

Hi everyone. This morning's entry is about success. And what it means to me.

A few years ago, I wrote a journal entry (which you can read here: [Scrambled Eggs](#)) that addressed the topic sort of abstractly. But "success" is not something I've written about *here*. In *this* journal. Abstractly or otherwise. And it feels like a reasonable time to do so. Because "Why are you writing these?" is a question I'm frequently asked. And I never answer.

It's often about the books: "Why are you writing these books?" Occasionally, they're asking about my journal entries: "Why are you writing these blogs?" In either case, I bristle and change the subject.

Sometimes, the question is more specific: "What are you hoping to get out of these books?", they ask with a furrowed brow and unblinking eye contact. This one *always* involves creepy staring.

But other times – at the worst of times – they're not really questions at all. Sure, they possess every inflection of a question. The sentences are flamboyantly adorned with the punctuation of curiosity. But I'm not fooled; these are judgmental statements dressed in deceitful costumes. "Isn't it kind of unrealistic, trying to become an author?", they admonish. "Shouldn't you just focus on your teaching gig?", their derision continues.

If my interrogator's only purpose is to asphyxiate my soul, they're going about it effectively. But if they're soliciting an honest response, they need to reframe the question. Delete their cookies and reload the page. Because they're operating under the presumption that my principal goal is sales. The entire endeavor must be a practical one, otherwise why waste the time? But it's *not* practical. I already have a "teaching gig" to accommodate my grown-up responsibilities. This is different. It's an emotional project. And for me, *impracticality* is the seat of the deepest, almightiest emotions. Consider religion. In general, it doesn't provide shelter or calories, but a true devotee will prioritize faith ahead of both. Our sense of "needs" gets warped. Them's powerful emotions. And that's closer to what I feel with this project. There's a story in me that needs to be freed, a piety behind my need to proselytize. It's not about cash. That's cheap. This is far more urgent and precious.

A better question to ask is, "What would success look like to you?" *That*, I can answer. This:

Someone writes me a letter that says something like, "Oh my golly" (because they're not the type of person to curse, and addressing deities directly or casually seems every bit as naughty as cursing). "Oh my golly, I sat down to read one of your journals, just to see what it was all about. But as soon I finished it, I opened up the next one. Like I was dishing up a second helping of a delicious meal. After I licked that second plate clean, I went back for another. And then another. Before I knew it, in a single sitting, I had finished every journal on the menu." Or some such. Through that exchange, I would feel like I had really connected with someone. And that's what I want. That's success to me: it's real connection with real people. If, instead, they sent me money, it would feel somehow sleazy. And unemotional. And unsuccessful.

