

Twelve Thousand Days

I am a middle management manager, working at Brownies. We make cupcakes for the professional cupcake industry. Cupcaketeers have for decades chosen our brand because of the quality and durability of our cupcakes, but we are under pressure from our competitors, Choco and Jimmies.

I am married with two children. My wife is intelligent and pretty so many people wonder how she ended up with me, including me. My kids are fine looking, talented musicians, and home schooled. I personally have no musical talent other than the playing "Funding provided by" guy, sort of a familial Annenberg-CPB foundation. I have no known hobbies or aspirations, and spend most of my free time doing house project work, watching Netflix, and doing a lot of reading on terrorism. I really want to teach a college level class on the history of terrorism as a strategy of political insurgency, but have more work to do to get it wrapped up, and then have to get a gig doing it somewhere.

I have been at Brownies for 4 years, 2 months, and six days. I have 290 days to go until I vest, and 12,214 days until I die at age 82.3 years. I plan on living 30,000 days. No more, no less. I have used up 57.2% of my life, with 42% left to go. I track both of these things. As I approach my last 12,000 days I do have to wonder, is this really all there is to it? Do I want to spend the majority of my last 12,000 days as a middle manager in cupcakes? Or even a glamour job in Twinkies?

How do I want to spend my last 12,000 days? How did I get here, and where do I go now?

Previously I had worked as a baker, bakery leader, chief baker, and even as a Product Manager for Wireless cupcake enclosures, at two private companies and two fortune 500 companies.

Now I was working as a materials manager in a cupcake and fruitcake financial roll up. Cupcakes were the smaller portion of the total business; as everyone knows the real money is in fruitcakes. As a result of being in cupcakes, where risks were lower, we were often seen as the laboratory for grand experiments by the conglomerate. It was very painful.

When things went well, the Queen of Tarts was richly rewarded. He had a huge house, a million dollar boat, and never was afraid to tell you how successful he was, and how it was all his doing that made the project/experiment a success. He was rich because he was a visionary leader not afraid to take risks.

One thing I could never figure out, especially when his mouth was animated and flapping spittle around while talking about his boat and money and things was why he never thought to fix his teeth. They were a mess. Yellow and not straight at all, stuck behind a jowly fish face with botox fish lips, they were hideous. Throw a hump on his back, and drop him off at Notre Dame, and he would be hired as bell ringer in a heartbeat.

When an experiment went bad, the Queen of Tarts started looking for heads to roll, and roll they did. He would sack entire Supply Chain Teams, wipe out marketing, fire the IT team and then rehire them as consultants, and in general rage across the company searching for any real or perceived failure and just

whacking away at it with his croquet mallet. Then he would go boating. When he came back refreshed, he would tell the survivors he was a “take charge” manager, and that is why he was a leader.

I was promoted during one of these purges and was now able to see the mayhem behind the yellowed teeth, and was uncomfortable to say the least. The Emperor had no clothes. No one was going to tell him that. And I am down to my last 12,000 days...