

Letter to Peter Kapinos

On February 28, 1998 Peter Kapinos wrote:

It seems you are quite bored. A question. A while ago when I visited, you had a lot of friends. Maybe because it was Tues. Night group and you went to Spirit of the Lakes church. Do you really feel like getting out there to meet people? Did Paul Green's death change you a lot? Respond.

Dear Peter,

I am kind of bored but that is not all bad. I have lots of things that I want to do in life, however two types of things tend to dominate my time keeping me from doing these things. The first is workaholism. It is very easy for me to get absorbed into work to the extent that the means become the ends. It feels productive and "Erdman" like, so it is self-reinforcing.

The problem is, though, that it leaves little opportunity to do anything on a social level let alone meet anyone new. In fact, when I do meet someone I tend to categorize that meeting as a business meeting and make it rather sterile. The second is I get involved with someone that I feel comfortable with and use that relationship as my sole source of fulfillment. Yep, you guessed it...today that is Ryan. In his case it is very addicting to me to just hang out with him for hours and hours doing nothing. Paul was also one of these relationships. It was always easier to hang out with him than to do things with "new" people. At least Paul always pushed me to get out, though.

So, to me being bored means that neither of these things are dominating my life. So, it feels good for a while. It is like opportunity abounds in that I am not tied down to old time-consuming habits. I can only handle it for a few days, though, before I start resembling a vegetable. Unfortunately, right now I am trying very hard to avoid workaholism and "Ryan-oism" and therefore I have become a bit of a rotten, moldy vegetable.

When Carl left years ago I was in a comparable situation. Not only because of him leaving but also because at the same time I terminated my investment and job with Sienna Technologies, so I had neither crutch. It was liberating and boring. I certainly am not one to live in moderation: my bipolar is evident when I view the world as strictly black and white. Learning to live in boredom is part of the process of finding gray in the world...at least that is what I think and am going with now. I am fearful of getting so absorbed in work that I lose perspective on what life is about as I am annoyed about getting fixated on someone who does nothing more than take my zest for life away.

You are very correct in saying that I had more friends when I was going to Tuesday group and Spirit of the Lakes. It wasn't any one big event but rather just the consistency of going week after week that made me feel more connected and indeed resulted in quite a few friendships. Paul was a very important element in that he kept people connected. He was kind of like Grand Central Station. I don't have anyone now who is both a good networker and cares enough to kick me the ass to get out. So, I know that role must come from within now. It is just very difficult. I compare myself to others and see

how some people are like social magnets. I then assume that they are good role model material since they have so much of what I want.

Dr. Devine tells me that these are lousy role models for me. I think that I am starting to see that. I go from not being very social by nature to expecting myself to become a social magnet. Last week I thought back over all my school years and realized that I have always had 1, 2, or 3 good friends and a bunch of acquaintances. I never have been highly social. So, I think I need to embrace that aspect of myself as part of my nature. I just need to work on having those few quality friends.