



The Bird is All Right

Madison Morris, Junior
Reporter

It was a chilly November morning in Boston. The streets were nearly empty as the sun was just beginning to peek out from behind the sea of buildings. The city was peaceful, except for one seventeen-year-old girl crying hysterically next to a trash can. Yep. That's me.

In order to explain why it is that I interrupted a beautiful morning with the annoying sound of my high pitched wails and frantic pacing, it is vital to understand what exactly it was that caused me to be in such a state of distress on that fine morning. It all began an hour earlier, when I stepped out of the Blue Line train station. I was instantly greeted by a small bird sitting on the sidewalk, staring directly at me. I walked closer, eager to get a better look. I suppose this was not the best decision because the second the little bird saw me heading its way, it flew across the street directly into a window.

I immediately ran across the street towards the bird, who had fallen straight into a trash can underneath the glass window it had previously slammed into. I peeked into the trash can, praying that I had not actually just murdered a bird with my presence. To my horror, I found the bird underneath a pile of trash lying in a pool of blood. It was still breathing. In that instant, I accepted that the survival of this bird was my responsibility. The next 60 minutes were a blur of guilt for potentially killing a bird and calling every single animal rescue hotline in the city of Boston (Who knew there were so many animal rescue hotlines!). Finally, I ended up calling animal control because this was clearly a life or death situation. After ten minutes of crying over the phone about the bird to an emergency hotline employee who was tired of dealing with me from the moment I said, "The bird looks very scared and very sad," I was informed that someone was coming to the bird's aid. So that's how I ended up here, forty minutes later, still crying over a bird. Finally, an animal control officer came to save the day. After one look at the bird, he informed me that the bird was completely fine. Awkward.

The bird was a Woodcock, a species of bird that migrates alone from southern Canada and Maine to the southeastern United States. Woodcocks, along with most other birds, can often lose their bearings in travel, and can find themselves doing things that would appear concerning, such as flying into windows. When this occurs, the bird will fall to the ground and appear to be dying, when in reality it is just stunned. The bird will recover for up to two hours before getting up and continuing its migration.

I have chosen to share my embarrassing story in the hopes that it will help a fellow animal lover to not freak out over a bird that is completely fine. If you see a stunned bird, simply leaving it to recover is all that is necessary in order for the bird to continue its migration. And please, don't bother the on-call animal control officer.

Seek Discomfort

Muriel Owen, Sophomore
Reporter

Everyone is scared of something. I am. You are. Even Harry Potter is scared of fear itself (and Dementors). The exact definition of fear is "an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat." Based on the definition and personal experiences, fear and the state of being scared are associated with pain and ultimately discomfort. This key component of discomfort is what allows something to be feared. Generally, people dislike being placed in an uncomfortable situation, whether that be dinner with divorced parents or in the middle of the ocean with nobody around. However, while some run and hide from their fears, others embrace it and go out searching for that one thing that makes their heart race and their palms sweat. Some go out and seek discomfort.

Recently, I came across a channel on YouTube. This channel consists of four guys, Ammar from Egypt, Thomas from France, Derin from Turkey, and Matt from the United States. These four met in Montreal in 2015 and were able to bond over a similar life goal that "life is best lived outside of your comfort zone" (Yes Theory). From that shared concept, Ammar, Thomas, Derin, and Matt went on to create videos for their YouTube channel, Yes Theory. The videos they create are all focused on attacking one's fear and, in doing so, seeking discomfort. Their channel currently has 3 million subscribers. They had a show on Snapchat Discover, moved to Los Angeles, and have been adding to their group of four guys with each video, turning strangers into friends. While some of their content is lighthearted and done simply because they can (like their "We Fooled the Internet w/ Fake Justin Bieber Burrito Photo"), a majority of their videos are made to continue upon their pursuit of discomfort and embracing fear. I, too, used to be someone who, instead of taking fear and attacking it, ran away and hid because I feared what might happen to me and the possibility of pain. However, after watching Yes Theory, I have seen and now experienced first hand how saying yes can allow people to pursue their dreams and passions and achieve amazing things.

The concept of saying yes and embracing the things in our lives that may put us in an uncomfortable situation is very important. According to Yes Theory, "life can be as fulfilling and authentic as you wish so long as you're willing to seek discomfort." I know many people, including myself, who shy away from great opportunities and adventures as a result of fear and the "what ifs." However, if more people decided to say yes, as opposed to closing doors and therefore experiences, they would be able to live a happier and more fulfilling life. Of course, it is not going to be easy, but that doesn't mean that facing fears is impossible. Fear should never be the reason to miss what could have been an amazing adventure. So, I urge you to watch a video or two by Yes Theory, and afterward, go. Go face and embrace your fears. Go and say yes. Go and seek discomfort.



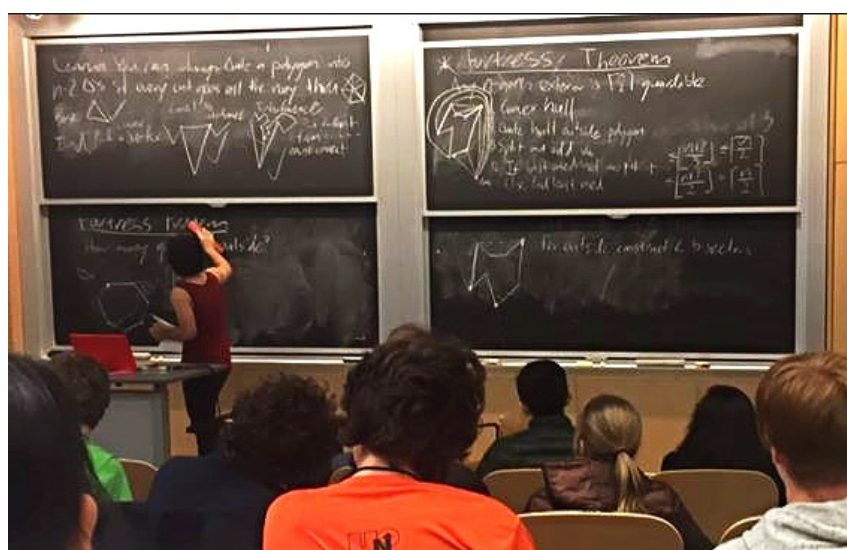
Splish Splash

Riley Bowen, Sophomore
Reporter

Marie Curie's son-in-law won the Stalin Peace Prize. Starfish are colorblind. I don't know how bikes work, but it turns out nobody does. Never before have you had the opportunity to discover so many new facts about so many different topics. At MIT Splash, an annual program taking place the weekend before Thanksgiving, students have the opportunity to learn about practically anything. Don't fret, just because this event takes place on MIT's campus doesn't mean you need to be a genius or computer master. You can fill your schedule with classes ranging from "How to Knit" and "Let's Talk about Baseball!" to "Finite Automata and Regular Expressions." Now, I have zero interest in any of those things. In fact, I have no clue what automata means. Personally, I'd much rather take a class about solving a Rubik's Cube blindfolded or the science of chocolate. That's exactly what I did, inviting two friends and moseying on down to Boston for the weekend. I'd highly recommend this opportunity to anyone in high school, unless you're under eleven (doctor's orders).

Some of my favorite classes included "The Structure of Personality," "Introduction to Typography," and "The Neuroscience of Zombies." Some might not like having to follow a schedule, so if you are in the mood for something more casual, the program also has walk-in classes throughout the weekend that you can wander in and out of. I participated in these as well. I made a mini acrylic painting (easel included) and appreciated all juices except for Ruby Red. Getting to classes proved to be difficult, however. It was slightly intimidating to navigate over 35 buildings, each with multiple floors. Maps are provided, but without any sense of direction, I remained thoroughly confused. Luckily for me, volunteers lined the halls to help direct students to the right locations.

Splash helps to prepare high schoolers for college in that it introduces participants to new people with similar interests and to the frenzy of a college campus. In a more straightforward way, you can take classes on life skills, like "Making Good Financial Decisions" or "Preparing for College." These are classes that help prepare you for the real world and aren't included in most schools' core curriculum. Education is vital, and this program inspires young learners to broaden their academic horizons.



To learn more about Splash, access <https://esp.mit.edu/learn/Splash/index.html>

Headlight's Quote of the Week

"Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever puts one down without the feeling of disappointment." ~ Charles Lamb

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