

I've been putting out Tikkunista for ten years. I describe it as a weekly that publishes roughly 40 times a year. So that totals up to about 400 issues, and at roughly 25 hours an issue, I've put in the 10,000 hours that Malcolm Gladwell says gives one mastery. Can I claim mastery? Possibly. While I do put out a better Tikkunista than anyone else, no one else is putting one out. I guess that makes me the biggest fish in an empty pond.

I have certainly gotten better at it. I have about 60 sites I check weekly to find articles of interest on world politics, or culture, or art, and then I tease out the linkages between them, patterns that bind three or four separate strands into a stronger sheaf. Last week I explored the pattern that underlies the riots against austerity programs in Spain, Portugal, France, and Greece. And then I contrasted that to the re-election of five left-wing leaders in South America, leaders who have raised the quality of life for their peoples. And, since it's that time of the season, I looked at how those same key questions aren't the ones being debated in the US elections. And then I got into the culture and photography half of the magazine. It was a good issue, and the 400 or so people who read it seemed to like it, as far as I can tell from this side of the screen. But despite that it's time to stop.

One reason is the physical. I was in a sports clinic last week, talking to a doctor about the persistent pain in my shoulders, and she pressed various places to determine which ones really hurt, and then she pressed them a few more times to be sure she had the right ones, and then she asked me about how long I spent every day on the computer. I thought about it and said, "Twelve hours."

"Ah," was all she said. She didn't give me the lecture, but she didn't really have to; my shoulders had been doing an effective job of nagging me for some time. I can argue with them about why I need to be online: there's the Writers' Croft stuff to respond to, and there's Tikkunista, and as a writer, it's a computer on which I write, and then there's all the 21st century Facebook and email and Twitter stuff. My shoulders don't pay any attention to my head though. And if it comes down to a battle, the shoulders are indisputably the ones who have the arms.

Diana taught me that there are three things you might get from your job. You can get money; a community; or work that you enjoy doing. Not all jobs offer you all three of course, but you can survive on a job that offers two out of three. If you love the work and the community, you can get by on a lot less money. If you have money and a good group of people to work with, you can survive work that's not exciting. And if you love the work, and the money's good, you can put up with almost any group of co-workers. But while I like the process of putting Tikkunista out, and I believe that it's a useful magazine that offers information that's both important and not easily available, it hasn't generated either a community or money. I have expanded the website in hopes for both; there is space for comments and a tip jar for money. I get about one real comment a week (and usually over 4000 pieces of spam, though my

spam filter clears them out quite efficiently.) The tip jar gets about one tip every six months, and while those average \$75, that leaves my hourly pay at just under 1¢ per hour, which even with the rise in the Canadian dollar is not enough to warrant hiding offshore.

Three people in the past month have told me they no longer read Tikkunista because they find world news too depressing. I don't think I feel more depressed knowing more about what's really going on. I enjoy watching the strategy of the "great game" of politics, and seeing how countries' leaders and popular forces try to outmanoeuvre one another. And I am enough of an optimist to think that generally, things are improving, that there are a lot of positive things in this world. And there may well be a gene that survivors of the Holocaust have that predisposes us to follow political developments. Those who didn't have that predisposition didn't get to pass their genes on to the next generation. So when I stop putting out Tikkunista, I won't stop following politics.

I will try putting out a Twitter feed @tikkunista that will allow me to send out items I find. But that won't take up any time that I'm not reading online. It'll cut out the hours of formatting and embedding links that I now spend each week. Ending Tikkunista will create an empty space in my life, that I will then find something else to fill, because there is no space that abhors a vacuum more than the space between waking and sleeping. I'm not sure what that activity will be, but it needs to be something that isn't sitting in front of a computer. It doesn't need to pay well, but it needs to be something that offers me a community. It's easy to find work that is worth doing, as long as one doesn't want to get paid for it. Perhaps the new alternative school down the street will take me on, once the police finally send the report that confirms that I've never done anything bad. (Two months waiting thus far. I have got confirmation that it's nothing personal. They're just way behind.)

Ten years of an online magazine is, as my British relatives would say, a good innings. But I just keep thinking of that line in an old Neil Young song, "He had everything he wanted, till having it turned out to be a job." I've been happy doing this, and I've gotten better, and I hope brought some smiles, some pretty pictures, and some useful information to my readers. I take great pride in both the design and format of Tikkunista, and in how every week I focus on some issue a few days before the Globe and Mail or Toronto Star pick it up. But I know pretty exactly what the next year of putting out Tikkunista would be like, and I don't know what the next year will hold in that space if I don't put it out. It's time for a new adventure. I'll complete this year's 40 issues, which will carry me past the US election. And after that, I'll be flying off on my own wings of change and hope, and find somewhere else to land for awhile.