can you respect someone if you have no trust in them? People have to earn your trust, then if they are able to do that, then you may respect them only if you feel that they deserve it." Bernice stood using her crutches. She looked at me and grinned. "Now

lets get back to work you gay adulterer.” I stood and moved toward the door. “You’re going to hell Bernice.” I jested as I opened the door to the plant. She laughed and said, “Doubt it.” I held the door and winked, “After you dear...” She laughed again and I held the door for a most unlikely teacher to pass before me.

By the rules...

As the *Quest* cuts through the choppy waters of the ocean I scan the sky this night for stars. When you are out at sea and the lights of humanity are far away, the stars come out and play. Stars really do twinkle and dance about when viewed from the deck of a ship. A dome of deep blue houses billions of specks of light all while you sit in the center and marvel at your blatant insignificance.

For the record I have never played by the standard rules of the game. Hence the choice of a name like Dread Pirate. It’s not that I don’t play well with others, I am a solid team leader. I live by the credo; lead, follow or get the hell out of the way. Carpe Diem is the plan of the day in most cases. Life is far too short to be caught up in some rhetorical bullshit that may or may not be relevant. Case in point, the gray area.

Like in dodge ball when I was in high school. I used to throw the ball in as high of an arch as I could manage and let the ball fall down on my opponent. It would piss them off to no end because they never saw it coming. The other was to throw a spin ball and bounce the ball before it hit the opponent. Normally the ball would be headed toward some unlucky sod and they would move. The ball would hit the floor and take off either to the right or left depending on the spin. The normal person has calculated the trajectory of the ball even after the bounce. The normal person did not move if the ball was not in their suspected path of flight. Another opponent sitting on the sidelines wondering exactly how they were hit.

Where the hell am I going with this you ask? Well there are rules to damn near everything I would think. But there is a lot of gray area in most things to allow for diverse action. Just like dodge ball. Like the bounce shot. Even if they caught the ball it mattered not, I was still ‘in’ because the ball had touched the floor first. But if they were hit, they were toast because the ball had not yet hit the back wall. It was a win-win situation that I devised within the parameters of the rules.

And how about those unwritten ‘rules’? I can remember as a kid that we played stickball or another unique game called ‘sogie’. These are two games that have no written rules. Sogie? This game was played like baseball but on a city street. A wiffle-ball bat was used to hit a balled up sock that acted like a ball. The one main rule was that you could actually hit the runner with the “ball” to tag him out. You could smash him in the face with a thrown fastball or nip his coat, tagged or thrown, it was all good! There were no written rules and each group of kids played to their own tune. Hell, the game, as far as I know, was unique to the street! Rules for sogie were nonexistent. And yet, rules in a quasi-state existed. The trick to sogie? There was no foul territory! You figure it out.

Rules. There are people who live for them. There are also people who spend their lives figuring out ways, whether on accident or on purpose around the absurd while still

playing by the set parameters. Who you ask? Can you say tax lawyer? Lights come on now I bet!

I am one of those that will play within the set parameters of the game. There is no need for me to play outside the boundaries. There are enough new ways of doing things within the 'old rules' that one can have a blast all the while playing "old school". I do not do this on purpose. My mind just works differently. It is just the way I am wired. I am one of those people that just do things differently without having a second thought. It is the same reason why the slash is part of the Imperial Dread Sea scrolls. It is why I am a student at 37. It is also why I never ever conform to the standard without first adding my 'twist' to the game!

Dynamics of change...

This day I will not leave my cabin. I can see the lovely blue water shimmer from here quite nicely. The crew is more efficient some days without me mucking about than with me muttering profanity for no rational reason. The *Quest* moves forward no matter what...

Have you ever had an experience that after it was all said and done a little piece of you changed? I speak not of a great catharsis, or events leading to, but of an event that when looked at in the scope of things was not supposed to be profound and potentially life changing. I am ever so amazed at how this unique process takes place. I have lived through major events that would scar most rogues for life. And yet I and have sailed through the event as though it were a wine and cheese party. What is truly fascinating is when a seemingly unimportant action has created such a wave of reaction that I feel as though I must lash myself to the main mast if I have any hope of riding out the storm.

I think however that only certain individuals or circumstances may set these tidal waves into motion. Hinge pins if you will to the event. Like the sailor on the yard to pull free the last knot holding the stowed sail. It took yards of line to hold up the mass of canvas but only the event of the last knot being undone actuated the drop of the entire sail.

It is so easy to forget that the simplest of actions may unleash such an incredible amount of reaction. It is for the most part almost unimaginable to fully grasp the dynamics of change and what actually triggers change within your world.

Color and B&W...

The ocean is an incredible variation of colors. And sometimes in some places it is completely devoid of color, it takes on a crystal clear and at other times it takes on a variety of opaque colors that make the mind and eye marvel. The ocean even becomes black and white. Sail the waters of the North Atlantic in winter when the sky is overcast

and the lack of sunlight hides the colors from our eyes. The once blue-green waves become black with white capped rolling crowns. She can teach us much this lady of the sea. More than most would ever imagine.

The recent change of my sights appearance has me a tad amused. For many years my world was black and white, both literally and figuratively. Then came a catharsis that shattered the world as I knew it. The change came faster than I could ever have imaged and my senses became overwhelmed with such a variety of diversity that it hurt. The change from black and white to color is unimaginable to most people. I am one of the few to be able to boast that I have been the world in both. Both have merits.

I have also seen this world in a very black and white *way*. At one time the rules were effortless and things were simply right or wrong. There was no gray area nestled in the middle of the right and wrong. There was just a very thin line that separated the two. There was no gray area at all. Then came the reality that there are things that must fall into the middle ground for more than one reason. Once my mind was able to grasp the concept that there in fact was a middle ground that was not dubbed 'right' or 'wrong' a change began to take place within me that to this day I have yet to fully understand. The result has been a rushing, almost explosive expansion of my personal morals, standards, and principles into the gray area I have come to know as life.

But again I digress. The site has a new black and white look that I am not sure that I fully enjoy. It reminds me of the days when the world was either right or wrong. Perhaps it also reminds me of my days of complete insanity when the world was insane and I was the only logical rational being in the cosmos. It also reminds me of the days that I was unable to see the beautiful color in the world. To see the world in black and white is truly a unique experience. But the colorization of life does in fact have a profound affect on one's entire world.

Or by Neptune, it is just a reminder of how far I have come and how far I have yet to travel on this journey we call life...

Inner Motivation...

As the tides ebb and flow so do the experiences within our lives. Each tide brings with it new and a unique undercurrent, tidal flows and surf. Each day at the beach is completely different for a myriad of reasons; sun, wind, surf, tide, etc. Thus each day of our life will be just as different. It is only through positive self-motivation that one may continue forward though the diverse change that assault us on an hourly, daily and weekly basis.

Personal strength, positive thought and inner motivation are the rogue's best friend.

Treasure Chest Five

One...

At full sail I stand behind the ships wheel. My hands grip tight the wheel's smooth wood. The bow cuts a path through uncharted waters and yet, somehow it is all the same. Is today the same as yesterday or perhaps today is just simply *going* to be the same as tomorrow. It matters not, for the ship, crew and I sail forward into the moment.

It is all about vision, and self-realization. Have you ever met one that had a purpose and was bent upon that purpose no matter the course they had to navigate? Perhaps you have sailed across one that had such a vision of what they desired that it drove them forward with fervor? Or maybe one that suffered from the self-realization that their purpose was other than to be a waste of carbon and a user of oxygen?

Vision is more than just what the eye sees. It is what the mind conjures into a quasi-reality that allows us to see our future. We are able to see our own destiny with the greatest of detail if we only allow ourselves to become one with our dreams, desires and expectations.

Self-realization is the ability to realize that you are master of only one. It becomes clear when the comprehension strikes that you are the motivation, the action and reaction within the one. Enlightenment is attained when vision and reality of self, merges with the one.

Strategic visions...

Over time seamen have had visions. Some have found great vision within the minds eye as they sit the mid-watch with nothing more than blackness to stare into. Others have been granted a glimpse of their future in the swirling mists. Even fewer were able to take advantage of the long hours to piece together their personal vision.

Vision does not come with a sudden flash of inspiration I am afraid. It takes years, sometimes decades to fully comprehend the vision that we truly desire to acknowledge, accept and then apprehend. Time is of complete and total relevance to this process. For all things become clear in time.

Once you have taken time to become acquainted with the one (your mental and physical abilities), a vision then moves into deciding what effective strategy will allow it to plot a course the individual needs to begin in order to attain this goal. Yes, a vision can be a goal. You may find that without the proper vision the goal is as unattainable as that phantom ship on the horizon.

Forming a strategic vision is an exercise in astute seamanship where pipedreams and fantasy are analyzed to see if they can become reality or if they must stay as a fantasy. Separating the attainable from the unattainable is often time consuming and difficult, yet, all things held equal well worth the effort. Chasing an unattainable vision is nonproductive. Creating several smaller goals may be in order to place a rogue in reach

of that vision. Often the simpler the strategy the far more productive and lucrative it turns out to be.

The ever-present challenge in developing a strategic vision is to think creatively about how to prepare oneself for the future. Diversity, randomness of thought, education and motivation all play roles in fueling the fires of creativity. Creativity is one of the most useful tools in a corsair's arsenal of attributes. Creativity can be fostered, nurtured and built through a variety of means most of which are pleasurable and inexpensive.

Let me note that many successful individuals change direction not in order to survive but rather to maintain their success. Success is not a one-time attainment but a continuous venture that must be analyzed, fine tuned, refined and manipulated on a continuous basis in order to remain active.

Question.

As I sit upon the bow I muse. Questions. A single query can lead to another. The singular become the plural and then plural into overwhelming. A cascade of spidering musings becomes a virtual quagmire of questions. That quagmire is the very essence of life.

To question is to be alive. To be alive and thinking in the key to success!

Find the beauty...

I am awake this morning, and as I sit upon the deck I see that the sunrise is golden. The blazing orb slowly rises to bring light to all. I am glad of its arrival. I enjoy its warmth, the color it brings to my eyes and the way it changes the surface of the ocean. I have yet to figure how it throws all those diamonds across the tips of the waves like that...

Amazing beauty. That is what I have found the most motivating within my life. Some people just wallow in the bad, the evil and the absolute depression of ugly. Not I, not ever. I find that my life has been a series of foreseeable events punctuated by random acts of beauty. Beauty is what has sustained me and allowed me to move forward. Beauty is the hallmark by which I sail!

I have noticed that beauty has been the fuel that has given me the motivation, strength and desire to move on. A single random act of beauty can foster an overwhelming amount of energy within my world. I then use this energy to do the mundane, the improbable and the impossible.

It is within the beauty that I find the means to pursue and attain my goals. It is through beauty that I forget the pathetic, ugly, bad and evil. It is beauty that drives me forward to...

Sail on... sail on!!!

I hear you...

At times I feel like writing that on many pieces of paper and putting just those words in a bottle. Cork that bottle and then send hundreds of bottles on their way to wherever messages-in-a-bottle go. I think mermaids have this huge collection of messages-in-a-bottle. It is probably like a contest with them, who can get the most messages-in-a-bottle wins a date with Poseidon or something.

When I was out at sea I used to send messages-in-a-bottle. I would take fuel sample bottles and ever so carefully place notes in the bottle. I would even go so far as to seal the cap with silicone to ensure a watertight bottle. When I went into the Navy I had no family that sent me letters or care packages. Mail call was a joke. One squid told me that I should subscribe to magazines so that I would at least get junk mail. I hate junk mail.

Out of all the bottles I sent, I never so much as received a single postcard in return. I used to put my FPO address in the things. Odds are the Russian ships that shadowed us every moment of every day got tired of picking my bottles out of the drink. I expected to at least get a ticket in the mail for littering some guy's private island with bottles.

There are times when I sent the messages never giving a damn if I ever heard things back. Just placing the message in the bottle and letting it float away from the ship was the whole point of the exercise. I placed what was on my mind in writing and sent it away. That single action in itself was the act that kept me relatively sane. The ability to place my feelings, fears, joys and thoughts in that glass jar and send them off into the realm of the mermaid made my life that much better.

Then there were times that I wanted nothing more than to receive a single line of text in return. It could have come in any form from carrier pigeon to telegram. All I ever wanted to hear on those times were the simplest of words and even more simplistic a concept.

“I hear you and I understand.”

I think that there may not be any more powerful of a statement. People have lived their entire lives waiting to here these six words and die without ever having them grace their ears or calm their mind. A simple truth may be considered. We can sustain a variety of mental and physical damage as human beings. But one of the most powerful tools to recovery in any form from any damage are the words that appear above. I have stopped people in mid-bitch, mid-rant and mid-cussing by looking directly into their eyes and saying those six words... Their power is astounding.

Take this new found knowledge and sail on... sail on!!!

The journey is the key...

There are times when we stand on deck and stare out over uncharted waters. We look at virgin seas with eyes that are fresh to the scene. With no charts to guide us we sail on through the invisible barrier of known and unknown.

In our lives we often come to the same intersection as a sailor at sea. We can't sail around the world because it is flat we think. And yet, that ever so adventurous someone did not accept the given boundaries and sailed on. There are individuals who continually press the boundaries of their world and move forward. They have little fear of the world around them, for they are one with themselves and one with their environment. Or perhaps they need the rush of the unknown to keep themselves on the edge. It matters not, for they are the adventurers, the free spirits and the seekers of fortune. They fear not the darkness.

There are as many different kinds of sailors as there are drops of water in the ocean. We all sail through life in our own way. Some of us have different ideas, different thoughts and most of us see life differently than others. Different is not bad, just unique, odd or even queer. It may be through choice that we see the world as we do or it may be through no fault of our own that we see the cosmos through jaded eyes.

No matter our view of the world around us, no matter the path we choose the course must be plotted and navigated. It matters not how we see the journey I would think just as long as we make the journey. Fifty sailors can see the same vision and fifty stories will emerge from the event. Those stories will continue to change over time and in direct proportion to the amount of rum consumed.

It matters not the course you sail.

It matters only that you sail it.

The journey is the key.

When the end is only the beginning,

You have done it right!

Right and wrong...

This evening the sun has slowly fallen below the waves. The sky has become that wonderful shade of blue gray that tells a sailor that the night will be calm and peaceful. No need to lash oneself to the ship's wheel this evening thank Neptune. The lookouts call all clear as the *Destiny's Quest* hurtles over the brine as though by magic. The stars guide us and the moon lights our way.

Again I find myself leaning over the quarterdeck rail deep in thought. My musings on honor have done little to bolster my feeling of well-being and oneness with crew and self. One mate even went so far as to mention that Chivalry was just as absent as honor. [Chivalry: May be defined as martial valor, gallant or distinguished gentlemen, the spirit, system, or customs of medieval knighthood, the qualities (as bravery, honor, protection of the weak, and generous treatment of foes) of the ideal knight.] With a grin I am inclined to agree that this medieval code of behavior went out of fashion prior to the

end of the medieval period! Honor and chivalry are the stuff of legend. Perhaps it was ever nothing more than the musing of a romantic writer and his quill. Both rank right up there in my humble opinion with the 'romance of war'. What a contradiction in terms there. Must have been some lad in 'military intelligence' that coined that phrase.

But it matters not. Honor and chivalry are simply words that describe an action or set of actions by a specific individual. And by the variety and diversity of comments received after the last several entries it can be argued that honor or chivalry are nothing more than a personal perception of an individual's action and or motivations behind said actions. There are as many types of honor as there are individuals that attempt to perceive the concept. What one crewmember may find as honorable may churn another's stomach in disgust.

It is, as always, a matter of personal perception and even a more personal belief in what an individual does that counts when the sea gets rough. Honor may also be defined as what an individual or group does not do. Often times the lack of action speaks far louder than a symphony of sound and movement. To me honor and chivalry are long gone. Replaced by other less eloquent concepts. But then it is all a matter of perception is it not?

To quote one evil movie character: "There is no right and wrong... there is just boring and fun, and I hate boring don't you?"

Tenacity...

It is a lovely day. The seas are calm and the gulls call to us and beckon us ashore. I found a note in a bottle today. It was just floating by and I had it gaffed and brought aboard. I enjoy picking up the stray message just to see what's new and wrong in the universe. After reading over the notes contents I pondered. At first I was just a little disappointed. I understood the plight of the rogue who had cast it out to sea. In a way I was in the exact same boat as they were.

But then I turned my mind to other things. My mind began to grow more agitated and I began to get that odd feeling in my chest that I get when something is very wrong in my life. I searched for the reason for this agitation. In a flash it came over me like a wave breaking over the bow of the *Destiny's Quest* in a squall.

I climbed the rigging and relieved the lookout of duty as I climbed onto the small platform of the crows' nest. As I look out over the vast expanses I cannot understand. I know my mind works differently than others. I know that I view the world completely different than both the sane and un. My ponderings fall somewhere in between the two in that gray area that some may call insane. I call it home.

There are many things that I cannot fathom. It comes from being able to see more than I should be able to. It is a curse. One thing that just astounds me is watching an individual work to achieve a goal. Some just skirt the situation looking for the easiest way to achieve their desire. Then there are a few that make a plan, create a strategy and begin the quest. And then in rare occasions you see an individual dive right in. This is the corsair that you just have to admire. That individual who just sees the prize and no matter

the odds the rogue stands and delivers. Oh! the beauty of it. Does an old sea dog's heart good to see an individual set on achieving a mission. You watch them scrape and scratch, you can see their ferocious determination and your admiration for the rogue builds by the minute.

But then it happens. Like a cannon ball through broadside they break through the last barrier of resistance to their goal. Just like a rock through glass their final blow shatters all objects in their path. Now here is the part that separates the Sailors from the deck hands so to speak. There are some that will stand there slack jawed and befuddled at their victory! They look upon the object of their desire as though it has grown into some distorted mirage. They do not reach out and grab the brass ring and celebrate victory. And this is where I am at a loss.

I have found myself in this situation and have realized that I have in fact earned the privilege to enjoy the spoils of war or the fruits of my labor. I cannot understand their hesitation or their mindset. Life is far too short to let opportunity and victory set you back on your heels. Carpe Diem by Neptune! Do they not understand that the only opportunity that you cannot win at is the one you pass by? In those times, I have learned to believe in myself; I have learned not to fear the darkness of life or the mind and also to...

Sail on... sail on!!!

Squeak and flip...

I have come to the astounding and brilliant conclusion that nothing worth having comes easily. Now I am not sure as to why this is, but I do know that it is a truth. Or perhaps it is just a lighter shade of gray. Challenges face us each day. Some of our own making and some that are handed to us by others. Challenges of our own choosing are often the most difficult for some reason. The challenges given to us by others can be disregarded or dismissed as nothing more than *life*.

When it comes to facing the challenges we ourselves choose... by Neptune these are the hardest to face and move forward with. At times they may become heavy, overwhelming, insanely confusing and perhaps even frustrating. And yet we continue onward like true corsairs because we know in the end the reward shall be sweeter than the song of the siren and softer than the hair of a mermaid.

We may learn much from the nature around us. Just as the sun rises each day and the dolphin play in the bow wake we must rise to the challenge. We must be like the sun, rise fresh and new each morning and move forward to meet our goals and aspirations. Like the dolphin we must be prepared to jump the wake with a squeak and a flip. Both the sun and the dolphin were here yesterday, just like we were.

Each new day is just that, a new day, a new adventure, a new outlook and a new destiny. It is our fate to move forward into time and space. It is our adventure to live as we see fit. It is our own outlook that we judge or view with crystal clarity. It is a new day to take your world a step further into your own adventure.

New horizon...

As a brisk wind whips the surface of my lover into a sassy chop I stand behind the ship's wheel and stare out toward a new horizon. A completely new horizon do I gaze upon not just a refreshed or renewed place. It would seem that in the single sweep of a man's hand and the shake of a hand, a world that I once knew changed. The world became larger, deeper and far more expansive than I could have ever imagined.

I heard it crack then in one expansive earth shattering explosion shatter directly above my head. The impenetrable invisible barrier that had so long held me firmly within the ranks of the blue collar immediately disappeared. The force that had so long held me captive as an enlisted man just vanished in a single millisecond. And yet, I feel absolutely no different this day than yesterday. Odd.

What is a rogue to do once that he has achieved a treasure that he has been digging for over a period of time that covers twenty years!? Well damn the man. The answer to that question is rather complex and yet incredibly simple. Once a new platform has been achieved one has a different view of the world about them. This view may then afford them answers that the previous level did not. It is therefore imperative that an individual continue to strive for a set goal no matter the cost or the odds.

No matter the odds. Understand that 'the odds' are no more than the limitations and fears that you place upon yourself. Life is far too short to sit back and view a treasure from afar hoping that one day the fair winds will just happen to blow you by happenstance to within reach of this target. Life, circumstance and fate are often not in direct line with your personal goals and desires. It is rare that anything worth achieving is within your grasp I would think. It is only the achievement through hardship that seems against the odds that is worth a tale and a toast!

It is only now that I see a new path before me. Has only been a day but I can see clearly the course that lay ahead of me. Through the example and achievement of the First mate do I now see the logic of this course. We as corsairs of life may pull from a variety of resources that afford us exemplar, paradigm and model for our own lives. It is rare that we will travel a virgin course! Let us pull upon the success of others so that we ourselves may achieve our dreams, aspirations and goals.

Carpe Diem in each and every aspect of our lives my crew. Fear not unknown, fear not the darkness. For it only when you achieve the level above your current standing will you know your course. And yet another reason to...

Sail on... sail on!!!

Treasure Chest Six

Personal preference...

A brilliant sun illuminates our ocean as the sassy wind slaps and batters the canvas that we hang in full this day. The lovely lady *Destiny's Quest* almost skips across the chop as we skim over the surface of this cyber sea we choose to sail. It is a fine day for an ocean voyage, sun bathing or just sailing about in search of an unsuspecting innocent trader with a desire to hand over his supply of rum as well as other items of interest.

Some days are so wonderful you just want to lock in a bid on a plethora of them to be used at your discretion. The perfect day might be a combination of weather and attitude along with a slight splash of 'unusual' mixed in for good measure. The perfect day for a rogue can be as simple as a good meal and calm sea. Or a corsair of true mischief might desire a little less today but copious quantities of potential for the near future. Either way it is all a matter of personal preference.

I find it most interesting that so much transcends into this realm. The realm of personal preference that is. I would think that very few things actually escape this incredibly huge genre. A personal preference can be so amazingly broad and yet incredibly fine tuned to the point of miniscule detail almost beyond description. Personal preference is the final gate that all things must pass in order to be accepted by an individual.

The laws, rules and guidelines of personal preference are not always the standard logical, rational or often valid guiding principles one may think they are. They are as unique to each person as a fingerprint or genetic makeup. There are times that a specific object, thought or practice is dismissed for no other reason than it does not fit into ones personal preference.

What perplexes me the most is that people will completely dismiss 'X' on basis of personal preference and humanity on whole willingly accepts this reason with little to no thought to the subject. 'X' may be just fine to the rest of the cosmos but because of this factor known as personal preference may be dismissed within milliseconds. Personal preference does not confound me as much as why people so readily accept it without question. Homosapiens on average refuse to accept finalities. And yet, when it comes to personal preference it would seem that the rule is to accept finalities rather than question.

The game of life...

Another fine day for sailing. Life is far too short to waste it away.

I get in trouble a lot. Go figure. You see, I speak damn near the same way I write. No shit. Messes the common land lover up big time. A case to bring my point to bear might be the fact that I believe all things to be a game. I can tell you that I have raised more than one eyebrow when I speak of this little philosophy of mine. Just like damn

near everything in an individual's life is tainted with personal preference... I believe that almost all that we do is a game. (I say almost all here instead of an absolute because even though I have not found an exception, I am sure one exists.)

I have upset more people than I can count or remember. I boggle the average mind with the fact that I believe all we do is in some form or another, a game. Now before you slip off to the comment box and begin to rant... do yourself a favor and look up the multiple definitions of 'game'. Go ahead, I will wait...

Time passes

Life is a game. Almost everything we do is a game.

Now let us look at the word 'game'. Game can be defined as; a procedure or strategy for gaining an end, a specified type of or mode of activity, a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules with the participants in direct opposition of each other, a situation that involves contest, rivalry, or struggle. (these are but a few possible meanings, there are more.)

Let us then take the word game and replace it with its definition and thus see my point.

- 1.) Life is a procedure or strategy for gaining an end.
- 2.) Life is a specified type of or mode of activity.
- 3.) Life is a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules with the participants in direct opposition of each other.
- 4.) Life is a situation that involves contest, rivalry, or struggle.

I think you would agree that there exist no falsities above.

Let us now take the second sentence and again substitute the definition for the word 'game'.

- 5.) Almost everything we do is a procedure or strategy for gaining an end.
- 6.) Almost everything we do is a specified type of or mode of activity.
- 7.) Almost everything we do is a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules with the participants in direct opposition of each other.
- 8.) Almost everything we do is a situation that involves contest, rivalry, or struggle.

Again I believe that the above statements are truths. So the next time someone says to you, "get into the game!" or "let the games begin!" understand that what is being said may not be exactly what you are thinking. And for the record;

Life is a game. Sail on... sail on!!!

Symphony of movement...

As I stand upon the deck of the lovely lady known as the *Destiny's Quest* I feel the soft pitch and roll of the sea under me. The cry of the gull and the soft lapping sound of the waves touching the side of the ship caress my ears. Life at sea is good. The routine of it soothes me and calms my frayed nerves. When on land you never know that is going to happen from day to day. It is a roll of the bones guess what will be around the corner. When at sea a sailor goes about a routine that is comforting and mundane yet allows the mind to think upon many subjects.

Thought is what a sailor does best. For out at sea a sailor has no distractions, no lover to deviate his mental prowess into physical gratification. The routine affords the mind time to expand upon a subject so that it may be explored completely with little or no relevant distraction.

Each journey is one of our own choosing. There are ventures we take with crew and others we take alone. At times crew might be all around us and we stand alone in a musing that only seems to grow deeper and more mysterious with time. In the end it matters not. The breeze pushes the *Quest* along and we ride the waves along with her. There is little choice in the matter. For even deep in thought and frozen in thought we continue to move forward through time and space. Movement is continuous and thus we stop for nothing.

We are, no matter how much we disdain the thought, part of a continuous symphony of movement that never stops. Thus we... sail on... sail on!!!

Breathtaking motivation...

I have had a vision of the utmost beauty. A beauty beyond words, a vision so breathtaking that to attempt to describe this apparition would fail miserably even by one with an ability to manipulate the written word. I had never before understood exactly what the description of "breathtaking" was but this day I have gained an experience in this phenomena.

What powers our inner motivation? Have you ever wondered what drives individuals to great feats both personal and public? I might suggest that inner motivation comes from a mental vision that is held in paramount. A single vision that is held in steadfast esteem so as to become the pinnacle of all. An image so incredible that it holds the power or ability to motivate a rogue to perform up to and beyond their highest ability.

Oh yes my crew, inner motivation is the key to all success no matter large or small the overall scale. Interior impetus is the driving force behind every great deed. With personal inspiration an individual may be able to climb much further and much higher than a counterpart without such inner fire. Know that to gain such a prize in nothing less than spiritual in nature and thus should be treated as such.

The human spirit, the quest for motivation can come from a variety of sources. Both exterior mental and physical can affect a corsair's motivation but I say there is nothing that can motivate a rogue's enthusiasm like an inner mental vision. An inner

image, silhouette, or mirage if you will can drive a individual to achieve the greatest and most difficult of goals with much less distraction than the sturdiest of whips or verbal threats could ever do.

Find it crew. Find the one inspiration that will drive you on with such drive and force as well as afford you the greatest of advantage and inner motivation possible. It matters not the source of this power. It matters not that others know or even understand this inner vision. All that matters is that you hold the concept within the mind's eye and more forward with confidence and purpose. Create inner motivation of the self by the self so as to achieve any goal needed. Know that with the proper mental revelation a simple rogue can achieve, realize and accomplish!

Find the heart...

Well damn the man and full speed ahead. Could not even piss off anyone with my last blog. Looks like I am going to have to try harder this time!!! And thus I will discuss something we all know and love, artists. Yes mates, I am going to chat about those individuals who reverently call themselves artists. I freely admit that I speak from the viewpoint of an outsider. Oh, I have been known to snap a semi-decent photo once in a great while but in no way do I fancy myself an artist or even a photographer for that matter! The perspective I do write from is an individual who has watched talented people rise to the top. I have also watched talented people fall squarely on their hindquarters and not bother to get up. So for better or worse, here are the notes of a watcher.

Ever meet one of those individuals who desire to do nothing but "their art" and make enough money to live well off of it? Kind of like asking for someone to pay you seventy thousand dollars a year to play in a sand box four days a week. Money for nothing and your chicks for free... I look at those people and wonder exactly how reality can escape them so completely.

If you are talented you can make money at your art if you are a damned good businessperson *and* you are diversified.

The artists I have known that have become successful (Burkette and Larison) have done so through a variety of means. They understand, and thus have passed on to me, that you are not going to make a living on selling your one good piece of artwork a year!

Zack Burkette took roll after roll of photographs in order to get just the right shot while working as a freelance and associated press photographer. Zack told me that an individual can only be successful if they are both persistent and a good businessperson. He claims anyone can take a photo, but it takes a salesman to sell it to the right person.

Neither of these established successful artists have done "only their art" on their way to success. Ron worked at a chain bookstore when his wife became ill and needed insurance. Zack always worked a variety of other jobs to make ends meet as well as keep his mind active and his eye sharp. Both have done more than just their preferred medium all the while in order to become a success. Writing, stock photography, articles and

editorials, teaching and other forms of art were often worked on to keep the mind active, the hand trained and the contacts fresh. Often while doing an unrelated project both artists met individuals that have afforded them good paying projects in their preferred field of work!

Everything is a business. Everything from religion to sex is a business. There is nothing that is not a business. Art does not magically fall outside of this arena either. Art is more of a business than most other areas simply because of its difficulty in sales. Art sales drop when the economy is even close to substandard. Hard earned cash will not be spent on an impulse purchase if an individual is not highly financially self confident. Above all an artist must be an accomplished sales person. But are they? Odds are they ship off their artwork to some far off gallery in hopes of a ten to thirty percent return on their work. If you worked for twenty hours digging a ditch and your boss told you that due to buyer haggling and overhead you were only going to receive twenty five percent of the value of your work you would brain the son of a bitch with the shovel! But artists just bend over...

A successful individual is diversified. Is it any wonder that a diversified artist will be successful? Hardly. The bottom line is that no one is going to pay you to play in the sand box all day. You may well have to become a businessperson, work a job that you may not fully enjoy, or diversify in many ways in order to become a successful artist. Network, build and learn several different ways of selling your art. Study those who have gone before you and succeeded.

What you do is find the art, and then you become the art you desire.

Quarks...

Soft music plays, the world gently spins and exhaustion is but a moment away. Life is a symphony of movements, challenges and quarks that are never ending. For some inexplicable reason we continually force our way forward into the fray. Gently but firmly moving into the future all the while attempting to understand.

Living life is often not as difficult as understanding the reason why we do so.

Possible and probable...

We often sail through our lives never really knowing our parameters. What will we do in certain life situations? What are we willing and able to do in specific circumstances that are out side of the 'normal' daily routine. Often we become so entrenched in our daily rituals that thinking outside the box is not the rule but the rare exception.

Might it be possible to realize that certain parameters or boundaries we have are not as static as we think them to be? Could it be possible that our rock solid reserve would be nothing more than rice paper pomp when it comes to a specific situation? All too often we stop pushing the envelope of our minds because our life becomes mundane. It is in this state that the mind becomes complacent in its limited walls. No new stimuli to challenge the self. Weakness forms and the mind becomes dull, less sharp and lackadaisical.

A true corsair must look at what he/she will do in a hypothetical situation and beyond! What would you do when you are between a rock and a very hard place? Will you replace the rigid criteria of the past with a new flexible standard so as to survive and thrive? More to the point, if you held the flexible standard would you have ever gotten yourself into having to make such a decision!?!?

It is the job of the mind to reason, rationalize and respond to diverse stimuli. Allow it not to starve but thrive with a variety of thoughts and musings that force it to contemplate the possible prior to the probable.

Clarity...

A single blinding flash of clarity that is so incredibly overdue strikes you and you laugh. You laugh simply because you have been on the verge of understanding for months and you could not quite see the whole concept. All at once an overwhelming understanding hits you affording you grand comprehension. Sweet and almost complete intellectual capacity!

Every journey moves in a variety of directions at one time. We do not play upon just a linear arena. Our travels take us in multiple directions on multiple planes within a plethora of dimensions. Life is not static. We cannot become stagnant.

As the *Destiny's Quest* sails forth I understand only a fraction of what I need to. I know that I speak a language different than others. I understand not the motivations and actions of others. I often am unable to communicate my thoughts, needs and desires to others correctly... but the fact of the matter is thus; many before me, and many around me are a misunderstood as I.

The difference between those to succeed and fail is nothing more than self-awareness and tenacity!

We sail on...

We sail on, no matter the reason or the cost... we sail on. The choice is not often ours you see, we become swept along with the current of life and can only watch as the view around us changes. As the tide cycles we sail with its ebb and flow. Thus is life.

Along the way we often make mistakes. Myriads of miscalculations that may cost us a variety of ways. One never truly knows what a decision today will cost us tomorrow. Foresight is never as clear as hindsight. Some decisions that seemed so perfect for the moment often turn astray and become a tear in our sail. A small rip that slows us down and prohibits proper navigation. And yet we still sail on...

Mis-navigations however slight can always be accounted for in the overall scope of things. Remember that in the overall scope of things you can regain your track with little to no trouble. In life, it may not be how far you travel, but how well you have traveled! And for that exact reason why we sail on... sail on!!!

Peace and calm...

This evening I noted how silence fell with the passing of the sun. An odd almost eerie calm collapses about the *Destiny's Quest* as the sun dips gently over the horizon. The shroud of tranquil darkness cloaks the ship and I may at last think clearly. As I sip rum from my favored beaker my mind is at last free to turn the day's events into some semblance of order. Can my mind create some bit of tidy array from the complete chaos that comprised the day's events?

Today I was to receive startling news from several shipmates that in no way was I ever expecting. The trials and tribulations of life placed in the open by mates for yours truly too ponder. Life is in no way static, of that I know for sure. Each mate had a completely different situation. News of what others face never ceases to amaze me. Just when I think I have found a new measure of 'bottom' someone goes and adds yet another knot to the sounding line. Damn the man.

Humanity on whole never stops astounding me. I find mystery, and even magic within its confines. Given five crewmembers and one situation the outcome would surely be five unique and separate reactions to the given stimuli! Fascinating. Human reaction is an ever-changing cascade of emotion, reasoning and action.

I find that watching humanity and listening to their tales has been the greatest asset I have with my arsenal of understanding, reasoning and learning. It is through others that I may learn more than I could ever be able to experience in several lifetimes of adventure. It is for this very reason I am so incredibly grateful that these individuals chose to confide in me. Through their ventures I learn, ascertain and gain a perspective that I would otherwise be blind to.

If we take the time to absorb the barrage of stimulus that assault us each day we may find that the answers we seek have been given to us. While taking time to soak up this newfound knowledge we may also find a bit of peace and calm within our own hectic and frustrated lives as we...

sail on... sail on!!!

Treasure Chest Seven

The quality within...

The ocean is clean, clear and calm as we are pushed forward before the wind. The *Destiny's Quest* is in pristine shape thanks to her top-notch crew of one hundred hands. She bristles with the best corsairs in the fleet this day. Proud, dedicated and unique are one and all. The weather is fine as we cruise the ocean looking for an unsuspecting merchant vessel or lost mermaid!

I have chosen to sit atop the fore mast this day. An unobstructed view of what lay ahead. Odd how some choose to look at what lies ahead while others prefer to stare into their past. I find that pondering the future affords me quintessence of thought, mind and action. We can surly learn from the past, but can clarity be attained only through our precedent actions?

My musing this day skirts about the subject of our person, my person. Can I spend copious quantities of time with myself and not go insane listening to the muse within? How many people refuse or are unable to spend days, weeks, and months by themselves? What is the difference between a people person and a recluse? The answer to these questions may be far more simple than you think.

The quality within. How many individuals are *self defined* by others, their reactions and / or stature in their family unit, work place, or civic organizations? All too often people become swept away in the rip tide of what others perceive them to be rather than who they are. A man is only superficially defined by titles, reactions or perceptions.

But how can one know who and what they truly are you ask? The litmus test of a person's ability to know themselves is to spend quality time alone with only their own thoughts for company. It is only when an individual is absent from the confines, constraints and contradictions of others can they realize who they really are. When alone do their thoughts free flow or stagnate? Does motivation keep them ever busy or do they become sloth-like inert matter? The true test of who and what you are can not be gained by looking into the mirror others hold up for us to see our reflection in but in the reality of one's time with self.

It is only when we find our true self that can we begin to grow into the person we desire to be. True folly is not changing into what we want to be but rather changing what we are not into something we cannot fathom.

Your adventure...

The world moves forward and so do we. We have little choice in the matter really. The key I would think to successful navigation of this forward motion is nothing more than keeping an eye turned to the future all the while understanding exactly where you are at any given moment. Life can be a bore, an adventure or complete hell depending on where you choose to look. If you chose to look to the past and muddle about the present odds are you live one boring life. If you live in the past your world is hell because you do

not see what is going to happen to you due to lack of current or future perspective. If you mark the chart with both present and future positions you will find that your life becomes an adventure that you have always dreamed of!

Time.

As the *Quest* gently glides along the calm crystal clear blue waters I grin at no one in particular. The Crew works the line and sail with precision grace and *Destiny's Quest* responds with like perfection as she carries us onward and forward into the unknown. With perfect sail and confident crew you can venture forth into the unknown with only the excitement of a child to fuel your imagination.

Life is far too short to stand about the stern looking back the way you have come. For the way you have been shall become crystal clear within the minds eye in its own good time. Life's ventures and mysteries are often so incredibly deep and extreme when one is in the throws of it. It would seem to us at the time that our world is skewed in some fashion so as to not allow us to view the whole if it. Or perhaps we are only able to assimilate a certain amount of stimuli at a single time. Our threshold reached we cannot absorb more data until a later date when our mind becomes accustomed to the current information. There are of course many possibilities to this scenario.

The crux of the matter is that *time* will make all crystal clear no matter the situation or the stimuli. Time affords us a variety of information that can be gently reduced to core truths. This expanse of instance affords the mind to peel away the irrelevant like peeling way the layers of an onion. Once attained these core truths are then pondered upon at our leisure. After an unspecified period our psyche accepts what truly was. No matter if the mind does this consciously or unconsciously it does in fact carry out this operation with utmost precision.

Mental musings plus time often equal reality (what actually was). Some think time to be their bane. I find time to be my friend, mentor and motivation in many things. Often the past and present can afford us a future lesson that will bestow upon us great understanding.

Dreams...

Hold your dreams close and never let them go. All too often we become disillusioned by day-to-day drudgery and give up our inner most desires, our dreams. Our dreams are not just inner musings that are nothing more than wishful fantasy. Our dreams stem from the core of our psyche. This inner desire is the foundation of our central motivation. Have you ever met a person who has so much motivation that you damn near want to pitch them over the side? If you watch and listen to that person you will find that the core of their energy comes from holding their dreams close and continually harboring

a belief that one day they will attain their innermost desires! True inner motivation comes from a journey of self on a mission.

If an individual was to continually repress their dreams or innermost desires you will see that very soon they lose their inner motivation and begin to sail with no navigational charts in hand! As children our minds are filled with unlimited possibilities. As we grow older our experiences and achievements afford us only a limited view of what is truly possible. We begin to set aside dreams and aspirations as unattainable or impossible to achieve though some rational and logical rationale we dredge up. It is then that we no longer feel the inner motivation and desire to...

Sail on... sail on!!!!

Today's Motivational thought:

Choose your friends carefully. A negative attitude can change *you* little by little without your knowledge.

Preset protocol...

This day I sit in my cabin and stare out the portal. The *Destiny's Quest* moves ever forward and I continually contemplate the future. A forward thinking forward moving experience one could say. The sky is cloud covered this day. My mind takes a short detour to wonder if we will sail into a squall in short order. It matters not, the crew can handle anything that happens. They are the best in the fleet.

I have come to realize that no matter how it boils down, we stand alone to make our own decisions. An individual may be surrounded by copious family, multitudes of friends and even a few lovers but the reality of the situation is that we stand alone in making a life's decision. It has taken me years of standing alone and making my own decisions to realize this small fact!

It has occurred to me that I often silently look at the actions of others to better understand my own position within a given situation. There is often an unexplainable overbearing compulsion to speak to others about some decision we face. We look to other resources such as tomes, scrolls, or video to assist us in our decision making process. Our mind requires a certain amount of data prior to its ability to make a decision. Whether we do this consciously or unconsciously matters not, we still do it. For some reason we must gather data and then assimilate the information along with other stimuli in order to make our decision.

It is most difficult when a "link" in this process is unattainable and must be skipped. There are times when we must forge ahead all the while making a decision while not gently progressing the step by mental preset procedure. However we are able to make a variety of decisions on the 'fly' so to speak. Knowing full well we have no real logical sequence of events to quantify our decision. This ability is what affords us great capability and should not be overlooked as an attribute.

All too often we know the answer to our dilemma. We however force our minds, bodies and life into a situation because we must follow some preconceived procedure. When in reality we can make the exact same decision within the first seconds after the quandary arose. I find the human psyche and human behavior amazing when it comes to this capability. We can access, assimilate and accept a given challenge and know how we must react within seconds of its arrival.

There are times when a rogue gets all caught up in the protocol, procedure and pretext of the step by step mental guidelines that we all place upon ourselves that cause more grief and aggravation than should be necessary. How many times have you labored through this process to come to the exact same conclusion that you came to only milliseconds after your initial exposure to the situation? I would bet quite a few. Therefore I would suggest that one become more at ease with their initial response. All too often we disregard our “intuition” when it seems that time after time our intuition matches the long drawn out process we choose to follow in its stead. How long will it take for a mate to realize that no matter how it boils down we stand alone to make our own decisions, and our first instinct about a situation is usually the correct one?

Today's Motivation:

There is no honor in poverty

Understanding the reality...

Some people amuse me. Since when has it become fashionable to sit in judgment so as to be able to ‘forgive’ someone? I just don’t get it. As of late I have heard more than a few people make the statement that they have forgiven someone for some perceived personal infraction against them. Who in Neptune’s name do these people think they are? Have a few in the human race grown so arrogant so as to think themselves able to forgive the infractions or sins of their peers?

So what actually happens when this individual sees fit to forgive some poor sod? Does this forgiveness enable them entrance into Valhalla? Heaven? Does it enable them to gain Enlightenment? Will this forgiveness allow them rebirth as some higher life form? Might they attain demi-godhood through this most grand gesture? Can one pass go and collect an extra two hundred dollars while playing the game of monopoly for the rest of their life because they have been ‘forgiven’ by this most holy and perfect Homosapien? Exactly what does your forgiveness grant this so most fortunate individual?

I have read only a few pages of text on religious doctrine and dogma but I cannot seem to remember any of the primary directives as to express to its practitioners to be so arrogant as to “forgive those who...” {Except the Catholic Church who does enable one prayer prior to the sacrament of communion that states in part, “... and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us...” But this is not part of the *primary* doctrine of the Catholic Church. See the Ten Commandments. } I can think of no religion that enables a follower the elevation of stature so grand as to allow them to

forgive individuals of their sins on a daily basis! {The Catholic Church and its splinter factions who practice the sacrament of confession allow the priest to act as a medium between God and man. And therefore the priest, in theory, only asks God to forgive the repenting soul and does not actually forgive the soul via their hand.} Have I missed some faith that grants their followers a form of demi-godhood or godhood that affords them the ability to pass judgment and forgive other's trespasses at will?

I could have sworn that most religions teach compassion, humility and the 'turn the other cheek' mentality. Have I missed a major lesson in my studies? Can someone direct me to the religion that allows me to sit on a high horse and absolve passers by of both real and perceived infractions?

To those individuals that come to believe that they can forgive others; I make this observation. Could it be that you have only come to accept the action or infraction against your holy and above reproach self? Perhaps you have come to understand the reason behind their actions? Might you be using the word 'forgiveness' in instead of the term understanding? I cannot imagine a human being so arrogant, so self-serving, so self-righteous as to think themselves able to forgive another. May I suggest that prior to using the term forgive or forgiveness that you think of what you are truly attempting to express. Take the time to reflect upon your personal beliefs and practices, then convey your thoughts in a manner that directly reflect your true meaning.

To state that you forgive someone only sets you up on a very high pedestal (of godhood or demi-godhood) that affords an irresistible target for someone like myself to knock off. Can you think of yourself as so above the rest of the human race as to be able to forgive? If so what does this action really do for the 'forgiven' individual?

Should I be so bold as to suggest that a true rogue might want to express themselves in a rational logical and humble manner while they sail on through life? Arrogance of the mind is true folly for the spirit.

With arms wide open...

We cruise through life with a set of given parameters that we attain via our experiences. These parameters or boundaries are flexible and yet at times they seem as stable as granite. I can assure you however that these self-induced limitations are very mobile. From personal experience I can tell you that life is simply what we choose it to be. We place limitations, boundaries and parameters upon ourselves through our actions and perceptions of the world around us.

There is a way to shift the perceptions of our world by modifying our actions so as to afford new opportunities and learning experiences. This shift may occur via physical movement, psychological movement or intellectual movement. Either, all or a combination of these actions may well change your self-induced limitations. It is through experiences that we are able to attain a new grasp upon our world. This knowledge then allows us the ability to move in a new and unique direction to us. A once steadfast and immobile boundary now becomes nothing more than a wave that carries us into a new sea of opportunity.

Life is a series of physical movement, psychological movement and intellectual movement. Use these movements to position yourself were you need to be as you sail these waters we call life.

Surrender but never...

Each day that we sail grants us yet another day of possibilities. The ocean we sail is expansive enough for us to make a myriad of choices and still end up at the same destination at the end of the cruise. Or fate is our own no matter how much we want to believe differently. Call it free will or choice it matters not. As sailors we ultimately navigate to where we want to be.

Being we are our own best navigators. For only we know our own true agenda. Let not the visions and plans of others divert you from the path you seek. Sell not your soul for false hope crew. Stand fast in your beliefs, ideas, and your personal goals. For there is only thing that will keep you alive and that is holding close your dreams and aspirations. It is these inner most desires that fuel your motivation.

The key, the way to ensure your own success is summed in one simple sentence. As a prelude, it is true that we must conform or be cast out. We must walk a certain path that affords us dignity, respect and success afforded us by our peers. Life on a deserted island is not much fun. What must be done is easy to say... and yet quite the challenge in the main stream of daily life.

The way to ensure your own success is to surrender but never give yourself away.

Trust *the* one...

It has taken my brine encrusted mind years to assimilate one simple concept. This idea has eluded me time and again like a merchant schooner in the mists. Even now the idea slips away as though it is some phantasmal force. For two days and nights this marvel has flitted about the parameters of my mind and yet, I cannot grasp this musing in its entirety. Like grape shot through canvas the only sign of its passing is a gaping whole where *something* used to be.

What I have come to know over this past year has been known by many over the generations. Both wise and knowledgeable have secured this concept far quicker than I. And yet, in some odd way I feel that I have known this ideal all my life. I just had not acknowledged its validity. To know it and yet not fully grasp the concept seems to ever be within my scope!

What I have learned over the past year is simple. Trust only yourself. Three words that hold an entire cosmos of meaning. What I feel and seem to understand now is that no one will ever hold my dreams, beliefs, aspirations, and motivations as close as I do. As a corsair I cannot expect that an individual will ever hold the same hopes, dreams and goals

in tandem with I. There are not parallel lives. In the broad view of life each of us hold a unique mindset that affords us a unique outlook upon the course we sail. No other looks upon our navigational charts and sees the exact same route as we do.

More importantly I would think is the fact that I cannot expect others in my life to fully comprehend my dreams, beliefs, aspirations, motivations, hopes, or goals. Further, I cannot expect them to begin to care considering the fact that they have a myriad of their own thoughts, values, inner motives and desires to accommodate. How can one human truly care about another when they have their own agenda? What person does not have a full docket? Can we actually be so bold as to think that another would stop living so as to accommodate us?!

Furthermore I would think is the fact that I cannot expect myself within the parameters of my life to fully comprehend another's dreams, beliefs, aspirations, motivations, hopes, or goals. Further, how can I care about *their* world considering the fact that I have a myriad of my own thoughts, values, inner motives and desires to accommodate? How can I, only one human, truly care about another when I have my own agenda? What person does not have a full docket? Can I actually be so deluded as to think that I would stop living so as to accommodate you?!

The fact is, only we can trust ourselves to hold what we desire as dear. Others may sail with us for a short time but the truth is that they have their own agenda. They ultimately sail their own course no matter how desperately we desire differently. Those who may sail at our side still sail a completely different course as we do.

Only we can hold our mysteries close. For that is all our dreams and ambitions will ever be to another. Only we can foster, nourish and hold close what we cherish. We can never trust another to hold something that is a mystery to them close and dear. Only we can be true to our self. Therefore it must follow; To thine own self be true and trust only you.

Within the abstract...

Ever notice some mates enjoy the specifics of a given circumstance? They revel within the details of a situation and become enthralled inside the particulars. No detail is too small to be overlooked. Details are the polish upon the ships bell or the fresh coat of paint upon her figurehead. Specifics are what turn a concept into a plan.

I find that it is all too easy to get caught up in these bits of detail and become lost within the specifics. More often than not a mate will become so caught up in the particulars and lose sight of the overall quest. I have watched more than one mate get so frustrated that a single detail not work that they feel the entire quest derailed. It's hard to see the ocean through the water at times. How often have I been guilty of feeling as though I have failed to meet some preset goal because a few of the details did not pan out? I had in fact well surpassed the original goal but because a few of the details did not work as I expected I felt as though I was cheated out of perfection.

All too often we get caught up in the figurative. I would much rather deal within the realm of the abstract. Not that certain details can be overlooked mind thee. A sailing

ship with no sails is most frustrating. However, I would much rather keep the big picture in mind while sailing through life than being bogged down within the insanity of every day life. The frustrating hourly mechanics of life is enough to make just about any person loose what mind they have left. All to often I become so entrenched in the bilges of the *Destiny's Quest* that I forget the crow's nest exists!

Within the abstract
Your destiny is clear
Your world is enabled
Your place is assured
Within the concrete
Your destiny is unknown
Your world is disabled
Your place is uncertain

Within the abstract
The view is fine

Treasure Chest Eight

Rogues rules...

The sun rises and with it a new canvas. Each new day is a beginning. A sailor can have a fresh start all over again if he so chooses. In the days of old it was nothing for a mate or a group of mates to leave their ship and go ashore or sign on to another ship. There was little loyalty to the owner or the Captain. In the days when the Pirates reigned supreme the Captain had supreme authority during battle. All other times the ship was run as a democracy! Even rogues knew a good thing when they saw it.

That freedom, that ebb and flow of life afforded them a choice each and every moment of their lives. You mates, have the exact same choice. Having the freedom to start fresh in a moments notice has become commonplace. Do not get caught in the mindset that you are marooned in a certain location and have no options. This is simply not the case.

Open your eyes, open your ears, and open your mind. Take a long look around and begin to think upon all of the options you do have. Then, like the buccaneers before you, take that chance and ...

Sail on... sail on!!!

Priority 1...

I rarely if ever go back and revisit past ramblings of my own. But there are times that I just have to reach back, grab a passage from a past Scroll and pull it forward into the current days fray. Today is such a day! Let me further elaborate, in the post entitled "Rogues rules..." I made the closing argument as follows, "Open your eyes, open your ears, and open your mind. Take a long look around and begin to think upon all of the options you do have. Then like the buccaneers before you take that chance and ... Sail on... sail on!!!"

A visitor made a statement about the entry that has rolled about my skull since the very moment I read it. "Sometimes the options hurt others. And they can't be envisioned." I am sure that this visitor had no idea that she would throw me into a mental tizzy of sorts with her simple words!

Her words struck home, or at least brought up memories from past voyages. What I realized after my initial confusion was that I used to think just that exact same way. I was trained, taught and forced to put everyone else first no matter the personal cost to myself. Later in life I realized that nice guys finish last for a reason. Nice guys are too worried about helping others win the race to take the prize themselves.

In general I cannot agree with her statement *now*. (Mind thee that at one time in my life I would have fought you to the death in defense of her statement) What I was **not** taught as a child or young adult was that *my life was my own*. Not having this crucial

piece of information forced my life into a very specific lifestyle and pattern. I also had not come to the realization that if I don't take care of me I sure can't take care of you! In the daily battle known as life I also learned that there are survivors and there are casualties. It did not take me long when living on the streets to figure out that being a casualty was not an option. Later life experiences also helped galvanize the fact that if I was going to be who I wanted to be I had to make certain decisions that would not be popular with certain individuals in my life.

And herein lies the crux of my current mindset. Yes shipmate, options can sometimes hurt others. But we must ask if it is not better to upset the boat and crew slightly than to destroy our own life's goals and desires. Should we not ask what is the personal cost to yourself rather than others if we do not follow a specific course of action? Is it better to lose *who we are* than to "hurt" another? Life is full of let downs and frustrations. To sail about trying desperately not to upset that balance is just impossible, improbable and illogical.

As a very wise woman once said, "Love is not passive." Nor can life be! All too often we so fear tipping the boat. We fear that we will lose who and what we are. We become a counter balance to others motions on the boat rather than get wet taking a header into the brine! There is a time and place for every action. All too often we succumb to the idea that we must be the counter-balance to a world gone mad. All the while we look at those who live life to the fullest and with what seems wild abandon in awe and jealously.

My life is my own. I must be who I desire and the type of rogue I need to be for me. I must open my eyes, open my ears, and open my mind. I must take a long look around and begin to think upon all of the options I have. Then like the buccaneers before me take that chance no matter what others think or feel I must Sail on... sail on!!!"

Carpe Diem mates.

Misspoken doublespeak...

Question: If you could sail *anywhere*, where would you journey?

Answer:

I would sail to Ibiza. It is the party central of the world and I could be taken advantage by many willing women, and all of Europe is close by when Ive had enough. The island itself is also very beautiful and I could even have a second home there.

Posted 8/29/2002 at 8:41 am by DraigStudio

Dread Posts blog titled, "This place or that place..."

Draigs Rebuttal:

Aha! But see here mon capiton! When I say I want to sail to Ibiza, it is for several things.

I am not concerned with prosperity when I sail there. I want to sail towards inhibition, to contentment, to craziness, to happiness, to relaxation, my list goes on. YOU take my response to literally as well and dont delve deeper then just the name of the place.

Posted 8/30/2002 at 8:39 am by DraigStudio

Therefore the first mate might want us to conclude that the Answer = Rebuttal. And this is the basis of this blog. To coin a cliché, “What we have here is a failure to communicate!” The Bottom line here is that “I would sail to Ibiza.” Does not in any way equal, “I want to sail towards inhibition, to contentment, to craziness, to happiness, to relaxation, my list goes on.” Might our professor be implying that one cannot sail towards inhibition, to contentment, etc. if one does not first go to Ibiza. I think not.

Taking the two entries in context still does not give us equality. Damn the man, a complete and total failure to communicate exactly what was desired. This is far too common an occurrence in today’s better educated and better connected world. We have telephones, cell phones, snail mail, electronic mail, and express couriers to communicate with those we wish. The education level of the population in general has gone up over the years and still we cannot fully express exactly what we mean. Communication is a tricky game at best mates.

We have all been subject to the line, “But you said...” It is a common occurrence to have to clarify exactly what we mean in today’s world. Face-to-face relationships are falling off the gangplank like drunken sailors. We are destined to be misunderstood by the very direction of our society! That is why we, as sailors must take a little extra care in attempting to communicate exactly what we mean via this new form of communication. When one casts that message in a bottle to the sea we can do our part to make sure that if and when it is received that our message is truly understood!

Mean what you say and say what you mean!!!

Shortwave...

Each day we face a multitude of challenges. No matter our position or our attitude life has a way of tossing us a short wave once in a while. I can’t tell you the countless times while underway that the ever-constant motion of the ship would take a slightly different pitch and sailors would go askew. Seaman would lock their in-motion leg and stumble like an ally wino over a street curb. Petty officers just took the ‘short’ wave in stride and walked on with sea legs of iron.

All of your life you have faced a plethora of changes. You have continually adapted to the tides and the pitch and roll of the seas you sailed. One ocean is just like the next mates. Crew I know you can do it. No matter what comes along you can conquer it! You have sailed long and hard. Use that experience and what the old salts have imparted to you and no matter what...

Say it with me...

Sail on... sail on!!!!

Three options...

How mad do you have to be
too pick up a pile of
steaming shit and
throw it at the band?

Front man
Twisted Sister
Dee Snyder

The rogue's rules are rather simple really. A true corsair takes what he has learned from a variety of sources and utilizes them in their full capacity to help attain their goals. I have stated before that I believe that damn near everything (if not everything) is a business. Therefore I find business strategy a wonderful source of inspiration. Take the following points as an example;

- 1) Defend your options.
- 2) Never undervalue your assets.
- 3) Exploit fate.

Is it not amazing that we can take these three simple rules of business and harbor them close all the while gaining a valuable set of guidelines for life? The first, 'Defend your options', is so basic that it almost hurts. All too often a mate is quick to dismiss his potential alternatives. How often do we discount recourse prior to fully exploring and understanding its value to us?

The second, 'Never undervalue your assets' is all too often the case both in business and in life. Humanity has the uncanny ability to underestimate themselves and the assets they retain. It is hard to see strength or a quality as a valued asset but we must attempt to understand that our chattels do in fact have a fair market value that should never be underestimated.

The third and final canon is a complete no-brainer for any who sail the high seas. The exploitation of ones own fate is a logical destiny. You have the responsibility to make the most of your own good fortune.

These three points are the rogues' mantra. It is within these basics that we can begin a long prosperous journey as we sail through life! It is within these guidelines that we can create our entire future within the parameters of profit.

Outside the box...

I am off the coast at anchor and can smell fall in the air. The air is cool and the sky has moved from crisp blue to a light gray. The greens of the trees on shore seem to be a little more yellow and red now. Its time to

bring on stores and I nod to Boson to drop the long boats to pull into shore and acquire the needed items.

As I watch the scene unfold before me, five words seem to resound through the musty hallways of my mind, “Conform or be cast out.” Throughout the cyber world of Xanga one finds a myriad of entries asking why they cannot be accepted for whom and what they are. Even Crew have posted such queries to the masses and with what outcome?

Methinks that the bottom line is that people refuse to think outside of the box. If they thought outside the box their entire world would be in question. And Neptune knows that land lovers don't like to have their world moved about! Please note that I did not state that people cannot think outside the box but refuse to think outside the box. Humanity on average can't accept ideas outside of their cozy acceptable world.

A far older and more difficult concept to understand is the men are from Venus and women from Mars mentality. Our First Mate wrote a blog just a short bit ago asking why the hell woman say one thing but fully expect the exact opposite. Damn the man bro... Don't you know that you have to conform or be case out? You must be sensitive but show no emotion at certain times? You must be masculine but shave that face clean so as to look like a female or not get any until you get rid of that “thing”. I am sure that the crew has just shouted out many more of these lovely conformities that one must submit to.

A most lovely shipmate has recently been grilled by her most unique mother about whom she dates. This lovely lady must to conform to specific unspoken and very confusing rules. I am not sure as to whom she is allowed to date but if I were saddled with all of those do's and don'ts I would tell good old mom I was gay just to watch her have a heart attack. Damn the man I am an Evil bastard. But no! We must conform or be cast out...

You can't like your job. In no way can you think differently from the next person. You must play the ‘be like the Jones’s game. Feel free to be different but prepared to be cast out. If you are cast out, prepare to feel the reality of discrimination. Conform or be cast out. What ever you do don't think outside the box. Don't be different. You must conform to the current mindset. You must not be different in thought, mind, or dress. Don't be too friendly. Don't be too mean. Don't smile so much. Don't be happy. Don't be helpful. The rules of social engagement are enough to make this rogue's head spin.

Even in our personal relationships we must attempt to kowtow to certain spoken and unspoken rules of the game. Neptune help your sorry self if you think outside the box or can not understand the logic behind the stupidity. You are destined to sail life alone or at the very least misunderstood. This frustration and label all because you think ‘outside the box’.

Just remember that conformity is relative.

Just remember that being cast out is relative.

Silence...

It is among the unspoken, within the quiet, part of the nothing that I find what I seek. Within the stillness my goal often becomes clear. It is through the unspoken that I find acknowledgement. As I am surrounded by nothing I seem to better understand everything. The calm fosters the storm.

It is within the silence that I find a serenity that cannot be described. It is the silence that births understanding of sound.

Sail with me to all reaches of the Cosmos. Join the Crew and enjoy the ride as we...

Iceberg dead ahead!

Have you ever met an individual that is very special? So special that you are willing to go above and beyond? I am sure you have. We all have in one-way or the other. What happens when that certain someone, for whatever reason, stops communicating? We have all been there too. For reasons only Neptune can fathom this person just starts keeping their agenda, their needs, wants and desires inside their head. Sort of feels like trying to open the hatch of a locked rope locker without a key. You get nowhere fast.

The true question you must ask yourself is if the relationship is worth working at or should the situation be deep-sixed for more productive ventures? Let us say that you being the stalwart squid that you are decide to make a run of it and seize the opportunity to sally forth into uncharted waters. Well damn the man, are you not just the true privateer?

I might be inclined to suggest that patience, and diligence is the solution to the situation. Odds are the person has no idea they have blocked you out because they are concentrating on another subject, situation or circumstance. A wise mate would gently let them know that they have mis-navigated their current agenda only because they have left you outside of the ever so important charting process!

That aside, some mates fear that what they desire to say will be ill received by their shipmates. Pleasantries and manners aside it is a most unwise shipmate that does not bellow, "Iceberg dead ahead!" for fear of upsetting the helmsman. There are times that certain things must be said and for good reason. Don't be caught with locked knees on a rolling deck. Sailor, always know that a shipmate will lend a hand when, and if, you should loose your balance.

Vacuum...

It is very difficult for a sailor to live life within a vacuum. Odds are not a whole lot happens in a vacuum that will provide you with the stimuli you need to #1 live, #2 gain knowledge, and finally *experience*.

All too often a mate wants to jump ship and sit on the desert island because they are tired of “dealing”. Being a vacuum (desert island) is not really the way to learn, experience life and grow as a person. Part of being human, part of our very psyche thrives on new and unique stimuli. All too often we forget the real course we have charted only to be side tracked by sirens or those lovely mermaids.

We can enter a state of abstinence, grace or seclusion only to realize that what we really needed was to step into the life we already had. We stand at the helm and stare at the horizon only to see the line between the sky and water. We do not see the sky, nor do we see the water but the middle singular meeting of the two that only exists within our imagination.

It is most frustrating to live a life while holding certain aspects of our world at bay. Life is to be lived, tasted, enjoyed to the fullest all the while we continue to learn, grow and become a far better sailor than we ever imagined.

Roll with...

As the sun sets and the North wind slaps at the sails. The slap and pop of the canvas makes my blood race. The ocean is our world and the *Destiny's Quest* our home. As the masts creak and groan under the gentle push of the wind she jumps ahead as though alive and ready to run all out. But we all know that she is the *Destiny's Quest* and she is always ready to run full out in a moments notice.

Each day brings a myriad of events. These events are on various levels of import and multiple stages of development. The ever continuous flux of life and the ebb and flow of events in life are always changing. Like the tides and the wind, like the placement of the sun or moon in the sky, even the stars sweep across the sky at night in perpetual movement. Should the events in our lives be any different I ponder?

I think that our lives are so intertwined with the cosmos around us that we, like it, are in constant flux. Our lives, like the journey we sail are ever changing and ever in flux. New events, people, and situations are the plan of the day. We must, as good sailors let the deck roll and let our sea legs help us ride out the pitch and roll of the deck. Calm seas are fine but do become quite the bore after a while. A corsair must be ready for all possible seas. Just like our faithful ship, we must roll with the ebb and flow of the tides unfazed. To be like the *Quest* is to be on the Quest!

Treasure Chest Nine

Risk...

On this perfect morning I sit upon the bow and muse. An ever continuous stream of thoughts sails though my skull like a parade of her majesty's finest on line. Always pondering what will be and what will burst into reality like a paladin upon horse through the line of footmen I am. Moreover, I have noted that most mates are willing to dream, talk about, and plan their desires or even fantasies. A mate will dream about a fantasy in one million ways leaving no possibility unattended. They are more than able to talk about their desires in the minutest detail. Plans pour forth like fruit from a cornucopia. They have it all covered in more ways than can be imagined by another.

But then something takes the wind from their sails. For some reason they falter to a dead stop just at it comes time to take that crucial step. When their dreams, talk and plans culminate into reality they all of the sudden become *aware* that reaching this goal is possible. The moment they become *aware* the human psyche plays the devil's advocate and throws every unrealistic possibility and probability within the parameters of their reasoning.

Don't you just love how dolphin always 'race' the bow of the ship? Why do they play in the bow wake of a behemoth that they know that they can out run any day? Perhaps they are keeping in practice for the day they have to come into a conscious awareness than they must swim faster and further than they ever have before... I digress.

The best-laid plans have mental landmines and possibilities of failure all through them. It is called risk. Risk is how we measure the value of a certain object. If a mate walks into a seaside shop and purchases a necklace for his love, the risk and therefore the value is minimal. If by chance the mate had to come alongside, grapple one of Her Majesty's traders, draw pistol and sabre and *go get* a trinket of beauty for the love of his life... Well by Neptune, now the risk is just a tad higher and the value of the locket now may well be considered maximum.

And thus is life. Dreams, talk and plans are only worth their risk. If one has grandiose intentions but never acts upon them the risk is nil and therefore of no value. If however a shipmate dreams, talks, plans and then becomes *aware*, fights the demons of the psyche and makes the imagined reality...

This is a corsair who is willing to give this dream a value. Whether the venture is successful or not matters little. The sailor was willing to at least risk, all the while setting a value upon the dream they have held close. Without acting upon the dream it can never have any value whatsoever. There is little risk in musing.

Just as the thread ends I spot a sail off on the horizon. I call out to the helmsman to set an intercept course with this lovely prize as the final words of mine ring in my ears.

“There is little risk in musing.”

Perpetual or rechargeable...

This evening I sit in my cabin and feel the motion of the globe we call home. Have you ever felt it? I mean have you really ever closed your eyes and relaxed enough to actually *feel* the motion all around you? Can you feel your heart hammer within your chest like a jackhammer? Can you feel the motion of the earth below you? Have you ever reached out and felt the movement all around you in all directions? I would think not many have. So many are unable to sense what is truly about them. Locked in a stagnant world that drains them of their energy.

How many would believe that there is more energy all around them than they could ever assimilate in a lifetime? Who would believe that you can ever be drained by a situation or individual because all the energy you need to meet the challenge is at your beck and call. Some believe that the power comes from deep within to rise to assist a mate meet a new challenge. I do not disagree with them. A few believe that the energy you need is flowing all about you as though an invisible multicolored fog. Perhaps a few understand that energy flows about the globe like a huge magnetic grid that leave no surface untainted. There are many ideas, and just as many beliefs that would expand and expound on these possibilities.

It is here, within as well as without. Flowing around us as though we have been thrown into the brine we are totally and completely immersed. And yet some shipmates have no idea this resource exists. They sail through life oblivious to the obvious. And yet, they know it is there as sure as the sun rises.

~ ~ ~

Within the movement is energy. Within the energy is power. Therefore it must follow that within movement is power.

~ ~ ~

Through your own movement you generate the energy that you require. I would venture to expand further and say that through your personal generation of energy you attract additional outside energies. Physics teaches us that magnets are energized and thus pull like kind to themselves and repel opposite energy. It also teaches us that for every action there is a reaction. (I personally do not believe it to be 'equal and opposite' so I do not continue on with the falsity.) Somewhere in your studies you stumbled across the fact that electrons, protons and neutrons are polarized and thus must by their very nature generate movement!

Is it so difficult then to understand that everything is in motion and that with that movement comes energy? Within the energy comes power and therefore it must follow that within movement comes power? If my mind can grasp this simplistic concept than I am sure that your mind has taken off with this idea already.

Need I close with the idea that as long as we move we are generating and gathering the energy all around us? I think not. Your sharp mind had already extrapolated the above data and came to the conclusion long before I came to this long-winded closure. It is within movement that we shall generate the energy that we desire to continue upon our Quest. It is with the energy that we will find the power to stay our journey.

I ask again, have you ever felt it? I mean have you really ever closed your eyes and relaxed enough to actually *feel* the motion all around you? Can you feel your heart

hammer within your chest like a jackhammer? Can you feel the motion of the earth below you? Have you ever reached out and felt the movement all around you in all directions?

This is dedicated to all those shipmates who never stop...

Sailor of life...

A sailor of life must at all times stand fast in his ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstance. How often have I written this upon the Imperial Dread Sea Scrolls? Shall I recount the ways? Pen with nostalgia? Wipe off the brine from the parchment and bring forth long lost scrolls from the archives of Dreads library of wit, wisdom and redundancy? I think not. Like the cosmos around us I would think that we should move forward into the future with a sincere desire to better ourselves, all the while leaving dead weight behind.

Forward motion, might forward motion be the absolute that I seek? Might forward motion be an absolute? If an object is in motion forward does this mean it is moving absolutely forward? Or perhaps moving forward absolutely? Absolutely moving forward? Could it be said that the only absolute is the movement of the cosmos around us? Might this be the absolute that I seek? Could this be the single constant that eludes me so diligently?

If there is one thing that I regret, it is having the inability to fully contemplate those topics that I truly desire to understand. In a world of whirlwind motion, packed schedules, continual change and ever shifting itinerary it is almost impossible for me to find a free hour to muse upon a single subject. Or perhaps it is just that I lack the mental capability to fully grasp this most simple concept. I know not the reason behind this inability to muse but it is the singlemost regret in my life. Nonetheless I must move forward into the fray!

Get my messy life straightened out...

An incredible shipmate sent me a message in a bottle this day. As I popped the cork and unrolled the parchment I knew from the last line that it was a special piece of paper. Now some of you may be wondering why I read the last line of a note first. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. All I can tell you is that its just one of those 'Dread things'.

Within the confines of this correspondence this stalwartly shipmate made the comment that it was time to "Get my messy life straightened out." After reading the work several times I came to the stark and logical conclusion that this Rogue may have fallen prey to a common misconception. Allow me to elaborate.

In pondering the overall concept of “messy life” I was unable to place any direct parameters on this condition. Does this mean that the shipmate has spilled their rum on their jerkin while navigating the rolling deck of the *Destiny's Quest*? Or perhaps this shipmate's life's path has not followed some predetermined navigation? What is the prerequisite for dubbing your life ‘messy’? What criteria do you have to meet so that you may join the exclusive ‘messy life’ club?

I would think that owning and operating ‘messy life’ is relative. What is messy to you might very well be neatness personified for another. I have yet to find a resource that affords me some celestial step-by-step guide to my life. Nor have I met an individual that claimed to have a perfectly neat life. But I can provide you with barge loads of sailors that will swear an oath that their lives are a mess!

I prefer to look at it in a somewhat different manner. The word messy implies, untidy, muddled, chaotic, unordered, disorganized, confused and or cluttered. Each time we are challenged with an untidy situation we are offered an opportunity. When things are muddle and chaotic we are given a chance. When disorganization and confusion reign we are afforded an opening. When clutter overwhelms we are presented with prospect.

We as sailors of life already know that there is no such thing as a problem. Having our sea legs we know that there are no problems only challenges that offer opportunity. So given this truth we must then conclude that a messy life offers us a multitude of possibility! Therefore in super secret Sailor code, “Get my messy life straightened out” really means, “Meet the challenges that my life is offering me.”

So to the crew and this lovely shipmate I say, rise up to meet the challenges that your life has to offer. Fear not the darkness. There is no right or wrong path there is only forward navigation!

Purposeful movement...

Over time all things become crystal clear. The problem with that statement is that often we are not willing or able to wait extended periods. As sailors of life we are used to being on the move. Time is measured by ports of call or in some physical measure. Rarely does a mate set aside time in any given situation. Time is after all just about everything.

So much import is given to time that an entire race steps in time to it. Time is the up front and personal reminder of what must be done. Mariners of long ago used to continuously flip an hourglass in order to keep some measure of the passing of time. Today time is measured to the nanosecond.

And yet, when one has the audacity to ponder its true implications, time is nothing. Setting aside the obvious reasons for this observation I would like to ponder the subject of time within relationships. All too often we become entangled in the net of time as it is relative to our perceived goals. From the first moment we enter a relationship we are barraged with social morays and standards that are mind numbing. One can only kiss after the second date, engagement must last a year and no longer, children must come

between the second and fourth year of marriage. The list of time sensitive milestones placed on humanity by itself is incomprehensible.

We are each unique and individual. Our internal clocks do not have to be in sync with the societal norm timetable. In sailing through the waters we call life there are those that choose to surf, operate a racing boat at full throttle and those who prefer the mast and sail. Always remember that time and movement are relative. What is fast to one shipmate may be doggedly slow to another.

It is through time that all things become crystal clear. And it is purposeful movement through time that affords us the clarity to see all things.

Challenge questions...

A seaman recruit named Anthony Robbins released a salvo of work in the early to middle nineteen ninety's. Some of the titles were *Unlimited power*, *Awaken the Giant Within* and *Giant Steps*. Are his works astounding revelations of motivational wit? No. As a matter of fact there is not a new idea among all the printed pages! Is the text so inspiringly written that it motivated you to read page after page loosing track of time or sleep? No. The works are in all honestly barely readable. They do not flow nor are the chapters linked with bridging concepts.

Then why pray tell am I bringing up this topic? Because the man also compiled a short work titled, *Notes from a Friend*. This brief is not well written but it is concise and does move a bit better. While combing the pages of this work I found what I consider a diamond in the very rough. Remember that when we read or listen to a concept it may not be exactly correct for us unless we modify it to suit our needs. We as a race have come to desire that our answers be spelled out for us in crystal clarity and Technicolor. Allow me to afford you an excerpt from *Notes from a Friend*, Page 57.

The Problem-Solving Questions

1. What is great about my problem?
2. What is not perfect yet?
3. What am I willing to do to make it the way I want?
4. What am I willing to no longer do in order to make it the way I want it?
5. How can I enjoy the process while I do what is necessary to make it the way I want it?

This man made millions of dollars on churning out unpolished motivational suggestions such as this. It is, for the most part a diamond in the rough. The first change I would make is to rephrase so as to eliminate any use of negatives. There is very little use in looking to become positively motivated with a negative statement. Second I would look to clarify his hazy suggestions into a crisp sharp concept that is understandable and complete. Thus, I suggest the following using Anthony Robbins problem-solving questions as inspiration.

The Challenge Meeting Questions.

1. What positive characteristics does this challenge pose for me?
2. What purposeful movement will lead to me meeting this challenge?
3. Am I willing to invest time and motivation into this challenge?
4. What changes must be made in order to rise to meet this challenge?
5. How do I stay motivated and happy while moving toward meeting this worthy challenge?

As you have noted the two banks of questions seem completely different at first glance. However, upon contemplation the second series I have named 'The Challenge Meeting Questions' seem to ask the same questions just in a positive and less daunting manner. First and foremost we know that we face no problems, only challenges. The second difference is that I wrote the series without the use of negatives. And finally they flow a tad better than the original set.

The only two differences between these sets of very useful motivational tools are that millions of people paid millions of dollars for Anthony Robbins' set of questions.

Sail on... sail on!!!

Failure is not an option...

As I worked about ship this morning I came to a conclusion to an ideal that I had been allowing to bounce around my skull for months on end. There is nothing like a good solid day of work to clear the psyche and purge the blockages of the mind. In my world physical labor often leads to mental revelations of such astounding proportion that it is almost impossible for my intellect to comprehend. What might this mental disclosure be you ask? Seven simple words have opened my eyes wider than they have been in a very long time. It is going to cost you dearly but I will share this simplicity with you so that you, as Crew, may better understand the Quest you sail.

There is no such thing as failure.

There you have it. (Did you count the number of words?) It has taken me a substantial amount of years and uninhibited mental capacity to come to this mind-numbing conclusion. I could not of course transcribe all of the details of the musing in one blog. Nor could I possibly remember all the data, life experiences, logic and rationalizations that have lead me to this seven-word sentence of empowerment. For those shipmates who have regularly read *The Imperial Dread Sea Scrolls* you may well have noted the path to this conclusion via the evolution of each web log entry over the years. Therefore those Crew who have steadfastly read may well understand far better than a new/occasional reader the complexity and evolution of this simplistic sentence of empowerment.

Failure is not an option. It never has been and never will be in my life.

For all intents and purposes 'failure' is nothing more than a 'threat' that has been instilled in us by authority figures. Questions like, "Do you want to be a failure?" Or statements such as "You are *going* to go nowhere with that attitude." Perhaps even, "You are such a disappointment." have conditioned us. We are often forced to believe that we are failures by the judgments and comments of others. And yet, when the keel meets the brine the fact of the matter is that all that really matters is that we sail our own true course and damn the expectations of others. Failure exists only in the mind of those who choose to judge. Failure does not exist in the minds of those who are highly motivated individuals with the understanding that failure is not an option.

How can you as a shipmate change your outlook to that of a highly motivated individual that is self-empowering? First you must understand that failure is a 'four letter word'. Strike it from the ship's log and drop it from your personal vocabulary. It is through action that life begins to move in the desired direction. In deleting this four letter word from your vocabulary it will so leave the parameters of ones mind. It is then that you will truly come to bear the full understanding of how powerful you can truly be. Close your eyes just for a moment and ponder a world with no such thing as failure.

As you can imagine, the world, your world, has just become a very different place. If a shipmate strikes the f-word from their mind then there is nothing that they cannot do. What you ask of the doom and gloom sector of your life that will continually bring up the f-word? Use a very simple and basic tactic that is sure to work and doubly sure to help them see the error of their ways. First ask the individual to explain to you in detail exactly how you 'failed'. With complete sincerity politely ask questions about their observations. Ask as many pointed close-ended questions that you can think of. Then at the end of the conversation query the individual as to if you actually 'failed' or if perhaps you just did not live up to their personal expectations. If this does not stymie their failure theory continue further by asking if they felt that that they provided one hundred percent support in all ways to help you achieve the goal that they had set for you. Odds are that second question will end the negativity and place the individual in the correct frame of mind.

In short, remember that if failure is not an option then it must follow that there is no such thing as failure.

Belief in self...

The bow cuts the white caps with little difficulty. The sails expertly cup the wind to help us move ever forward. Our sea legs allow us to walk the rolling deck with no difficulty. As we sail upon through this journey called life we are subject to various stimuli. High seas and clam waters grant us the ability to see the difference.

The events around us help to educate and build our beliefs. As we grow and throw ourselves further into the fray we may well forget the most basic of all beliefs. As the globe around us spins into the unknown cosmos, while world events are ever shifting and ever changing, as local dealings continue to be ever present, while events within our own clan seem to rarely slow, the mind does not have time to calm and focus. The amount of information we absorb a day is staggering. The amount of stimuli we are barraged with daily makes a broadside salvo from a man o' war look pathetic.

Everyday we are forced to accept mass amounts of new stimuli that wash over us like waves that break the bow in the North Atlantic in January. Cold harsh never-ending waves that assault us to the core and chill us to the bone. A myriad of news, events, duties, responsibilities and actions must be taken in and assimilated. Our mind works overtime in overdrive in an attempt to understand. All the while we question every single event against our beliefs, morals and standards in an attempt to evaluate them. Events and actions may change our outlook on life, our values or standards. Just as the cosmos is slave to change thus are we.

Throughout our life we are in a state of constant change and flux. Rarely are we afforded one single day with little or no change. Our values, morals, standards and beliefs are always in a state of flux. There however has to be one single belief that remains the unchanged cornerstone of your world. One belief that is so paramount that it must be the center of all. A single belief that is so important that if forgotten can destroy you. What might this all-encompassing ever-present belief be?

Quite simply it is: the belief in self.

A marlinspike in sand will move with the tide...

It was just a few days ago when I was sitting in the Galley chatting with a shipmate that a thought was planted within my endless sting of musings. It often takes days or even years for an idea or thought to percolate into a full-fledged dyed in the wool concept.

Often it is the simplest of statements that sends me into a contemplation process that inspires even greater thoughts. It is like attaining a piece of the puzzle that you have needed for a lifetime that has been ever so illusive.

The statement was made that the shipmate hated to make decisions. It was pointed out even further that the shipmate's life was directly affected in a non-positive way the difficulty was so great. After thinking upon the subject I realized that I have heard this exact same statement by various other shipmates over the years.

In part the word decision is defined as; a report of a conclusion, promptness and firmness in deciding. The idea of a decision is thus quite firm. I would venture to say it might even be considered final. It is here that I find the fatal flaw in the entire idea of using the concept of a decision or the making thereof.

Decisions are finality within an ever-changing world. As a human and as a society we continually assimilate new information and process it against what we know in order to understand the present and speculate into the future. This process is ongoing and

evermore. It seems rather ludicrous in a world and life that are in continual flux to create conclusions that are rigid. I can think of not one single aspect of the cosmos that is not in flux or dynamic. A marlinspike in sand will move when the tide rises and the waves move the sand around it. Creating concrete decisions in a symphony of motion may well be as useless as a marlinspike in sand.

Therefore I might suggest a different strategy to sail through life with. Formulate a flexible goal. We know from experience, science, philosophy and logic that we are part of a continual evolution. We also know that after we attain a specific goal we will instinctively seek yet another as we move through the change of our existence. Creating a goal that is flexible is the key to success.

Plan a strategy. The key is not to make decisions but to create a strategy so as to meet the flexible goal you have set in your continual effort toward self-achievement. The art of devising and employing plans or stratagems toward your goal is much more practical than drawing a line in the sand. If our cosmos is in flux, and we are in motion it only stands to reason that we should employ movement to maneuver through this unrest.

Do not fear manipulating your strategy to further your process toward your goal. Strategy is meant to be flexible and malleable. You must not worry about adjusting course or manner of reaching the next waypoint while continually moving forward. Strategy is meant to be modified to the circumstance.

Stand not as a mighty oak in the storm of life but as a willow. Oaks seem to make decisions while the willow plays out a variety of stratagem. There is nothing in our life that is final. Why should we get caught up in finality in a life of continual transformation? Formulate a flexible goal and then create various means to achieve the next ambition. You may just find that you achieve more than you ever thought possible as we...

Sail on... sail on!!!

Motion...

On this day the ship slowly inches forward. She prances high upon the waves as the surface of the ocean boils. This is out of character because the wind is oddly clam. Gently, almost tenderly she rolls with the waves and moves gently among the ever rolling liquid landscape of hills. Like a melodic symphony the ocean moves in ways that no algorithmic function can ever match. Liquid chaos. There is movement within movement and motion within motion. Current runs in one direction below the surface and the waves roll a different direction upon the surface. The tide pulls in yet a third direction and the bow of the *Quest* forces yet more currents. Waves softly lap the hull from all directions causing a push yet pull that seems to add to the symphony of movement around me.

Motion within motion. I find that motion is oddly calming, soothing to me as some long forgotten lullaby. Forever movement is my solace. It is within the continual flux that I find my peace. In a world gone mad it is within the confines of motion that I find tranquility.

I once penned within these scrolls that I have yet to find a constant. I mused that I had yet to find an ever-present absolute. And yet, as I mused upon the subject I began to look deeper and deeper into the microcosm of my perception of an absolute. I failed, for a moment to turn an eye to the macro of the possibility. Caught within my limited ability to reason, consumed within the inability to expand I became perplexed thus juxtaposed within my own psyche.

It was only when I stood in the crow's nest and peered at the horizon did the possibility begin to form within the cogs of my brain. My mind thus moved beyond the horizon to ponder what I could not see. Then as if within some sort of fever caused by illness my mind exploded into what I could not know. Beyond the parameters of the confines of my world my mind I began to expand into the unknown. Into the space around the rock I call home sailed my thoughts. It was then that the possibility became clear to my fogged mind.

The one constant that I may have found is the absolute of movement. The unconditional movement of our cosmos may be the absolute that I seek. Could it be possible that motion is the absolute that exists? Might continual movement be the only constant within the confines of our cosmos and beyond? Could the single absolute that exists read: Everything is in motion all the time?

Treasure Chest Ten

Oaken map...

As I sit upon the Captain's chair in my cabin I catch the sent of fresh salt air through the open portal. Music from either the galley or topside filters down through the bulkheads and touches my ears. I close my eyes and let my head gently fall back. I can see only the spinning quasi darkness behind my lids. I feel my chest rise and fall as my breathing marches ever forward. Gently I listen and try to hear the movement of the crew about the deck as they move about in their travels. Today, I hear nothing. Only the creak and grown of the *Quest* as she gently rocks with the waves. I am alone with my thoughts.

I have noted that life is a series of chaotic moments linked by various expanses of times of uncertainty, confusion and continually punctuated inability to comprehend. This is not just part of our existence but in large part the entirety of our existence. From the moment we are born we know not the moment of our death. We know not our course in this life. We have no real idea as to where the decisions of others will take us. Life is rather like sailing the currents without sail on a raft hoping to reach an uncharted destination.

Each day we are assaulted with a salvo of broad unique decisions made by others that will directly affect us and yet we are never consulted prior to the decision being made. We stand only to catch a mind full of various stimuli all at once it seems. Confusion is caused by a sensory overload of new stimuli. Our minds are continually gathering, compiling, filing and assimilating data. Yet, it rarely occurs that we are able to manage to predict the future or know what new stimuli wait just over the horizon to stagger our mind. All the musing in the world never quite explains why something that should happen does not or an action that should not have occurred has raised its ugly head into the murk of reality.

We are no doubt creatures of chaos. Our lives, our environment and our nature are chaotic at best and insane at worst. When was the last time anything in my life went as charted I ponder. The answer is simple and straightforward. It slams to the forefront of my mind with absolutely no effort. Never. We are disordered sailors sailing the cosmos of chaos. Our best-laid plans fall useless by the wayside as we sail forward. Our efforts, when we were young had a mindful purpose that lead directly to our ideals that were struck in granite. Our efforts later turned to a finite balancing act between ideals and survival. Then somewhere along the journey the granite ideals turned liquid and it became noble just to survive.

We may brood over the fact that our course is ever changing. But like the cosmos around us we are in a state of flux. It is of little use to stand still mentally or physically within perpetual motion. So it is with great understanding that I wipe the charts and maps from the top of my desk. I stand, placing my hand flat on the top pf the smooth oak. My eyes scan over the grain of the oak. It seems to be a good a map as any as we...

sail on... sail on!!!

Celebrate...

Steam gently rises from the surface of the amber liquid. The hot liquid slowly swirls softly long after the turbulence. The light spicy scent is almost nonexistent. I sit staring at the surface of the cup and wonder what it is about a cup of tea that will set the world right again for me. Over the centuries wine has been called the nectar of the gods. I ponder if perhaps they have overlooked one possibility.

Grasping the large bowl cup I bring the edge of the vessel to my lips. The lip of the cup is hot on my lower lip. I slowly inhale through my mouth and I taste the tea even before the liquid touches my tongue. The steam gives me a preview of the taste to come. The hot brown liquid touches my lips and the heat of it startles me. My tongue tingles and I take in only a few drops of the precious hot sustenance.

The tea flows on either side of my tongue and its flavor fills my mouth. It is a powerful yet subdued flavor. I close my eyes and enjoy the flavor lingering in my mouth as the warmth of the liquid gently slides down.

Tea is not like coffee for me. After the first sip of coffee I can't seem to taste it again. Tea for me is the exact opposite. I can enjoy the flavor of tea again and again with every consecutive sip. Each sip is like a new taste for me. If you pay attention and think upon it you might find that each sip from the mug or cup is completely different. As the liquid cools and as the tea continues to steep the flavor in the container is ever changing. Each sip is from a completely different cup of tea. Unless of course you take the bag or ball out early and do not allow the tea to continue to change its flavor for you.

The amber liquid is often the beginning of a day or the celebration of a day well lived. Taking a moment out of a day to celebrate nothing more than a moment for you is the key to inner peace. It might be a cup of tea or listening to a few notes of music that you enjoy. It might be a hot bath or a long shower. Perhaps a walk or just a few minutes of sitting alone to relax will help bring you closer to you.

Attempt to find celebration is the smallest of what you do. Find understanding and enjoyment in the simplest of actions and your life shall take on a whole new dimension. It is within the simplicity that we shall overcome.

Limbo-Stress...

As I watched the Crew on the white sand beach I noted an object floating in the water. It was being slowly pulled toward the *Destiny's Quest* by the outgoing tide. A corked bottle bobbed gently in the water. I watched it slowly make its way to within my grasp. At first I thought that the Crew had sent me a note requesting extended shore leave. After uncorking the green bottle and gently coaxing the parchment out of it I immediately realized that it was not what I had guessed.

It part the note indicated, "...right now I feel in limbo." From the context of the note I was not sure if the author meant that they were in a place or state of restraint or confinement, or perhaps the intermediate or transitional state that often feels like a sailor lost at sea. I marveled at the parchment and the words upon it. Limbo seemed to me to be

a place where all rogues, corsairs, seadogs and buccaneers purposely stay. My mind flitted from possibility to probability in attempting to ascertain exactly why living in a state of limbo was derogatory in any way. Limbo seemed like a great place to make a clean start. Limbo definitely offered a multitude of directions to sail from.

Transitional states are often mistaken as a bad place. But if one takes a moment to ponder the obvious it does not seem such a dastardly place. Limbo implies that you have arrived from a specific journey only to be in the process of attaining your bearings in order to set sail again. There is not a ship in the fleet that can stay afloat forever. Ports of call for replenishment, repair and R&R are a matter of course. Why would it be any different for a sailor of life?

The author then goes on to state that because of his standing in limbo they are placing stress upon himself. I say they are placing stress on himself only because I believe that no one can place stress upon your person except you. If you feel for some reason that you are not comfortable dockside there may be good reason. All too often a shipmate can become comfortable and complacent in the 'replenishment mode'. Neptune, some sailors spend their life dockside rehashing journeys of days past rather than making new journeys! Overhaul will always be part of the life of a sailing ship and thus it will be to yours as well.

If you take a moment to open the ship's log and survey where you have been it may well give you new insight as to where you want to go. There is no harm in scribing potential goals on a scroll. Look at the treasure and chart the course to attaining it. Timelines can be rough but should be relatively conservative and never outlandish. Pushing too hard will cause a sailor to burn out and frustration. A schedule too lax affords the mate time to wander off course and never make it to the prize. A conservative 'guesstimate' and the knowledge that all plans are a work in progress will grant you the opportunity to set sail as well as become further motivated by seeing measurable results.

The note crumbles to dust as a strong breeze whips over the deck. Perhaps it realized that it had stayed in the confines of the bottle long enough and with the help of a rogue was set free to sail the four winds... My eyes fall upon the Crew taking a breather in the beach and I know that sometimes all it takes is something as small as the removal of a cork to let us...

Sail on... sail on!!!

Our own making...

As the sun begins to touch the treetops I see that the crew has spread out over the beach now. Small groups and singles dot the white sand now shadow streaked. I also note that a few shipmates have moved inland for more interesting entertainment. Ever wandering they are. The Crew of the Destiny's Quest is continually searching, exploring, constantly moving forward into the mists of the unknown. Ever pushing the present into the future. Seeking what is unknown. Searching for the hidden and moving ever forward in their Quest for knowledge.

Here I sit upon the Captain's chair staring out the aft windows of my cabin. The ship free floats gently guided by a soft warm evening breeze. She can only drift as far as the anchor allows her. Often I realize that she does not mind dragging the anchor in order to attain a better vantage point. She has a mind of her own methinks. Island scent wafts through the open portals. The gentle rocking relaxes me and calms my thoughts. The ocean has a way of doing that you know. She can relax you in just a matter of minutes at times. She just cradles you and rocks you gently until you are right as rain again. My mistress she is. Even in the worst storm as I walk on the bulkheads I have no fear, only a sense of belonging.

My mind turns to the Crew on the liberty and the note that turned to dust before my eyes. Motivation, limbo and stress are the current topics of musing. What, if anything might they have in common? In what way do they contrast or complement each other? Motivation comes from within, perhaps produced by the gallbladder and exasperated by the tonsils. Or might it be a mental masquerade of inspiration? Either way it is as elusive as the snipe and as bold as a leopard at night.

Limbo is a state of self-choosing. A shipmate must mentally choose to be in a state of limbo rather than another alternate state of mind. Limbo is nothing more or nothing less of our own personal choosing. It is a sabbatical from the perceived insanity of the day trials and tribulations.

Stress is a prime motivator. Stressed? Don't want to be? Get off the rail and take charge and carry out the plan of the day. Bada-bing, no more stress. Stress is eliminated with action. I would go so far as to hypothesize that stress could be alleviated with *perceived* action. But that is a tangent for another day.

As I sit here in my now darkened chamber I see the glow of the just gone sun over the horizon. The deep red and lusty purples that splash across the night sky make me think of a queen I once knew. It also reminds me that what was today is gone and what will be tomorrow will be of our own making.

Know and understand...

I sit upon the forecastle. The ship gently rocks and a strong breeze bats at the canvas sails. Here I sit, tired yet energized, awake yet asleep. I know for a fact my mind and body are one. And somehow my conscious seems separated from my physical being. I am here, firmly placed, my backside upon the solid wood of the deck and yet I am removed. Displaced and separated. If I did not know better, I would believe that I was in some odd dream state. A feeling that I have only known during my slumber.

On this day, my mind is full of all I have done and seen, and yet I can feel the vast void that has yet to be filled. I reason, and in an odd way understand that I have knowledge, but so little that it seems almost laughable. Then, in the same instant I comprehend that I *know and understand* more than most will ever fathom. I can feel my mind reach out over the ship's deck and out over the waves of the ocean. It seeks, finds, assimilates, and yet is blind to what it touches.

As body sits and is gently rocked by Neptune's ripples. I know that I am unique and separate. And yet somehow I am part of the ship that carries me. I somehow feel as though I am part of the waves and the gulls that soar above the white caps. Suddenly I feel akin to the flying fish and the great ones who silently lurk below the surface. I, in turn, am assimilated by all that I can see and feel. My physical parameters are solid and firm. I know that I am a solitary being that resides separate from all others. Out here, out at sea, as you sail though life, you are more alone, and yet so much more apart of your world than your mind can begin to believe.

Open vs. Trusting.

Open

(Highly abridged definition to fit context of article.)

Pronunciation: 'o-p&n, -p⁶m

Function: *adjective*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English; akin to Old High German *offan* open, Old English *up* up

Date: before 12th century

Characterized by ready accessibility and usually generous attitude: as (1) : generous in giving (2) : willing to hear and consider or to accept and deal with : **RESPONSIVE** (3) : free from reserve or pretense : **FRANK**

Trust

Function: *verb*

Date: 13th century

intransitive senses

a : to place confidence : **DEPEND** <trust in God> <trust to luck> **b** : to be confident : **HOPE**

2 : to sell or deliver on credit

transitive senses

1 a : to commit or place in one's care or keeping : **ENTRUST** **b** : to permit to stay or go or to do something without fear or misgiving

2 a : to rely on the truthfulness or accuracy of : **BELIEVE** **b** : to place confidence in : rely on **c** : to hope or expect confidently

3 : to extend credit to

How often have we heard the comment, "You are so open and trusting..." I find this comment to be simple-minded and shortsighted. I have heard it all of my life from strangers and acquaintances alike. Why is it that humans automatically slap the 'and trusting' suffix onto the word open? This behavior has boggled my mind for as long as I can remember. What I fail to understand is how people automatically make a bridge between an open attempt at communication and trust.

Open communication is a rarity in this world of ours. People rarely open up and speak openly about their trials and tribulations. We reside in a world of closely guarded secrets. You would think that gentlemen you know and every single lady carries the secret of life in their hip pocket (or purse as the case may be) and have been sworn to secrecy by the Queen herself! The way they guard their past, present and limited understanding of humanity is astounding. We know that studies have shown that people are highly reserved because they fear ridicule. The more reserved the individual the greater the fear of derision.

So enter, stage right, one shipmate that does not care what you think of where they have been, does not fear your pathetic scorn and just maybe, is in the mindset that if you share knowledge that you learn with others, and they in return, share their knowledge gained by their life's experiences with you, humanity could, for a moment, stop reinventing the wheel generation after generation. Perhaps they are doing nothing more than being willing to hear and consider new stimuli? There are some sailors that cruise about with a burning desire to learn and the fact of the matter is that one person cannot experience everything they wish, so through books, video, television and other people they can learn and grow. These shipmates can learn that leaving the sails out full in a storm is not a stellar idea, thus save themselves great tragedy by learning from others.

Now the interesting part is that if you sit down and attempt to communicate you automatically, as if by some default setting, get dubbed, trusting. I cannot think of anything further from the truth (pun intended). Just because I am willing to entertain (hear and consider) your words does not mean that I believe (trust) them! Nor do I expect you to take every word that I set forth as gospel. Discerning shipmates need to be able to separate the fact from the sea story. Because someone is chatting with them means only that they are offering information that they found relatively important to themselves. It has, not a thing to do with trust. As a matter of fact I will chat away with a shipmate all day long but trusting them is a whole different matter!

Trust must be earned. A shipmate that is open and chatty may or may not earn your trust over an extended period of time. If you think I trust you because I am sharing a part of my life's experiences with you, you need to step back and evaluate your perception of trust. Is it not incredibly arrogant of you to presume that you have earned my trust in only a matter of moments, hours or days?

All too often people speak before they speak. Such is the case with, "You are so open and trusting..." Don't fall into the trap of presuming that because someone is open that they trust you. That shipmates, is one way to get yourself into serious trouble. Reserve your observation on trust for individuals that have earned it, or perhaps until you really feel that the person has grown, over time, to trust you. The next time you find yourself making an observation of someone being open and trusting, ask yourself if perhaps the best thing to say is, "I enjoy your openness, it is refreshing."

Looking good...

As I sit upon the bow and stare at the shoreline I can smell it. Like the perfect scent of a woman, it teases my senses. Breathing deeply I attempt to inhale the wonderful aroma. Something in that smell, something in the taste makes me smile.

The scent of Autumn washes over me and stirs something deep inside me. We must put in to shore to find a safe wintering harbor. Damn the man, but Old Man Winter and his North wind can kill a sailor. A safe place, maybe we shall visit that braless woman's tavern after all. I wonder what her port of call is.

I am almost livid at the thought of putting the *Destiny's Quest* in dock for any amount of time. She is made to run ahead of the waves and catch the breeze in her perfect sails. But I must, the north wind has shredded more than one sheet and snapped just a few masts.

You see I have two kinds of time in my world. Profit time and Sleep time. There is no other sort of time that I know. Sleep time is rather obvious and self-explanatory. Profit time however may not be exactly what it seems at first reading however. As a profiteer everything I do has a single-minded purpose. That purpose is simple, it is to attain and amass profit. (My cosmos revolves around the Ferengi rules of Acquisition so to speak.) But one may find wealth in many places, in many things, and via many sources.

So I would say that taking the time to do something as simple as polishing one's shoes or ironing one's shirt can and will bring one profit. Looking sharp will do wonders for your personal motivation and self worth. Hell, your stupidvisor may see the change and think that you are happy and motivated to work in hell and give you a raise or promotion. People will treat you better therefore you will aspire to greater things. That business deal may pull through because of your professional and motivated appearance. You may even get a *date* because you look *fine*. To think that all of this profit could come from something as simple as properly applied shoe polish or a tad of finisher on that shirt!

Profit comes in many forms and in many denominations. A true rogue knows that each and every action can lead to profit of an equal or greater reaction! Therefore all my time is Profit time.

Balance...

I sit alone, in my cabin and stare out the portal. Only a single lamp burns casting yellow-gold luminescence about the small space. Again the night has come. Night has come and with it that same feeling return like a plague. It settles upon the mind like a thick fog that shrouds the sea. You are able to see only what is directly in front of you and anything out of arms reach is a mystery. Mystery is not my idea of a puking good time.

Throughout our journey the best we can do is attempt to achieve a balance within life. The mystery can be seen as some as a unique flavoring that livens up a dish. Some

may find the mysterious a formidable enemy. The unknown is everywhere and present at all times. And yet we must find a balance between the known and the unknown. A balance must be attained within the mind and the soul.

Balance. I cannot fathom the ability to attain mental equality with *all*. And yet, each day, night and the times between I struggle to attain a balance in the tidal flows of life. To attain the perfect harmony that would afford me peace within mind and soul. Might the key be to concentrate upon the balance rather the actions that skew the perceived balance? Might the balance be just a matter of perception? Can one find peace and harmony within the insanity of imbalance? Is it possible to know the unknown or attain balance within an ever-changing cosmos? Might one be able to be able to become and yet be gone?

As I stare out this portal I realize that the simplicity of balance escapes me. The logic and the rational behind the centrifuge is as unattainable as the balance itself. One must ponder the simplistic and gain a basis in understanding prior to contemplating the cosmos and its many mysteries. It is within the micro that we find the macro, or maybe just the opposite?

Battle on...

The wind fills the *Destiny's Quest* sails to capacity. The Boson and sail maker have every scrap of canvas to the wind. My Lady skips across the brine faster than I have ever seen her run before. It's as though she *knows* what is ahead...

The watches are all alert and have eyes glued to their spyglass. Each searches the horizon for any sign of the prize we seek. There is one thing that will sharpen a sailor's wit and spirits faster than the cat o nine, and that is the excitement of the hunt and the anticipation of the coming battle.

Battle. We often think of it as some foreign concept. We think of it in some far off ideal that involves troops, weapons and Sun Tzu strategy. It could be one of those things that you have romanticized and think of as a knight in shining armor affair. And yet, I say that we know battle far better than we think we do.

We battle to get out of bed each morning. We battle to eat yet another meal, or exercise again. There is a daily battle to do what we must so as to meet the morrow with a smile. We battle not to choke the shit out of some bastard that desperately needs it. Battling traffic, crowds, stupidity, vulgarity, and overwhelming delusions of grandeur are daily occurrences. We battle for our rights, both real and perceived. We battle to stay motivated and upbeat. We battle not to be depressed and unmotivated. We battle to stay on top, ahead of the game, out front, and in advance of the competition. Even the nay-sayers and peace-nics battle for not or peace! Come to think upon it we are in continuous battle of one sort or another.

Battle. Although a word that most of us do not associate with our daily lives, it does in fact have quite a foothold in our world. Conflict is *the* way of life. It is, from the moment we are born the first and foremost important directive of our life. We do battle to

survive. Mates, the trick is not to avoid the conflict of battle but to run headlong into the fray. The sooner you understand the idiosyncrasies of battle the sooner you will master it. Once you master conflict you have mastered all.



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Aft Ships Locker

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The Dread Pirate lives in the foothills, somewhere in Virginia. Dread enjoys archery, fishing and the outdoors. He continues to write and self publish his works as a hobby. His first ebook was written under the pen name Dread Pirate and is titled The Imperial Dread Sea Scrolls. Dread Pirate also writes under the pen

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His second work, a novel of fiction, titled Birthright... Slayer has been a wonderful achievement. In his first published novel, MM lifts the curtain on a nightmare world that contains danger, excitement, and the possibility of eternal love or death.

For the latest information on the author and his works make sure to visit the [Dread Pirate's website!](#)

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