

17 Things I learnt in 2017: A survival guide for tough times



"Sometimes, I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

**W**hen life throws you a curve ball (or three), it's all too easy to lose your way. Here, Stone Fox Bride founder and author Molly Rosen Guy shares the 17 pearls of hard-won wisdom that she acquired in 2017, to help guide you through the tough, tough times. Do make your own coffee. Don't chase pleasure. And, sometimes, know that the best thing to do is do nothing at all.



2017 kicked my ass – I turned 40, a dear friend died, my dad got sick, there was madness in my marriage. The road I was walking took a sharp, sharp turn and I suddenly found myself at a crossroads, alone, in the deep, dark woods with nothing but equal parts fear and faith that I would somehow find my way. Thank god for friends, family and the magic of the universe that came to my rescue at just the right time; who knows, I might have been devoured by wolves otherwise. Twelve months and tons of tears, sweat and self-help books later, I am still around (and stronger than ever) to tell the tale. Here are some nuggets of wisdom I picked up along the way.

**1** If you're unsure what your next move should be, refer to the canon of classic children's books and films for foresight.

*The Velveteen Rabbit*: "Once you are real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

*The Lorax*: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better."

*A Wrinkle In Time*: "Believing takes practice."

*Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*: "Sometimes, I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."  
Glinda the Good Witch from *The Wizard*

*Of Oz*: "You've always had the power my dear, you just had to learn it for yourself."

**2** Chasing pleasure expecting happiness is like going to the hardware store for milk. They are two totally different things. Pleasure is fast and fun – the bowl of ice cream, the midnight Net-a-porter binge buy, the one-night stand. Happiness, though, is slow and rote. It's the book you've been writing for five years, the house you've been building one brick at a time, the headstand you practised for a decade before getting it right. Pleasure versus happiness is the difference between spending your time and investing it. Pleasure fades; happiness lasts. The quick fix versus the long and winding road. Pleasure goes nowhere; happiness will take you where you want to go.

**3** WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT, DO NOTHING.

4

OWN THAT ROAD MAP ON YOUR FACE: YOU'VE WORKED HARD FOR THOSE LINES. PLUS, THE GIRLS WITH THE SCARS ARE THE ONES WHOSE STORIES ARE WORTH STAYING UP LATE TO LISTEN TO. >>

*Each night when you get in bed and turn off the light, thank the moon for three things that brought you joy that day.*

# 5



**6** If you have time to think about these things, then you have too much time on your hands: does bone broth have calories; Botox or boob job; Kylie or Kendall; cabernet or rosé; Maldives or Mallorca; avocado toast or almond latte; your ex's Instagram; *do these jeans make my bum look fat?* All that pure, sweet energy you pour into vanity and tabloids is best spent taking action against racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, policy changes that harm immigrant families, legislation that denies women reproductive rights...

# 7

**THERE ARE NO ANSWERS IN YOUR PHONE.**

**8** When your husband hands you a plate full of crumbs and insists it's a feast, tell him to fuck off. You will not be the woman who wastes her life mistaking allure for love. Get a handle on *what you want* and go get it. "You can have what you ask for," says the poet Diane di Prima. "Ask for everything."

**9** Let others have their obstacles; offering to help can often be harmful. There are big rocks in all our roads for a reason.

# 10

**IF YOU ARE UP AT 4AM, BAWLING IN BED, GRACE CODDINGTON'S MEMOIR MAKES FOR A SENSATIONAL PSYCHIC BAND AID.**

# 11

**MAKING YOUR OWN COFFEE AT HOME EVERY MORNING WILL SAVE YOU £912 BY THE END OF THE YEAR.**



**12** Bitching and moaning about the girl who got where she is because of her affluent family is foolish. Success has little to do with what comes your way and everything to do with how you handle it. Dwell in possibility, believe in abundance – there is enough of everything for everyone.

**13** Impressive: meeting a potential client with a head full of research on who they are, what they've done and where you want to take them. Unimpressive: meeting a potential client with a head full of air and empty promises, no idea where their business has been or where they want to go.

**14** When it comes to work, your dad's dorky line you used to scoff at now seems quite sensible: "You must circulate to percolate."

**15** When it all comes crashing down one day, remember that time you interviewed Diane von Furstenberg for a magazine in the summer of 2003. How the two of you sat at a big wooden table with a bowl of red apples between you, and how, mid-interview, she took your hand and looked in your eyes and said: *Today is the first day of the rest of your life.*

**16** In the end, no one will care what shoes you wore, where you spent Saturday night, how many times you pressed snooze. In short: less me, more we. They will note if you showed up at the hospital, sent a thank-you card, did the dishes post-dinner. Did you shut the fuck up and listen for once – so they felt safe, so they felt seen?

**17** When brushing your teeth at the mirror in the morning, don't pay heed to baggy eyes and saggy tits. Instead, ask: *What kind of day do I want to create? What am I crippled by? What am I going to do about it?* Pray for diligence, discovery, renewal, recovery – then pat on that pretty pink blush and go get 'em. **Stone Fox Bride: Love, Lust, And Wedding Planning For The Wild At Heart** (Spiegel & Grau, available on Amazon)