

Fear: Why do we hide?

For the past two months, I decided to do something different. I decided to write an article on mass transit. In order to do that I had to ride the bus, and take cabs. I was curious and I wanted to know what that was like and if it was cost effective. What I learned was something completely different.

I drive everywhere. I am rarely home. I see myself as very involved in the community. What I didn't notice or realize was how truly disconnected I have been to people around me in general and society as a whole.

Think about it. Every day we travel from point "A" to point "B", but in the process we don't notice or think about all the people, places and things in between. We turn away and miss the interesting little family run bookstores, café's and boutiques. Instead we choose to browse big chain book stores. We eat our meals at franchises, boxed, pressed and shipped. We shop at "cookie cutter" big chain stores. We are anything but unique.

We drive around in our vehicles, looking straight ahead, our music on or our ipods blaring. We don't look around. We pretend we don't see the extreme poverty that surrounds us. We hope that somehow if we don't look we will not realize our mortality.

We don't stop and have real conversations. We don't sit and enjoy a long lunch with a friend and we don't talk about anything important. We are too busy in "fast forward" to stop and experience life. But we think we are so open, because we hang out with our friends and go to all the latest clubs, and because occasionally we pencil in or are backed into a face-to-face conversation.

We don't notice the real people that have "friend" potential. Some people "friend" 1,000 people on Facebook. Some may have 200 followers on Twitter. Some people have "online friends" that they talk to daily, and possibly even spend hours chatting about their thoughts and their days. Some people only communicate through text message. The phantom connections make us feel secure.

We have fooled ourselves into believing we have many close bonds and relationships. When in reality we can't really account for that.

With the rapid growth of technology in the past 30 years, we went from being tied to our homes and offices to a more mobile existence. Everything seemed to lead to the appearance of this freedom that we never had before.

In reality, technology has not freed us, but seemingly imprisoned us. It has isolated us from each other. It has given us a false sense of security and social connection.

It is fear. It is fear of forming meaningful relationships. It is fear of establishing meaningful communication. It is fear of rejection. We have imprisoned ourselves behind a fortress of technology. We filter our lives in such an orderly fashion. We order friends,

and relationships like ordering take out. We isolate ourselves. We alienate ourselves from others and from society.

In the past few weeks, I have talked with people I would normally never talk with. I have been to places I don't normally visit. I have lived and experienced this town in a different way and seen it in a different light. My life has slowed down and sped up. But I have seen people with very little give quite a lot.

In our dependence on convenience and mobility, we have stunted our social growth.

I have learned a few things throughout the process. Fear is in all of us, of stepping out of our comfort zones, of meeting new challenges, new people and of facing the possibility of failure. I have always known if I didn't bother to try I would never know if I could. Therefore I always try and I always do, but what this has taught me was even when I do things, I do them within my comfort zone.

I remember sitting in the office one day listening to Chancellor Anderson say that he has always preferred to be "number two" but that he follows all the great leaders. He prefers his freedom and privacy. As he said that it made me realize that is exactly what I had expressed recently but in a less articulate way. I have always preferred to be the writer instead of the editor, the one getting my hands dirty, and in the field instead of the one sitting behind a desk making the decisions. I like the freedom.

But making the decision to step out of my comfort zone and take on a different position has given me a different view of the same subject.

I stepped out of my car. I stepped out from behind my fortress. I have walked, and taken buses. I have stepped out of my familiar surroundings.

I tested the waters and slipped into the field of journalism. I have even taken on the position as the new Editor-in-chief of *The Voice*.

It has given me a different perspective of the same society.

To some degree I had lost faith that people cared about things, each other, or the world around them. What I have learned in the past few months is that is far from the truth.

I have seen people who have very little give so much of their resources and themselves. As I have walked through the city, I have seen the genuine kindness and generosity of strangers towards each other.

I have always been involved on campus to a degree, but by speaking to others, by working with others I have learned something completely different. I have seen people come together and put forth great effort in honouring their commitments.

I have learned that sometimes it is not that people are not motivated as much as they are not engaged, stimulated or inspired to action. But in the past few

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FINDING
MY VOICE

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New leader takes over at newspaper

The Voice starts the new year and spring semester with a new leader. The previous Editor-In-Chief L'Asia Brown, who served as editor from 2009 to 2010, stepped down toward the end of the fall semester.

Alicia Bayat, who was a staff writer in the fall, and served as interim editor-and-chief has officially taken on the duties of Editor-In-Chief.

Ms. Bayat is a senior and has been attending Fayetteville State University since the fall of 2007. Ms. Bayat pursues a dual major

with a Bachelors of Arts degree in History and Sociology.

"The Voice is no stranger to change. In a field that is in constant flux, we are meeting all these changes and challenges by welcoming new staff from all majors and levels of experience," said Ms. Bayat

The Voice is currently welcoming new staff members and will hold an informational interest meeting on Thursday at 2 p.m. in room 235 of the student center.

~ Shirley Townsend

Many ask 'Why the late notice?'

Fayetteville State University's first day of the semester was planned for Monday, Jan. 10. However, according to the FSU website, a decision as to whether or not classes would continue as planned would remain unknown until 6 a.m. that morning. Childcare arrangements, traveling twenty plus miles to school and deciding whether or not to have class on blackboard would have to wait.

"Why the delay for our university?" A professor at FSU who wishes to remain anonymous commented. "Sometimes you just have to use common sense.

As many students, faculty, and staff members sat in front of their television while other agencies announced closings; the question arose whether or not the university was opened.

"I wasn't coming," said the source. Roads in her neighborhood had already been blocked off due to dangerous conditions.

Angelena Nall, an FSU commuter student pointed out, "They waited until the last minute."

Fayetteville Technical Community College as well as Methodist University announced their closings the night before. Why didn't FSU do the same thing?

On Tuesday, Jan. 12, FSU was initially set to operate on a normal schedule. That decision was changed around 9:30 that morning. Many students, staff and faculty

members had already taken the potentially dangerous drive and were on campus at the time of this announcement.

"Maybe they should check with Fort Bragg in the future," said C/PT Michael Wright, who is part of FSU's Army ROTC program. Fort Bragg was closed because of weather conditions.

Junior Ashley Bofill, who also commutes, said that the university's notification process was annoying and inconvenient. Her daughter also attends the daycare here at FSU which operates under the Cumberland County School system. Consequently, she was forced to miss Wednesday's classes when the university was opened, but the daycare was not.

This weather incident left many students, staff and faculty with questions about procedures and plans for inclement weather.

According to FSU Director of Public Relations Jeff Womble, the university strives to make the campus aware of operations by 6 a.m. He went on to say that changing weather conditions may make it "necessary for university officials to alter their original decision as it relates to university operations."

~ Lanelle Delaine

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