

i was going to be somebody - until i decided to become somebody.

i dont know if it is a sign of the times, or the culture we are a part of, or simply the human condition - but the mistaking of a symbol for the meaning, of having and earning, of being and becoming is a mistake that costs us all something.

we see individuals who possess the traits we admire, we try and follow in their footsteps, to seek what they sought. but too often we find shortcuts, we find a way to buy the experience, we act as though the accomplishment is the transformative force as opposed to a symbol of the work that went into it. the goal is arbitrary - it is a husk, a shell. it has served its purpose. to bypass the struggle is to reduce yourself to a spectator. a consumer. and is about as meaningful as pictures of food to the hungry.

i am not explaining it well. i was a smart kid. that is not a boast. it would make as much sense to brag about having freckles or speaking english. maybe it was genetics, maybe it was because my mom read to me every morning or because my dad would take me on walks in the woods only to stop and tell me it was my job to get us back home. school came easy. i didnt have to pay attention. i didnt have to work. i had teachers who would riffle through my desk to find the assignments that i had finished and simply not bothered to turn in. i got A's in classes i liked and B- in classes i didnt (i would get grounded for a C). i coasted. i would work just hard enough. even in college, i was resentful - i didnt want to jump through the hoops, didnt feel like i needed to prove my intelligence, never felt the need to work. Academia, at the levels i pursued it, did not change me. or, more accurately - i did feel the pull to change for it. it was all set, i was pursuing a degree in computer science, the path was simple and without much effort i could have easily finished school, coasted into some mid level job, and continued exactly how i was...

that, was being smart. was inhabiting the comfortable. i did not start to grow until i began to set my sights on things that i could not as yet achieve. i began to work outside my comfort zone, to try things that scared me. i got an idea of the person i wanted to be, noted where i fell short and began the long, slow process of fucking changing. the mark of any good journey is that the person arrives is not the same person who started. we are changed in the seeking. the earning. the struggle. the gym turned into a crucible. a laboratory. a clear cut measure of my will to change. the goals we set in the gym are often rather arbitrary - very few people would live a radically different life if they were somehow granted elite levels of strength or endurance. it is the fight, the work and the wanting and the attention to detail. to relationships. for most of us the training, whatever training, is an analog. a vehicle. a carrot we dangle in front of ourselves to encourage the changes we want to make. here, at our gym; there is a reason why allegory is in the fucking description.

becoming is important because in setting these goals. in risk and work and fear and doubt we discover so much, we change and grow. more so, when we finally realize our goal, the joy is momentary. brings more questions and new goals, it is the path. the journey that calls us. that is what others respond to. the hunger of the truly exceptional. the seeming paradox of speaking with such humility while standing in utter confidence. a true journey familiarizes us with our limits. redefines them. in doing so, we are humbled. by fear and failure and doubt. we see how far we want to push ourselves and feel the pain every inch. at the same time, it develops an intimate knowledge of what we are truly capable of. we can respond from fact and history instead of fear and posturing.

it earns you the right to be truly confident. to speak from experience and the ever present urge to improve.

this is another half starved workout induced rant, it is spurred out of a sickness of seeing people equating "having" a thing with "becoming" a thing. set goals. lofty, difficult goals. work your ass off to achieve them. push limits. end days with more questions than answers, understand that the short path leaves you as you are, but with a picture of food and an aching belly...

or you can take the long road. the hard road. to arrive as something new, scarred, yes. but satiated... for a little while anyway...



Sometime

s, a goal is just an excuse to tread the path...