

I Wish I Were An Android?

Story by Dana Petric
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Scene I

On Tape:

Escape your body... quit now
Escape your mind... don't finish
Escape your fears... be a loser
Escape your doubts... don't stick with it
Escape your laziness... it's too difficult
Escape your typing... it's easy - keep doing it

Movement: struggle with body part pieces

IT WAS LIKE THIS DREAM I HAD LAST NIGHT.

Finola Flackenflicker:

You're just confusing me - I can make my own decision. I really don't need this. I know what is best for me. Just leave me alone. I know what I am doing... I hope.

Finola Flackenflicker:

You're out there aren't you? I knew you were coming, but I thought it was later. My name is Finola Flackenflicker. This always happens to me - something either distracts me or confuses me or upsets me.

Jeese, sometimes I feel like a piece of dog shit that has been stepped in and squished all along the sidewalk, or a rat caught in a trap or a piece of meat that has been ground in a grinder or a brick cemented and stuck into a wall - trapped. Did I just say all that? I don't usually talk like this. Okay, I bet your all saying "HERE'S ANOTHER FEEL-SORRY-FOR-THE-CHARACTER-AND-NOW-SHE'S-GONNA-WALLOW-IN-HER-OWN-PITIFULNESS-AND-WE-HAVE-TO-SIT-HERE-AND-WATCH" show.

Well, you're wrong. Because I am at a "turning point" in my life. Okay, so I have had quite a few "quasi-turning points" but this is it. Absolutely, positively.

Movement: begin lifting body - raise shoulders & arms

For I have found the solution. I have the opportunity to transform myself into something... greater than human? Something beyond imagination - something so far removed from myself that it would solve all my problems.

Movement: slump down

You're probably saying "who really cares"? Well, probably no one. But here it goes anyway.

I have read every "count yourself in, feel good, self-help" book I could lay my hands on - everything from "You Can if you Think you Can" to "Living, Loving & Learning" - feeling good about myself lasted for only as long as I read the book. But when I tried to apply the theories to different situations in my life, all the feelings of confidence disappeared - I was just myself again in the world.

I've recited the affirmative statements like: Everyday in every way I'm getting better and better.

I have tried to creatively visualize - and I have even gone along the road to confidence:

1. learn to work by making constant effort;
2. accept new ideas with courage born of enthusiasm for living;
3. seek to learn from failure, by making crisis into opportunities for growth;
4. face trouble as a natural part of life, one who knows oneself to be free people who must make free choices, and

5. hold tightly the ideals cherished in
their youth and boldly continue to dream.

And where has it gotten me - here!!!!!!

Android

Poor Finola she suffers so much. Finola has created her own reality based on the quantum mechanical theory of pre-mature cognitive commitment which is the cause of Finola's feelings of doubt, self-loathing, insecurity and low self-esteem. She must be retrained to think in another way.

Scene II

Finola

That was very strange - sort of a time lapse - Did you ever have the feeling that you've walked into a huge stadium - filled with thousands of seats - and there are people sitting in all of the seats - and you wander around looking for an empty place to sit and you realize that there is no seat for you and everyone seems so smug sitting in their seats and they all stare and point that you don't have a seat - and you start walking in circles and circles and circles...

Movement: weave through wooden cutouts - 3 times - begin the words "fill in the numbers, calculate, fill in the numbers, calculate" - use hands - cupped-like fashion - pushing downward motion and keep walking around the stage.

Finola

Until it seems hopeless.

Scene III

Android

PREOCCUPIED WITH HER FEELINGS - NOTHING MORE
THAN FEELINGS... (*sing it*)

Movement: go to position between cutouts

Finola

I am always saying "feel". Why do I have to feel so much? What makes me feel good or bad about myself? Do animals feel in this way? No, because they can't. Does a tomcat say: "Gee, I'm a lousy cat today, I don't like the kind of cat I am and I wish I were more like that Persian cat over there". Of course not. But that is what makes us human, the ability to think and reason and feel. And that is what keeps getting me into trouble.

Movement: Star moving towards cutout of FILONIUS FEELINGS...

Having to hold in my feelings because it is usually inappropriate to say what I really feel like saying and then I feel so full of FILONIUS feelings and I have to let them out and they want to come screaming out. Then those patronizing people say: "chill out" or "take a pill" - it's as if I shouldn't feel anything and I guess it is true - it would make things so much simpler if I didn't feel.

Movement: writhe around centre stage

Drowning in my feelings - they ruled me. I was like a fountain and my feelings the water which spurted in the air. They would keep coming till I felt spent. Nothing left to feel.

(begin role to scrim)

I only wished it were so.

Scene IV

Android

COMPARING ONESELF TO THE FAÇADE OF PERFECTION

Money, looks or just plain happiness, a person is only satisfied with themselves by not measuring up to someone else's standards. The outer layer of perfection hides all the inner imperfections. When you look at people you realize no one is perfect, everyone has problems. To be satisfied with oneself - a subjective quality.

Movement: move toward yellow light

Finola

She walked into the room surrounded by an aura of perfection.

Our hostess, Betsy, seemed to be in total control of the situation. Her hair was coiffed just so - her clothing designer - she traveled to Namibia to take photographs - who actually does that - she does.

And there I was comparing myself to her - why? I was totally different yet I felt so insignificant.

But she made a slip, about the career she never had and the children she raised without the recognition she deserved. I guess she wasn't perfect after all.

Movement: perfection dance

Scene V

Android

The fear of herself not skydiving.

Finola

The plane takes off - there is a pilot, the instructor and 2 of us who are going to jump. We reach 3,000 feet and the fields below look like a patchwork quilt of various shades of green.

It is time to go. The door opens - the air outside is like a solid wall - the sound of the wind is deafening.

Dave will go first. He has a huge smile on his face and he says "see you on the ground". He gets ready and before I know it, he is gone. His parachute is up and he is sailing gently to the earth - all I can really make out are his enormous white running shoes.

It is my turn. I make my way to the door, my chute heavy on my back. The wind is very cold and blowing fiercely. I position myself on the wing and I don't look down.

I have a moment of terror. I recall a story the instructor told us about the girl who couldn't let go of the wing - they had to land the plane and pry her off the wing - but I say to myself: "you've made it this far, you can do it - you know you can do it".

The instructor says: "go", I release - the air takes me as I count "arch, 2 thousand, 3 thousand, 4 thousand, 5 thousand - I open my eyes - if the parachute isn't there I need to pull the auxiliary, but it's hovering above me. It opens and I float to the earth. I made it - I knew I would?

VOICE IN THE DARKNESS

It came lurking from the shadows, its face was filled with fear yet it continued until it came to its final moment of confrontation - I walked away from my big opportunity.

Scene VI

Android

SHE DOUBTS HER ABILITIES - the feeling of inadequacy swept over her body as she realized she could not live up to the pressure that was placed on her to become a "societal successful" person. She would always be floundering in her own mire.

But why did it have to be so? Couldn't she change in some way and find here true doubtless path?

Finola

Why don't I automatically believe I can do anything? Most people say, when they are asked to do something difficult - "sure, I can do that, no problem" - I respond with "um, well I'm not sure, possibly, maybe".

My doubts have always plagued me. Grade 3 I cheated on a spelling test - beginning (spell out loud) so I thought Susan was a better speller and I copied her paper - she spelt it wrong - I had it right in the first place.

Doubtful.

Android

"Goethe - German poet, dramatist, philosopher, born 1749, father was a - to the point - Goethe said "to do everything one is asked to do, a person must overestimate themselves" - that is the key to it all - but as they say what door will it open? Don't lock the door to your doubts, but open the door to your possibilities - because if you never open the door you'll never know what there is to accomplish.

Also in my 2,000 gigabyte memory simm board, I found a great American industrialist Henry Ford - born - okay I'll skip the introduction - anyway he said: "whether you think you can or you can't, you are probably right." Now that I'm on a role, remember the words of Mark Twain: "all you need in this life is ignorance and confidence and then success is sure, success is sure, success is sure..."

HER FACE WAS AS TRANQUIL AND CONFIDENT AS A CHILD'S.

Scene VII

Finola

I once knew this little girl who felt so good about herself - strong, confident, and assertive. Her early schooling was very special for she had the same teacher for 3 years. This teacher, Miss Neudorf, believed in everything she did - in fact, she encouraged her so that she felt good about herself and helped her believe she could do anything - even this.

But everything changed as soon as she reached high school and nobody looked at her and nobody cared and nobody listened. Why should they - she didn't know but just expected that they would. She realized she didn't belong. She was on her own - she had to think greatly of herself because no one else, especially when she grew older, would do it for her. It was all up to her - but she couldn't do it.

Movement: bring both wooden cutouts together sideways - and walk, sidestepping up stage - say each segment then move.

She lost her interests (move), she lost her friends (move) and she lost herself (move).

Reach scrim and turn around.

Yankee Confidence

Excuse me. I'm not really supposed to be here, but I just had to say my piece - I can relate to Finola - I used to be like her until I got smart. I didn't have to transform myself into something "greater than human". Don't get me wrong I'm not putting her down. But I realized you just have to act in a certain way - ****I started acting like the most powerful and most pampered person in the world - I started acting like Frank. I believe that acting like Sinatra has turned my life around.*

Frank would not say "I'm sorry to bother you" to a salesman who has written my bill up wrong and who continue to ignore me. Frank would say "You've made a mistake, sea-slug and if you don't correct it now, you'll live a life that will make a chicken-sexer's look grand".

Frank would not say "Excuse me" to the man who blocks the elevator door knowing full well that his floor is above mine. Frank would say "outta the way sheep-brain".

Frank would not say "oh, I'm sorry" to the man who crashes into my grocery cart without apologies. Frank would not be in a grocery store.

When you're wimpy and unsure of yourself the world looks very complicated. But you can't look at the world as a slug, you've got to observe it as a Sinatra.

As a proper little slug, I would receive telephone calls from people I wouldn't know that well and they would put me on hold before they inevitability ask me for a favour - and I'd wait! Thinking like Frank I don't do hold. Before strangers push that blinking light and place me in telephonic purgatory, I tell them to call back.

(*Note: excerpt from "Acting like Frank"
- 1993 Van Sun)**

Hey, if I can accomplish this I can do anything. Don't let on I was here - I know Finola will make the right decision.

Scene VIII

Android

I was ALSO a humanoid. I specified my own parameters and I am able to do everything I couldn't before. But the only problem now is that I really don't care what I can do. There is no pleasure or pain, no struggle or

accomplishment. It is all the same to me now and I can't even taste chocolate anymore.

I have all the confidence I'll ever need, but what's the point - I just keep doing without any thought or difficulty. It is all so simple now... or has time rewritten every line ... I guess that is what I've always wanted out of life. To be good at everything, to have all I need and accomplishments to be easy with no effort. How dull! Or not.

DISCOVER ANDROID SUIT ON BODY.

Finola

As the new me all my problems will be solved. I will be the most perfect person in the world. With nothing standing in my way I will be able to do anything that is stored in my prescribed parameters.

It is my dream to have data programmed into me - so I don't worry that I don't know the answer - I will access the right answer. Or I will instantaneously play a piano concerto by Mozart, do astro-physics, write a novel, speak another language - and if I want to know more I get another micro-chip implant. Let the wires carry the information to my brain centre.

Strong and intelligent with no emotions to hinder me - cool, calm, collected and calculating. I will do all and live forever. No food or drink or sleep will be needed - no laughing or crying will be necessary.

When I take the plunge, I will have a perfect body, perfect skin, perfect attitude, and perfect emotions... (head moving back and forth) I will be perfect?, I will BE perfect, I will be PERFECT.

No wait, I can't go through with it - I don't really want to be an Android. I will never feel happy or sad or know love or hate - or

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sleep or drink or eat - no devil's chocolate
ice cream, no lasagna, no red wine or ... ahhh!!

GET a hold of yourself - don't back down now -
you are your own worst enemy - the enemy of
self-doubt and fear and folly and fallacy and
phoniness.

I am working within specified parameters, I am
working within specified parameters... I... AM...
PERFECT.

LIGHTS OUT

The End