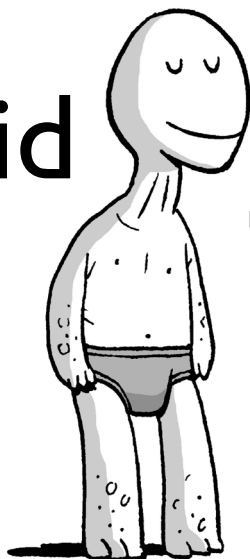




i said



f**k it

The inspiring stories of
people who changed their
lives by saying 'F**k It'

i said
f**k it

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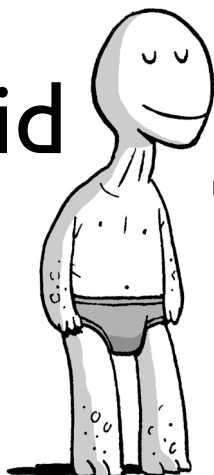
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i said



f**k it

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INTRODUCTION

I said F**k It in 2001 and left a great job in London to go it alone as a therapist.

I said F**k It in 2002 and took Gaia and our twin boys to Italy to set up a retreat.

I said F**k It in 2004 to the idea of ever healing, and I healed.

I said F**k It in 2005 and decided (with Gaia) to try out running a 'F**k It Week'.

I said F**k It in 2006 and wrote my first book, 'F**k It: the Ultimate Spiritual Way'.

I said F**k It in 2007 and published it myself.

I said F**k It in 2008 and let Hay House do a better job of publishing it.

I said F**k It in 2009 and took my first baby steps in creating music for people to let go to.

I said F**k It in 2010 and didn't do a lot.

I said F**k It in 2011 and (with Gaia) closed our retreat, to teach F**k It Retreats all over Italy.

I said F**k It in 2012 and performed my first 'F**k It Experience' in London.

I said F**k It yesterday and had a pancake with ice cream AND cream.

I said F**k It today and hugged someone I didn't know.

Saying F**k It has changed my life.

And, over the years, it's helped change the lives of 1000s of people.

We've had 100s of emails (and letters), we've had photos, and drawings, and poems and songs.

And most of these stories of transformation begin 'I Said F**k It'.

I find these stories so inspiring to read. They remind me (if I needed it) of the deep power of this profanity to help us become free in our lives: by letting go of what we don't need; by realising what really matters; by remembering that life is short and that we should try to do what we love in our precious time; by ignoring what the naysayers say (nay) and trusting our own hearts.

I Said F**k It.

They Said F**k It.

Read their inspiring stories, and you'll soon be saying, to those who are prepared to listen:

"Well, I Said F**k It and..."

John C. Parkin, February 2013

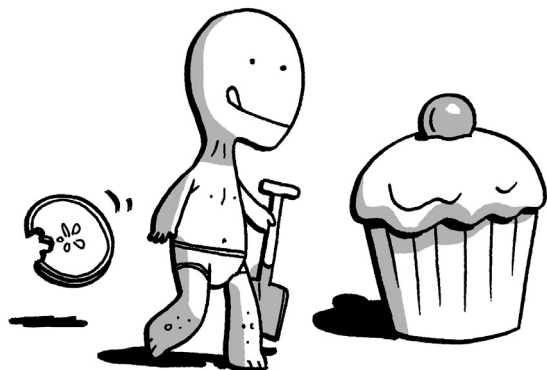
I SAID F**K IT AND LOST WEIGHT

Diets do not work. I have tried all of them. Been there, done that: tons of cabbage soup, Atkins, metabolic balance... In fact, I was on my first diet at 6 months old. My family already thought I was too big. And this ran like a thread through my adolescence, puberty and up to my thirties.

'A beautiful girl but with too much gold on her hips and tummy.' I have never felt beautiful, just unhappy about my weight and not strong enough to slim down. Misery!

Then the book *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way* came to me by chance. When I read 'Say F**k It to Dieting', my first thought was that this would never work out. But I was tired of trying hard, so I gave the idea of just letting go and eating what I wanted a chance.

So, I started to just say 'F**k It' and I swore to myself that I would never, ever go on a diet again in my lifetime. It was not easy at the beginning – my fear was that I would grow fat until I looked like a stranded whale. However, the relief of never dieting again was bigger and my fear slowly turned into confidence. I told myself that I was beautiful, loveable, adorable, wonderful and sexy; that I was in fact gorgeous and perfect just the way I am.



At first I gained a few kilos (no panic), but then slowly, step-by-step, my body started to change. The weight started to come off until I lost 7 kilos, just by saying 'F**k It'!

Now I have an easy relationship with food: if I want a piece of chocolate or cake, I say 'F**k It' and enjoy it. If I do not want to eat what I am served, I say 'F**k It' and leave it on the plate. If I am keen to do some sport, I say 'F**k It' and go for it. If I am lying in bed and do not want to move even my little toe, guess what? I say 'F**k It' and stay and enjoy.

I will continue with my F**k It diet because it is the only way my life seems to work. If I lose more weight, it's ok. If I stay just the way I am now, feeling happy, I simply say 'F**k It', that's just fine.

LYDIA PLANKENSTEINER

2

I SAID F**K IT TO MONEY AND MEN

I said 'F**k It' to money a few weeks ago and I'm now in a position to buy my own home outright.

I also said 'F**k It' to men 3 years ago and then went to 'The Hill that Breathes' where I met my life partner. In order to allow the universe to support you, you need to relax. It's so cool when you are in the flow!

JENNY GRAINGER





3

I SAID FK IT AND BOUGHT A PORSCHE**

I'm a consultant. I do well. Well enough to pay the mortgage, lead a nice life, take the occasional holiday and run a sensible car.

And it was on holiday, at a F**k It Retreat in Italy in fact, I decided to say 'F**k It' to the sensible car thing.

I knew it would be a stretch on the bank account. But I also thought 'If not now, when?'. I'd always wanted to drive a Porsche, so I thought that I should take the plunge and try one out.

As we all shouted 'F**k It' together at the end of the retreat, I wondered how long all our great F**k It intentions would last. I wondered how long mine would last. In truth, I expected I'd still be driving my sensible car along sensible roads throughout that winter.

But then I got home. I went into my house, put my bags down and before I knew it I was in my local Porsche dealer. Then I was driving my Porsche. And

that's what I've been doing ever since. Not terribly sensible, but massively rewarding – in a visceral, primal kind of way. The next summer I went on another F**k It Retreat in Italy. This time in 'Roxy', my Porsche.

I still have Roxy. I get joy from her every day. I occasionally have to double-take at the garage bills. But it's been worth every minute. I've gone from saying 'F**k It, I'll buy a Porsche', to 'F**k, I've got a Porsche'.

MARK SEABRIGHT

4

I SAID F**K IT AND RELAXED

It all started 2 years ago on my summer holidays in Naxos, a small Greek island in the Mediterranean Sea. I was lying on my plastic sun lounger by the pool, unable to move due to back pain caused by a slipped disk.

It was all my doctor's idea. He said a restorative retreat in a warm climate would be the best environment to heal my back. Before I left his ambulance he gave me a book that changed my life: *F**k It*.

So here I was, 1 week later lying on my sun lounger by the pool all day reading this book. After 2 weeks, my back pain was better and the book was full of pen marks and notes. *F**k It* had given me lots of ideas on how to change my life. It is worth buying even if you take just one good idea from it: I had found 80!

I regard myself as an emotional wreck. I have about 25 crises in an average month, although my friends would say I have nearer 30! Reading *F**k It* at the poolside, I realised that all my emotional crises are dealing with the same old bullshit. Here then are my top five crises:

Number 1: Trouble with my ex-girlfriend

Number 2: Trouble with my ex-girlfriend

Number 3: Trouble with my ex-girlfriend

Number 4: Trouble with my ex-girlfriend

Number 5: Trouble with my ex-girlfriend

This list showed me that I had to say 'F**k It' to my ex-girlfriend. But it wasn't so easy, particularly as we have a house together. And I am sure, if you were to ask my ex-girlfriend for her top five F**k It list, it would be:

Number 1: Trouble with my ex-boyfriend

Number 2: Trouble with my ex-boyfriend

Number 3: Trouble with my ex-boyfriend

Number 4: Trouble with my ex-boyfriend

Number 5: Trouble with my ex-boyfriend

After returning from Naxos, I was filled with good F**k It vibrations. Just by saying 'F**k It' to things and thoughts that I don't want or need, I could change my life for good. But 1 hour after the first phone call with my ex-girlfriend, all the good ideas from the book were gone.

So I came up with an idea. When I am being attacked by negative thoughts, I need a F**k It visual reminder. This should work like a street stop sign, reminding me to stop the car and then – after looking right and left – drive on. The idea was to have a F**k It banner that I could place, for example, all around the advertising agency where I work to stop my negative thoughts.

That night, working with an art director from our agency, we designed over 25 different F**k It banners. But something was still missing. The F**k It banner was not working for me. Then the solution came to me and my new mental stop sign was born: F**k It & Relax.

For example instead of a picture, I put the F**k It banner behind difficult clients and other tricky people on my iPhone. If the number from such a person is coming up, I now always smile and the conversation is more relaxed. The telephone is a great source for strange situations, so I put a lot of the banners near to my telephone desk. Also I have a screensaver on my computer and a F**k It & Relax banner on every invoice and my bank account stuff.

For me placing the F**k It & Relax banners in difficult situations, is my daily training. This is the way I become more and more relaxed. This is the way I really learned the message of letting go. Having a book is perfect, but I needed thousands of reminders until I could do what I know I should do.

I became the Bullshit Black Belt Master with fewer than five emotional crises per month, just by hanging F**k It & Relax banners all over the flat and office.

FRANK ERIC STOCKMANN

5

I SAID F**K IT TO ANXIETY

As a 24-year-old female who has suffered with anxiety since the age of 16, I cannot express the relief I felt when reading the *F**k It* books.

I used to be a doormat for a number of people, and had such crippling anxiety that 'it' would prevent me from living my life normally. I remember when I first saw the book in a bookstore. I didn't buy it at first. I was drawn to it, as it stood out from other books in the Self-help section. I went back the next day, as I honestly could not get the words 'F**k It' out of my head. I bought it and since then I have not looked back.

I said 'F**k It' to the people in my life that decided they could walk over me and treat me like dirt. I said 'F**k It' to the voice inside my head that told me I couldn't do something because I wasn't good enough. I admit I am not 100% cured and still get off days when I just want to shut myself away. But the beauty of this is I can actually say 'F**k It' to that too, and have a day where I end up in a threesome with Ben & Jerry, curled up on the sofa watching chat shows. I truly believe that I am finally experiencing and living the *F**k It* life.

EMMA STONE



6

I SAID F**K IT

TO THINGS MATTERING SO MUCH

I had a car accident a few days ago. Not a major crash; no injuries to the people involved and minor car damage. Still, a stressful event as it was my fault and one that had financial consequences at a time when money was tight. But as I drove away from the accident, I wasn't bothered by it like I would have been in the past. By accepting it, letting go of it and seeing it for the trivial incident it was, it lost its power to bother me. I didn't get into the usual cycle of self-recrimination, endlessly replaying the incident and panicking about the financial implications.

Something had shifted within me and had been for a while. I was now employing a F**k It approach to life rather than a 'f**king now what?' approach, in which the darkness of everything mattering was being replaced by a lightness of everything not really mattering. And wow, is life sweeter, more interesting and fun-filled.

My introduction to the F**k It philosophy started in December 2010. I was running on empty in my life and had taken time off work. I had become interested in eastern teachings over the past year and discovered the *F**k It* book. Reading it curled up in bed, some of my intensity immediately faded. Instead of taking the standard few days off, I took 5 weeks off and ditched getting up early to exercise, meditate and be 'good' all the time. I had some of the best lazy days for years and started to relax and enjoy myself. Top of my shopping list was ice cream, an ice cream scoop, cornets, flakes and beer.

I went back to work and for a while life continued to be better. However, during the summer I started to crash again and once again took time off work. This time I took off 3 months and planned to return with reduced hours, but when offered this I realised I didn't want to work at all. So I quit without a job to go to. After a few months of fleeting freedom I started to go downhill rapidly. With neither regular work nor energy to pursue new challenges a void in my life opened up that became increasingly filled with anxiety. I had hit rock bottom. I had said 'F**k It' to stressful work, but behind that was a whole raft of stuff I needed to say 'F**k It' to; fear and control, conservatism, self-absorption, the need to please

and the passivity it breeds. It was live or die time and I had to increase the volume, frequency and commitment to F**k It.

I had previously been anxious and not pursued life. To explore and enjoy life you have to take risks and be relaxed. These two elements must co-exist or the comfort and stress zones will forever limit and constrict. Through taking risks and relaxing, much of the past few months have been amongst the most exciting and liberating of my life.

Externally it's all a bit messy; job situation uncertain, money's tight, renting a bedsit, I am single with no kids. I can still feel stressed and negative, but I see and accept it differently. I'm having fun and opportunities are magically appearing. And if they don't work out it, doesn't matter because with a committed F**k It approach good stuff will keep coming and the bad stuff quickly dissolves.

STUART BRYAN

7

I SAID F**K IT

AND STARTED MY OWN BUSINESS

The beautiful journey of saying 'F**k It' is in knowing that it can change your life path dramatically. It removes the inner voice of fear: 'Don't do it', 'You will fail' and replaces it with courage and commitment.

My F**k It path began in 2000 after a serious car accident. With no job, rehabilitation and an uncertain future, I embarked on studying natural therapies. Like many people, I was caught up in a demanding job that only paid the bills. It did not ignite any passion in me or sense of purpose. By the end of the day I was too tired to explore what my heart needed, where my passions lay.

When I finished my studies, the next step was 'what to do?'. Did I have the courage to completely change career paths? Did I believe in myself enough that I could create whatever I wanted to be and do? Do I have the strength to just say 'F**k It' and go with my heart? Well, it turns out that I do, we all do, it is inside all of us. We just need to ignore the inner voice and our insecurities of what others might think.

My F**k It moment, one of many since that day, came when I decided to open my own clinic. For me, this was not a dream I ever had or a passion I was carrying. It was a moment when F**k It leapt from my heart. Within the space of 4 hours I had seen a shop for lease, called the agent, signed the lease and by nightfall I was a business owner. F**k It is your intuition, your gut feeling. If you let that out before your ego takes over, then you are on your way to the F**k It life.

Without a business plan, or much experience in running a business, the clinic took on a life of its own. With every F**k It came a new opportunity to grow. The F**k It energy attracted like-minded therapists and 8 years later we are a successful community of 15 therapists. Now, I am not saying it has been all smooth sailing. Everything in life has its challenges, but each F**k It moment has been the absolutely perfect course, regardless of the outcome.

By saying 'F**k It' we can open ourselves up to possibilities. I often hear people say, 'I don't know what my passion is'. They say this like we are all born with

only one purpose and one passion, however our passions and purpose can change and evolve with any given moment in time. You just need to learn to say 'F**k It'.

KIM WILLIAMS

8

I SAID FK IT AND CONQUERED MY FEARS**

I arrived at the wonderful 'Hill that Breathes' 2 weeks before my 60th birthday. It was the first time I had travelled alone and I wondered what on earth had possessed me to book such a holiday so far out of my comfort zone – on so many levels. Nursing a bad cold and full of anxiety and apprehension, I truly did think I had made a mistake. But the welcome and place soon made me realise this was exactly what I needed; it was the right place to be. Within an hour I had healing tea made for me and another lovely first-timer made me a special blend of oils to breathe, which soon made my cold a distant memory.

During one of the very intimate tea-drinking sessions, after hours of breathing and connecting with each other, a brilliant turquoise dragonfly dipped and dived around us in the domed space. It faced many of us at eye level and stayed whilst we drank and shared stories.

I write, or try to as it has kept me sane over the past couple of years. That night, after walking up the hill to my room in the peaceful silence of the darkest dark I have ever known, I wrote about this experience. In a big F**k It moment, I found the courage to read my poem 'Tea drinking with a dragonfly' to everyone at our final session in the dome the next day. Reading aloud something about myself was one of the hardest and most personal things I had ever done. As I finished, there was silence for a second or two. I thought 'they don't like it', then came clapping, stomping and whooping.

Following this F**k It moment I began to grow and believe. I came back to face many challenges, but I am still writing. I even said 'F**k It' and read at a festival recently. I am now almost half way through my MA in Poetry at MMU!

VALERIE BENCE

Tea drinking with a dragonfly

Twenty spent souls
take tea with Gaia
breathed out, blissed out
knees make a touching circle
round low tables
as energy seeps like healing lifeblood
between us.

She works alchemy with
glass, leaf and water
filling, pouring, drinking, smelling;
invert, inhale, imbibe
in a continuous
breathing circle.

Time shivers to a halt -
into the dome space
darts a tiny alien spacecraft
hovering slow, stopping,
looking head on
at eye level, one into each
like a beautiful blue green toy,
then off and spinning
teaching us the art
of flying

VALERIE BENCE OCT 2011 THE HILL



9

I SAID FK IT TO ANOREXIA**

The workshops and books well and truly planted the seed of F**k It into my approach to life. And from this seed, wonderful F**k It flowers have grown. When we met, I was still fighting with anorexia and depression, but I am now in full recovery and currently working with a literary agent on my first book: *Freedom To Eat*. I am also training as a Sport and Exercise Psychologist and am embracing my strengths through competitive Olympic Weightlifting - currently London and South East Champion.

I have given up on perfectionism and striving to achieve all the time, packed in a lot of the academic obsession, and followed my heart into yoga. I qualified as a yoga teacher last year and set up Mind Muscle Yoga which aims to empower people to reach their physical and psychological potential. I now teach group classes and one-to-ones, run workshops and retreats, and love it more than I ever thought was possible.

NICOLA JANE HOBBS

10

I SAID FK IT TO MY MARRIAGE**

From a very early age I had a lack of self-worth around men. This was unfortunate as I wasn't too bad looking, had a good sense of humour and decent set of values. It was with this mind-set and feeling of not being good enough that I searched for men with broken wings. I had a series of what I would call dysfunctional relationships, in which my thoughts and beliefs had no space or value.

When I was 26 years old, I married someone whose levels of self-love and self-worth were similar to mine. How could I have attracted anything more? I decided to settle rather than wait for what I really would qualify today as a correct matchmaking between two souls. The day I accepted his proposal, I developed a huge muscle pain around my heart that persisted for most of my marriage. I lived in 'love limbo', as I called it, for 9 years, thinking it was normal to suffer in relationships. This 'suffering' came from not being with my match. He was a good human being, but just not for me.

I knew that perfection didn't exist, so I convinced myself that it wasn't that bad. However, I became miserable, sad, gained about 20 kilos, felt powerless and lost my zest for life.

After a long period of consideration, a beautiful 5-year-old boy and a few brave attempts to consider leaving, I finally decided to say 'F**k It'.

My reasoning was this: I have one life, one shot at this. Would I be happy to carry on living this way and denying myself peace of heart, mind and soul for the rest of my life? This time, I had the maturity and sense of awareness needed to follow things through.

When I graduated as a life coach 3 years ago, I decided also to graduate in life and do the right thing, move my own Everest. How could I expect anyone else to have the courage to do what they needed to do, whilst I lived a lie and did not have the balls to move on?

'F**k It' has been an invaluable mantra for me, one I continually use. It helps me get to the next success level, where even the sky is no longer a limit for me. I am deeply grateful to John and Gaia whose insight and wisdom gave me the courage to live an inspired and empowered life.

CHIARA L.



I SAID FK IT AND QUIT MY JOB (AND GOT A F**K IT TATTOO)**

Once upon a time (2008, actually) my life was going nowhere, except possibly downhill. I was divorced, broke (£45,000 in debt), working in IT for the last 10 years and hating it. I was 44 years old and miserable.

Then I started a relationship with someone who was into what I would have described as 'hippy, holistic bollocks'. She'd been to this place in Italy called 'The Hill that Breathes'. The guy who owned the place had asked her to look at a proof copy of his book, and that maybe I might like to read it.

And so it came to pass that we bought *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way*. Apart from the dictionary, I've never owned a book that I just dip into, rather than read from page 1 to the end (or until I get bored). This book was different. Boy, was it different!

John kindly signed his book and said 'Read page 75'. I was blown away by the first half of the page which described exactly how I felt about my upbringing. As I read the book further, I was simultaneously delighted and confused at how someone could have made sense of my world so articulately, especially when I hadn't been able to! I had never read a book like this that didn't make me feel like "It's easy for them, they've spent 40 years in Tibet, or meditating", or something that meant I couldn't attain whatever inner peace or wisdom the book was selling.

John's approach was – and remains – different. His book is about engaging with all the stuff of our lives, whilst simultaneously realising the futility in taking it all so seriously. What first attracted me to the title was its irresponsibility. But I've come to realise that it seems very irresponsible, but I've realised that (for me anyway) it's actually about taking full responsibility. Although you can't control everything that happens to you, you can choose how to react to it.

It would be safe to say that this started a process of change. In the summer of 2009, I went to my first week at 'The Hill'. The day I came back, I went from

the airport to work and quit. I explained to my boss the reasons why and his only response (apart from wishing me well) was to say: "You aren't going to be working your notice, are you?" I wasn't.

After a year, and another trip to The Hill for a F**k It week, I was a self-employed full-time speaker and teacher, using what John and Gaia had taught me, and evolving my own way of conveying personal liberation. Oh, and somehow along the way I picked up a F**k It tattoo. Ask me nicely and I'll show it to you.

BRENDAN JOHNSON

12

I SAID F**K IT TO NEEDING APPROVAL

My day job as a high-level government lawyer can be stressful at times. My tried-and-tested arsenal of yoga, meditation, deep breaths, brisk walks and long baths were useless weapons in the combat zone I was in. I felt stressed, depressed, suppressed, essentially a freakin' mess! I wasn't supposed to be feeling like this. After all, I'm perky, life loving, balanced and positive. WTF? Something had to give.

And that something was me. Give not to others anymore, but to myself for a change. I decided that I'd had enough. Enough of trying to resolve everyone else's problems. Enough of taking on responsibilities that belonged to others. Enough of ignoring my creative soul. I was forced to step back and not only say WTF? but to answer the question. It was time to let go of every person, place and thing that dimmed my light. I said 'F**k It!' to all *that*.

Over time, I purged everything that blocked my body, mind, heart and soul from shining their brightest. I felt so light and free. The universe's gifts showered upon me. All because I said 'F**k It!'.

With this newfound courage to just be me, I wrote a book that has nothing to do with my day job. But when *Rock the World Rehab* was going to press, fear popped up. Someone suggested that after reading my book people would think I'm a flake in the context of my day job. When I asked him what he meant, he gestured with a fluttering movement like a butterfly, 'you know, free spirited'. That's me, for sure. I had to know exactly how the experts defined flake: 'a person with an odd personality; an unusual person; a whimsically eccentric person'.

So it turns out that I am indeed a flake, and a fabulous one at that. Who wants to be usual these days? What is normal? I suppose I could cut my hair into a professional bob or at least twist it into a tight bun. I could smile less and snarl more. I could trade my fabulous Jimmy Choo wedges for some Naturalizers (no offense, they're just not me). I'd rather poke my eyes out with pencils.

Perception is a scary thing. Instead of changing things to fit into a neat stereotypical box, I said 'F**k It!'. I'll take flake over fake any day! I hope you opt to be yourself and to shine your light on others. And when you do – when you can say 'F**k It!' to needing the approval of others – you will soar magnificently.

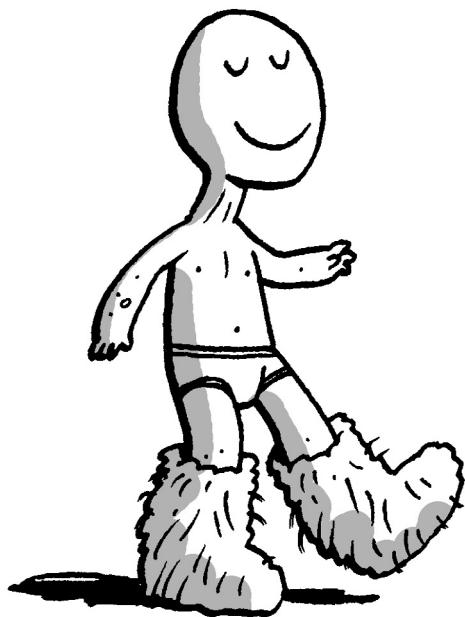
DENISE MARIE NIEMAN

13

I SAID F**K IT TO BEING PERFECT

When I was a little girl my father abandoned me. Well, actually I did see him on weekends and holidays, since he was a heroin junkie by night and a General by day. I became a very conscientious child for two reasons: firstly, I had to be together as my drug addict parents weren't, and secondly because they were so damned strict.

As I grew up, the conscientiousness grew to extremes of self-consciousness and perfectionism. Not the sort of perfectionism that drives you, but the sort that just paralyses you with doubts and fears. By the time I was 19 years old, I was lying in my bedroom listening to 'voices' about how to develop magnetic attractiveness, trap a man and become more popular. I was so insecure I booked into a psychiatric ward for the sake of finding some company.



It's only lately, 22 years later, that I can begin to exclaim 'F**k It, nobody's perfect!' – perhaps the most liberating words I have ever uttered.

It's only now that I can say 'F**k It, who cares what Dad thought or other people think'. I can now let go of a lot of neurosis and stop being false. I can see myself as I really am: a diamond in the rough. And with that attitude I am about to take a long overdue walk in my pink fluffy boots that look like a ruined toilet seat cover. Because F**k It, I'm worth it.

CELESTE CARROLL

14

I SAID FK IT AND WENT FREELANCE**

Going on a F**k It week taught me one main thing: the F**k It principle is not a revelation. It's what life told us as kids before the world got in the way. As kids, you have to trust in everything and everyone around you, and you know what? In the vast majority of cases, it turns out fine.

Even after the world got in the way, life has been politely knocking at our door every time there are decisions to be made or tough paths to negotiate. Through our letterboxes, it's been saying: 'Stop. Please listen to me. I can sort this for you'. Whilst attending a F**k It week, I was able to see that this was true – and always has been – in my own life.

The start point of going freelance was F**k It in action:

A good friend of mine and fellow wordsmith had gone freelance in 1989 and over a beer he told me about the various things he was writing about, people he was meeting. But more than anything, I was struck by the control he was able to exercise over his life. He's a keen cyclist and unless he had meetings or deadlines, he'd often say literally: "F**k It, I'm going out on my bike this lovely morning".

A few more beers and I just knew I wanted that kind of life. I just knew. But how to get it? Unlike my mate, I had just bought a flat and had a mortgage to pay, so needed a guaranteed income. I spent the next few days trying to puzzle out how I could go freelance and make it pay. A few days later, I gave up. I just couldn't see how it was possible, though I knew I wanted it. In effect, I'd said 'F**k It, if it's going to happen, it'll happen'.

And over the next few months, it did happen. One by one, various jigsaw pieces came together to answer the puzzle, concluding with me approaching my then employer and contracting myself out on a fixed fee per month. The mortgage paid. Hurrah!

Looking back, it came about because I had a desired objective in mind. Every now and then it came out in conversations with friends, and it was through

them that connections were made and work possibilities arose. Effectively, people working on behalf of your life *and* in your interests. How powerful is that? And it's here every day.

Don't get me wrong, I don't live inside some F**k It nirvana. I would be insufferable. All kinds of crap still happens to me. But when I sit back and think about what I want things to look like post-crap, that's when life's natural toilet starts to flush.

I wrote a song recently which I then realised was infused by the F**k It spirit. I guess you could substitute the word 'life' for 'love' throughout.

Way beyond my range of understanding
Way beyond my power to explain
Love came on an idle wind, and blew the kiss which
Prompted this refrain.

Just this side of wasted expectation
One small step from sealing up the door
Love unlocked my rusty heart, with a key
I couldn't see before.

And now my constant smile
Tells how I know that I'll
Never search again because you see...
While I was looking out for love
Love was looking out for me.

From a point of frequent agitation
Occupying less than steady ground
Love stretched out its ungloved hand, held me tight
And turned me right around.

And now my constant smile
Tells how I know that I'll
Never search again because you see...

While I was looking out for love
Love was looking out for me.

Yes, while I was looking out for love
Love was looking out for me.

ED COAN



15

I SAID F**K IT

TO WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF ME

I attended a F**k It week in October last year which I absolutely loved. Since then, I've made some big changes: three in fact!

Firstly, I said 'F**k It' and got married. I've been with my partner for 10 years, engaged for 5 and we decided to get married. It's always been something I'd put off before due to the headache of organising it. However, I booked our fairly large wedding in November last year and we were married on 27 February! I decided to say 'F**k It' to worrying about the day not turning out right and what people might think of it. The wedding was fabulous and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I'm so glad that I've proved to myself that sometimes we need to stop focusing on what can go wrong.

The only disappointment since my wedding is that our videographer 'lost' all our wedding footage! Instead of curling up into a ball and hysterically punching the ground, I just decided to say 'F**k It', these things happen. It can't be changed so there's no point in creating frustration and stress when there's absolutely no fix to the problem. Very pissed off, yes, but there's a lot worse that can happen in life. So, I said 'F**k It'.

Secondly, I said 'F**k It' to my job. I decided to leave my job in January this year, due to my aggressive line manager. There appeared to be no fix to the situation so, after careful consideration, I decided to leave. Since then, I've almost completed my course in body massage and I am now on my way to a new career. I've said 'F**k It' to the apprehension about whether or not my new career is viable. Instead, I'm just following my gut instinct and trusting what feels right.

Thirdly, I said 'F**k It' and had a party. I overcame my fear and threw a big 40th birthday party for myself. I decided to say 'F**k It' to worrying about people turning up and whether everyone will have fun. I've realised that I need to stop worrying about really trivial issues, particularly those outside my control – people are responsible for their own happiness, not me. So, I'm really quite proud of myself for facing up to something that before

I would have shied away from and possibly regretted not doing. I feel that I've grown a set of balls and am now more able to take life head on. To conclude, I would encourage others to say 'F**k It' to what other people think of you. It leaves you feeling miserable if you worry about what other people think. It only drains you and creates a lot of ridiculous conclusions in your head. I can now control what I really struggled with before. And it does feel good to really not give a f**k about how people may perceive you. You can't keep everyone happy all of the time.

VICKI BROWN



16

I SAID FK IT TO THE 9–5**

So what did I say ‘F**k It’ to?

I used to work in recruitment in London and was a bit of a party girl. I got head-hunted for a job in Sydney, so I said ‘F**k It’ to London and moved to Australia.

I lived in a great flat by the beach and practised yoga, which I love. But even this turned into a normal, boring 9–5 routine, so I said ‘F**k It’ again.

So, I came back from Thailand, had an argument with my boss and quit my job. Over the next few months in Sydney I was offered other recruitment jobs, but none of them felt right. During this time, I studied Ayurveda, more yoga, Reiki and massage therapy. Three months later, I was in Byron Bay finishing yoga training and starting my own business.

Saying ‘F**k It’ is the best thing I have ever done, as I am now doing something I love and inspiring people to follow their dreams.

NISHA GERA

17

I SAID F**K IT TO GETTING BETTER

In 3 consecutive years I lost who I thought to be my life partner, experienced chronic illness and found out that my job was at risk of redundancy. Needless to say, things weren't good.

Work had finally come to an end in June 2010. I'd given myself 3 months to recuperate (from chronic fatigue syndrome), after which I would be ready to find a new job. But coming home from a F**k It week in Italy in September 2010 (much improved but by no means well enough to get a new job), I said 'F**k It' to getting better and 'F**k It' to getting a job. This would take as long as needed and I would be guided by my body. I rested, went to meditation classes, read books I felt drawn to, worked hard at befriending my fears and generally ignored well-meaning advice from friends and family.

I then attended a Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course. Towards the end of the course I decided that I would offer administrative help to the instructor on a voluntary basis, both to support his work and to gradually build up my strength to return to a job in HR. As the final class concluded and I was mentally preparing myself to offer my services, the instructor explained that as his business grew he was struggling to keep up and that he was looking for someone to help. Without thought, hesitation or any consideration for anyone else I heard myself say 'Me – I'll do it!'. I started work the following month – 2 hours a week. Nine months later I now work 4 days a week, and am looking forward to becoming an MBSR instructor.

Looking back it's so easy to get trapped in ever-decreasing circles of loss and fear. Saying 'F**k It' helps you relax and see that endings really are just new beginnings in disguise. Sometimes, having no plan at all allows for possibilities you'd never even thought of.

Although I may sound like a true F**kiteer, there's still work to be done, as there are two things that I've struggled to say 'F**k It' to – finding that special person to share life's journey with and, all being well, having a family.

But writing this has given me the confidence to do what I've known for a while: say 'F**k It' to finding a man! I'd recommend it to everyone – it's really quite liberating.

SALLY ROBERTS

18

I SAID F**K IT AND RESIGNED

I read in a book recently that the word 'serendipity' was voted as the (English) nation's favourite word. My dictionary defines serendipity as 'the faculty of making fortunate and unexpected discoveries by accident'.

Back in the winter of 2010 I was working in North Yorkshire. This was not a problem in itself as I love this part of England, but it was not entirely practical as my home is in Hampshire, 250 miles away. Hence I was not in a particularly happy frame of mind when I wandered into a well-known book shop in Harrogate, the snow coming down heavily outside. I was pondering on which books to buy as Christmas presents when my eye fell upon John Parkin's book *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way*. It only took me a couple of minutes thumbing through the pages to realise I had struck gold. I bought four copies.

A few weeks later, my boss informed me that I was needed in Germany. Now, I have no problem with Germany per se. I have lived and worked there before and love their cake and coffee shops as much as the next person. However, even as I watched the lips of my boss form the words "We need you to..." a voice in my head said 'You know what, I really don't want to move abroad again, F**k It'. I paused for effect and to allow my brain to compute the gravity of what I was about to say: "Thanks for the offer, but I resign." A small voice in my head said 'F**k! What have you done?'. Then I felt an enormous weight leave my shoulders.

My wife took the news of my resignation with the words "Good, it's about time you did that!". The next move was to book myself on a F**k It week.

Had it not been for the serendipitous discovery of John's book I may not have had the necessary mindset to make such a potentially life-changing decision. I had been with the organisation for 31 years and had a well-paid position. I had not consulted my wife nor given myself any time to consider. But it felt the right thing to do and thinking 'F**k It' really helped me get my tongue and lips around my reply.

RICHARD COLQUHOUN

19

I SAID F**K IT

TO CHOP CHOP, BUSY BUSY, WORK WORK

There was an advert on the TV a few years back which showed penguins on a track: 'chop chop, busy busy, work work, bang bang'.

'Chop chop, busy busy, work work' is a good way to describe how I've lived my life. My young mind, like all of us when we are little, was very impressionable and the mantra 'you have to work hard in life to get what you want' was implanted very early on. So I've always had a very strong work ethic.

I also realised in my early teens that my crappy start in life wasn't going to magically change; that if I wanted anything, I was going to have to go out and get it myself. It was never going to be handed to me on a plate. Getting 'it' for me then was about money, having my own car, own house, people who loved me enough and finding a place in the world where I could feel and be secure.

Like a lot of people, my childhood wasn't perfect. There were happy and not so happy times: bereavement, mental, emotional and physical abuse – memories that could leave me depressed for days, weeks, even years. Looking back, there was too much 'busy busy, work work' and not nearly as much 'bang bang' as I'd have liked! And when I say 'bang bang', I mean anything that gets those happy hormones buzzing.

Eventually, I said the words 'F**k It', specifically 'shut the f**k up' to the stinky thoughts whirling around my head that had driven me nuts for a long time. I remember watching a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon in which Jerry played a demon. My demon is a small mouse with horns and a tail called Jerry trying to f**k up my happy thoughts.

The use of those two words 'F**k It' and specifically telling this demon to 'shut the f**k up' continues to work its magic. I still get the odd minute, hour or day when the demon plays with my thoughts and generally does his best to f**k up my sanity. But the more I use the words 'F**k It', the less he has his way.

I say 'F**k It' to a lot of things: speed bumps, traffic, rubber neckers, automated customer service lines, diets, fitness, more money, more stuff, getting out of

bed even when the sun is shining. I say 'F**k It' to the day job and another year of work objectives that will mean f**k all when I'm sitting in my rocking chair.

By the time you get to read this I shall have said 'F**k It' to a lot more things. F**k It to 'chop chop, busy busy, work work' and hopefully a lot more 'bang bang'.

MANDY E WARD

20

I SAID F**K IT

AND MET THE LOVE OF MY LIFE

John had written a newsletter about how we should face the upcoming financial crisis. Although my little business wasn't in jeopardy, I took an interest in his position about how we could even take advantage of the situation: don't worry too much, spend more time in the gym and more time with people you love. Maybe do what you've always wanted to do but never had the time or guts for.

The next morning I told myself 'F**k It' and bought a ticket to Spain, to walk the Camino de Santiago. After marching a thousand kilometres on the Via de la Plata (from Seville to Santiago), I arrived in Compostela a few days ahead of schedule. This gave me just enough time to continue my voyage to Finisterre, the 'End of the World'. And it was here that I met Beatriz.

The moment she smiled at me, I knew why I had to do the walk and what all these years of waiting had been for. Finally I had arrived. Things had to be done, decisions had to be made, most of which required the F**k It attitude. Beatriz and I now live together in Galicia. It's been 3 very happy years.



Relocating to Spain wasn't easy. My son, my company, a few friends, 4000 books that would never fit into any Spanish apartment and a lot more had to be considered. I've lost clients, but following a dry spell I've been able to win new ones. Old friends that are still around are now true friends and with my – now adult – son I have the most honest relationship a father could wish for. I hope the books are in good hands now. Since giving them away I feel a ton lighter!

BOBBY BREITBACH

21

I SAID FK IT AND CHANGED MY LIFE**

Nearly 1 year after my F**k It experience on 'The Hill that Breathes', I am a happy child of earth again. So many things were solved in such an easy way. Once you get used to feeling whole, it is like a treasure you don't want to lose again.

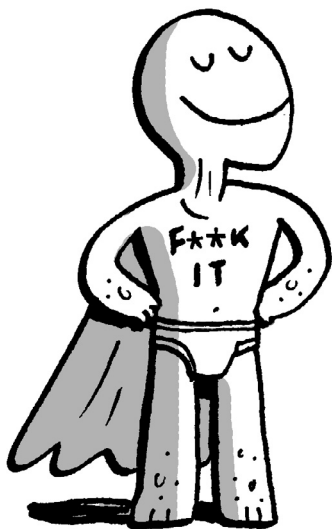
There are still days that are shitty, but there can't be sunshine everyday – especially here in Austria where it rains a lot. But on these days I know now that I did not lose my treasure; it's just in a place where I can't find it at the moment. I take these days for what they are: they will pass!

Here are the life-changing moments in my past year:

- I bought a house and made it a nest for me and my kids.
We have a home now, and it feels perfect!
- I fought my fear of getting into debt
- I said goodbye to my long-time love
- I made myself a winner and I will never be a victim anymore –
it's all up to me!
- I put myself first
- I started to reconnect with old friends.
- I kissed one of them (it was great!)
- I swore never to go on a diet again – and lost 8 pounds
- I started to move my ass and I love it!
- I cut my hair

- I love myself – I am great
- I understood that I am loved – otherwise I wouldn't be here on earth
- I made friends with a bunch of lovely feckers
- I found my sense of humour again, and I laugh as often as I can
- I opened my heart and now I can say: I am a strong, beautiful, successful woman with a big heart (and a big ass) and I don't want to change my life for anybody!
- My F**k It friends call me 'viking' – and I am lovin' it!

LYDIA PLANKENSTEINER



22

I SAID F**K IT TO BEING A WIFE

Find a life partner by 25, get married before 30, have children...

At 30, married and pregnant with my first child, I was doing pretty well on my self-imposed timescale for a successful life. I was having a few anxiety attacks, getting acupuncture weekly and had been seeing a psychotherapist for 3 years. But hey, life was supposed to be a *bit* stressful, wasn't it?

That's when I first discovered *F**k It*. I laughed a lot, cried a bit and got bloody furious at times.

In the heady, lazy days of late pregnancy and the hazy bubble of a new baby, I didn't think about *F**k It* much. I trod the socially accepted path of maternity leave for 8 months, then worked part time.

It hurts to write that my marriage was not in a good place. We had got together very young, and I was a different person over a decade later. There was a year of desperate, tearful sessions at Relate. The tension affected our health. There was so much *pressure* to stay together; we were *married*, there was a *child*. My mother wrote me letters telling me I needed to try harder. I lost my voice for 3 weeks. I couldn't express what I was feeling anyway.

In December 2008, shortly after our son turned two, we said 'F**k It' to staying together. Pretty much immediately we both felt a lot better. Friends spending time with us remarked that we should split up more often.

We all moved out of the swanky townhouse and had a dramatic drop in living standards. But with this came an almost euphoric feeling of peace and relief. I'm now deeply content, most of the time. The tension and stress of 'being a Good Wife' were making my life miserable.

If your relationship makes you happy, that's brilliant. But really, if you are striving and stressing and it's all totally overwhelming and sad, consider saying 'F**k It'. You'll be amazed what the universe works out for you.

SERAPHINA LLOYD

23

I SAID FK IT**

TO BEING A CONTROL FREAK

In 2010, I bought F**k It by chance. I read it and gave it to my husband. He was as enthusiastic about the book as I was. When discussing where to go on vacation, we decided on 'The Hill that Breathes'. One of the most powerful insights I gained during my time there was 'to be' instead of 'to do'.

A year later, I left my husband. Although he loved me, never cheated on me in 16 years and was a great father, I always felt he was wondering whether the grass was greener elsewhere. We had a really good marriage, but I was fed up feeling second best around him. I sold our apartment and my company. I moved into rented accommodation with my son, filed for divorce and changed my surname – all in 6 months.

I have never had so much time for myself. I now have more time for exercise, my hobbies and the new company I recently set up. I also fell in love again. I don't know how the relationship will turn out, but the most important thing is that I still believe in love. We are not great parents to our son... life goes on.

From being a total control freak, I now realise that we can only make the best out of any given situation. And that is how I live my life today.

KRISTINA ERCEGOVIC

24

I SAID FK IT TO A BROKEN BACK**

In April 2007, I was driving home when a car travelling in the opposite direction swerved into my path. We both collided head on at a combined speed of 160 mph. I was lucky to be alive, but was left with an inoperable broken back.

I was 27 years old and barely able to walk. I was depressed and down.

But then I thought 'F**k It'.

I said 'F**k It' to the pain that was holding me back in life.

I left my well-paid job at the time and followed a dream – to create my own legacy, a retail empire. Now, over 4 years on, I am the proud founder and factotum of Loving Outdoors, a multi award-winning online outdoors retailer. I may still have a broken back and be in pain, but saying 'F**k It' set in motion a chain of events that changed my life for good.

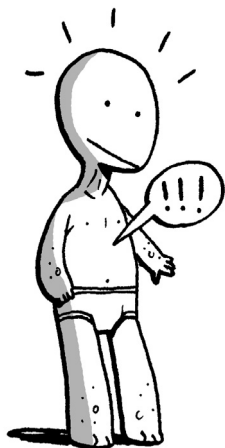
SCOTT

www.LovingOutdoors.co.uk



25

I SAID FK IT AND GOT A LIFE**



I said 'F**k It' to emotional guilt and decided I needed a life. The woman I'd been loyal to for so many years had held me back.

She was meant to be taking some 'time out', but now 3 months have passed, and £20 grand later she doesn't appear to be wanting to come back. F**k that.

I've now moved house, bought a new car, made lots of friends, feel fit and ready to have a life again.

In life you should trust how you feel. If something feels instinctively wrong, don't ignore it. Find a way to listen to that instinct, and act upon it. I found yoga and chi gung helped me do this.

I've now booked our wedding for October and I pick up the keys to our new house next Wednesday. Life is very good.

Saying 'F**k It' can be the first step in changing your life, but it is important to keep the momentum going. Once you've said 'F**k It' and truly mean it, all sorts of things become apparent that you had never noticed before. Good luck and go F**k It.

ANONYMOUS

26

I SAID FK IT TO MY GRIEF**

My mom passed away in December. Once I finally said 'F**k It' to my grief and allowed myself to experience the depths of it, an overwhelming peace fell over me. My mind shut the f**k up and I was able to feel her strong connection and hear her wisdom again.

TRISTAN LADY T



27

I SAID F**K IT

TO THE STABLE LIFE-LONG CAREER

I was working in a government job; life-long career, stable, Monday to Friday, pension, same boring thing, day in day out. One day I was talking with a friend and mentioned how I was not happy, needed a change, needed to get out of there. He asked me whether I was sure. I said 'yes' and my F**k It opportunity was born.

My friend passed my resumé to a company with which he worked. A day later I received a call. All she said was "Can you fly Friday?". I sold my furniture, made arrangements for my car and apartment, resigned from my government job and decided to move to the middle of nowhere, working at a remote mine site in Northern Canada. I did not know my salary, I did not know any of the people in the new company and I didn't even have a place to live. I said 'F**k It' and was on a plane by the end of the week.

It was scary but probably the best decision I have ever made. When I first made the decision to say 'F**k It' and go, people kept asking me why I was leaving,

saying I was crazy to leave a stable life-long career for something unknown. I also heard 'why are you going there' a lot. My response is and always has been 'why not?'.

I have been working for this company for 7 years and have travelled all over Canada, the United States and the Caribbean. I have been blessed to see and do some pretty amazing things, both with my company and on personal trips. I have met lots of fantastic people. I am so glad I took the chance as it has changed my life forever.

I encourage my family, friends and people I meet to make the most out of life. When something has you down, when nothing seems to go right, when you are unsure of the path to choose, when in doubt say 'F**k It' and just go. Don't question why; instead say 'why not' and go. This world, this universe, our lives have so much to offer – the possibilities are endless. If you cannot see the possibilities, just say 'F**k It' and go; the rest will work itself out.

APRIL ANGER

28

I SAID FK IT AND LEAPT**

It's not easy to say 'F**k It'. It's not like you wake up one day and say, 'that's it, I've had enough, I'm off'. Life is much more complicated than that. There are repercussions that hold us back, that make us feel guilty. Voices in our heads shout 'What are you thinking?'. Then there are the voices that whisper, that come not from our heads but from a place near to our hearts. If during the chaos of your life in turmoil – because a life is usually in turmoil before a F**k It moment – you manage to find space to listen to those small, kind voices which are being bullied and shouted over by the loud, ugly dissuading voices, then you will start on your path to a F**k It life.

It takes a long time, hours of thought, oceans of tears and buckets of self-doubt before the courage is found and the steps are taken. In my case it meant giving up an idyllic life that had become a gilded cage in a bucolic but culturally sterile environment. I had so much to be grateful for, but somehow I couldn't swallow and I had problems breathing. I developed a lethargy that numbed my mind. I persuaded my husband and daughter to make the leap towards another life, another city. Despite some initial misgivings from them, everything worked out well and we are all happy following the move.

Luck was on my side. I had taken the F**k It path before as a young girl when I left my home town and country. It helps to have been there before because the second time around you remember to take a flashlight. You know the expression 'Leap and the net will appear'. Every time I dare to do something in my life (something that although crazy on the surface means a great deal to me), there has always been a net waiting for me. What is even greater is that the more courage needed to jump, the softer the landing. And you may even find, like me, gifts waiting. I honestly believe that god, the universe, the world, life, whatever your belief, expects us to make the most of our time here and that it rewards us when we dare to live to our fullest.

JULES RITTER
www.julesritter.com

29

WE SAID FK IT TO THE WEATHER AND MOVED**

It wasn't that we weren't happy. We were. We were just fed up with the consistent cold and had grown weary of weather that was always the shade of gray.

Two years ago on a rainy day in July, my husband uttered 'It's suicidal gray'. We looked at each other and knew it was true. We weren't about to slit our wrists, but we knew we'd had enough. In that moment, our dream of living somewhere warm and sunny went from wishful thinking to a full-on, escape-to-paradise plan.

So we said 'F**k It' and moved to Maui 7 months ago.

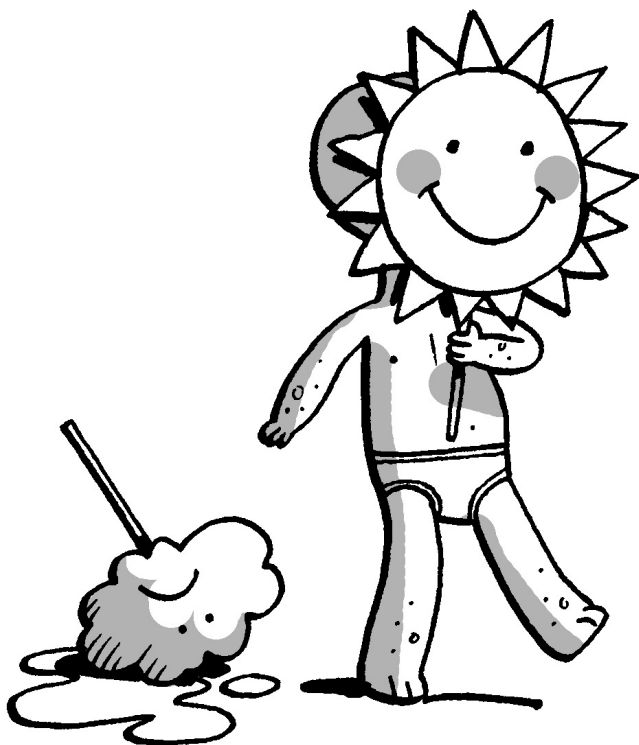
We love being warm all the time. We didn't miss having a winter this year. Instead, we swam in the ocean on Christmas Day and watched the sunset in our shorts and tank tops on New Year's Day. We no longer wear undergarments or closed-toed shoes. We can make a fruit salad from the tropical delights that grow in our front yard. Daily doses of sunshine and salt water tend to keep us in a good mood. We wanted this kind of consistency and now it's ours.

Before making any major decisions, be clear about what you're saying 'F**k It' to. Any time you follow a dream, you can count on surprises along the way. Some are super sweet. Some really suck. For us, saying 'F**k It' was about the shitty weather we could no longer tolerate, but ultimately, it was about letting go of the lives we had in order to create the lives we wanted. It's not easy, but it can be simple. You simply have to know what you really want. Sometimes it takes knowing what you don't want to figure out what you do.

It takes courage to quit the job you hate, leave the marriage that's loveless or lifeless, move thousands of miles away from your family and friends, or... (insert your own big life change here). We all have what it takes within us to make changes in our lives, provided we want it enough. When you say 'F**k It', life doesn't necessarily get any easier nor does it mean all your plans fall perfectly into place. Know this though; you've just taken a huge, delicious step towards being fully alive and altering your own journey of the human experience.

A couple of years ago we would've told you to 'Go for it!'. It means the same thing, but today we'd tell you to 'F**k It'. Trust us. You'll feel a lot better for saying the latter.

LISA EVANS



30

I SAID FK IT AND LET GO**

I was caught in a continuous cycle of black thoughts and despondency. Claire was trapped in an abusive, loveless marriage, devastated by the recent death of her father.

Sometimes there can seem no way out. You just grimly hold on to the steering wheel, hoping the faster you go the quicker you'll get to a better destination. But all you do is keep visiting the same old crap, only faster. Then along comes an idea that really appeals. How about saying 'F**k It' it to the lot; take your hands off the wheel and see what happens?

So, I arrived at 'The Hill that Breathes' with trepidation hammering in my heart. I sat at a table full of women wondering how long it would take a taxi to pick me up and take me back to the airport. The long wooden table was dappled with Italian evening sunlight, groaning with bowls of delicious food and red wine amidst the heavy scent of pine from the wooded hill. It started to have an effect, and then around the corner of the old farmhouse walks Claire, the last arrival. Rays of sun formed a halo about her. Each of her long strides bolstering my confidence that being there was simply the right thing. Our eyes met.

Sitting opposite me, we shared wine and our destinies entwined. Over the following days we saw little of each other. Instead, we concentrated on breaking through the sludge that had brought us here, letting the tears and the words of John and Gaia bust open the beliefs that had so imprisoned our lives; seeing gradually that saying 'F**k It' does not make us selfish and self-absorbed. Our initial connection and attraction remained strong. Sitting in a hammock together one evening towards the end of the week, as fireflies flickered at the wood's edge, we knew our F**k It experience was going to have the most profound effect on our lives.

Three years later, we are happily living together, running our own business in beautiful Sussex and getting married on July 13th this year. Although the divorce and the molding of two very separate lives has not been easy,

whenever things get a little hectic, we both look at each other and say 'F**k It, let it be, move on'. Look what we have achieved in 3 short years just from saying that!

SIMON GRAY

31

I SAID FK IT AND WORKED LESS**

Just say a big F**k It and work less. Less work, more time. Easy.

I was working full-time as a computer engineer on a project 300 kilometres from home. All I did for a whole year was: sleep, eat, drink, work, drive, work, sleep in a hotel, have breakfast in a hotel, work and, you guessed it, work. There was no sport, no girlfriend, no culture, nothing of any interest really. I needed something to change my life. But what?

The most important thing for me is spending quality time doing what I enjoy. Although I liked my job, life is more important than work. I am not defined solely by my job, but also by my personality, activities, opinions, friends and experiences.

My big F**k It moment came when I decided that I wanted to work less and have more time for myself.

So I talked to my boss who agreed that I could work only 3 days a week. Although I had less money, there were many advantages to working fewer hours:

- 4-day weekend
- More sleep
- Eat better
- More free time for sports, reading, visiting museums
- Enjoy your work more
- More energy
- You discover more about yourself
- Feel better about yourself

I also started teaching maths to children and doing voluntary work. Although I didn't know about *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way* before I changed my life, after reading it everything made more sense. I continue to say 'F**k It' and enjoy F**k It moments. But most of all, I did what I wanted at the right time. That's all that matters. The now. And life is about now. It's about moments. Just say 'F**k It' and grab your moments.

PAULO ALMEIDA

32

I SAID 'F**K IT'

AND HOME-SCHOOLED MY DAUGHTER

After my divorce in 2004 times were difficult: adjusting to different surroundings, a smaller home to live in and just life in general. For the past 8 years, I have had to work hard to keep a roof over our heads and food on the table for me and my daughter.

My daughter didn't enjoy school. I would drop her off only to receive a phone call a little later asking me to collect her. She suffered anxious feelings and panic attacks. She was bullied at school, through Internet bullying. The Education Welfare Officer labelled me a 'bad parent', at which point I thought 'F**k It'.

I handed in my notice at the sixth form college where I was working. I haven't looked back because I knew in my heart it was the right thing to do. Financially, it was a gamble to quit my job and teach my daughter at home, but it seems to have paid off. I taught her English, Maths, History and Geography from the GCSE syllabus. Meetings were arranged between her English teacher and myself, so he could go over material she had missed in class, and so on. My daughter gained a grade B in English Language and English Literature. The experience has made me stronger. I wasn't scared to give up my career for her because I knew life couldn't possibly continue the way it was.

The future? God only knows. To continue being there for her and to allow her to grow as well; to establish friendships along the way and to get a job (the last bit is me!). I know I will have to work full-time for the next 5 years in order to be financially balanced again. I believe that even though we make our own path, there is a little path already laid out for us. Things happen for a reason and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Ironically, I hadn't heard of F**k It retreats until last year. I just went with my heart (not always the best option sometimes), but when it's your own child and no-one else seems to want to hand you the gauntlet of help... F**k It.

CARRIE SHERD

33

I SAID F**K IT AND HAD FUN

A couple of years back, I was going through a period of extreme self-doubt in both myself and my direction in life. I was, to quote a favourite band of mine, 'rudderless' (by The Lemonheads, if you're not hip enough).

To cope with work and the other pressures I was putting myself under, I ended up abstaining from alcohol. I had this irrational belief that not drinking (alcohol, not any liquid) would miraculously build my confidence, make me feel better and help me start living up to my own expectations. What could be clearer?

The reality, of course, was that this monk-like stance was hindering me more than helping me. And even though I realised this at the time, I didn't have the confidence to change my day-to-day actions.



Then I read *F**k It* and, although the world didn't change, some of my perceptions did.

So, on a night out soon after reading the book, I met with friends and made a conscious decision to say 'F**k It' to some of these insecurities and self-imposed restraints. 'F**k It' to getting worried about how having a drink might

ruin my night (and the rest of my life); 'F**k It' to not having a drink; and 'F**k It' to the very concept that socialising with a few drinks could only result in bad situations.

So I ended up saying 'F**k It' when offered another drink; 'F**k It' when asked if we should go on to a club; 'F**k It' if I wanted a shot; and 'F**k It' even when I was politely asked (by the boyfriend of a girl I was clearly chatting up) if I wanted a drink. 'Yes, I want a drink and yes, I'm chatting up your girlfriend!'

Did I end up pulling the girl? No. Did I have a hangover the next day? Yes. Did I have fun and enjoy myself? Yes. Is this what I believe to be the purpose of life (to have fun and enjoy yourself, not to get smashed every night)? Yes.

Thanks *F**k It*. You didn't revolutionise my world, but boy did you give me the permission (which I clearly needed) to allow myself to cut loose once in a while and have fun.

DAMIAN ROBINSON

34

I SAID F**K IT

TOOK A CHANCE ON LOVE

A year ago, my life was quite different. I was living in London (having moved there from Australia the year before) and trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. I worked as a healthcare assistant in a children's hospital. It wasn't particularly challenging, but the hours, combined with the loneliness of not really knowing anyone, made me very tired and quite depressed.

Following a visit from my sister, I found myself sinking lower into loneliness. I did have a couple of old friends in London, but found it difficult making new ones and breaking into an existing social group. To top it off, I felt like an outsider at the hospital; that I didn't really fit in or belong. I felt like an awkward teenager all over again; all shy and quiet and just wanting to do my job invisibly, but at the same time wanting to be noticed and appreciated for all my hard work! It never seemed like anyone listened to me, and that my point wouldn't be heard until someone else made it.

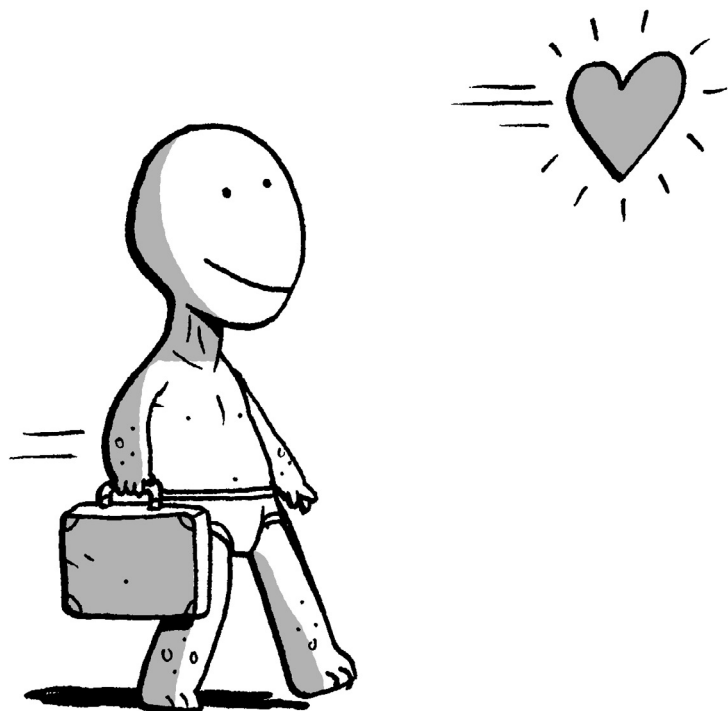
Around that time, I discovered the *F**k It* book and what an eye-opener it was! (I've since bought the book for a friend and lent my copy to my Mum and sister). I let go of so much and it felt fantastic, particularly my obsession with being thinner. I met some nice guys too, including H whom I saw for about 7 months. I liked him, but it always felt like we were just great friends keeping each other company until someone else came along, which for me happened when I met Dan. That was my first F**k It moment of significance: I decided to give H the boot and take a chance on Dan.

Unfortunately, he was moving to Sweden in August to start his Masters degree. When he asked whether I would like to go with him, I said 'yes'. There was nothing keeping me in London and we seemed to have a real connection. I researched jobs I could do and even started learning a few phrases in Swedish. I went one step further and handed in my notice at work. I know it sounds insane, pitching in my job and running off to another country with someone I barely knew, but I have good instincts about people and moving countries is no big deal to me. I'll probably do it for the rest of my life.

So, here we are in Sweden. I've made some friends and I finally know what I want to do – I am pursuing writing and applying for a Bachelors degree in Sweden. Dan and I are still going strong. Eight months doesn't sound like a long time, but it seems like longer (in a good way).

If I hadn't said 'F**k It' and taken a chance on love, living in a new country and completely upending my life, I would probably still be miserable, lonely and living in London.

VICTORIA



35

I SAID F**K IT

TO THE LIFE THAT GROUND ME DOWN

Once upon a time... there was a girl who knew she was good at what she did, but someone she trusted decided to break down her confidence, self-belief and, most of all, self-esteem. That little girl was me. My former boss felt threatened and insecure, so to feel good about herself, decided to break me down. And over 3 years ago she succeeded in crushing me.

But out of this cloud comes a silver lining. Something in my head – the little inner voice – decided that enough was enough; it was time to say ‘F**k It’ to everything. At the end of the day, who else was I going to answer to but me? So I asked myself ‘would I look back on my life with regret’ or would I think ‘go girl, you did your best and you did really well?’. Well, that’s when I discovered the powerful tools that can help you to pick yourself up and get on with living. It was now or never. In that moment, something lifted. I felt like my shoulders were lighter, like I had been wearing a heavy robe that was weighing me down and now it was no longer there. Something had changed.

I can honestly say I wouldn’t be doing what I do right now if it hadn’t been for the bully. Mine wasn’t exactly a fairytale start-up business story. I had left a world full of friends and financial security to stand up to what I believe in: to work with integrity, honesty and most of all, respect for other people. I decided that I would use the skills and knowledge I had acquired to build my confidence. Out of this was born my unique style of marketing coaching for women in business: Strategic Secret.

It didn’t happen overnight. Starting my own business was daunting. I didn’t want my friends and extended family to know about it either. Why? Because I didn’t believe I could do it! I also knew that they would think that I couldn’t do it and would most probably tell me so. But 2 years on, here I am and I absolutely love what I do.

The opportunities arising would not have come my way had I not changed my thinking and believing and, of course, saying a huge 'F**k It' to the life that ground me down and the people that broke me down!

ANJALA FARMAH

36

I SAID F**K IT AND LEARNT TO RELAX

Due to several tragic events (including the death of loved ones), my life got out of balance. I started to become misanthropic, cynical, tired of society, humanity and life as a whole. I stumbled upon the first *F**k It* book by chance. At first, I was sceptical about the idea: it sounded too simple. But once I began reading, I became immediately convinced, especially the part about when you want to achieve something, you have to stop wanting it desperately. On several occasions in my life, things would come to me only when I gave up wanting them and just relaxed.

The *F**k It* philosophy gave me a more relaxed attitude towards life (the *F**k It* meditation from the audiobook was particularly helpful). The practical tools in the book enabled me to relax more in specific situations through conscious breathing, letting go, accepting things as they are and watching impartially.

The *F**k It* philosophy also helped me to see that life is neither good nor bad – it just is, and the quicker you accept this fact, the better. This triggered a kind of journey that finally led me to Taoism and Zen Buddhism. I now do Zazen, Tai Chi and Ba Duan Jin every day.

These developments (among others) gave my life a positive shift, which has also spread to other family members – so the *F**k It* philosophy is contagious! When things get really hectic, a big, hearty ‘*F**k It*’ is Zen in a nutshell.

TIMO

37

I SAID FK IT TO BEING A SIZE 12**

After saying 'F**k It' to being a size 12, gradually my anxiety reduced, my self-esteem went up and my marriage (including my sex life) improved greatly. As I removed dieting and the pursuit of size 12 from my life, I found I have space for plenty of other stuff, like hobbies. I stopped feeling guilty about what food I should and shouldn't be eating, and I ate food that I actually liked.

I gave up my 7 hours a week in the gym and got a bike instead (I've done the London to Brighton bike ride twice). I now enjoy bike rides out in nature, which calms me down and helps with my general well-being. I threw out all the clothing I was going to 'slim into' and now I only have clothing I love wearing – no more hiding in black tents for me!

I also quit smoking after twenty years of twenty a day. I used to binge drink to get away from the fact that I hated – absolutely hated to the point I would self-harm – what I saw in the mirror. Now I enjoy a drink, yes, but the urge to get drunk until I pass out has disappeared.

As I freed up this headspace, I realised I didn't really like my job. I was working the 9–5 and commuting on the M25 to get money to buy me things that would cheer me up because I hated my job. I was comfort eating a lot at work in order to get me through the day. I had thought that if I could become a size 12, I would be handed the keys to the kingdom and my life, including my job, would become so much better. Of course, this was all an illusion so I quit my job and set up on my own.

I set up www.fuckthediets.com in order to encourage others to quit the diet/weight loss treadmill; to go out and create the life they want without waiting until the weight has gone. Far too many people say things like 'I'll quit my job when I've lost 30 pounds' or 'I'm not going to have a holiday until I look good in a bikini'. Too many people actually feel their lives are pointless unless they can be slim. Life is too short to be on a constant quest to change the body you have. Trying to lose weight can act like a sticking plaster over all the other little niggles and problems a person has.

I'm not telling people to go eat doughnuts all day on the sofa (if they want to though, I won't judge them for it; it's their body and their life), but I am saying that this constant quest to reach a certain size or weight can result in failure each time. So why not invest that time and effort in enjoying life now and doing as much as you can for your health? This will include your mental health – don't spend your life beating yourself up for not being something you may never be. That would be a tragic waste of talent and energy.

There are so many great people out there not being as great as they can be because they believe their bodies aren't up to scratch. This is madness and I hope to help change that.

JENNY JAMESON

38

I SAID F**K IT AND IT SAVED MY LIFE

Saying 'F**k It' literally helped save my life. In 2010, I had a seemingly great job and long-term boyfriend, but I was very unhappy in the relationship. Splitting up with him alongside feeling very stressed at work led to me taking 2 months off from work due to depression. I have no idea what caused me to sink so low. I had just been promoted and everything should have been great. A dear friend gave me 'the way of F**k It' to cheer me up, and I was hooked.

I read *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way* and also listened to the F**k It show. Through words, music and help from close family and friends, I got better and went back to work. I also bought copies of *F**k It* for friends and family, and took a copy with me wherever I was working in Europe. It's my bible.

Six months later I was beginning to feel blue again. Things had got on top of me at work and all the little things that don't really matter started to get to me again. So I re-read my bible and realised that there was something I'd always wanted to do in my life, but had put off due to commitments and obligations: to go travelling. The thought of leaving my job and giving up my life in England was damn scary. I had a lot of thinking to do before making this decision.

After a business trip to Paris, I hopped on the Eurostar back to London and a girl sat opposite me. She pulled out some wine from her bag and I asked her 'Bad day?'. We laughed and got chatting. For some reason I totally opened up to this stranger and we swapped life stories. She'd had a much rougher time than me that year and her problems totally put mine in perspective. Then something just clicked. We swapped numbers, I gave her my copy of *F**k It*, and we have kept in touch since. She also swears by it now. The day after my Paris trip, I walked into work and handed in my notice. F**k It.

Since leaving work I have travelled to Australia and spent the last 6 months in Western Australia. I'm currently working in Sydney, after which the next stop is Southeast Asia. I've had so many awesome experiences. I haven't looked back and hope I never will. I even had the courage to work for the same company that I had worked for in the UK, because the things that got to me before just

don't matter in the way we think they do. It's just a means to an end so I can save up for the next part of my trip – I'll have no issue leaving them all over again to continue travelling. My coping mechanisms are so much better thanks to F**k It.

LUCY HOLDEN

39

I SAID FK IT AND RECOVERED FROM MY EATING DISORDER**

At the end of 2009, my husband and I decided to say 'F**k It' to his high-paying job and travel the world. We planned our itinerary for 6 months and in July 2010, our 'F**k It' became a reality. For the next 8 months we travelled with our two children to 20 countries around the world. During our travels, I was still recovering from an eating disorder and kept a journal of my thoughts and recovery in each of the countries we visited. Not long before we left, on 27 April 2010, I wrote:

"I have been inspired to say 'F**k It' to all of it, by John Parkin, author of *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way*. So, F**k It to rules and regulations, both self-imposed and other; F**k It to self-control and discipline; F**k It to goals; F**k It to what other people think of me and what I'm doing; and most of all, F**k It to food and F**k It to my issues, whatever they are. I think this is a much more eloquent method of getting out of my own way and letting my mind and body work it out at their own pace."

At our first stop in Sanur, Bali on 8 August 2010, I wrote:

"I'm convinced it's got to do with stress and the chill factor. Stress is caused by fear and fear sells stuff, especially in the weight loss industry. I once read a book that stated simply "the reason you are fat is because your body is toxic." I'm clued up on the acid/alkaline balance thing in the body. My Ph test strips are now turning a dark shade of green. But why? What's changed? Perhaps I'm finally employing the F**k It strategy outlined in John Parkin's book or perhaps I've let go of the need to control it all. I've stopped worrying and am letting my subconscious unravel and do its job at its own pace."

I believe by saying 'F**k It' to my life as I once knew it – obsessive, controlling, anal – I was able to fully recover from my eating disorder. And also, by saying 'F**k It' to a highly stressful, although well-paying job, we were able to share the experience of a lifetime as a family. Needless to say, when we arrived back

in Australia my husband immediately gained a higher role and higher paying job, and now we're living a pretty darn good life.

I was also blogging for a few years to help myself and others going through similar issues. On 10 April 2011, I posted:

"It's all going along cruisey. You're beginning to believe that what you want is indeed possible. You're starting to trust yourself more and more each day. You're no longer preoccupied, all of the time, with food. You're thinking your body actually looks OK. It all seems to be falling into place. And then it happens. You don't recognise what is going on. You don't know what you're feeling. You tap (or not). You pray (or not). You try distracting yourself with some other task. But still it persists. That feeling of wanting to eat. Nothing you're doing is working to stop it.

"It is here you have two choices. But before you make the choice there's something you can say: 'F**k It'. Then you can either eat or not eat. F**k It means I surrender, this time. It takes the caring out of the equation. It disconnects you from your thoughts. One meal, one day, even one week of eating does not make a difference in the scheme of things. You are on a journey. A journey to become better and better. So you might as well say 'F**k It' and get on with the journey. Accept that there may be a slip up (or three) along the way. But know that each time is an opportunity for learning, a time for growth. Whether you do in fact end up eating or not is unimportant. What is important is that you continue on your chosen path to freedom. Say 'F**k It' and move on."

I would encourage others to say 'F**k It' because without those two magical words, dreams simply stay dreams. F**k It opens yourself and your life to whole new opportunities for greatness.

SHELLEY STARK

40

I SAID FK IT**

AND EVERYTHING CHANGED

There are little F**k It things and big F**k It things. The little things are about our attitude to life. The big F**k It things make the chapters in the book that is our life. Here's a little F**k It: I say 'F**k It' to writing 600 words for John's book. I'm sure 200 is quite enough!

Big F**k It things have happened to me. They have mostly been very scary and sometimes upsetting, however, they have all been the most amazing decisions in the end. It's not important to me that you know about my life, so this is where I say 'F**k It' to sharing my life with you. Instead, I'll share what F**k It has taught me and where it has taken me.

What does it mean to say 'Fk It'?**

When we say 'F**k It', first we let go; we say no thanks to our current situations, to expectations, to commitments, to other people, to our friends and loved ones. Therein lies pain and upset because of the attachment, but that's ok. What this gives us is space, and in that space, with the right ingredients, the desired outcome will manifest.

How do I make it work?

There is a recipe. The closer I stick to it, the better the result:

- I have to listen deep inside myself to find the true path
- I must have faith in the universe: that it knows the right path, and in the manifestation of what is chosen
- I have to make space for the magic to happen

What has changed for me?

Everything has changed. Everything about how I see the world has changed; to love the world as it is and others as they are, to be able to listen, to be able to

see, to believe in the unbelievable, to have faith in the mystery, to know that to open myself up to the possibility is to invite magical gifts into my life. The world is becoming what I believe it to be, a place of magic and wonder where the impossible is possible.

The problem with Fk It?**

It's addictive. To say and act upon F**k It is to close our eyes and jump. We have to let go to gain, and we learn that it's good. Then I wonder 'how much can I let go of?' Ultimately, we can let go of everything except life itself. How far do we go? F**k It, who cares?

Today, I feel as though this is only just beginning. A few days ago, I said a little 'F**k It' and did my first shamanic journey, a journey to other worlds. My life has changed again. It's amazing. So then I ask 'what can I say 'F**k It' to next?' Here lies the really amazing truth for me now: F**k It is no longer about just saying it. It is about the journey to the F**k It moment in time, and the journey after. Every morning I wake to the wonder and mystery of the journey with the faith of knowing where I am going.

The most recent F**k It thing (of some significance) and I have no idea where this story is going: a 60ft ex-fishing boat for converting into something comfy.

MARK RAWLINGS

<http://www.facebook.com/monarch.theboat>

41

I SAID F**K IT TO ILLNESS

I said 'F**k It' to illness, having weak boundaries, meeting everyone else's needs before my own and seeing emotions as weakness.

As a result, I was rewarded with energy!

LEISA ZAKERI



42

I SAID FK IT TO CARING WHAT HAPPENS**

I write literary fiction. My novels are nuanced and my story lines have ambiguity. I readily admit that I draw from personal experience, but it would take a bored scholar to dig out the connections to my true life. I tell audiences that I wouldn't have fun if I didn't have a lot of emotional autobiographical material. Then I drone on about my favourite topic: do I write for vindication or vindictiveness? I've always been a little coy about how much is real. I haven't wanted hurt feelings or lawsuits.

My latest book is my tenth novel. And it's this book that made me say 'F**k It, I don't care what happens'. I'd reached a point where I was willing to stop writing, to rest on my laurels, play with the grandchildren and, to be honest, sit around and watch crap on television. But one of my editors phoned one afternoon and said, "Aw, come on, you've got another book in you. Just think about it." I wanted to prove her wrong, but I was going to give her a fair chance. So, reluctantly I turned off Dr Phil and Anderson Cooper and lolled around thinking hard.

My darkly comical fiction is character-driven. Once I have a full-blown protagonist, a novel pretty much writes itself. That character, who is usually a whacky woman, is defined by her circumstances, and a story flows from there. No screwy women presented themselves. I didn't shrug. I went through real people I knew. Male, female. Old, young. Family, friends. And to my surprise, my first ex-husband came to mind. Of course, he wasn't going to be the person from whose point of view I was going to write. He was an ex for a good reason. Myself? No, that wasn't funny. My daughter? No, she was a finer writer than I. But she was waiting for me to die before she sat down at the keyboard. That left my son. Perfect. The story of my son's life when he lived in the house with my then husband was a powerful one. Good makings for a novel. I could make the case to myself that I had a great narrative. I also could make the case for both vindication and vindictiveness.

I wrote the book in 4 weeks, as if I were in a fever. A book written that quickly can be either like one of those essays reputed to have been written in

college when kids were on speed and scribbled the entire answer on a single line – or like what I wrote: a tight, neat whole book. The editors found little more to fix than Microsoft Word's arbitrary decision to put a double space between paragraphs.

The book came out in May, and it changed my spirit a lot. I had a major F**k It attitude as I promoted it. I was never coy. I told interviewers that to some small extent it is fiction, because fiction is shaped better than fact. But the important truths are just that: important truths. The father character is based one hundred per cent on a real person, and I know because I was married to him.

All I had left to do was poke around to be sure some troublemaker would put a copy in front of him. I've had no blowback, certainly no legal action. Just a huge amount of sympathy and empathy. Finally the bully is helpless. I had said 'F**k It' and forged ahead.

PATTY FRIEDMANN

43

I SAID F**K IT TO SUPERSTITION

I'm gonna be 50 on Friday 13 April. I was also born on one. And I say 'F**k It' – I love who I am!

JULIE RUCK



44

I SAID FK IT AND JUMPED THE TRAIN**

I should have known in 1990 when we first started dating. We were drinking a bottle of wine by the railroad tracks when a stationary train started moving. We, of course, decided to jump it! As it started going faster and faster, we climbed to the top of the train car and wondered where it was going. We fantasised about staying on until it stopped. Eventually, rationality and practicality got the better of us and, since I had to work the next day, we decided to jump off. By this time the train was moving pretty fast... so much for the romantic notion. Luckily, we were not hurt as we jumped and rolled to safety, security and the comfort of our existing lives.

Since then my husband, Chris and I have f**ked it all a couple times. In 1999, we quit our jobs and hiked the Appalachian Trail, 2150 continuous miles from Georgia to Maine in the United States. After that walk we settled down for 6 years in a lovely home in Vermont. We both had perfect jobs (him a coffee taster and me working at a craft brewery), but we soon got restless again. We started thinking 'Why do people wait until they are sick, divorced, have lost a loved one or a job to really start living their lives?'. We decided it was time to once again grab life by the horns. We sold our house, gave our car to my Mom, sold most of our possessions and travelled through Central and South America for an exhausting yet glorious year!

It has been 5 years since that trip. We are now in Canada living the dream... no, seriously. Chris is still a coffee taster and I am a yoga and pilates instructor. Although we love our jobs and have lived in exciting cities these last few years due to his work (Chicago, Toronto and now Philadelphia and now Montreal), I can feel that restless spirit once again starting to rise like the Kundalini serpent moving through the spine.

Of course we go on great holidays, but I continually find myself thinking 'Can't we just 'F**k It' all and stay a while?'. Yes, of course we can and I'm sure we will again

one day. But life is all about the ebbs and flows, the yin and yang, the balance of responsibility and patience with wanting to jump the train now!

Sometimes I still wonder where that train was heading. I wish so bad that I would have said 'F**k It'... one of the few regrets in my life. After all, with the exception of smoking crack and sleeping with hookers you rarely regret the things you have done, but that's ok. Instead of dwelling on the past and focusing on what I didn't do, I'll look forward to the next time as I know we'll never be done saying 'F**k It' all!

CARRI URANGA

45

I SAID F**K IT

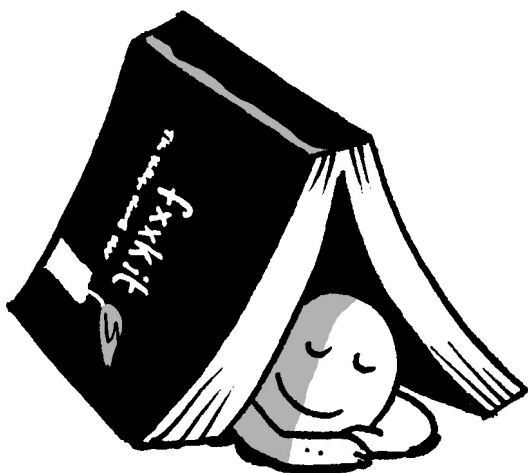
AND ENDED UP A TOY BOY

'F**k It, just write a little story. It doesn't matter how good... just do it.' This was my first thought. And many F**k Its in between. After reading a lot of great books on freedom and living in the moment, it was the F**k It attitude that helped me meet women. Every time I saw a beautiful girl, I just said 'F**k It', emptied my mind, grew a pair and talked to her.

I said 'F**k It' to university and I'm going to be a chef instead. I'm now 22, in a relationship with a 28-year-old lawyer and gonna be a trophy husband!

JOHANNES





46

I SAID F**K IT

AND EMBRACED THE FUTURE

I bought *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way* about 2 years ago and it sat at the top of my reading pile until a few months ago. I hadn't read it because I was happy – married to a wonderful man and very much in love. My life was perfect. Well, I thought it was until my husband of just over a year announced that he didn't love me, had never loved me and had been sleeping with another woman (someone I knew) for our entire marriage.

Overnight, I went from receiving poetry and flowers from my husband to being informed we were getting a divorce. If that wasn't bad enough, he also threw me out of our home. To say that I was devastated would be a gross understatement.

I veered from a state of numb shock to soul-crushing grief several times a day, whilst trying to hold down my job, find somewhere to live and stand up for myself in a legal battle with the man who had been my best friend for most of my adult life.

I hit a low point about a month after my marriage ended; I received a 'lovely' letter from my husband informing me that he was divorcing me for my unreasonable behaviour. I sat on my bed with the paper clutched in my hand with emotions so intense I felt like I was being ripped apart. In that moment I really, truly wanted to die. I knew that I had to do something to occupy myself, so I grabbed the book off the top of my reading pile.

I don't believe in any particular god, but I do think that it was beyond fortunate that it happened to be *F**k It*. I read it every night and when a fortnight later a mutual friend informed me that my husband was taking his new woman to New York for Christmas, I discovered the joy of saying 'F**k It!' I hollered it at the top of my voice and felt as if a great weight had been lifted. It might have helped if I hadn't done this in the middle of a busy market, but I didn't even care about the looks. I held my head high and thanked the universe for all the wonderful things in my life.

The book hasn't left my side since. It is a permanent feature in my handbag and although it's looking a little worse for wear, I wouldn't part with it. I dip in whenever I need to. When my husband had divorce papers specially delivered to me on Valentine's Day, you can guess what I said. Five months after the worst day of my life, I'm not yet divorced and I'm living with my parents, but I am healthy and can honestly say that I'm happy. I feel blessed by the opportunities that lie before me and I am planning to take the book with me as I spend this summer travelling around Italy. It's a dream I've had for a long time and I very much doubt that it would be happening if not for the author's inspiring words.

MELANIE WILTSHIRE

47

I SAID FK IT AND PUBLISHED**

After donating a kidney to my brother, I started writing a book about the experience. Nine years later, and after months of hard work and a lot of tears, I was happily waiting for a proof copy from an online self-publishing company when two things happened.

Firstly, I discovered that the surgeon who had operated on me was in the middle of a case in the High Court. I started freaking out about everything I'd written and most of all, what would happen if my book encouraged someone to donate a kidney and something awful happened to him or her? I didn't know what to do. Secondly, I got a phone call from a family member who was against publishing the book. They felt it was a private family matter and I didn't have the right to talk about it. I lost my temper and they hung up.

There was no need for me to publish the book; the material was already public on my website (which could be taken down at a moment's notice) and there was no publishing company with orders to fill. I could quietly let the book fade away. If I went ahead and published, I could ruin a family relationship, not to mention the legal issues that might arise. 'What's the rush?' friends asked. 'Why not just leave it for a bit and see what happens?'

When my proof copy arrived I took it to a park and read it through with as much clarity as I could. I changed one word. I knew that the book was as honest and fair as I could make it, and I couldn't let go of the other question: 'If not now, when?'

So I said 'F**k It', pressed the publish button... and nothing bad happened. Even my family accepted that I had done what I thought was right, especially when I told them about the emails I'd had from readers thanking me for helping them through such a difficult time.

When faced with a deadline or an immediate consequence, we can say 'F**k It', but it's harder to say 'F**k It' to the 'wait and see' moments. Why quit your job when it upsets your parents and you can wait until next year? Why start a

business when everyone says it's the wrong time? Why the hell not? I say 'F**k waiting for the right time. Do it even if it's the wrong time, because the right time may never come'.

PEARL HOWIE

48

I SAID F**K IT

AND RAN OFF TO ART SCHOOL

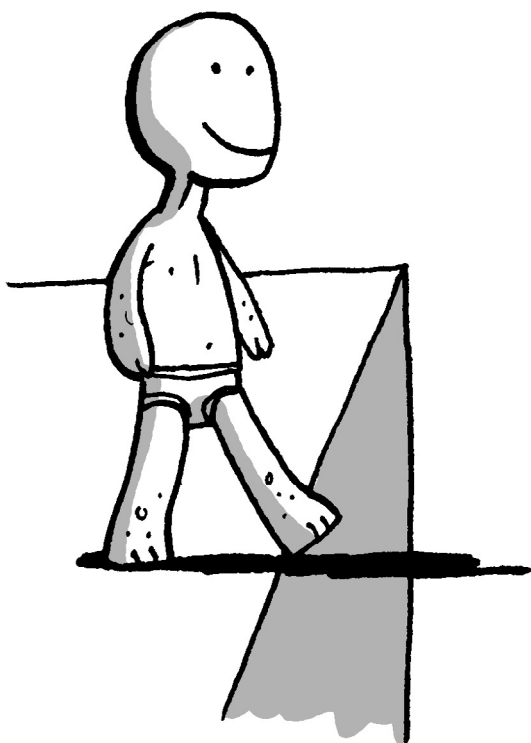
I never really thought about what I wanted to do with my life. Like many people, I left home at 18 to study in a big city (London), then life, love and jobs came along and I just stayed there. Through my twenties I was plagued by headaches and a doctor once suggested I was depressed. Outraged, I dived into a whole range of natural therapies and crystal bothering, and along the way I got happy. Very happy. A big part of that was landing my dream job, one that combined my love of list writing, planning and telling other people what to do, with my new-found love of all things 'alternative'.

In May 1996, I became assistant receptionist at the Mind Body Sprit (MBS) Festival. It was great! Over the next few years, I got more and more involved, met so many great people, worked in Sydney, became manager, and later Managing Director. I loved the buzz of pulling all the different elements together every year.

I was always reading the next book, going to the next workshop. Always striving to be a better and better version of me. But years and years of being very busy stacked up. I was tired. All that adrenaline is pretty exhausting, and while I knew life wasn't quite right, I was doing my dream job, so if there was a problem it had to be me.

More books, a great therapist. I started to talk about art classes, but was convinced I didn't have time. And after working for 10 hours most days and commuting across London, there wasn't really much free time left. And time is really what it's all about for me. Gradually I realised I had been providing a place in which to help people live their dreams and had forgotten to live mine. Or at least I had forgotten to consider the idea that a lifetime can have room for more than one dream.

So, in June 2008, after 12 happy years, I said 'F**k It' and stepped off the edge of all that was safe and secure in my little world. I celebrated with a week at 'The Hill that Breathes'. I'd loved the *F**k It* book from the minute a copy landed in the MBS office, and could think of nowhere better to enjoy the thrill of my new freedom.



Four years later, I'm still exploring that freedom. Having run away to art school at the seaside, and been taken through the most profoundly intense process I could ever have imagined, I'm still learning about what I want and how to get there. Sometimes I catch myself missing the certainty of my old life, and then remember how grateful I am to have had the courage to say: 'F**k It, this is not my story anymore. I'm off'.

SHARON ADAMS

49

I SAID FK IT TO SELF-PITY**

The life I'd known and loved for 8 years disintegrated around me in May 2009 when my 41-year-old husband, Lee lost his 21-month battle with cancer. Being widowed at 35 was not in my (albeit loose) life plan. I went into deep shock immediately afterwards for months. When the depth of my grief began to emerge over time, it literally and metaphorically brought me to my knees.

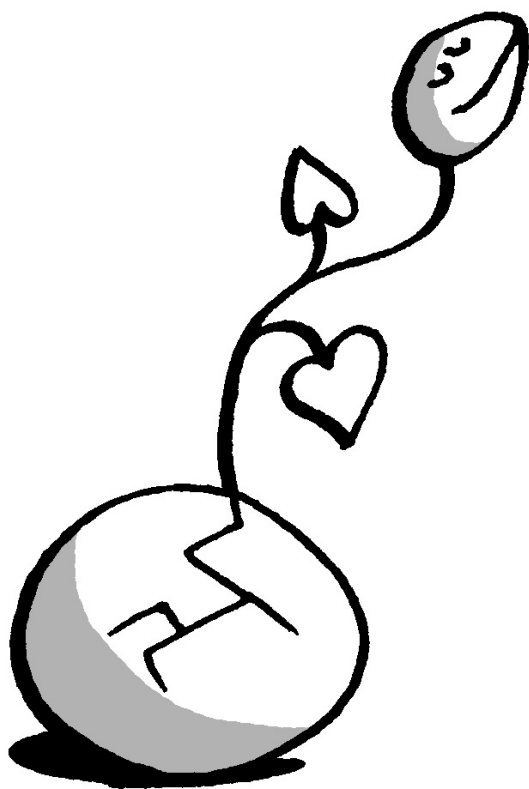
However, all during Lee's illness, we both had a mantra: 'it could be worse'. In the wake of his death, I don't remember ever making a conscious decision to continue following this mantra, but that is exactly what I have done. Something this huge and life changing cannot be wasted on self-pity. I have refused to sit in the corner, weeping and bemoaning my lot.

So the F**k It part stems from a deep understanding that only comes from experience. It is about really understanding and knowing without doubt that we humans have no control over the sh*t life throws our way. We do, however have absolute control over our response to situations. And my response has been to view this huge life lesson as a privilege – one which has proven how strong and capable I am, and one which is making me determined to contribute in a way that helps others. I do and will miss Lee every day for the rest of my life, but what an utter waste for something so tragic to happen and nothing good to come of it. So F**k It, I will not let this thing grind me down, make me cynical or risk averse. I will also only let it define me in positive and fulfilling ways.

What happened next has been about focusing on creating a legacy Lee would be proud of and building a life for myself that gives me an opportunity to make a difference, in however small a way. My can do/will do attitude, which has always been there, is now supercharged. In the last three years, I have completed a full time MBA, visited China, India and South Africa, been to eight festivals and numerous gigs, raised nearly £10,000 for cancer charities, run a half marathon, completed a skydive and organised Fosterval, a music event in Lee's memory. Alongside that, I'm fitter than I've been for years and have a stronger group of friends than I've ever had.

I no longer worry about the small things. I believe fundamentally that, having survived this, I can and will cope with anything else life throws at me.

NANCY FOSTER



50

I SAID FK IT AND LET GO**

During 2008, I had my own radio show in west Wales. I worked as a volunteer and had never done any broadcasting before. I loved it but soon realised that not being blessed with a researcher (as many of the national radio stations would have had), my time was being eaten up at an alarming rate. In between moments of immense pleasure interviewing some amazing guests, I found my resentment building as I sweated over finding interesting guests each week, whilst also finding time to take notes on the books I had to read.

On one particular afternoon, a few days before my show, I found myself feeling particularly resentful and angry. I thought about all the lucky broadcasters who could just roll up at their radio station, knowing they had a guest. And if this guest were to phone in sick at the last minute, the producers would find someone else. I found myself thinking the same old line which came back to haunt me in these torturous moments: 'It isn't fair, why does it always happen to me? Everyone else is better off than me!'

I decided to get in touch with Hay House, the publishers in London, to see whether they had any authors who might want to be interviewed at short notice. I felt embarrassed and humiliated. What were they going to think? 'She always phones at the last minute, she can't get her own guests, she needs us.' The usual drivel was churning round in my head. I finished emailing the letter to the press officer, then pushed my chair back so violently I hit the sofa. 'F**k It', I grunted out loud before going to the kitchen to make my lunch.

Looking out of my window at our beautiful garden and the sea beyond took my mind off the frustration I had been feeling earlier. So much so that I forgot about the email I had sent until much later in the afternoon. When I went to check my inbox, I was surprised to see a reply from Hay House. I was even more surprised to find that they did have an author who had just written a book and would love to be interviewed. The book was called *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way*. It took only seconds to realise the enormous coincidence of my saying 'F**k It' earlier and then being offered an interview with John Parkin, the author.

Of course, it wasn't so much the words I vented that were so synchronistic as the feelings that accompanied it; the sense of letting go, of surrender. How I love all my so-called 'coincidences!'

AMANDA PAINTING

51

I SAID FK IT AND LEARNT TO FORGIVE**

Just over 3 years ago, I was living what people would call the perfect life; a fairly decent job, a lovely family home, beautiful wife, an even more beautiful baby daughter; car, annual vacations. What more could a man ask for? Then out of the blue, within 2 or 3 months, everything that had meaning to me disappeared.

It started with the words that any person dreads to hear from their partner: 'I'm not happy'. Nothing good ever comes from those three words, which will forever be ingrained in my thoughts. Life was about to change forever. My wife of 10 years had found a new lover and I was to vacate my role as husband with immediate effect.

I had no option but to live in the basement of our house until we figured things out. I was hoping that my wife would see the light and want us to be together again. However, she was out dating another man and planning a future with him, whilst I looked after our daughter. I believe this is commonly known as the denial stage. The agony of watching all this unfold was too much to bare, so I took refuge in a friend's basement, and I still reside in one 3 years later.

Next went the job that I had within the family business. It seemed like a nightmare that just kept getting worse. This is when the depression and journey into therapy started. Drugged out of my mind, going from one therapy group to the next, I was hoping that someone could show me the light, the right path to take, *the answer*.

Nothing can prepare someone for losing everything they have built up over years; the cultivation of a marriage, the hard work and dedication to a company that just disposes of you when the going gets tough. All the effort, time, commitment, compromise, sacrifice: all for nothing.

I'd turn up at group meetings and therapist's offices and just cry until my tear ducts ran dry. It was becoming boring for me, the therapists and everyone who heard my story over and over again. You could see people's faces turn from concern and sympathy to complete frustration and probably boredom. This was a time when I couldn't feel anything but pain and the only option seemed

to be the ultimate solution. It's not what I wanted, but at the time it felt like the only option. However, something kept me going.

It's my belief that therapy can become addictive. You go there every week and pour out your soul to gain some release. It feels great to get things off your chest, but as the days go by the problems start to gradually come back and then you're back in the chair the following week, pouring out your soul. So I said 'F**k It', decided therapy wasn't for me and started to search for alternative methods of relief.

I turned my hand to learning the art of meditation, starting with mindfulness then moving on to transcendental meditation. This is when things changed. I was becoming my own therapist. I could see things for what they were and dealt with them in my own way. Day and night I'd practice letting go of thoughts which, slowly but surely, has helped me stay centred and grounded. I said 'F**k It' to the meds and haven't had any problems coming off them since.

I noticed that my relationship with food changed. I no longer desired fast food and since fruit and vegetables have become a major part of my diet, I've lost a shedload of weight. It certainly takes people by surprise as they think I'm ill. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It's not all been great, but I'm slowly getting to a better place. *F**k It* reminded me of my own journey and I'd also like to suggest adding a chapter in the next edition: Say 'F**k It' and forgive. This is one of the most powerful actions you can take after finding acceptance of a situation. Say 'F**k It' to the past and forgive people who have hurt you. And, most importantly, forgive yourself for the hurt you may have caused others. It will release a lot of tension that has been holding you back for years. Events stick with us for years unless you can accept and forgive.

GAVIN



52

I SAID F**K IT AND LIBERATED MYSELF

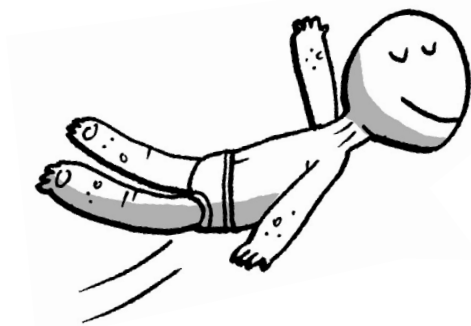
I was one of those people who worried what others thought of them. I constantly strove for perfection and caused untold tension and anxiety by worrying about things that may well never happen. I was a wreck – a stressed-out, pissed-off wreck of my own making. I was my own worst enemy and my own hardest task-master. I've moaned about every aspect of my life for years, and have seen no joy in anything – until now.

Browsing the book shelves in the Mind, Body & Spirit section, I was drawn to *F**k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way*. It was like the *only* book I could see. It fell open at a page, which I proceeded to read. I was hooked and felt better than I had done in years, purely by reading that one page! I'm on page 84 now, so imagine how fab I'm feeling – *totally* liberated, *that's* how!

I have been caught in every 'trap' mentioned (as far as I've read), ranging from food to finding spiritual peace and enlightenment. Of course, I've been stuck in a cycle of striving and disappointment. Not good at all!

I cannot convey how liberating *F**k It* has been already, but to give you an idea I smiled properly yesterday for the first time in almost 3 years – *really* smiled. I could even feel happiness and laughter bubbling inside me, too! Only a day or two before, my son had pointed out that I wasn't 'happy and laughy' any more; I was always grumpy. That was hard to hear. The *F**k It* way of life has saved me from that dark and dismal place. I have, over the years, been to one complimentary therapist after another but none have truly helped me. Your words have done more in 24 hours than alternative therapists, mediums and tarot readers have done in 10 years!

I go back to work tomorrow – something I would normally dread, but I'm thinking 'F**k It!' I've already decided that this may well be the last year that I work there – *if* I last the year! I have no idea what I'll do after that, but who cares? I'm not going to worry about it. Just the thought of not being trapped there makes it bearable; the fact that I can and *will* say *F**k It* and leave when I'm ready is so liberating! There is no pressure. Already I am happier, calmer



and more relaxed, just by letting go of all those goals and ideals I had set for myself. I want to say 'How crazy was I?' but I won't because that would be self-critical and I don't do that any more. I am me; totally unique and totally fine just the way I am. My spirit is now free to soar, unbound from the chains I'd wrapped around myself.

REBECCA



53

I SAID F**K IT AND TOOK REDUNDANCY

Well, things have been moving along rather well since the Stromboli F**k It week this year.

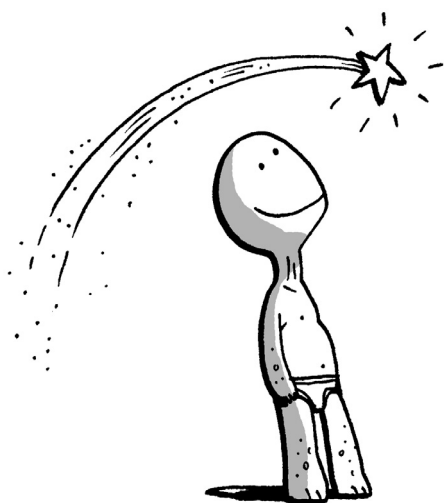
I came to one of the F**k It sessions and made the statement that my company were allowing voluntary redundancies. When I got back from the F**k It week, I took the voluntary redundancy and did a TEFL course in Alghero. There was an amazing vibration and beautiful energy there.

I know when I've had monumental energy shifts because I always see a shooting star! At the Hill last year, then in Stromboli and then sat at Buena Vista having watched an awesome sunset, the biggest of all the shooting stars, with a mahosive tail.

Now I'm a Teacher of English as a second language and I've been offered a job in Thailand. I'm nervous - yes and a little scared, but uber excited too.

Just wanted to thank John and Gaia, F**k It really inspired me to just live my life.

NIDHI JOSHI



54

I SAID F**K IT

AND FOUND INNER PEACE

I was tattooing a big owl on Thom's back when I first heard of the F**k It Way. Thom had the book in his bag and took it out to show me. 'This is so cool, man,' he said, handing the black book to me. I don't remember what page I opened, but it must have made some sense; no mean feat as at that point very little in my life was making sense.

My mother had died, 20 days after diagnosis, from the cancer that had taken root in practically every part of her body. I had become estranged from my brother and his entire family. I'd ended up under psychiatric care, had some kind of breakdown and my wife had thrown me out of the house. All of this had taken place in the space of 3 months.

By the evening of the tattoo, I had moved back into the marital home and my wife had gone, leaving me with a 16-year-old stepdaughter and a mortgage to be paid. The only bright point in my life was that I was now rake thin. The downside was that I didn't look like a model. I looked like an emaciated, manically depressed, heartbroken 46 year old.

But the next day, something changed. The first thing I did was buy a copy of *F**k It*. I practically ate the pages, trying to digest its message. And somewhere, somehow, I must have. Because that afternoon I painted the words 'F**k It' across my bedroom wall – 4 and a half feet high in black paint. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, those were the first words I wanted to see.

I told everyone about the F**k It Way and many people bought the book based on my demented ravings about how I was learning to F**k It. I was a F**k It evangelist. And as I raved, F**k It made more sense to me. About 6 months later, I attended a F**k It Way day in London. What I took away from this day was the confirmation that my life had no purpose and no meaning. I felt calm and content knowing this. All the things I had thought so important in my life had gone, but had been replaced by newer, perhaps more suitable things. And most of the time I was happy. Sometimes I was angry and sometimes I was sad. But on those days,

I could just say 'F**k It'. The F**k It message had taken up residence and was living somewhere. In me.

For me, F**k It isn't a thought.

It is actually a sensation in my body and a pacified blood vessel in my head.

It's like the biggest laugh I've ever laughed.

When it settles in for a day or half an hour or even 10 minutes, it's like being in the most comfortable bed on the planet.

It's like knowing the plane you're on won't crash.

But not giving a shit if you are told it's about to.

Now, when I have a decision to make or a situation that's causing me some upset, I think about watching my mother dying and I apply F**k It.

It could be worse.

It could be better.

It could be just as it is.

And what it is, is alright.

And tomorrow it might all feel not alright again.

But F**k It.

TONI LE BUSQUE





YOU'VE READ THE BOOK — NOW GO ON A F**K IT RETREAT IN ITALY

This is where it all started: John and Gaia ran their first F**k It Retreat in 2005. They're now running these famous retreats in spectacular locations around Italy, including an estate and spa in Urbino, and on the volcano of Stromboli. Say F**k It and treat yourself to a F**k It Retreat.

'Anything that helps you let go is okay on a F**k It Retreat.' **THE OBSERVER**
'I witnessed some remarkable transformations during my F**k It Retreat.' **KINDRED SPIRIT**

LIVE THE F**K IT LIFE

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FK IT THERAPY IS NOW ALSO AVAILABLE AS AN ONLINE COURSE,**
so you can explore the teaching in this book in depth with John & Gaia from anywhere.

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