


STRAIGHT

A CONVERSION COMEDY

written & performed by **DAVID SCHMADER**



"Wickedly bent! ...Acerbic and hilarious." *San Diego Gay & Lesbian Times*

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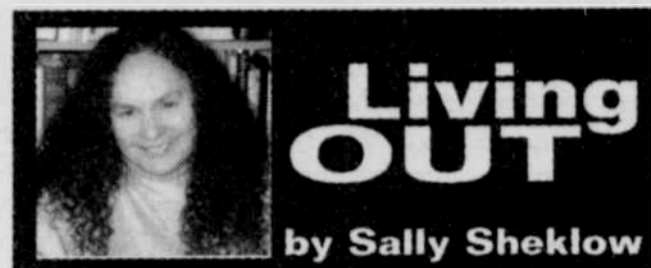
Christopher D. Wright, P.C.
Attorney at Law and C.P.A.

A Class Act

HUMOR

High anxiety

The art of living in the moment (or not)



I tend to live on the anxious side. I worry that my body will fall apart before I get my life together. I worry about that creaking noise in my car's steering column. I worry that the Oregon Citizens Alliance's latest measure will pass.

My therapist tells me to accept anxiety as part of life. Focus on the moment, and when I catch myself worrying, gently bring my attention back to the here and now. She says counting my blessings will help me get through the anxiety.

So let me count them. I have someone who loves me and who can take all the love I have to dish out—that's good. I have a dresser full of clean socks, underpants, T-shirts and sweats. The house has plenty of toilet paper and dog food and a full pantry.

I should stop and be grateful for life's blessings during my morning meditations. But I don't do morning meditations because when I try to empty my mind it fills up with to-do lists.

I need to be in the present moment, slow down, focus on breathing. Feel the air coming into my lungs. Let my chest rise and fall with each breath. Listen to the air coming in and going out. Why are my sinuses so stuffy? Am I allergic to something in my own house? Am I drinking enough water? Am I doing my part for freedom? Is Lon Mabon back in jail yet? Why is my armpit hair gone? Does this happen to all women in their 50s, or is my thyroid gland malfunctioning? Do I eat enough soy products? Is walking the dog enough exercise?

Back to my breath. OK, I'm just here. Sitting in my room. Our dog is sleeping on her pillow, and the cat and Sweetie are curled up under the comforter. Morning sunlight glows through the swirly floral pattern on my curtains. Finches and chickadees chirp their spring song outside the window. The carpet is soft under my bare feet.

My hand still aches from cleaning the oven last weekend when I used heavy-duty cleaner made of chemicals that are now probably killing off the salmon. Some environmentalist. Last week I found a bloated salsa tub in the back of the fridge and tossed the whole thing unopened into the trash, which will be dumped in the landfill and create greenhouse gasses and poke more holes in the ozone, and that will be the end of life as we know it.

But in this very moment, all is well. Turn off my mind, relax and float downstream. All you need is love. Come together. Let it be. She loves you.

Did I waste my adolescent years being a Beatle-maniac? Would my life course have been changed if I had actually studied? How can I function in the world without ever having memorized my six, seven and eight multiplication tables? Is social change possible? What can be done to stop the government from spending \$400 billion a year on the military?

Stop. Come back. Gratitude. I'm grateful I still have a whole day ahead. I am grateful I have a good dog

who doesn't pull on the leash and gets me outside every day. I'm grateful the lilacs are blooming and the daphne is still scenting the front porch. I am grateful I live in a state with deposit bottles. I am grateful the tree sitters stopped that timber sale. I'm grateful I got to see Lon Mabon in handcuffs.

I am grateful to be alive during the years that Ellen and Rosie came out on TV and that Vermont recognized same-sex unions. I am grateful I survived my motorcycle phase. I am grateful my house has hot and cold running water, and I get to sleep on clean flannel sheets.

But at what cost do I have these privileges? Am I doing enough to fight overconsumption? Why do I have athlete's foot again? Will I ever run a marathon? Study Latin? Write a book? Get that mole on my back looked at? Am I petty and shallow?


OK, back to the moment. I think I'm getting the hang of it. I am in the now, breathing, taking the air in and letting it out. I envision myself peaceful and calm. I am relaxed and happy. I wonder what I will wear for that interview. Why did I ditch home ec and let Debby Morrison do all my sewing projects for me so that now I can't even hem my own pants? Why don't they make pants short enough for people my size?

There I go thinking again. I will let those thoughts float away like clouds. Back to my breath. Sweetie is waking up. I'm crawling in with her. Breathe in and out. Be here now. **JS**

SALLY SHEKLOW is frantically awaiting enlightenment. Soothing messages can be sent to sally@wypmprov.com.



"Anxiety" by Edward Munch



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