

THE WEEKEND

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He had left without seeing me just before the weekend.

It was my first stress free weekend of the New Year. Two weekends before this was spent in Mumbai, the city close to my heart. They were planned for both pleasure and business. However, the only plans made for business were successfully executed. Pleasure plans, very conveniently, flew down the drain. Weekends of the previous month were mere chaos with family, events and various other unnecessary responsibilities in addition to work. I wanted to relax, finally. I tried not to think about him and all that he had done over the course of two weeks that caused all the bitterness between us.

It was a Friday. I had planned to sleep all day as the previous day was terrible with all the yelling and screaming from my end of the phone and only petty explanation and silly excuses from the other. Someone, I loved, was able to leave without saying good bye, especially with no idea when we were to meet next, simply remained undigested within my system. I must confess, I did over react but then again, I have all the reason and logic in the world to support my actions.

Therefore, as per plan, I lay in bed on my chest with my head buried in my pillow. Very dim sunlight covered the entire room. The heavy curtains blocked most of it from lightening up. The sheets felt very soft against my skin. The room was very chilled yet very comforting. Within the early hours, as I was trying to find a comforting position to fall back to sleep, the construction machines went on loud right in front of my apartment. The windows of my room are not sound proof and hence, I could hear every bit of noise made by every little screw in the 'whatever' machine. People should really consider weekends and perhaps start these sorts of activities a little later in the day. Where the hell was neighbor courtesy?

All this noise was making me twist and turn in bed. Then, I recalled the domestic help was supposed to show up some time in the early hours of the morning. But as usual she never did. My door bell did go off however. I hurried up to open the door thinking it would be the cleaning lady. My apartment was a mess, the laundry bag was overflowing, the kitchen sink needed some cleaning, bathrooms were not looking too good. After I unlocked three latches of the door, entirely for security reasons, the next door lady stood there dressed up in a sari. For a few minutes, I just stared at her annoyed. 'What the hell did she want at this hour of the morning on a freaking weekend?' She felt guilty to have awoken me up at ten in the morning and apologized. Just to be nice, I made a few conversations with her and thanked her for waking me up as I had something

that I made up at that moment planned or I would miss it. I asked her casually if she was going out since she was dressed up. She apparently likes to dress up on weekends. She wakes up in the mornings, takes a shower and dresses up for absolutely no reason. The lady has a 6 month old and is at least 2 years younger than me. I wished I could ask her for some patience.

Wrapping up our little kitty party, limited only to the door, I shut the door as politely as possible and snuggled back to bed. The noise in the background continued but by this time it had become a part of everything else. Perhaps now I could sleep, I thought. I failed miserably!

I forced myself out of bed, cursing myself for not sleeping on a weekend. I tried to spare myself too as it was not only my fault that I couldn't sleep but also the fault of everything around me that wouldn't allow me to sleep. I grabbed my phone, checked messages from the night before that I hadn't attended to, some phone calls that I didn't answer and then simply chose to ignore a follow up. Walking into the kitchen, I decided to make myself some strong coffee.

Recently, my mom visited me in Dhaka. She absolutely hated my addiction to black coffee. She, very strongly, believed that coffee with no cream was very bad for health. She also believed it was the prime cause for my lips to turn dark. Little did she know I was smoking behind her back! Just to make her happy, I started adding full cream milk to my coffee. I didn't enjoy it one bit but drank it anyways. I silently frowned every morning when mom came with my coffee as I was gaining weight everyday.

Thinking of mom and coffee, I decided to make some coffee with cream. Digging around for the three in one coffee packs, I wondered if there was a way to sleep longer hours at least on the weekends. It was hopeless. There was going to be a crisis of sleep. I could totally see it coming. Now it's the neighbor behind my apartment, a few days from now it's going to be the neighbor to my side and then the neighbor on the other side and this would go on and go. There is an epidemic in Dhaka city of building tall residential buildings. There is no space and so people are very comfortably stacking themselves one on top of the other. Very soon, the apartment complex I live in, is going to be the shortest one in the block and there's going to be scarcity in sunlight. I really hope I don't have to see that day!

I wondered if I could request the landlord next door to have his labors start work on the huge noise polluters after nine in the morning. But then, I dropped the idea. Why the hell would he slow down his construction because I can't sleep? Moreover, he lives around here; he probably is unable to sleep too. But then again he is an old hag. He probably wakes up at five in the morning

and walks up and down the street to control his diabetes and be fit even at 80. He probably can't wait to have all the work started in the day.

My coffee was ready. I had nothing planned for the day so I would just sit on my behind and watch TV. Sipping the first cup of coffee, I walked into the living room. The couch my sister got carpentered was not the most comfortable type. I missed my lazy boy. It was more like 'cheap and solved the problem' type. It was extremely uncomfortable even to sit on. The cushions were just there for the heck of it. It didn't give any form of comfort. If one were to lay on it, the cushions don't really hug the body contour. It was just there because it was supposed to be there. Now, I had to lay on it and watch TV all day. It was a little impossible on that couch.

Many a time I wondered how it would be to shift the TV to my bedroom. Amazing! On a Saturday, all I had to do was nothing. I'd wake up, and turn on the TV, be under covers and watch TV, I could fall asleep watching TV, for all I could care, the TV could be on all freaking day.

I stood at the entrance of my living room, from where both my couch and the TV were clearly visible and went into the possibility of luxury with the simple position change of my TV position. But it was not going to be possible just by me alone. There are a whole bunch of problems that come along with it. The issues of wiring, the cable connections and who knows what! I didn't want to disturb what I had right now. I decided to drop the marvelous idea and find comfort on the disfigured couch.

I was blindly engrossed into the TV. I wasn't sure what I was watching or why I was watching. I just stared into the screen. My mind was somewhere else. All kinds of thoughts rushed in and out. Thoughts of my mother, my father, my sister, her husband, the recent trauma my parents had to go through because of my sister and her choices about life and then thoughts of him. Sometimes, I thought I should do what I wanted to. It was my life and I knew what was best for me. I knew what would make me happy. But then I asked myself, really, do I really know what was best for me? Do I really know what would make me happy? My sister knew what would make her happy and she did it. Often when I speak to her, she told me I should just do what I wanted to if I was sure about it. Sometimes, I want to take her advice and sometimes I am scared to.

I wondered what my parents would feel like if I really was going to marry this man that I loved. He didn't belong to the social boundaries I was from. He didn't belong to the political boundaries I was a part of. Meeting him was an accident in my life, but a good accident. I say accident, because I wasn't supposed to, at any point, meet him. It just happened due to unavoidable circumstances that even I wasn't aware had to be avoided. Whatever the reason may be, he became

a part of my life. An important part of my life! How was I going to handle all the people closest to me? All these thoughts clashed with one another and became a mess.

Suddenly, I lost track of all my thoughts. Some sexy Indian model was dancing on the TV screen. She was tall and dark, very attractive. She was very flexible. Channels should not televise these kinds of women on TV all day. Seriously, what the hell are they trying to prove? I flipped channels to hunt for a commercial free English movie. This was another problem. There were too many Indian channels on the cable network. I despised watching these channels, first because of all the unnecessary commercials, second because their shows are entirely useless or knock off from somewhere else and third, even if I watched something and tried to keep up, I'd lose track because of all the damn commercials and advertising of other shows. The news was getting to my nerves too these days. There's never something good on it. It's all about war and destruction! I stopped watching the news long time ago.

Flipping channels, I went back to my thoughts again. How was all this confusion with parents and family going to matter at this point anyways? We weren't quite speaking with each other. I refused to take any of his phone calls and if I did, I refused to speak with him normally. Only fury flew between us. I was starting to feel insecure. This was not healthy. Most importantly, it was not likely of me. What the hell was going wrong with me?

Most of my time, I spent in isolation. Even while at work, I kept to myself. There weren't too many people at work either so it helped the isolation mode I had succumbed to. At this point, I had lost all connection with my thoughts too. Whatever ran through my mind didn't make any sense to me anymore. It was as though I was hanging in the air and gravity was confused with me too.

I tried hard to get myself together over a period of a few days. Everything seemed so distorted. This was not what I was looking forward to in life. But then again, we are never prepared for anything in life, would be everyone's argument. All of the events that have been taking place since the last couple of years have been so out of place, not normal, difficult, and confusing and so much more that I can't even explain. Nothing seemed to work as it should have or should, or rather was not normal. It was as though my life was like a terribly messy room and it was absolutely impossible to tidy it no matter how hard I tried. I was becoming numb to all the people that mattered to me most. I satisfied myself by explaining it was merely patience that I have grown over the years. I tried to figure out what was the reason for it all and concluded it was solely my fault. Perhaps, the decisions I had made along the way were not the best or they probably were but

it s just taking time for everything to set right to where it was. But then again, can everything go back to where it was? I doubt it. Do I want it to go back to where it was? I didn't know. Everything was going to be new, something I hadn't experienced before. I wondered all the while, what was waiting for me, what I am going to be surprised with again.

Sleep had become a challenge by now. I was always so tired but I could never have a good night s sleep. Everyone I knew was unsatisfied with me and my ways. No matter how hard I tried to cheer them up, I only made it worse.

Once again, alone in my apartment and back to loneliness as my best friend I sat in my living room in front of the TV. I looked around and decided I would change the furniture just to make it a little more to match my taste. Perhaps, I might feel a little more comfortable when I walked in here. I looked at the framed photographs of mom and dad and mentally hung them up on the wall where I wanted them to be. It would be great. I painted my living room just like I paint my life as I want it to be. I had stopped painting other people in my imaginations long ago. People never seemed to last for too long. The paintings of only people always fade away very suspiciously. I started into the TV screen and one of my favorite movies was playing. I smiled at the scene and tried to engross myself into it.

The couch was not so uncomfortable anymore!