

Breaking the habit

EVE BARLOW

MAY 30

I'm spiraling so I'm changing my approach.

95% of my mental health distress stem, ultimately, from what social media has done to me. This is a fact. I was publicly shamed on Twitter four years ago, and faced a tidal wave of abuse that I did not deserve, and it has impacted my brain, my reality, and my life, and I really wish it hadn't. But it has. It took everything from me instantaneously. This is the reality and it's catching up to me now. I am hypervigilant and see everything as a threat to me, and some things are not a threat. Some things are people being stupid. Some things are people living in a different set of circumstances. Some things are people being tuned out of the disaster we're tuned into. And we all know that stupidity, ignorance and malaise often creates an opportunity for evil, and I am not discrediting what absolutely all of us feel right now, but allow me to just spout some personal, maybe awkwardly intimate, perspective.

Speaking only for me, if I do not account for my brain, my losses and the impact it's had on my inner self and sense of security, then I will not get what I want from life. And the fact of the matter is that as important as this work is and as necessary as it is in this moment, and as much as I have the mettle and temerity to do it despite the harm it causes me, I have very little I hold sacred left, and what I do have I cannot afford to lose, and I'm losing it because I'm stuck in the loop of this virtual insanity (hi, Jamiroquai). So it's time for me to look at my own trauma, and to take responsibility for my part in how I move through the world.

I looked at my statistics earlier, and I have insane engagement online. 242m on X in the last year; 12m on Instagram a year. The impression is a lot. And I feel the pressure to keep going. I know a lot of people depend on this, because I receive hundreds of personal direct messages and emails

from strangers every month, and I know how dark the world is, and how isolated so many Jewish and non-Jewish people feel right now. I chose to carry this torch and it's an honor, so I'm not going to abandon you. Of course, I'm not. I have abandonment issues. I wouldn't do that to you.

However, I'm not going to abandon myself either. I have to put my phone on do not disturb for a while, and I have to be quiet. I have to read books. A book a day. I have to have mornings to lie in bed and not wake up to the alarms of push notifications about blood and guts and death. I have to find a love language with people outside of the war again. I am not ungrateful for the community we have, but I have to find my way home. And I have to be able to listen to Dua Lipa. I'm sorry. I have to. I can't and don't want to cause pain, and I do cause pain, without intending to cause pain, because I represent pain. I am pain to people outside of this. When they see me, they just see reddened eyes and broken voice and shattered heart. For most of my life I was joy. Life and soul of the party. A fun person to be around. Not a pain. I want them to see strength and brightness and vitality. That's who I am. I can unlock that very quickly if I stop doom-scrolling, and trying to fight people who come November will only have energy to film themselves having a conniption when they realize they've just handed Donald Trump back the Presidency. I have to trust that life is going to take care of people who are on the wrong side right now.



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Your Jewish friends, neighbors, and coworkers are not okay. We may not talk about it with you, but we are going through life-changing reevaluations of our worldviews—and our friends.

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People have said “focus on YOU” to me now for months, and I know what it means. Well I thought I knew. I didn't know. Now I know. This isn't all of me. I'm not going to let PTSD control me. *That's*how they win. It's very easy to tell yourself that you win when you keep digging your heels in, and stick to message, and keep going, but if you dig your heels in too long, and only

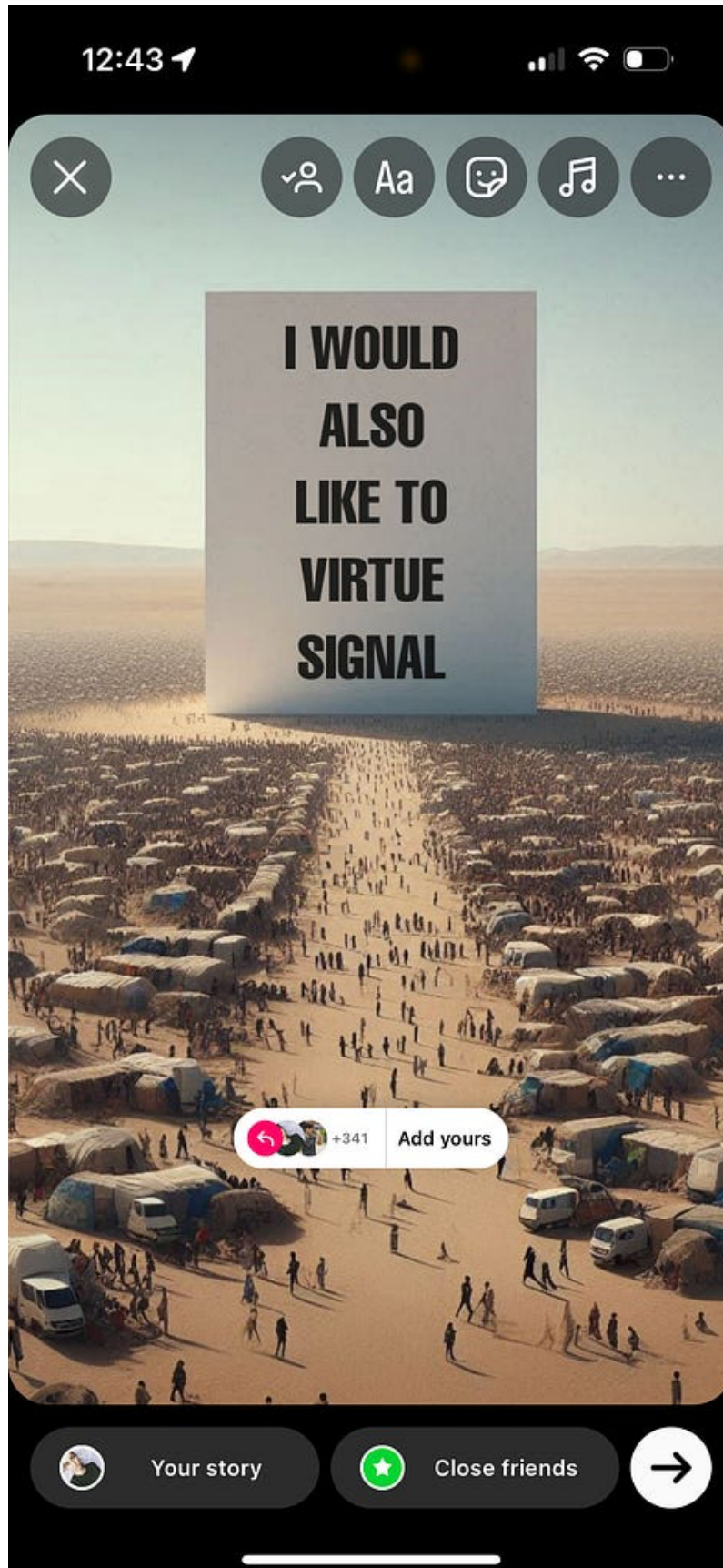
repeat the same paragraphs every day, and stop remembering what road you're even on, then... don't they win? Does the fighting become the way to win, or does it become the crutch that keeps you from winning? What is winning anyway? I'm a winner. And this is not what winning has ever felt like.

When I went to Israel in December, someone mentioned the parting of the Red Sea to me. "This is where we are in the Torah: Will we make it back to the promised land? We just have to keep moving." Think of that Red Sea. Walls of ocean on either side. No idea how long it will last. Our enemies chasing behind us. Wave after wave of ocean miraculously drowning them. So that's where we're at. We're funneling ourselves through that treacherous road, hunted, charging forward and - yet - blind to the when, where and how of the destination. This could take a bloody long time. Social media is a wasteland. It's a waste of space. It's a waste of time. It's a garbage way to spend your days. It peaked in 2012 and it's never been good since.

I'm going to start treating social media like a game, because that's what they're doing. I'm going to have strict rules about when I use it, and how I use it. I believe in creating a disruption, and I always will, but it's not going to disrupt me any more. It's not going to tell me about the world any more. It's going to tell me how it's playing the world. Do you see the difference? People used to say that social media isn't reality. And you know, it's not. But it is. But it never used to be. My friend said to me tonight, "There's no social media in Star Trek". I could think about that for a long time. Social media is a broken mirror on the world and there are one or two things in the reflection that aren't in your surroundings. How did they get there? It's become real life. There are dual worlds now. I will see people I like post things I hate, and I will imagine their posts being hammered by waves of ocean behind me.

Yesterday was a perfect example. Yesterday was HORRENDOUS. Every Jew I know lost their shit. My phone was ringing for 15 hours solid. We all crumbled because of one Instagram graphic appearing on everyone's stories that read ALL EYES ON RAFAH (see yesterday's post). It was shared 45 *million* times in 24 hours, and there are only 15 million Jews. It's absolutely nuts. Nuts on nuts. It's so nuts, it's almonds and pistachios and pecans. It was completely nuts. The most shared AI image of all time - officially.

Virtue signalling peaked yesterday in support of HAMAS. And we all lost it. Of course we did. We're traumatised by social media because it has left out of our phones like the scary witch girl at the end of *The Ring*. Social media has changed the outside. Today in Mexico City, after the 45 million people shared that pro-Hamas meme online yesterday, a mob set fire to the Israeli embassy. The scenes are awful and they are dictating and reaffirming the rules: Don't stand up for Jewish people. We will burn things if you do. We will burn buildings. We will burn our own cities.



Standing up for the Jewish people has never been popular but it is the right thing to do. And people are scared to do it, because of social media. Everyone is getting cancelled. Even people who have said nothing on either side are being added to blackout lists. The finger has been on the trigger for eight months now. For 235 days. The finger has never come off the trigger. We are all triggers now in our own worlds. Everyone is triggered by us, because they've either directly experienced their own social media mess or they're absolutely terrified of it ever happening. One time a singer-songwriter came up to me at my local running trail, some years ago now. And she said to me: "Eve, I'm so sorry about what happened to you. I saw it online and it made me upset to see people speak about you like that. And I want you to know: that is my literal WORST NIGHTMARE."

A year later, she couldn't handle anyone spotting the association. She didn't want anyone to know that she ever knew me, and she unfollowed me. Because it is her worst nightmare – to be caught doing any one of the nameless crimes that change like the wind. Every day it's something new, something worse. Someone who did share the All Eyes On Rafah meme and later took it down told me that he was shouted at by many progressives who said his post wasn't extreme enough. Even people who posted the Hamas post didn't do it right. There are no rules, and everyone is crumbling. And the Jewish people are the trigger. You're a trigger. I'm a trigger. We're the trigger. They cannot handle us — we represent their worst nightmare. And we're getting locked out of everything because who wants their worst nightmare sitting in the room with them, lying on the couch, sharing a pizza and a glass of wine? Nobody.

How do we stay in the room.

During the 1930s after the Nazis came to power in Germany, free radios were handed out to German citizens, and the radios only had ONE station on them. You can guess what the station was. Why can't they see it? Or can they see it, and they just don't want to see it? The Iranian regime is the

master of propaganda. And now they don't need to give out free radios, because everyone has iPhones and apps. Instagram. TikTok. X. Threads. We know that there is an algorithm. We know that hashtags drive narratives and that an ailing mainstream media is contending with online disinformation, often echoing it instead of doing due diligence on the facts. Every "information" source is in a race to the bottom. The truth hasn't mattered for a long time. They are all tuned into the wrong radio station and now they're being pressured to abide by it. This is fatal. And while they don't feel the effects currently, they will. The smoke from the burning buildings and the Israeli embassies gets into the lungs. They will not escape this. "Do the right thing." I tell them. "Do the hard thing. Think for yourself." If only they were strong enough to not be sheep. They haven't been since COVID. They have adjusted to just following the herd, or else: social death.

This is the most cost efficient way for Hamas to get what they want, by the way. They get to sit in their rat tunnels and let their civilians die, while Western progressives terrorize Jewish and marginalized people on their behalf just so they don't get cancelled. Anyone protecting civil liberties and holding on to the meaning of words are fodder for the pyre that they're building upon which to implode Western values and civilization, just so they don't get ostracized. They have globalized Palestinian refugee status, just so they can still belong. Now everyone can justify terrorizing the Jews any place anywhere, all in the name of some fabricated Narnia. Meanwhile there's a real two state solution that could be granted if Palestinian leadership could only accept it. They won't. This is what they want. They want Jews to be unsafe everywhere, stateless and hunted.

And *meanwhile* meanwhile in the real *real* world, the IDF is winning the operation. So which part is upside down? All of it or none of it or half of it or...? How much is upside down and what controls it and why are we giving it power? Was it 45 million *people* who shared the online All Eyes On Rafah meme, or was it 500,000 people and 44.5 million fake Instagram accounts?

I played a lot of video games growing up. SNES. N64. Playstation. Those were the main ones. I can do this. It's a video game. Less hours on X. Less browsing on Instagram. Post and run. Don't overthink. Don't engage. Stick to the message. Be sure. Don't look at what the idiots are doing. Don't let it get to you. Don't let it shape your worldview, or make you afraid to go outside. Knock them out. Remember *Street Fighter*? Hadoken!



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