

Dylan Mustach

This I Believe

I remember standing at the edge of a wood-paneled fence alongside a childhood friend. The fence surrounded my family's backyard. We were just standing there, staring out into what was then uncharted territory. Fast forward to today. I find myself standing with the same look I did almost fifteen years ago, staring up at the night sky overwhelmed with that sense of wonder you get while contemplating on what lies ahead. It is expressed by a deep desire to challenge, search, explore, and ultimately to know.

I believe in the power of the unknown. It has inspired man to sail the seas and fly the skies; it has provoked mankind to reach the moon and survey the stars. Breakthroughs in medical and scientific research are the product of its stirring. It has caused humanity to press new frontiers in all parts of life. It causes us to ask questions; how, what if, why? It motivates us enough to answer those questions. Undeniably, it has influenced humankind since existence.

The good side of that power often speaks to me sweetly, especially out on the metaphorical balcony soaking in my surroundings. Appreciate the little things and how they work. Sometimes, it causes me to delve into the realm of fantasy and challenge reality. It is the reason why I enjoy learning about new ideas and even coming up with a few of my own. Unfortunately, the unknown does not always work for good. It is like a double-edged sword.

I like to call the harmful side 'the dark unknown', and it scares me. I remember attending my grandfather's funeral a few months back. The ceremony caused me to feel anger at the process of life, and I began to realize how little my life actually means in the grand scheme of things. So I

started to fear death. It caused me to make poor decisions because I believed that if I didn't indulge myself now, then there is a chance that I will miss out later. I began to fear not living up to the expectations of others. What if I fail? Am I good enough? I developed selfishness, envy, and became timid. I needed to reevaluate things.

I am sure there are several ways to beat this cancer caused by fear of the unknown. For me, it required a careful review of my purpose in life. I took to mind the example of humility led by my grandfather, an immigrant from Croatia. His model is flawless. It is filled with all the character qualities that unanimously make up a dynamic individual. As I have begun to strive to emulate his life, I have witnessed that fear being defeated. Embrace the unknown.

My mother is an avid reader. She enjoys learning new ways to approach life and practices those techniques every day. One book she read engrained a new concept into her mind, then into all our minds: "Do not fear death, but rather the unlived life" – Tuck Everlasting.