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Diorama, Mount Wilson Observatory, California

For the weekend...

from Douglas E. Welch

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Join The Conversation On Discord.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have been running a Discord community for friends and family.

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Photo by Zdeněk Macháček on Unsplash

Pile Up and Pile On

I have always been a worrier. This is one trait I can remember from my earliest days. These days we would probably call it anxiety with additional conditions, but it has been with me always. While I carry this anxiety with me day to day, it is when stressors are combined that I truly feel the weight. I can deal with an occasional setback and I have developed methods of coping, but when life begins to pile up and pile on I often struggle to get through it all.

As you might imagine, these last few years have not been an easy path. While I have removed a great many stressors from my life over the last decade, life ensures that there are always new stressors to be found. COVID has stalked us all over the last 2 years and this has been a constant weight on my mind. While the vaccines brought some relief, the continued waves have kept it in the forefront of my mind. Even now I am checking statistics every day to help decide how I am going to live my life. Can we safely go to the grocery store this week or should we have it delivered? Can we make a trip to a conference or to see family or is it still too much of a risk?

1 problem, 2 problems, 3 small problems

Living with this one issue is enough to wear anyone down, but when you start to combine that with all the other minor and major issues it can be overwhelming. Sometimes the issues are relatively small like a broken appliance that needs to be replaced, a home repair that brings a host of concerns, or – in one recent personal case – a dental filling that suddenly decided to fail after 30 years. Sometimes they are large, like war, political unrest, and crime. It's always something.

For me, my worst days come when I feel the pile up and pile on effect. Even if issues don't happen simultaneously, but one after another, the effect is much the same. I feel progressively more anxious, more stressed, and less able to cope with each day. Given enough stress, over enough time and I find myself curled up on the couch with no motivation whatsoever.

Coping

One way I try to cope is this – no matter how many issues I am facing – I try to address them one at a time. While they can feel overwhelming when combined, sorting them out into individual concerns and tasks can help in several ways.

First, when you take each concern separately they can start to feel a little less threatening. Big monsters get reduced to little mice if you can gain some perspective. I know in my own life, I can easily turn a molehill into a mountain in just a few seconds. Seeing the issue for what it truly is can help reduce my fear to more manageable levels.

Sometimes this means breaking bigger problems down into individual tasks. I might not have the energy to face the entire problem, but I can do some research, make that phone call, or send that email that moves me one step closer to a resolution. My strongest weapon against anxiety is action. I always feel better if I can take one small action towards a solution. Of course, when you are feeling unmotivated, taking action might be the last thing on your mind. Then again, taking just one action can be just the thing to move you to the next action and the next and the next. It is a small perversity of life that taking action can be so difficult just when we need it most.

It isn't you

At the worst moments, pile up and pile on can begin to feel as if it is directed specifically at you. Perhaps you did something wrong to bring all this grief? Maybe fate is conspiring against you? Maybe someone has it out for you? No, it isn't you or – in most cases – something you have done. Rather it is just the random chaos of life.

Some of the heaviest stress visits us when we feel out of control. No one likes to feel they aren't in control of their own life, even in the smallest ways, and yet that is often true. We can't decide if or when one nation invades another. We can't control when a deadly virus infects the world. We can't foresee that the fridge is going to die tomorrow. There is only so much we can control and the rest we just have to deal with.

Of course, controlling what we can makes it easier to deal with those things we can't. Doing maintenance on your vehicles will mean fewer problems down the road. Addressing a work issue immediately instead of letting it fester and grow will make it easier to solve. Preparing for earthquakes, tornados, and flooding can help you react and recover if and when they occur.

This is another one of my coping mechanisms. Being prepared means I worry less about the small issues so I can face the larger issues when they arrive. It means that issues can't pile up as much in my mind because I know I have done everything I can to prevent or reduce their effects.

Finally, we must take our stressors with a bit of realism. While we might not want to go through a stressful event, we also must realize that we don't have any real choice in the matter. Life happens. We can, though, choose our response to life events. This is one of the hardest things for me to do. I am typically caught up in the immediacy of an event and let the stress run away with me. I know, though, that if I can step away – even for a moment – I can evaluate it more clearly and develop the next concrete action that will help me move forward. I am constantly trying to find ways to tame my fear, emotions, and reactions to give me that time for calm consideration and response. Even at this age, I am not the best at it, but, as always, recognizing your problem is the first step to finding a solution, so I keep working on it.

When life feels like it is piling up and piling on the stress, break it down, tear it apart, and find the tiny, doable tasks, held within. Hopefully, this can help you to find a way out from under all the stress that life presents and move forward.

Video



TWO HOURS of Stunning Nature Scenes / The Green Planet / BBC Earth



A Glimpse Inside the World's Most Beautiful Libraries

*Libraries have always held a deep fascination for me,
both for what they hold and the architecture itself.*

Immerse yourself in these beautiful examples. – Douglas

Libraries have long been more than simple repositories of knowledge. They are living centers of intellectual exchange, research, teaching and learning whose doors are firmly open to the world at large. They are places of education and of cultural and scientific transfer within their domain and at the same time open portals to global information. Libraries stand for communication with the past, present and future. Furthermore, libraries were and remain statements of prestige as well as aesthetic and architectural sophistication. These houses of knowledge and its appropriation have inspired secular and spiritual authorities since the Early Modern Era to devote particular attention to their design and décor—as abundantly witnessed by these impressive photographs.

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Why skyscrapers are so short

There's a pattern that we frequently see in the development of a new technology. Initially, the practical functionality is limited by the technology itself – what's built and used is close to the limit of what the technology is physically capable of doing. As the technology develops and its capabilities improve, there's a divergence between what a technology can physically do and what it can economically do, and you begin to see commercialized versions that have lower performance but are more affordable. Then, as people begin to build within this envelope of economic possibility, capability tends to get further constrained by legal restrictions, especially if the new technology has any (real or perceived) negative externalities.



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Miniature Calendar

Everyone must have had thoughts like these before:

Broccoli and parsley may sometimes look like a forest of trees, and tree leaves floating on the surface of water may sometimes look like little boats. Everyday occurrences seen from a miniature perspective can bring us lots of fun thoughts.



I wanted to take this way of thinking and express it through photographs, so I started to put together a “MINIATURE CALENDAR.” These photographs primarily depict diorama-style figures surrounded by daily necessities.

Just like a standard daily calendar, the photos are updated daily on my website and SNS page, earning it the name of “MINIATURE CALENDAR.”

It would be great if you could use it to add a little enjoyment to your everyday life.

[View More](#)

The 7 ½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle

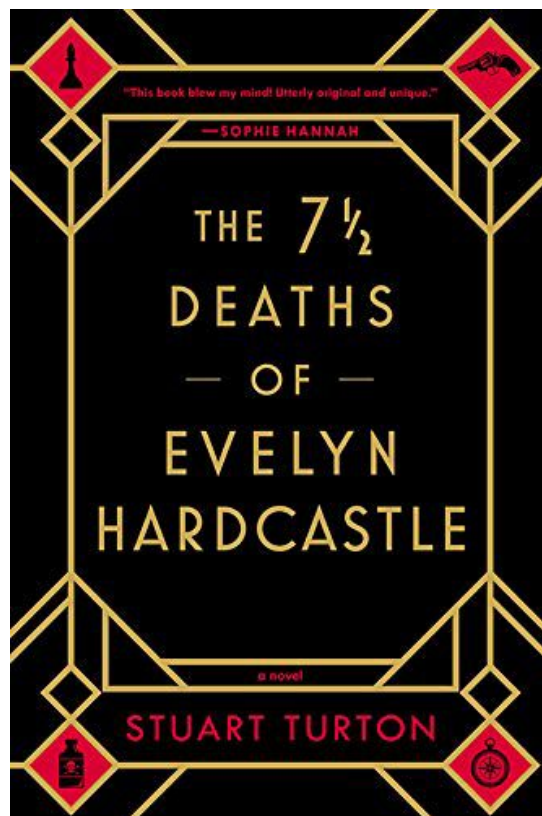
A confusing, confounding, and amazing mystery. – Douglas

Aiden Bishop knows the rules. Evelyn Hardcastle will die every day until he can identify her killer and break the cycle. But

every time the day begins again, Aiden wakes up in the body of a different guest at Blackheath Manor. And some of his hosts are more helpful than others. With a locked-room mystery that Agatha Christie would envy, Stuart Turton unfurls a breakneck novel of intrigue and suspense.

The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle is a breathlessly addictive mystery that follows one man's race against time to find a killer, with an astonishing time-turning twist that means nothing and no one are quite what they seem.

Amazon





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