

IRWIN

by

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Irwin was feeling so lonely. Yes, abandoned in his sufferings that were of no interest to the people around him.

Nobody likes people who complain about themselves and their problems. That is the main reason why Freud invented psychoanalysis. You could speak about yourself with someone else for fifty minutes in exchange for some money. But Irwin refused to do it. Irwin spoke about his problems to his girlfriend, friends and children, and he wrote about them in his diary. Basically he was only interested in himself and his problems.

Was he spoiled? Yes, he was. Was he sad? Let's say that he was never happy and almost always sick. He was never feeling well, he always had a pain somewhere. He had a long series of different illnesses, with attempted diagnoses made by many different kinds of doctors, lab tests, scanners and X-rays that he was undergoing all the time. He handled his health as if it was the financial market: shares, bonds, commodities and currencies were constantly fluctuating as much as his cholesterol, glucose, thyroid, blood pressure, PSA values, potassium, iron and bilirubin. Day after day he had to know about his health and he took a large quantity of pills in order to keep some of his levels in order.

He became more and more suspicious about traveling because his sinuses could not stand the air conditioning in the plane and in most other countries it was difficult to follow his diet because he was allergic to many different kind of foods. He could not eat dairy products, no white bread, no pasta, no rice. Everything had to be gluten free. He could not eat cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, garlic, onion, melon or watermelon. It was difficult for him to eat at all as he was going to restaurants most of the time. He only had pleasure when he ate French bread and cheese, but it was forbidden. He liked chicken, artichokes, celery, pizza and Swiss cheese. He used to like ice

creams but no other sweets. He did not much like chocolate, he never drank Coca-Cola because it was sparkling and too sweet. Coffee was bad for the liver, he did not digest hot chocolate and his tea was like water, without milk and sugar. As he was Jewish he did not eat pork meat or oysters, crab, lobster or shrimps and he did not mix butter and meat. He did not much like spirits, although his girlfriend drank vodka or white wine. He used to like champagne with ice cubes, but he did not drink it anymore because it was not good for his stomach. Or many years he had never smoked, but he had just started smoking one or two cigarettes a day.

He was extremely sensitive to colds, he caught almost one a week, but he fought against them with vitamins and aspirin. Aspirin was good for the heart, not so good for the stomach, but he could take another pill to prevent acidity and therefore gastritis. Every day he felt intestinal troubles due, as the doctors said to him after many tests, to the nervous system. But his having burps and occasional wind was not very pleasant. He was afraid of having a temperature and used the thermometer often. Irwin hated people being around him when they were sick or had colds because they could be contagious.

Even if the doctors had recommended it, he disliked sports in general so he did not go the gym, and he was terribly lazy. He spent hours lying in bed, reading or watching TV. He also became sexually lazy and he was insecure about human feelings and love. He did not trust his love or other people's love. He loved to buy pencils, pens, and all sorts of stationary. He also loved to buy books. He did not read them all, but his books gave him a feeling of security, of comfort. Otherwise life was so insecure and elusive and one was annoyed for various reasons, from bad weather to bad breath, from feeling rejected by someone who does not love you because she or he loves someone else to just because you are not attractive. In life it is frightening to be poor after a certain age, it is frightening to lose your parents, a person we love, a child...

One winter Irwin was vacationing on a tropical island in the Caribbean and one morning, by chance, he read in a local newspaper that there was a mosquito that had a dangerous bite on the island next to the one he was on. Five people were actually in hospital with a high temperature. The mosquitoes could very well come to the island where he was staying and they could bite him. Since he had read that news his vacation was spoiled, because any mosquito could be a possible danger for him, because he had sweet blood and mosquitos in general liked to bite him since he was a child. In order to

prevent that he went to the local pharmacy, where by the way he was going almost every day for one reason or another, and bought all sorts of preventive lotions and creams and sprays against mosquito bites.

Through negligence, one night when he was out with some friends he ate some lobster and drank a glass of red wine. During that night he had a high fever and tremors. The following day he still had a temperature and so he went to see a French doctor who told him that he had to have a blood test because his symptoms might mean that he was suffering from an insect bite, and that was more and more frequent on the island. The doctor said that he did not have to worry, just to stay in bed and wait for the result of the test.

Luckily the result of the test was negative. It might be an infection, either intestinal or urinary, but it was not sure, it might have to do with the liver. So what was it? When he went home to New York he decided to see some specialists and he spent most of the winter trying to find out what he had. Obviously he went through very elaborate tests and scanners and saw many different specialists and they all wanted to do further checks and enquiries.

His girlfriend was exhausted and very annoyed by the situation, by his complaints and by the fact that he was not able to follow a real diet and was on his own diet, that was clearly wrong as the results were so poor. One day his girlfriend asked him:

“Why don’t you go to see a shrink? Why don’t you practice yoga?”

He answered: “Because it is too expensive.”

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