

AN ANTIDOTE FOR PEOPLE PLEASING

Written by

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INT. COMMUNITY CENTER CLASSROOM - EVENING

Adult students sit down at desks with teacher (CHARLES) sitting on the front desk.

CHARLES

Hello class, I'm your meditation guru, Charles. I'm a Vietnam vet, and as you know, this is Guided Meditation For People Pleasers. The goal of this class is to become more assertive and take life by the horns. I'm going to teach you some lessons I learned during the war.

ANDY

Actually, I don't consider myself to be a people pleaser, I just enjoy being nice.

CHARLES

Shut the hell up and be quiet.

ANDY

(timidly)

Yes sir.

CHARLES

That's what I thought. Now, I want you all to close your eyes and visualize yourself driving a car down the road of life. Make sure its a big car though, maybe a pickup truck. None of that Prius bullshit, that's an invitation for people to step all over you.

SARAH

But I like my Prius.

CHARLES

No one cares how many miles per gallon you get or how little carbon dioxide you emit, Sarah. They see that shit on the freeway and it's an open invitation to pass you, or worse, tailgate you until you panic, spin out of control and end up with two pieces of metal holding your insides together. Now, visualize yourself driving down the road. You see a stop sign, and your first instinct is to slow down.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

But not today, you woke up today ready to take life head on. You don't see any cops, so you roll right on through that intersection, people be honking and yelling, but you flip them off. You're not afraid of conflict.

ANDY

But isn't that dangerous?

CHARLES

Andy if you don't shut your mouth I'm gonna come over there and staple your lips shut.

ANDY

Yes sir.

CHARLES

Good. Now, it's a hot day out and the AC in the car isn't working because you punched it for making too much noise, so you pull up to a Baskin-Robbins to cool off. As you walk up to the door there's someone close behind you, but you don't open the door for them. They got arms, what do they need your help for? In fact, you close that door behind you so they can't get in. That's your ice cream, and you must assert your dominance. You ask the cashier to sample every single one of those ice cream flavors, taking your sweet time while the line piles up behind you. After you sample that last flavor you leave, without buying anything.

SARAH

That's sounds pretty rude.

CHARLES

You don't make the rules, you just use them to your advantage, like putting your dog in shotgun so you can use the carpool lane.

ANDY

Um, I'm pretty sure that's still illegal.

CHARLES

Andy, if you keep interrupting I swear to God I will strap you to the top of my car and use you as a windshield wiper.

ANDY

Yes sir.

CHARLES

Now, you're driving back to your house, and your neighbor's dog has the audacity to run out onto the road. On any other day, you'd swerve out of the way, but nuh-uh, not today. You ain't takin shit from no one or nothing today. You take natural selection into your own hands today, and you drive right on over that mut without blinking. In fact, you put the car in reverse and back over it to make sure you finish the job.

SARAH

That's terrible! I love my neighbor's dog.

CHARLES

Typical people pleaser. Haven't you ever heard of the phrase 'dog eat dog world'? You think that if the roles were reversed the dog would just stop for you? Hell no, he would jump at the chance to kill you and avenge his wolf ancestors.

ANDY

But why would a dog be driving a car?

CHARLES

Don't be dumb Andy.

ANDY

Yes sir.

CHARLES

Now right as you're about to pull into your driveway, your neighbor runs out and starts yelling at you for killing his dog.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Normally, you'd apologize and start begging for forgiveness like the pathetic people pleasers you are. Today though, oh not today. You ain't taking no shit. You slowly make a U-turn, rev up the engine and then run his ass over like a piece of play-doh. You feel accomplished, go inside, and get yourself a bowl of Wheaties, because you're an assertive champion, and that's what champions eat.

SARAH

So you just leave them out on the road? How inhumane.

CHARLES

Keep your eyes closed and lemme tell you about inhumane. Your cooped up in the jungle. You haven't eaten in days, your so high on opium you can't tell your left hand from your right, and meanwhile you're getting picked off one by one by Vietcong, wondering when you'll be next. You look down the barrel of the gun, thinking how easy it would be to just end it all and get out of this mess, but no, you can't, you remember you have a wife at home. Somehow, you make it out of there alive, you get home, only to find out your wife's been taking a trip to pound town with your neighbor and walking his dog in the mornings.

SARAH

This is getting weirdly specific, I'm going to leave.

The rest of the class mumbles amongst themselves in agreement and also get up to leave.

CHARLES

Fine, leave you ass-kissing people pleasers, but don't expect me to help when you find your neighbors used condoms and dog hair underneath your bed.

Charles gets up and sits down in one of the student desks.

ANDY
You're not leaving?

CHARLES
Those bastards revoked my license
after I...took life by the horns
too many times. Plus, I have court
mandated anger management that
starts here in an hour.

ANDY
Well, I really appreciate what you
had to say.

CHARLES
Shut up Andy.

ANDY
Yes sir.

Fade to Black.