

Should

I should have cleaned the house today. I went for a walk by the sea instead. That's ok isn't it? Exercise, fresh air - they're supposed to be good for me. Walked along the sand, looked out at the grey waves as they poured towards me. I faced the waves, closed my eyes, listened to the crashing. I'm trying mindfulness; clearing my head of noise but I end up feeling daft and wondering if I defrosted the sausages. I headed home, at a brisk pace - getting the heart rate up, blood pumping.

Are sausages ultra-processed? I wonder if I should be eating them. But we shouldn't be wasting food so I decide it's ok, but perhaps I won't buy them in future. I scroll through social media on my phone as I cook the sausages, staring at the happy faces. I can't help checking the latest advice, see what regime they're following, what brand they're wearing, how it might help me to improve. I watch the videos, click the links, wonder if I can get down to the beach to join the early morning swimmers. Then, realising the sausages are burning, I slam the phone down and get out the wine instead.

Later, I wake up on the sofa. The bottle's empty, I should have done my nighttime skincare routine by now. I turn off the tv, wipe my face over with a sorry looking flannel and crash into bed. I'll try the routine again tomorrow; one day off won't matter. Did I do the full routine last night? Oh well...

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Work is unhappy with me, I should have done more to hit my targets. Should have worked harder, longer and with enthusiasm. I find it hard to get excited about insurance at the best of times. I sit through meetings where everyone is talking without really saying anything and the Chair keeps chiming in with 'let's circle back on that' which I think means let's start again because we're not making progress. I've taken to putting some wine in my mug, to make meetings more bearable. I'll go down to the beach later, once they stop talking. I should be walking 10,000 steps a day. I've hardly moved; I felt lethargic this morning. I'll just finish this mug and head out.

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Turns out work has no patience for not hitting targets, so I have time on my hands for job hunting. At least I don't have to sit in meetings. They can go round in circles as much as they like. I clear a few bottles onto my window sill, it's a lovely bay window looking out to sea. The light shines through the bottles. I open another as the sun goes down, and throw more wood onto the fire. I like to have a fire in the winter, it makes me feel cocooned. I'll just finish this bottle then do my nighttime routine. I should have written my CV today, or done some cardio, perhaps begun a mindfulness diary or manifestation journal. Never mind, there will be time tomorrow.

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Should have had 8 hours sleep, not sure what I got in the end. Came down during the night to get a glass of whiskey to help me sleep. I'm sure there was another bottle of it somewhere. Found the

brandy which I usually put in the Christmas cake. I should do more baking now I'm not working, I know what's going in the food then, less processed, more lean or something. I plonk myself in front of the fire with my mug. The fire is roaring, my eyes are heavy though the morning sunlight is still rising. I haven't been out of the house for a while now, mobility is tricky and I gave up on my steps. Should get back to that. Just a few paces to the sea. Eyes closing, fire is spitting. Shouldn't have put so many logs on. Laying down, watching the sparks and flames dance. Should be doing more. An orange ember drops onto the rug. I lay on my back and realise I cannot raise myself up. I can see the sunlight coming through my bay window. The window sill lined with different colour bottles, oh and the whiskey bottle. The sun through the coloured bottles shining different lights around the room. They shine upon an old photo of me with friends who I should have seen more of, should have stayed in-touch with. I hadn't realised there were so many bottles. Fire is taking hold of the rug, I should have changed the batteries in my smoke alarm, should have done more. Should hope that a passer by sees the smoke. Should have seen the signs, as the colourful bottle lights shine on me and the flames rise.