

The Flying Monkey Missives

Love Letters to Creative Explorers



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Flying Monkey

Flying Monkey Missives - The Introduction

In the latter half of 2011, I began a series of love letters to my Intrepid Explorers - those who signed up for my mailing list at my now-defunct site The Alternating Current.

It was there I stretched my alternative productivity muscles with gentle, but useful, quirky, yet powerful ways of getting your creative work done.

I created an idea generator worksheet, an idea evaluator kit, and a map-making to-do list class.

This missive was my way of working out some things I had going on as well as encouraging members of my Intrepid Explorers group to do the thing that makes them sing.

Here they are, for the first time in one place, slightly edited from the originals. Seven missives sent from May 2011 to March 2012.

Enjoy.

And if you want to talk about the missives or just drop a line, email me at alexia Petrakos@gmail.com.

Flying Monkey Missive #1

I hope this finds you well. My typewriter is finally working and my third attempt at writing this missive is shaping up.

I am writing to let you know what to expect from these notes borne by flying monkey. I would highly recommend having a few bananas on hand. They're useful when the monkey decides to start chewing on the envelope. I will dispatch these missives every so often, when the mood strikes.

So, Intrepid Explorer, there is much to tell you.

I must give you some information before you decide to join me on your first adventure.

Time is on your side, so take what you need before you make your decision.

I began dreaming of the sea and all it could show me. I was full of fear and doubt and my fears ruled me so much that I was stuck. I couldn't get out of the role I was expected to play. I was scared of veering off the path others had laid out before me. Yes, I felt the call of the sea but it was only appropriate to respond on holidays.

The call became too much to bear, too loud to ignore a few short years ago when I met an old, sun-weathered woman who told me her own tales of adventure and exploration and her own ship.

I couldn't hear anything but her voice.

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And I still get choked up when I think about her. She is the one who told me my desires and longings were things I needed to listen and respond to. They were the cries of my heart.

Those who ignore their hearts under the impression they're being "responsible" and "realistic" are denying themselves and the amazing human being they are.

They deny themselves the fullness of their being and wither away like flowers in a drought.

What I desire for you, dear one, is to be completely and entirely YOU.

It isn't an easy thing to do. Becoming is difficult, but it is worth more than all the riches you could ever find.

Becoming, stepping into the role of Intrepid Explorer saved me. And I know it will save you.

Not only will stepping into YOU be good for you but sharing your genius with the world serves others, too.

Will you join me?

You are truly amazing.



P.S. Send the monkey back with your reply and a fresh banana. Thank you.

Flying Monkey Missive #2

Hello my Intrepid Explorer!

It's not been that long since my last missive but I was so excited to be communicating with you this way that I had to do one sooner than I had planned.

My husband and I celebrated our 10th year of marriage this past weekend in a secluded cabin in the Smokeys. This Greek girl is at home both at sea and in the mountains.

It was heaven. Connecting with the most important man in my life in the most beautiful surroundings. I couldn't have asked for better.

And the relaxation, the quiet, the solitude, all of it fed my weary self, and I'm back with renewed vigor and hope for what's to come.

That's what getting away from your normal routine is all about. Renewal, rest and relaxation result in a renewed outlook on life.

In other words, take a vacation once in a while, OK? It's good for the soul.

Now about you...

How are you doing since the last missive? Have you made any decisions to explore your unrevealed, hidden, stuffed-down self? Have you thought about becoming?

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Or are those wild, untamed parts of you a little too scary to unleash?

It's alright. Most people go through their entire lives not knowing it's OK to explore those so-called "unsafe" parts of themselves.

It's perfectly normal to want the status quo. It's easy and comfortable and no one gets hurt.

But it's boring. Damned boring.

And you know it. There's that part of you that wants to break out. That's why you're reading this Missive. That's why flying monkeys and ships and exploring don't make you want to cock your head to the left and give me funny looks.

You're an explorer at heart. Deep down inside, underneath piles shoulds and musts and have-tos and ought-nots is you. Pure & unadulterated you-as-explorer.

It's time to be that explorer now. Your survival depends on it.

Still not sure how to actually do this? Here's something to try:

What is it that feeds your soul? What in this world makes you feel right? When do you feel most alive?

When was the last time you did something for yourself just because it felt right? Or do you even allow yourself to do anything that's not "productive"?

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Throw out all notions of productivity for a little while this week. Do stuff because you want to. Do things that feed your hidden self, that bring that lost part of you to the surface.

And don't just do it this week.

Make it a practice. Once a week at least, do something that has no purpose other than to feed you.

So, it's time to sign off. The monkey's a little impatient and I'm running low on bananas.

I'd love to hear about where you are and how you're doing these days.

I await your response.

You are amazing.

Alexia

P.S. Please don't forget to give the flying monkey messenger a banana for the trip back. She's always a bit peckish after a flight and has a tendency of veering off course for a snack and misplacing the envelopes.

Flying Monkey Missive #3

I'm going to cut to the chase, my Intrepid Explorer.

As you may have noticed on the Alternating Current's web quarters, I talk about ideas and sorting and have intended on writing more about how to get the things you want to get done.

But something huge is missing from all the communication coming from that route. I keep writing about the surface stuff. The things that are safe and perfectly normal to write about. Things that don't turn heads and are frankly boring & innocuous.

If you know me at all, you know I am not boring, nor am I innocuous. And neither are you, Explorer.

Life quite often looks boring from the outside (because there are THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE whether we want to or not), but I assure you, your inner life and mine are anything but boring.

The challenge, the thing I want to most do for you and for all closet Explorers is to bring that inner life outside. To bring the truth of who you really are into the world.

I stand for freedom. Freedom to be fully you in all your Creative Explorer-ness. Screw what everyone else says about propriety.

I stand for truth. Your truth, and your right to embody that truth.

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I stand for knowledge. Your highest aim is to know yourself (yeah, my heritage is showing*). And knowledge of your own desires and how to get what you want out of your life.

This is way more exciting than how-tos and lists and spreadsheets and categorizing, no?

And I'll be really honest. It's way easier to express this stuff to you through these missives than to the WHOLE DAMNED WORLD. It's a little scary to say these things in public, as I'm sure there are parts of you that make you a bit scared to show to others.

I'm taking tiny baby monkey steps on this one.

You are amazing.

Alexia

*Know Thyself - a Delphic Maxim inscribed on the Temple of Apollo in Delphi, Greece. I'm Greek.

P.S. You should know the drill by now, but please send a fresh banana back with the monkey.

Flying Monkey Missive #4

Dearest Creative Explorer,

Life has taken a turn for the interesting and pretty soon this Monkey Wrangler will have a real live baby monkey of her own.

Yes, besides incubating this new business, I'm incubating new life.

I'm at the tail end of the first 3 months and I've been completely exhausted. My body's decided all of her energy is better spent on growing this little one instead of letting me get to my work and to you!

But don't be discouraged. I'm still here for you. Not as much as I used to, but when I am, I'm 100% present. There's something about limited energy reserves and focus...

Which is what I wanted to talk about in this Flying Monkey Missive.

Focus, that is. And Energy.

It's rarely that Focus comes easily to Creative Explorers. But when it does, it feels like you've stepped on to a raft in a swiftly moving stream and the current does all the work for you.

That's called Flow.

That's when Focus and Energy combine to create an altered state of consciousness.

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You're intensely aware of nothing but what you're doing at that moment.

And this is when your best work happens.

Unfortunately, Creative Explorers sometimes have difficulties entering this Flow state. Our brains are so buzzy and we hop around from one thing to another, that we never quite get into Flow.

Our seemingly boundless energy is a hindrance to Flow. Because we think we can do everything RIGHT NOW, we think we must.

The past few months have taught me a valuable lesson in Energy and Focus and Flow.

I have very limited energy, at times I'm only at 25% of my normal levels. So I have to be very careful about what I choose to spend my time on.

Some days it's a choice between writing this letter to you or doing the dishes (guess which one I choose?).

It's a choice between teaching an hour-long class online or wasting my time on FaceBook.

And this isn't going to change much any time soon.

So what does this have to do with you? You're probably not carrying a child, and (I hope) you're not suffering a chronic illness, so you're not faced with this lack. (If you are, I empathize completely.)

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I propose that you take a serious inventory of where you spend your time.

Track what you do on a daily basis. Chart your energy levels. Figure out what you're really spending your time on. Is it what you truly want to do? Is it making a difference in your life? Is it making progress on your dreams?

Start whittling away the unnecessaries.

Find ways to consolidate things like laundry or cooking or email into chunks of time instead of sprinkling it through the day.

If you have a partner, talk about ways to get the things done that need attention (hello housekeeping?).

Two sets of hands are always better than one.

And jealously guard your high energy times for your own projects.

Sequester yourself in your rooms. Shut out all distractions. Disconnect from the Internet. Turn off all notifications.

Breathe deeply.

Make it easy for you to work. Put your hand to your materials and tools and do your thing.

The more regularly you match up your peak energy with your best work, the more you'll reach Flow. And at the very least, you'll have Focus.

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You are amazing,

P.S. The thing about the bananas still stands.

Alexia

Flying Monkey Missive #5

Oh my Dearest Explorer,

There is so much I want to tell you, and time just flies by so quickly.

I want to use the space today to talk to you about longing. Desire. Wanting something so much that your soul just aches at the thought of it.

Have you ever felt this way about something?

I have.

I do.

And it hurts so much seeing other people have what I desire.

I could get upset and jealous and hate the person that has what I want.

I felt that way on more than one occasion.

I could feel sorry for myself, find everything wrong with my current situation, and melt into a puddle of tears and desperation.

Been there... recently, in fact.

Or I could look at that person, see what they've done and motivate myself.

I could see them as somebody I can emulate, someone who has reached my desires and know that it's possible.

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Yet that's the hard way...

Jealousy and getting down on yourself comes so easily. Yet turning it around and using that as something to motivate yourself, something to drive you further towards your goal?

That requires some resolve, a lot of reframing, and the mentality of an Explorer.

You are an Explorer.

See the world through those eyes, act like an Explorer and you will reach what you desire.

It may not be NOW NOW NOW... but it will come in time.

I'm looking forward to the day where my life looks like the one in my head. But in the meantime, I'm making the most of the now, enjoying the now as it is and exploring.

You are amazing,

Alexia

Flying Monkey Missive #6

Dearest,

If you've been reading, you know I'm expecting a little monkey of my own in February and he's taking up a lot of my energies.

But I still have time for you. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to drop me a note.

This Missive I'd like to talk a bit about comparisons. Namely, you comparing yourself to others. I know I've written about this before, but I have to say it again...

It's a curse we Creative Explorers live with. We see all the amazingness others put out and wonder why our lives seem to pale in comparison.

The ocean is bluer on their side.

Frankly, I fight this on a very frequent basis, especially now that my energy is all involved in making another human being. I curse and rail at being unable to do stuff like her or him over there who seems to be growing and producing and making way more money than I am.

But it's all bullshit.

I am exactly where I need to be right now. You are exactly where you need to be right now. Right now, things are perfect.

If you think you need to change something, then you have the power to change it. If you think you need

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to do something differently, than you can take action and do it.

Nothing is holding you back.

And that person over there that seems to be doing so much better than you? Who's to say they really are? All you see is their output, not their innermost thoughts, not their realities.

No matter how "authentic" people are online, you never truly know what's going on.

Keep your eyes on your own paper, and if someone else is truly more successful than you, and you feel a twinge of jealous, cheer them on instead.

If you like what they're doing, see if it will fit with your way of doing stuff and integrate it into your own life.

But never ever beat yourself up because someone else looks like they're doing so much better than you.

You are perfect just the way you are.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday season full of love, compassion & chocolate.

You are amazing!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexis".

P.S. Send the monkey back with your reply and a fresh banana. Thank you.

Flying Monkey Missive #7

Dearest...

One-third of the year has passed us by with such speed, I barely have time to catch my breath.

I admit, my priorities are shifting, and re-aligning my explorations with a little one it tow is proving to be a great adjustment.

Things are smoothing out now, we're getting into a routine, but as with everything, I'm sure I have a lot of adjusting to do in the months to come.

With every major life event comes a period of mourning. Mourning the past life, mourning the person we used to be, the time, the things we used to do. Yet stay too long in this mourning, and you miss the beauty of the now.

I encourage you (and myself) to give yourself time to grieve, but don't live in what used to be.

You'll miss out on all the wondrousness of what's to come. And it just gets better every day.

Take time out to be grateful for what you've done, what you've accomplished, who you were. Write all of this down if you haven't yet.

Remember that who you are now is a culmination of all you were and did and experienced in the past.

But step into now when you're done. Be fully present in this moment and every moment hereafter. It all goes by way too quickly.

Flying Monkey Missive #7

I cherish my time writing these missives to you. I missed it so much the past few months.

My hope is that you get a tiny little something from these missives that will make you think, and maybe make things a little better.

You are amazing.

Don't ever think anything less.

Alexia

Flying Monkey Missives - The End

As you can see, this was the beginning of the end of the Alternating Current, as I let go of lots of things when I was pregnant and a new mom.

As a Creative Explorer (or Renaissance Soul, or Multipotentialite, or Scanner), I tend to start many things. I have lots of ideas and lots of ways to express those ideas. Sometimes those ways and I have to part ways, but they're never mistakes. I always learn and grow from them, and they're always a part of me.

I unearthed these missives because I thought they could be of use to someone, somewhere. During this time I had a lot of ideas about what to do, the how-to-do-it was what eluded me most of the time. The Alternating Current was a way for me to explore how to get things done that felt best to me.

So there it is.

And remember.

You

Are

Amazing.

With love,

Alexia