HELLO, CRUEL WORLD LITE: BETA 1.0.1

AN OUTLAW’S MINI-GUIDE TO SURVIVAL BASICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

BY KATE BORNSTEIN (BASED ON MY SHINY NEW BOOK!)

FEEL FREE TO COPY THIS FOR WHOEVER YOU THINK COULD USE A COPY. KISS KISS, KATE

You’re better off alive, no matter how messed up you think you might be right now. And you’re better off alive no matter how mean someone is being to you. You are simply better off alive than dead—no matter who or what you are, no matter who or what you love, and no matter what you do. Just don’t be mean. Being mean never works. Never. So that’s the only rule I can think of that’s worth following in life: don’t be mean. Yes, you can be mean to yourself if that’s what’s going to keep you alive. I’m sorry if that’s happening to you. But keep in mind that there are alternatives that hurt a lot less, and I hope you find one soon. Do what you have to do, and stay alive because it gets better. I promise. xoxo Kate

A WORD ABOUT GOD

So, what happens if you do something to keep yourself alive, and it’s something God says not to do? Well, start looking around for another God—a God or Goddess or whatever—who believes in you. But until you find that new God or Goddess or whatever, here’s a Get Out of Hell Free card. If you’re doing what you need to do in order to stay alive, and you’re not being mean to anyone, and you end up in Hell, you give the this card to whoever’s in charge. I’ll do your time in Hell for you.

A WORD ABOUT SERIAL SUICIDE

I think we need to pay a lot of attention to the times we just want to die, because we can use those moments as signals to ourselves that some identity or who that we’ve made ourselves into just isn’t working for us any more. When you feel suicidal, don’t kill yourself. Don’t kill your body. Kill off the who of you that needs to die in order that a better version of you can go on living a more perfectly delightful life, a life that makes you feel better.
A WORD ABOUT FEELING BETTER

It's better that we want to feel, not necessarily happy. Fuck trying to feel happy all the time. It doesn't work. Happiness only really happens when our guard is down and we're finally letting life's naturally positive energy into our hearts, and how often do we feel safe enough to do that? Instead, try to feel better than what you're feeling right this minute. Try that right now. How do you feel? Can you pinpoint how you're feeling... beyond good or bad? When you can spot what it is you're feeling, it's easier to find a slightly better feeling, and then a better feeling than that, and then a better feeling than that. So, you end up always being able to make yourself feel better. Cool, huh? It takes lots of practice, and it's worth it.

Here's a scale of feelings that works for me. As you work with it, you can modify it so it most accurately works for you. Just find what's closest to what you're feeling, and try to think of something that makes you feel closer to any of the words just above that. Focus on that better feeling, and keep climbing up like that.

THE HELLO CRUEL SCALE OF FEELINGS

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<td>13. Frustration</td>
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<td>15. Disappointment</td>
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<td>16. Doubt</td>
<td>27. Fear, Terror, Panic</td>
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<td>17. Worry, The Blues</td>
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<td>Despair</td>
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<td>18. Blame</td>
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<td>20. Anger</td>
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<td>21. Vengefulness</td>
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You can use GIDGET to shift the way you present your gender in the world. First, plot yourself on GIDGET—just put an X in each column for where you are most usually in your life. Then, put a star in the boxes you’d like to have as part of some new version of yourself. Then, live your life so that’s who you become. Ta-Da! You get to become the who you’ve always dreamed of being.
THE MASTER'S TOOLS WILL NEVER DISMANTLE THE MASTER'S HOUSE.
-- Audre Lorde

So what tools can you use? What do you do when you're living in the master's house and it's making life miserable for you and others? Most outsiders and outcasts have been on the receiving end of a bully's anger, so we are often loathe to use a bully's methods. But after a while—and usually under a great deal of pressure—some of us embrace those tools and turn them on our oppressors. I know a lot of people swear by that, but I'm trying my best not to use the following tools:

force
power over
shame
fear
hate

the end justifies
the means
intimidation
eye-for-an-eye
threats

humiliation
blame
name-calling
segregation
capitalism

divide and conquer
theft

When you don't use the master's tools, other tools become available to you: the "wrong" tools for the job. These aren't startling new tools. Most of them have been in use for aeons. It's just embarrassing to admit to using some of them. They're the tools the bullies have tossed aside as forbidden or unworkable because they're too scared to use them—and they're even more afraid that you will.

magic
love
sex
joy
patience
fairness

consensus
illogic
compromise
culture-jamming
compassion

humor
comedy
paradox
non-violence
seduction

art
visualization
affirmations
riddles

EXERCISE: Add more items to both lists of tools.
PRACTICE MODE: Do something nice for the wrong reason.
ARTSY MODE: Make art from the wrong materials.
WOO-WOO MODE: Worship God the wrong way.
MATH MODE: Solve a problem using the wrong formula.
SEX MODE: Find a fun sex toy at your local bakery.
ALTERNATE SEX MODE: Find a fun sex toy at the hardware store.
HEAVY METAL SEX MODE: Find a fun sex toy in a medical catalogue.

GANDHI MODE: Get together with a group of people who agree on which part of the master's house needs to be dismantled. Reach consensus on how to dismantle it without using any of the master's tools.

So, okay. I hope this "light" version of my book, Hello, Cruel World has helped make life look a bit better for you. If so, tell a friend. And please do stop by hellocruelworld.net and/or your friendly neighborhood independent bookstore, and check out what the fully-loaded book has to offer!

xoxo Kate