

# The Art of Self Destruction

BY JASON WHIPPLE

I'm quite familiar with the stomach pains that too much alcohol and powdered jelly doughnuts can cause. I don't mind the piercing headaches at first either, but when my skin starts breaking out and the Clinique for Men no longer does its job, it's time to reevaluate the situation.

Self-destruction and I go way back. I could cross my fingers in front of you without hesitation and say, "Yes, believe me. We're that close."

I backed myself into bad acid trips two years ago just to impress a cute DJ from New York City that intrigued me. And how appropriate too that he didn't even know what I was putting myself through.

And how about the time in the Friendly's parking lot in Colchester when my father asked me how much money I owed my dealer, as if the amount he had conjured up in his head was thousands of dollars.

And how about the morning I caught myself drinking Five O'Clock vodka from the bottle only minutes after waking up.

Or the early days of college when I used to drink two 40's every night, sleep until four in the afternoon, and have Taco

Bell for breakfast as the sun went down.

Or the darkest days of adolescence when I ritualistically ate a pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream, swallowed a whole loaf of toasted Wonderbread, sucked down two bags of Humpty Dumpty potato chips, and inhaled Oreos that my mother put in the jar on the kitchen counter. And all of this when I got home from school, making sure to save room for dinner at five.

And of course, my favorite. Melting into my therapist's couch, hopeless from depression, I told her I was still tripping from the night before. She asked me if I was self-destructing. "Of course not," I replied, "I have everything under control."

So, it comes as no surprise to me really that I'm battling with another bout of self-destruction. A night hasn't passed without the excessive drinking of whatever alcohol I can get my hands on, smoking pot like I can actually afford it, or coming close to having sex with strangers in strange places too strange to state.

These are behaviors I don't want to participate in, but for some reason, one way or another, I do. There are reasons for every action and thought I create, so I search for

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the reasons to my behavior every day, during the drive to Richmond to put together the pages spread out here in front of you, during the singing fits I have to the poetics of Stephen Malkmus, and during the long showers I take each morning.

When I sit down to listen to music, I pay attention to the bits of noise in the background, the same way I write myself through to the truth and dig deeper into myself. My introspective nature has always intensified my loneliness too.

Victimization can be quite attractive to me when I'm too used to being condescended to.

Yet, during the unending attempts for people to tell me how to be, they only reveal more about themselves than they ever can of me.

And why shouldn't I be looking for other realities when the boy I love's in California and says he'll be back in May. Is it worth giving my love long distance? Should I explore the possibilities of other relationships? Should I wait around for a phone call or hope that

there might be a letter in my mailbox from him when I get home? Should I put this energy into me?

So I ask, where in all of this torture will my implosion explode? I suppose I'll wait out today and wonder what tomorrow will bring; that has always been my greatest talent. Here are some tips that could prove useful to you on your journey:

Always have a bag of potato chips with you. Flavor is optional of course, but I prefer barbecue variations myself.

Don't forget the porn either; you'll need to find other beings to cloud your mind when you masturbate.

Buy a digital clock. It's

always important to limit the increments of time that you can actually count.

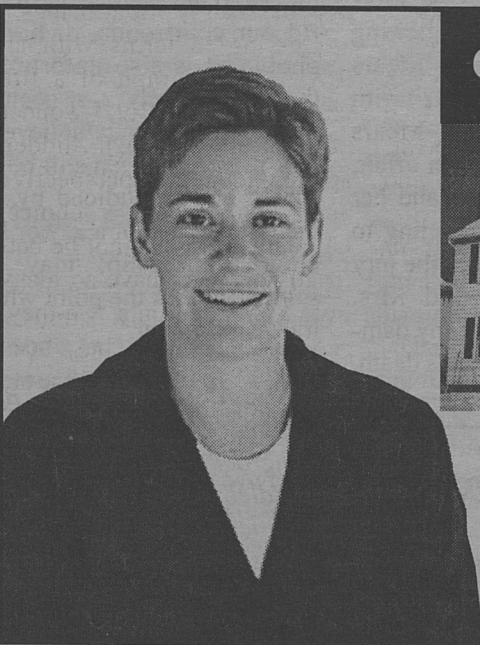
Consider finding a part-time job. Selling your CDs works for a short time, but you'll miss your treasures eventually.

Study martyrdom.

Save those credit card offers in the mail. Vacations and new shoes are just a swipe away.

So I keep writing to experience life until it becomes part of me or disappears completely.

Joys and tragedies dash past me every day. I have to remind myself that there's nothing harming me along the way. And simply saying this has saved me.



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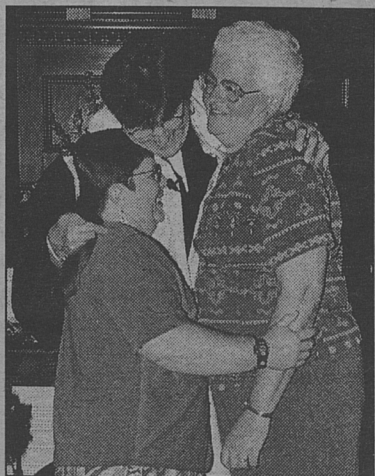
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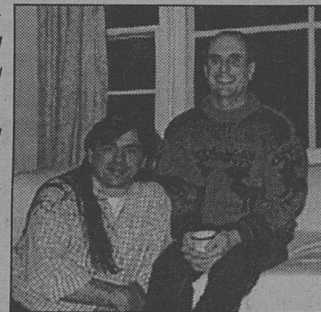
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