



pz's perspective

by: Pz  
photo by: Solus Creations

# living in a world GONEMAD

**D**o the right thing. Keep your word. Remain positive. Follow the Golden Rule. Live with integrity. Honor your fellow man. Respect the sanctity of life. Tell the truth. Appreciate the earth and its splendor. Never give up. All of these are messages I tell myself on a regular basis. These are messages I do my utmost to live by. I tell myself these messages actually have meaning— that if I only try harder, do better, open my heart wider, and expand my mind further, it will make a difference, and it will truly matter. These are messages I espouse to others, in the hopes their lives will be better, too, and somehow, someday— naïve as it may sound, simple as it may seem— the world will become an infinitely better place than it currently is.

On a large scale, this planet we inhabit called Earth is a huge mess and in absolute turmoil—plain and simple. If I do nothing more than read the headline on my AOL homepage, I soon realize there is so much going on outside this grand country of ours that gives me reason to question, reason to worry, and reason to wonder. The relentless fighting and bombing and conflict and chaos that persist throughout are enough to make me embarrassed to be a member of the human race. The poverty that is so prevalent—the power that is so abused—the environment that is so misused—it's staggering. How

is it that we've screwed things up so badly, and, what's more, that we're so intent on continuing farther along that same familiar path to total destruction? Many of these enduring conflicts, it appears, have the label of religion attached to them. I've always found it baffling how man uses God to justify his unjustifiable behavior. It makes me wonder.

What a sad state of affairs. I look around. I shake my head. With so little going right and so much going wrong, with so many people lost and struggling, and so few reasons to celebrate, it makes me wonder. With so many liars and deceivers, so much hate and unrest, with so few boundaries and standards, and so many bad things happening to good people, it makes me wonder.

On a smaller scale we have to look in our own back yard. Everywhere we turn, things are pretty crazy. The indictments that came down involving Vice President Cheney's alter ego, Lewis 'Scooter'

Libby, don't make us feel any more confident about the integrity of powerful people in high places. The approval polls on the President are sinking to an all-time low adding more salt to the oozing wound. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor can't beg, borrow, or steal her way into retirement, and it wouldn't be surprising—with the unpredictable pending confirmation hearings— if she is still seated when the Anna

Nicole Smith inheritance case comes before the high court early next year. It is reassuring to know our constitution is properly at work with the Supreme Court taking their valued time to weigh in on the outcome of an opportunist like Ms. Anna—no media circus there! Then, there's the trouble with Arnold. The Austrian born, 7-time Mr. Olympia took on California, and became Governor, Terminator style. Now, well into his term, he is finding it a whole lot easier to get the job than to execute the job. The business of governing is less about strong rhetoric and more about heavy lifting. Arnold is feeling some resistance. The people who earlier said yes to him are now saying no to his propositions. Where his career goes from here and whether or not he is able regain his base, muscle his legislation into law, and someday push the 28<sup>th</sup> amendment into being, remains to be seen. It makes me wonder about our government, our leaders, our priorities, and what's truly important.

And will Country superstar Kenny Chesney ever get beyond the sudden collapse of his short-lived marriage to Renee Zellweger that, unfortunately, ended in annulment? The speculation that continues to swirl around the 'real' reason for the breakup, centers firmly on the sinister and misunderstood word 'fraud.' We are so quick to judge. Give the man a break. Leave him alone and let him keep his private life private. All he wants to do is perform and bring joy to his legions of adoring fans through his music. You've got to love a guy who can pull off wearing a cowboy hat, puka-shell necklace, muscle shirt, painted on jeans, and is fantastically fit to boot! He's such a sweetheart, a down-to-earth Tennessean, and chances are he's wondering himself what hit him. He doesn't need outsiders putting their mean spirited 2-cents spin on what must surely be a painful chapter in his life. The press seems to feed off the story and we feed off of the press. It's a vicious and frenzied



cycle. They write it because we buy it. They air it because we watch it. It makes me wonder about our good sense, our questionable curiosities, and why the misfortune or heartache of others makes such great food for thought.

What a shame such time and attention has to be focused on these matters and we can't simply enjoy the entertainment industry for what it frankly is—entertainment. The people who happen to be entertainers are people, too, and have an actual life. That life is theirs to protect if they so choose and it is not crucial or compulsory for us to know anything more than they are open or willing to share. Sure, they are public figures, but how public is too public? It's become all about gossip and scandal. We've become serious about less than significant issues and less than enthusiastic about serious issues. Things have gotten so crazy and out-of-hand. It makes me wonder.

It's hard to talk about the hard issues. It's tough to deal with topics that aren't tantalizing. War isn't sexy. Homelessness isn't glamorous. Unemployment and healthcare are someone else's problem. Global warming is on someone else's planet. Suicide only happens to strangers. Disease only touches other families. Food lines don't make for stirring storylines. Let the alcoholics and drug addicts continue to be drunks and druggies. Let the missing children find their own way home. Let the victims of storms and floods blend back into society as best they can. Excite us time and again with Brad and Angelina, Tom and Katie, or Jessica and Nick. Bombard us with Paris and Lindsay and Nicole and Mary-Kate—the incredible dwindling women—to the extent that even I want to throw-up! Shell out more hapless, mindless reality shows and we all go to bed at night happy and fulfilled—or do we? Do we really need to see Cher's little girl Chastity, at 200lbs, vying to become the biggest loser? Do we really need to escape our own lives through a steady diet of the sorrow of others? Do we really just need to escape because it's too bothersome or inconvenient or flat out hard to face the truth? Are the problems of the real world too formidable to tackle? It makes me wonder.

People are hurting. Genuine problems exist both at home, and across the globe. Concrete solutions can be found if we insist they are found. WE have to become part of that solution and not drift off into La La Land with our heads in the sand. From all indications the world had gone mad, but right now this is the only world we have, right now, this is the only life we have to live.

Although I wonder, I will tell you this. As grim as the situation appears, it is no time to give up or give in. It is no time to compromise or settle or sit idly by—quite the contrary. Far be it from me to suggest I would have the answers for the whole of humanity. I believe, though, we can do what we can do—each one of us as individuals. Unfortunately, not everyone will pitch in. Much as we would like, some are too selfish or dastardly or downright incapable of being any better than they presently are. Some are operating at the highest point of human potential they will ever reach. I don't plan to write these folks off, yet, I can't depend on them either. What about the rest of us? What about those of us

who DO know better, who ARE capable, who ARE conscious, and CAN reach higher? What responsibility do we have to the universe and ourselves? We have to walk to the beat of our own drum. The rhythm will not be the same for each of us, but the dance is universal. We have to hum the melody of our own song. My station may be tuned into rock, yours may have R&B, but the music is universal. Regardless, in a world gone mad, we must make our own way, raise our own voice, and contribute by word and deed in spite of what others do, in spite of the obstacles, and in spite of the odds.

## PZ'S POINTERS TO LIVING IN A WORLD GONE MAD

**Honor your commitments**—Ever notice what a difficult time people have with commitment? Look at one of the most revered commitments—marriage. If we were so good at committing to one another the divorce rate wouldn't be so extreme. We have trouble with commitment on many levels. We make promises we don't keep, agreements we don't live up to, and nothing seems sacred anymore. If you make a promise to do something for someone—do it. If you agree to call someone—do it. If you commit your time or talent or energy in any way, shape, or form, follow through with your commitment. Make your word count. If, by chance, something comes up, don't disappear, disappoint, and do nothing. Let the person know. Don't leave them hanging or in the lurch. Don't assume they are mind readers and can automatically guess your intentions. Don't make excuses for your sorry behavior. We are all guilty. No one is exempt. That doesn't mean we can't do better—we can. People are human. They are forgiving. They give second chances.

**Stop playing the blame game**—What would we, as a society, do if we couldn't blame somebody or something for our condition in life? As a nation, we blame other nations and other religions for the evils in the world. As individuals, we blame the government, the IRS, our competitor, our neighbor, fast food, our parents, our husband, our girlfriend, anyone, and everyone. We sue when we're injured. We sue when we aren't injured. We're always looking to assign fault—to place blame. We do it so often, with so little regard for the true meaning of what blame really is, that it has totally lost all meaning. Blame has been watered down like lots of other aspects of our society. Save the blaming for when it counts, when it applies, and when it matters. Start taking responsibility for your actions and for your life.

**Learn to value others' time**—Who do you think you are? You are **not** the only one here. The world doesn't always revolve around you and your needs and schedule. Other people exist too, and their time is important. Don't act as though you can show up whenever you please to an appointment, a date, a function, or a meeting. Yes, stuff happens. Sure, things arise. That doesn't give you a free pass to run your own program at the expense of others. Fashionably late is reserved for divas, who are full of themselves, or for events that have an open-ended arrival. In many instances, time is money. It only takes a little planning and a concerted effort to ensure ev-

eryone makes the most of each and every day—anything less shows a lack of respect. When others are depending on you or your presence, be courteous and behave in a manner worthy of their continued involvement and support.

**Get rid of the weak links**—I do so like the expression 'a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.' For me, it is a metaphor for life. Imagine your life as being that chain. Now, think of all those involved in your life as being the links in that chain. If any of those links are doing less than their fair share



in contributing to your life in a substantial way, than the result is a pretty weak chain. It won't be able to hold up against the slings and arrows that come your way rather, in due course, it will succumb to the onslaught and eventually break. While it is never easy to have every link in your chain a solid one you should constantly strive toward that goal. In order to achieve that you must be willing to identify and rid yourself of the weak links. Work at surrounding yourself with those who share your common goals and philosophy on life. These people will make for the strongest links and your chain of life will be shored up around you on all sides to carry you through.

**Never miss an opportunity to bestow a compliment**—How quick we are to complain. We gripe and moan and whine at the drop of a hat. We are so spoiled and are such babies. Contempt breeds contempt. Negative perpetuates more negative. It is easy to see why the world has gotten so crazy. Save the complaining for valid, legitimate complaints. Focus your energies instead on what people are doing right. Tell them. Take a moment. Go out of your way. Let them know. If you look, you will see examples all around you. The key is you have to look—you have to notice. No matter how small, every little bit helps. So much goodwill comes from this simple practice.

## Support good people and good causes

—Look at Dana Reeve. No sooner did this super woman lose her Superman, she found she had another mountain to climb. What tragic irony that she—a non-smoker—announced her diagnosis with lung cancer 2 days after the death of ABC news anchor Peter Jennings—a long-time smoker. Hadn't she been through enough? Wasn't it now her time to blossom and shine since emerging from the 9 years she had spent steadfastly



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convenient source of fuel that you can keep handy.

**6) Journal it!** Write down what you are putting into your mouth each day. This definitely heightens your awareness to what goes in your body. “If you ink it, you think it.”

So, good luck Vanessa with your dieting! Think strong! Train hard! Eat clean!

**Q. I have budget confinements over the holidays, so I can only afford to go to my trainer once a week. Is there any benefit to only going once a week or am I just wasting my time and money?**

A. You are not wasting your time and money! A little bit is better than none and a quickie is better than none. Besides, even if you just train with your trainer once per week that doesn't mean you can't do your other workouts on your own or just be active on those days. The point of accountability with your trainer is invaluable because you know your trainer is going to ask you how your other workouts were. Also, your trainer should check with you on your “diet” each week and then also have you weigh in and do a body composition test every few weeks. I have one client that trains with me once per week and that is the extent of his workouts for the week. I am amazed at the strength gains that he makes even with this minimal time allotted for training. Albeit, he has a very physical job, so combined with his once a week workout, this is enough for him. I have other clients that train with me once a week because they do their other workouts and cardio sessions on their own time. An example would be that I train a woman just on her leg day because she wants to have a “butt-kicking” workout with me for increased leg development. She is competent is training her other body parts by herself. I always make cardio and diet recommendations to my “once-a-weekers”, so they have some homework to do until I see them next. I give out fitness reading material as well. Ask your trainer for “assignments” to do outside of your training session. Kind of like extra credit in your trainer's eyes! In addition, working out with your trainer should keep you motivated for the times you do train by yourself. So, don't fire your trainer just yet! Unless, of course he/she is not qualified or you just need a change. With the holidays fast approaching, we can all use that extra point of accountability with a trainer as it becomes tempting to “blow-off” workouts when we get busy with holiday festivities. The Holiday season is when we need to train the most! So, find other areas to scrimp in to allow your personal Trainer's fee to fit in to your budget. Don't put off training, by intending to make a new year's resolution a January 1st. Keep training right through the holidays and beyond. Your health is your wealth, so that once a week payment that you make to your trainer is a very valuable investment! In YOU!

*For anyone with any specific questions, particularly pertaining mothers and women over 40, please feel free to forward your questions to the Editor at Natural Muscle or me personally at [cynbfit@yahoo.com](mailto:cynbfit@yahoo.com)*

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caring for her paralyzed husband? It is obvious, from her reaction to the devastating news, the lessons she had learned of defying the odds with strength, courage, and hope, from the ultimate example, her beloved Christopher. With the tumor shrinking and shrinking, she is able to stand tall at the fund raiser for the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation proudly wearing the dog tag with the inscription ‘Go Forward’—the symbol her husband lived by right up to the very last.

So too, I'm in such awe of U2's Bono and his doggedness in bringing international awareness to the overwhelming issues facing an entire continent. He could, no doubt, be living the self-absorbed rock star life—void of any bona fide burdens—but he has taken on the establishment in a big way. Through his worldwide fame he has put a face on a cause that affects the global community. He has made us care about Africa. As he so profoundly states, “*I'm tired of dreaming, I'm into doing at the moment. In the end you have got to become the change you want to see in the world.*” Bono has proven if you put your identity to a worthy cause, commit with your heart, don't give up despite insurmountable odds, then you can make more than a dent in despair. We, in our own small way, can follow Bono's lead. We, through whatever means possible, can be inspired by Dana Reeve. We can lead when we are able. We can contribute when we must. We can support wherever necessary.

**The World is NOT your garbage can**—If, as you look around, you can't find something to be enthused about, then you are void of a soul. The magnificence of nature isn't something that can be measured, nor the wrath of Mother Nature something that can be explained. The hurricanes, the floods, the earthquakes, and the fires will come and quickly remind us how insignificant we can be—how little control we have. Man has so little concern for the treatment of his surroundings. Stop littering. Stop being such a slob. Stop being inconsiderate, ignorant, and destructive when it comes to something as precious as our planet. Become a better steward of your world and its resources. God isn't making any more land. Like life, it can be so fleeting. Once it is gone, it is gone.

**Respect money as a prized symbol of power**—I sometimes wish money didn't exist. It certainly creates a lot of problems. Having too much can be a problem; not having enough can be an even bigger problem. Most often money and power go hand-in-hand—he who has the gold rules. Our actions show we don't have a very good handle on its value. Although we are one of the richest countries on earth, we are poor by many standards. Respecting money and using it in wise and meaningful ways creates lasting and meaningful results.

**Be persistent in the face of defeat**—It's never over until it's over. You've heard that before, right? How come we forget to practice that in real life? I know sometimes it's hard to keep at some-

thing when you seem to be going nowhere fast. Too bad! Keep after it, no matter what it is. There's nothing worse than the feeling that you are trying too hard or you're beating that dead horse. You can never try too hard or beat too long. Eventually, your persistence will pay off, and you'll be glad you didn't throw in the towel before the fat lady broke out in her swan song.

**Recognize the simple is no longer simple**—Not a day goes by that I'm not reminded of this reality. Everything has gotten so damn complicated, and what was once so simple is now a major, full-blown production. I know you know what I'm saying. Everyone I speak to, everywhere I turn, nothing, but nothing, seems to be going smooth or easy or right or good the first time out. Getting something done efficiently, effectively, correctly, competently, or completely has become a feat of mammoth proportions. Why do you suppose it has come to this? What is going on to create this chaotic and harried state we navigate through like the ghastly landmines left behind in Sudan? Move too fast, expect too much, and it will surely blow up in your face. People are asleep behind the wheel. They are asleep on the job. They are asleep going, asleep coming; they are just plain asleep. It's your job to stay awake. Be prepared to deal with the sleepyheads as they will surely be in your path. Keep a cool head. Maintain a patient heart. Be aware and alive and alert.

**One person at a time**—Ultimately, it all boils down to you and me—each one of us being a special and unique part of the big picture. While the world may be going mad around us, we have to keep our eye on the prize. The privilege of living this life should be enough. The privilege of being a member of the human race and a citizen of this planet should be enough. Make your mark while you are here. Do what you do, as best you can, with gusto and grace. Give it your all. Live your life with the goal that the world will be a better place for having you in it. Maybe you will eliminate the madness. Then, everybody wins.

*Pz is a writer and motivating force in the area of self-enrichment and the human condition. She is dedicated to empowering individuals to live their best life. Have questions or feedback? She encourages your participation in the process.*

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