

HUMOR

Being Marc Acito

What, me worry?

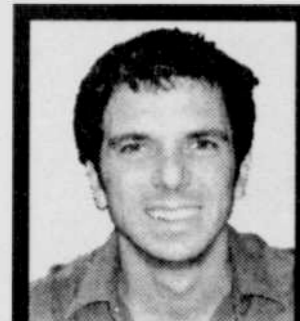
So here's what it's like to be inside my head: "Do you like me? Do you like me? Do you like me? I want ice cream. Do you like me?"

Like many neurotics, much of my day is spent calculating chess-like moves in my brain, anticipating the reaction of someone—say, my partner or my parents or the UPS man—then recalibrating my action to get the desired result.

Of course, this all occurs before I've actually taken the action in question, which is how I can spend half an hour staring at a blinking cursor

before I finally do something as simple as respond to an e-mail.

It's exhausting. What I've been obsessing about lately is the new Charlie Kaufman movie *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, which I haven't seen, although that's never stopped me before from forming an opinion. In it, Jim Carrey goes to a doctor



The Gospel According to Marc
by Marc Acito

to erase his memory, perhaps just to forget *The Majestic*.

But that's not the part I'm thinking about. What I've been thinking about is how Charlie Kaufman, screenwriter of *Being John Malkovich* and *Adaptation*, is getting rich writing about the short circuits in the brain's cerebral cortex, even though *Adaptation* was really just a movie about a writer who couldn't write a movie so he wrote a movie about it.

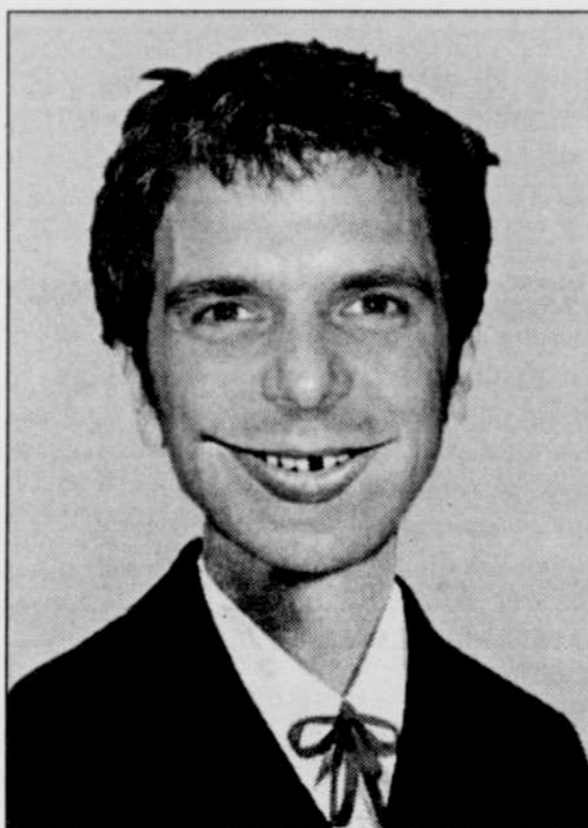
Since I'm having a particularly hard time

coming up with a column for this edition I thought I, too, would take you on a journey through the short circuits in my cerebral cortex and then perhaps you'll think I'm clever like Charlie Kaufman, and I'll get rich.

It all started when a reader wrote to say he thought a recent column wasn't funny. He didn't mean that he was offended, the way some overly sensitive, politically correct types will snipe "That's not funny" when you poke fun at someone for their disability like being fashion-impaired or having no head. No, he simply thought I sucked.

For somebody who spends his days calibrating other people's reactions ("Do you like me? Do you like me? Do you like me?"), this is a total buzz kill.

So then I got all paranoid I'm not funny. ("That's it, the secret is out. I'm a fraud. It's over. I'll never write anything funny again.



I'm going to have to change careers and spend the rest of my days working at a job wearing a paper hat.")

I figured my only hope was to mine my personal dysfunction in the hope that you'll find my innermost demons amusing and commend me for my naked honesty.

Hey, it's worked before. More than once (OK, it was just twice, but that's more than once) a reader has told me that something I wrote made them laugh so hard they nearly wet their pants. Now, while I consider forcing

someone to urinate against their will high praise, indeed, in both cases the thing that made them laugh so hard was the serious part.

As Mel Brooks said: "Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you walk into an open sewer and die." Put another way, comedy is laughing at someone else's pain, although I'm hesitant to reveal that trade secret because now all of you will go out and write

funny things while I remain here unfunny and unloved in my paper hat.

All this contemplation has made me worry that perhaps I'm suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder, so I've taken advantage of my inertia to visit several Web sites on the subject. Then I bookmarked them so I could check them several times a day.


I even took a test to see if I had OCD and discovered I don't because I don't wash my hands until they're raw or worry that I might have accidentally run over someone when I back out of my driveway (although given the way I drive, perhaps I should). No, it seems I'm just your average neurotic.

Now I'm pissed I'm average. See how I suffer for my art?

I did find one Web site, however, that offered both an "American description" and a "European description" of OCD. I wasn't aware there was any difference (except maybe that obsessive Europeans worry about leaving the iron on at 230 volts and obsessive Americans at 120); in fact, upon reading the descriptions (both in English), I found that the European version simply used much longer and more complicated words.

I'm ashamed to admit I couldn't understand the European version.

But my shame is your gain, and it makes me happy to know you're probably laughing at my ineptitude, even though it means I am not only averagely neurotic but vocabularily impaired.

And that, my friends, is *The Gospel According to Marc*. 

MARC ACITO's first novel, *How I Paid for College*, comes out in September. Write him at www.marcacito.com.

What is life with HIV?

fear talking love meds
sex friends family
secrecy (safe) contagious

Are you a sexually active, poz gay or bi man?

We're doing a study with 5 sessions over 12 months about life with HIV.

We'd like your views.

Participants are reimbursed for their time.

SHAPE
A New Study For Poz Men

Toll Free: 1.877.758.0042
A Project of the UW School of Social Work
<http://depts.washington.edu/shape>

HURRY! We've got to get to Hillsboro!

Rose City Softball is starting this weekend!



SOFTBALL
Rose City
ASSOCIATION

Upcoming Events

Opening Ceremonies
April 17th at Panorama
7 to 9 pm



Opening Day
April 18th
Gordon Faber Recreation Complex in Hillsboro
Games start at 11:00 am

We're still looking for new players.
Everyone is welcome!

for more information, you can find us at
www.rosecitysoftball.org or call 503-552-4769