

Why Not?
How Two Words Can Change
Your Life

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Paperback ISBN 978-0-557-35237-1

Hardback ISBN 978-0-557-47932-0

To

My Wife, Kristin, who is Ms. Why Not

Chapter 1

Christopher Mayhew was a total underachiever; that fact must be made clear from the start, or no good can come of his story. Here he was, living in a rundown house on the south side of Detroit, Michigan, and—at the age of twenty-two—still living in the home of his mother.

Having worked as a busboy since his freshman year of high school at the same restaurant, Paul's Deli, he was going nowhere fast. As if that weren't enough, he didn't have many friends, didn't like animals or sports, and had no hobbies except video games. The reason this kid was known as an underachiever? For his entire life he had been a person who never wanted to do anything, try anything, or participate in anything. Anything he tried, he always quit. When he was young he played Little League baseball. He was an average player. He was put in to play right field, and he once dropped an easy fly ball in the last inning, costing his team a trip to the championship. All the kids called him a loser and made fun of him. Later, when he got up enough courage to ask a girl to the seventh-grade dance, he was turned down, and made fun of for being turned down. His mother, trying to help, told him to go to the dance anyway. When he was there, he again got up his

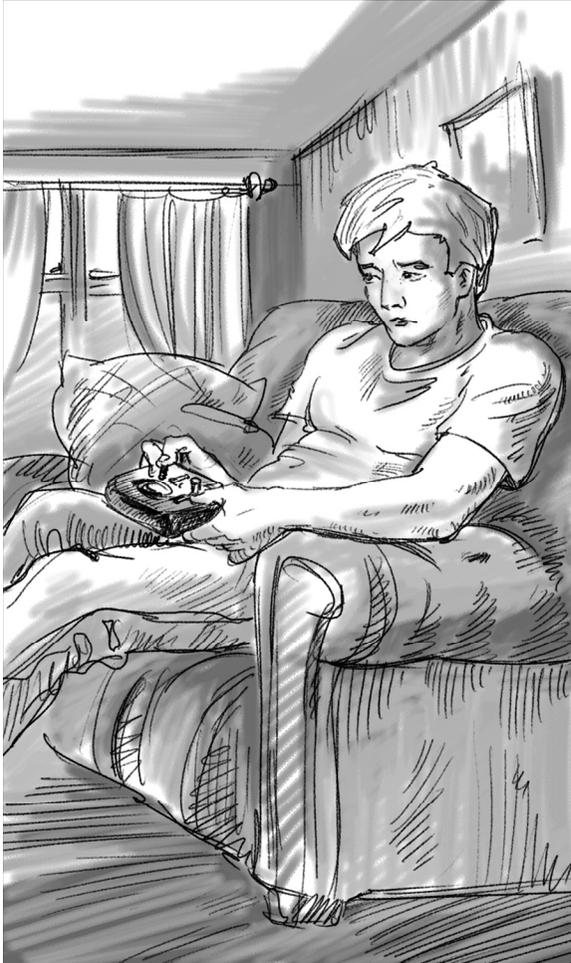
courage and asked another girl to dance. This was all done to prove that he could get a girl to dance with him. On the plus side, she said yes. On the downside, he was a really bad dancer; everyone called him “Chicken legs.”

Because of all these experiences, he never accomplished much in his life, which led to a cycle of self-doubt and an underachieving lifestyle. He performed the same routine every day—nothing new, nothing exciting. For Chris, life was simple: just get up, go to work at the delicatessen, clean and bus the tables, and then come home to his video games.

How did he become such an underachiever? It was actually very easy: throughout his entire life, when asked to do something, try something, or participate in something (sports, dancing, singing, music, a social life, dates, etc.), he always had the same indignant answer.

“Why? I can’t do that!”

Bottom line: he had a “can’t do” attitude”.



For some reason, at an early age Christopher developed a “can’t do” attitude. Whenever he was asked to do something, or had his own thoughts about doing something, his response was always the same: “Why? I can’t do that.” As a result of this attitude, people would shy away from him and not want to be around him. And because people did not want to be around him, he retreated further into his shell and did not want to be around other people.

He didn't bother trying to change his room or his style of dress. His shoebox of a room was drab and dark, the blinds always drawn (so that the sunlight wouldn't cause a glare on the TV screen) and his clothes strewn about. If it weren't for the pestering by his mother, Silvana, he'd wear the same clothes day after day.

This was the life he led, the life he was completely content to maintain.

For the moment.

Chapter 2

One spring morning, the time of year when most people are looking forward to rebirth and to the beginning of winter, Christopher was sleeping late, as he always did. His mother, who was entering middle age with grace, marched into his room and looked down at him. He lay there, sprawled across the bed, and gazed up at her with sleep-filled eyes.

“Chris,” she said, “up and greet the new day. You’re going to be late!”

He groaned and rolled over. “So what, Mom? I’m always late.”

The creak of the floorboards told him she was leaving, and he closed his eyes. A few more minutes of sleep would be awesome. Seconds later he shot out of the bed as an air horn went off in his ear.

“I said up, young man!” she bellowed.

Chris, sitting up, was surprised to find he was on the floor and not the ceiling! He thought sure he’d smashed into the ceiling and was stuck there. There stood Mom, a smug smile on her face. How could such a small woman be so intimidating? Chris figured it had to be her Italian heritage. A few inches over

five feet, she seemed a giant. She made up for the limitations of her stature with sheer determination!

“Mom, you’re going to make me deaf,” he whined.

“If you’d learn to get out of bed on your own, I wouldn’t have to resort to such ... extreme methods. Now dress and get to work!”

With that she left, and he began the same boring day in the same mundane way—with his regular breakfast, in his pajamas. After finishing a bowl of cold cereal, he put on his busboy clothes and headed out the door. Chris paid little attention to the neighborhood; he really didn’t care about his neighbors. The Willards, a dear old couple, were still living next door and spending their days tending the garden.

Chris didn’t care.

The Robinsons, across the street, had had another baby and were walking her in her stroller down the street. All of the neighbors were gathering to “ooh” and “ah” over her.

Chris didn’t care.

As far as he was concerned, these people were total strangers. They didn’t care about him, so he didn’t care about them.

Getting on the bus, he headed downtown to the delicatessen. Paul’s Deli sat in a fairly busy part of the city. Not the main business district, but a couple of streets over, and near the city hall. As a result, it generally got a good amount of business.

Stumbling in the door, Chris saw Arthur, the manager, and groaned. He could tell by Arthur's customary dirty look that he was not pleased. So what else was new?

The diner was a nice place, done up in the classic style of a 1950's soda shop. It always reminded Chris of that place in the TV show "*Happy Days*", with the chrome and stainless steel everywhere. All that concerned him was that it made cleanup easier.

Arthur strode over to him; at well over six feet, he could cover a lot of ground in a few steps. He tapped his watch. "Chris, do you know what time it is?"

He gave Arthur his usual blank look. "I don't have a watch, Arthur."

The muscles in Arthur's jaw twitched. "Punch in and get to work!"



Chris moved down the narrow aisle that separated the counter from the glass picture window overlooking the street, and he went through the swinging double doors into the kitchen. He looked around; not one of the staff so much as looked at him. Sure, they were used to him coming in at this hour. He walked over to the time clock, punched in, put his apron on, and picked up his collection tray.

Chris moved out into the main part of the diner. It was nearly full now; a lot of people were grabbing breakfast before

heading off to work. At the counter was a very well-dressed man, Mr. Morris. Chris recognized him. He was Mr. Morris, the owner of the local men's clothing store, and he came in every day for breakfast. He and Mr. Morris never said much to each other, even though they saw each other every day. Christopher was always busy busing tables, and he knew that he did not present an inviting, positive image, and so he only got back what he put out.

And of course, he didn't care! As far as Chris was concerned, life was totally unfair. Why was Mr. Morris so successful, while he couldn't get ahead?

Chapter 3

The morning at the deli passed just like every morning for Chris: he bussed tables, dumped the dishes in the back, stacked the glasses, put the silverware in to soak, and threw out the trash. That is, he made a half-hearted attempt at doing these things. Every once in a while, a glass would end up in the trash or with the plates, or some leftover eggs and toast would wind up in the silverware soaker.

Not that Christopher cared.

After the morning rush, the staff hurried to clean up and prepare for lunch. Christopher's idea of "preparing" was to go into the corner to read a comic book— alone and not talk to anyone. Not that anyone wanted to talk to him.

When the lunch rush began, Mr. Morris returned and ordered his regular pastrami sandwich. Christopher was quite accustomed to him ordering that and then being careful to eat everything and not leave a big mess to clean up.

Suddenly Mr. Morris began to choke. He staggered to his feet, his hands clutching his throat. It was clear that he was having serious problems and could not catch his breath. Christopher was bussing a table in that section and saw Mr. Morris panicking. As it happened, one of the few classes

Christopher ever did well in at high school was First Aid (he received a C), and there he had learned the Heimlich maneuver.

Arthur raced over. “Good God, something’s wrong with him! Someone, do something!”

Christopher knew to get behind Mr. Morris to administer the maneuver. He wrapped his arms around Mr. Morris’s stomach, clasped his hands at his upper abdomen, and pulled in with all his might.

“Ack!” Mr. Morris called out, a piece of pastrami shooting out of his mouth.

Christopher had saved the guy’s life. Everyone in the restaurant saw what had happened, and they began to applaud; even Arthur patted Chris on the back.

“Well done, Christopher. That’s the first truly right thing you’ve done since you started working here.” “Mr. Morris, are you okay?” he said, helping him sit down.



After spending a minute or so gasping for air, Mr. Morris reached out and took a sip of water. Then he turned around in his seat. “So, your name ... is Christopher, eh? I’ve seen you around here for ... a long time.”

Chris nodded. “Yeah, that’s me. So you’re Morris, huh? You okay now?”

“Please, call me Stephen; I like to be on a first-name basis with people who save my life,” he said with a grin. “Tell you what, why don’t you come by my clothing store when you’re

done today. I want to give you a new suit as a thank-you for saving my life.”

Christopher shrugged. “Oh, you don’t need to do that. And besides, a suit—I don’t wear suits!”

Mr. Morris gave a little chuckle. “Why not?”

“Yes, why not?” came a chorus of voices all around Christopher.

He slowly turned and looked around. All of the customers in the restaurant were listening and watching the exchange. Christopher swallowed hard; he was not used to being the center of attention. Finally, he gave in.

“Sure, okay, why not?”

With that, Christopher went back to work, Arthur helped Stephen get cleaned up, and the other patrons returned to their lunches. In truth, Christopher never found any reason to wear a suit, and he actually looked down on people who did wear them. As he carried yet another pile of dishes to the kitchen, receiving a few pats on the back from the kitchen staff, he realized that he had just said, “Why not?” for the first time in his life! The first time he had ever said it in response to *anything* in his life. Typically, he would say, “Why?” but this time he said, “Why not?” He wondered, was this the start of a new trend in his life?

He dumped the dirty plates into the dish rack next to the washer and shook his head. No, that was silly; nothing about his life was going to change.

Chapter 4

At about five o'clock Christopher punched out from work. This in itself was quite rare; usually he had to stay late to make up for being late in the morning. But, on top of that, Arthur actually let him go early—so he could get to Mr. Morris' shop before closing. And Christopher actually went there! A true triple header of freak events.

The sidewalk in this part of town was unfamiliar to him; he'd never bothered to walk this way. After all, the bus stop was the other way, and getting to and from work was all he had ever cared about—in the past.

Strolling along, he passed the dry cleaner's shop and the drug store, and he finally came to Mr. Morris's clothing shop. It appeared to be an older building, with big fancy picture windows and a canvas canopy hanging over the sidewalk. Christopher stepped up to the door, opened it, and went inside. A small bell mounted just inside the door rang out, and he closed the door and looked around.

Although he wasn't sure, Christopher didn't think he'd ever been in a true clothing store. The last clothes he had bought were from Sears or Target, and that was when his mother dragged him there—practically kicking and screaming the whole

way! This place looked awful fancy. Racks of pants, shirts, and coats were everywhere. Oh, and there were sleeveless coats—called vests, he remembered, having never had the occasion to wear one.

Mr. Morris came out from behind the counter and offered his hand to Christopher.

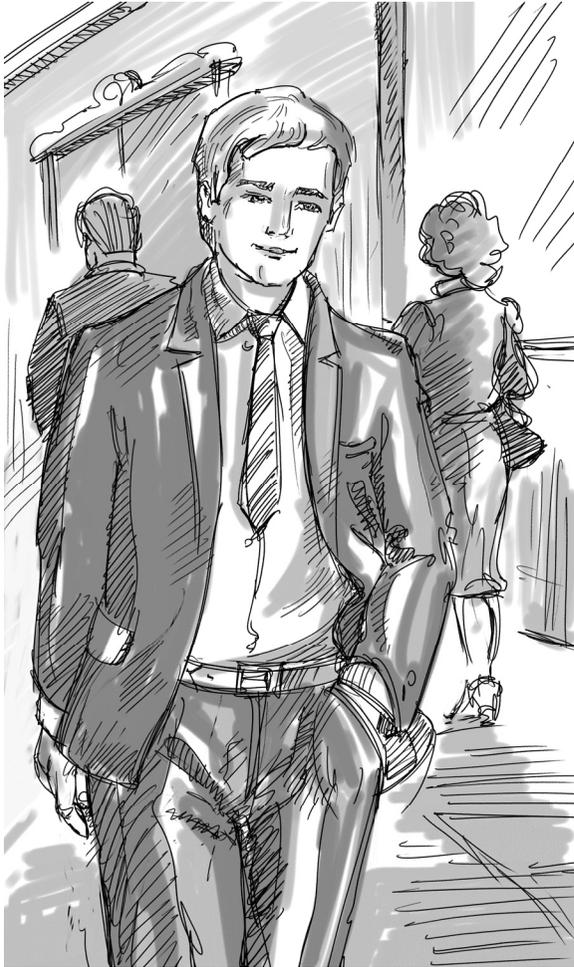
“My boy, so good to see you. Everyone, this is the kid who saved my life. So I guess you owe this week’s paycheck to him!”

Stephen laughed, and then his staff—a young man and two women—laughed too. Christopher smiled. He figured that must be the rule in these fancy places: you only laugh when the boss makes a joke.

“Yeah ... well, I figured I should come by, but you really don’t have to give me one of those ... things”

Stephen shook his head as he pulled a tape measure from around his neck. “My boy, I’ll hear none of that. It’s the least I can do for you.” He placed the tape around Christopher’s neck and announced, “Okay, neck, seventeen and a half!”

Just like that, Christopher was being fitted for a new suit, after being treated like a celebrity at work for saving Mr. Morris’s life. He did jump when one of the girls tried to measure his inseam, but they both got over it.



The young man put the pants on the sewing machine to hem the cuffs. Christopher stood there watching, intrigued. “So, how come all your pants are so long?”

The girls giggled but hid it well.

Mr. Morris smiled. “Oh, that’s standard, my boy. We let the pants out completely, and then hem them to the right length, depending on the customer. What, you’ve only ever had ‘off the rack,’ eh?”

Christopher nodded. “Yeah, I never knew a place like this existed.” Feeling a little confident, Christopher decided to ask Mr. Morris something else. “Ah, Steph—I mean, Mr. Morris, how’d you become so successful?”

Mr. Morris grinned. “Would you like to know the secret to my success?”

“Yes!”

“You have to promise me that, if I tell you the secret to my success, you’ll use the same secret in your own life.”

Christopher slipped on the coat and looked at himself in the mirror. When he saw how great he looked in the new suit that had just been fitted for him, he smiled.

“Sure, why not?”

Mr. Morris slowly nodded. “My boy, that’s what it’s all about: two words, *why not*. You’ve got to promise me that you’re going to begin saying ‘why not?’ to people at least once a day. I promise that your life will change forever if you just follow this simple advice.”

Christopher nodded in agreement. “Why not?”

Chapter 5

A few weeks later, Christopher got on the bus to go to work, as he usually did. He sat up front, again as usual; he didn't like the idea of having to walk farther back, plus the back end always smelled of engine fumes. At a nondescript stop, a very attractive girl came on the bus. Christopher had seen her every day on the same bus; he figured they were headed the same way. Yet he had never paid much attention to her, since he thought he'd never have a chance with her.

Today there was one seat available right next to Christopher, and the girl stepped up next to him.

"Hi, could I sit there?" she asked.

Christopher remembered the promise he made to Mr. Morris. "Why not?" he said.

Shifting over to give her as much room as possible, he smiled as she sat down.

"Thanks. My name is Kristin. I've seen you on this bus for the last three years, but never had a chance to say hi. Would you save this same seat for me tomorrow?"

Christopher felt his face growing warm; he hoped he wasn't blushing. "Ah, why not?"

Kristin laughed. "I hope that's not the only thing you can say!"

“Ah ... no, I can say other things. I mean, I can talk about anything you like!”



And for the next few minutes, they did just that. Christopher had no idea what they were talking about; he could only see her dazzling green eyes, hear the soft tones of her voice, and smell the lovely fragrance about her. Before he knew it, she was rising to get off the bus.

“Sorry, this is my stop. Goodbye, Chris, see you tomorrow,” she said. “I look forward to talking to you again.”

“Sure, why not!” he replied.

She laughed again; at least he assumed it was her laughing. Chris wasn’t sure, as it sounded an awful lot like an angels’ choir. His brow wrinkled: she’d called him Chris! Had he told her his name? He didn’t remember, but then he didn’t remember a single thing he’d said to her.

It was a bracing spring morning when he left the house, but now it felt like sweltering summer, and he unzipped his jacket.

“Yo, bus driver, you want to ease off on the heat? I’m being roasted alive here!”

A general rumbling came from the crowd around Christopher, and he turned to look at the other passengers. They did not look hot, and they did not look happy. He swallowed hard; it would appear he was the only one complaining about the heat.

“Sorry,” he squeaked.

Chapter 6

Not long after that, Christopher arrived at work, same as usual. But this time he was early.

Arthur, the manager, stepped up to Christopher as he was punching in. “Chris, I’ve been meaning to ask you something, and today’s the perfect day. I’d like you to be the restaurant host.”

Christopher’s eyebrows shot up into his thick mat of hair. “Me, why?”

“Well, based on your heroism in saving Stephen Morris with that Heimlich thing. So, what do you say?”

Typically he would say, “why?” and be grumpy. But this time, Mr. Morris’s words again rang in his ears.

“Why not?”

Arthur smiled. “Good man! You know what to do?”

Christopher nodded. “Sure, I’ve seen Stew and Jane do it often enough.”

With that, Christopher, instead of putting on his apron and picking up his dish pan as usual, walked out to the front of the deli and stood at the small podium by the door. As he ran his hands up the down the sides, his palms got sweaty; was he ready for this? Could he really handle it?

Why not? he said to himself.

He looked down; there was a diagram of the restaurant taped to the podium. Oh yeah, he was supposed to use that in placing people. So, how was he going to do that, and do it right?

He had no idea.

Right now, there were just a few people at the counter, so things were easy. But he knew that the breakfast rush would hit any minute; could he handle it?

He had no idea.

Christopher felt his chest get tight. Was he having a heart attack? No, that was silly; he was too young for such a thing. What about a fainting spell? Yeah, he could manage one of those. He licked his lips and looked around. Was it his imagination, or was the room getting hotter by the second? His mouth was so dry, he felt as if he could spit dust.



The door opened, and he snapped his head up to see a line of people coming in—Mr. Morris right at the front!

He smiled at Christopher. “Good to see you, son. What, you moving up in the world?”

“Hi, Stephen,” Christopher squeaked, his voice almost high enough to shatter glass. He swallowed and cleared his throat. “Sorry. Just ... trying something new. Table for one?”

Mr. Morris nodded, and Christopher checked the chart. He led Mr. Morris to his usual table—he figured that was easiest—

and then he took care of the next group. Looking down at the chart, and then at the room, something clicked in Christopher's mind. He'd seen this all before. Actually, he'd seen it twice—sort of. There was that video game he played, "Diner Dash," in which you had to serve all the people and keep them happy; and that other one, "Tetris," which was all about getting the pieces to fit.

Christopher started playing both in his mind: he tried to get the "pieces"—the people—to fit into the diner the best way, and to see that they were kept happy.

By the time the deli closed for the day, it was clear that he'd done a good job as the host.

Locking up, Arthur gave him a firm handshake and a smile. "Son, that was outstanding! God, you shouldn't be wasting your time as a busboy. Tell you what, how'd you like to be the full-time host?"

Christopher's jaw dropped for a moment. "Me? But why? What about Stew and Jane?"

"They're the reason I need a new host. They're getting married and moving away," Arthur explained. "So, what do you say, son? The job's yours, if you want it."

Christopher smiled. "Why not?"

Chapter 7

Over the next few weeks, Christopher proved himself fully able to handle the host position. Now, Paul, the owner of the deli, very rarely showed up there. Christopher had seen him a couple times over the past three years, but he knew that Paul didn't even know his name. It was said that he was always busy running his other businesses.

So it was something of a surprise when Christopher saw Paul come into the diner one morning.

Paul stepped over to Christopher and said, "So, you're the host Arthur has been telling me about, eh? Name's Christopher, right?"

"Ah ... ah, yes ... sir, that's right. But why has he mentioned me to you?"

Paul smiled. "Well, he sort of had to. I asked why the diner was doing so much better these days. I asked if maybe the bakery and the IHOP down the street had gone out of business!"

He laughed. Arthur, standing nearby, also laughed, and then Christopher laughed too.

Arthur stepped over to them. "And I said, no, it's just that the place is running a bit more efficiently thanks to Christopher."

Once again, Christopher felt his throat go dry and tighten up to the point that he could hardly breathe. He hoped he wasn't blushing.

"Well ... I just ... ," he stammered.

Paul held up a hand. "Now, now, no need to say anything. I came by to see you, and to ask if you could work some extra hours over the weekend. I've got a big party coming in, and I could use some help. What do you say?"

Remembering the promise made to Mr. Morris, Christopher knew what he had to say.

"Why not?"

Paul smiled. "Ah, that's the sort of positive attitude I like! Tell you what, Christopher, I'm opening a new restaurant, and I need someone with a great attitude like yours to be the assistant manager. Are you interested?"

"Based on my track record, I think you know what my answer is to that, sir. Why not?"

Chapter 8

Saturday morning was Silvana Mayhew's quiet day. It was the one day of the week when she could sleep late, make herself a leisurely breakfast, and then read the newspaper in peace. She knew that she would be able to read it in peace because Christopher always slept in. Sunday was another matter; he always got up early to read the comics, plus they had a tradition of going to the local bakery for a breakfast of pancakes and a Danish.

So it surprised her as she took a sip of coffee and lowered the paper to see Christopher standing in front of her. It so startled her that she choked on her coffee and promptly spewed it all over herself and the newspaper, which, fortunately, prevented the stream from spattering across his brand new pants.

Christopher laughed. "Ah, Mom, you okay?"

She coughed a bit more and leaned forward in her seat to catch her breath. "Goodness, Chris, you scared the daylights out of me! What in the world are you doing up at this hour, and dressed?"

"I've got a special ... job today."

Silvana tapped the side of her head and made a gesture of using her pinky to clean out her right ear.

“I must be getting old and hard of hearing. I could have sworn you said something about a job. You don’t mean a ‘job’ job, something where you actually get paid, do you? You’re going to a comic book or game convention, right? Yeah, that’s it.”

Christopher rolled his eyes. “Yes, Mom, a real job. The owner of the diner asked me to work a special party he’s throwing.”

Silvana’s brow wrinkled. “And you said yes?”

Christopher smirked. “I said—why not?”

After a hearty breakfast, one his mother was overjoyed to make for him, Christopher headed out and got on the bus. It had been a while since he’d gone into the city on a Saturday. As his mother would remind him, it wasn’t since the last time the comic convention was in town.

Once he got to the restaurant, he checked in with Arthur.

“So, what do you want me to do, sir?”

“There’s a major convention over on Peachtree today, Chris, and Paul and I are hosting some of the guest speakers,” Arthur said. “So, they and their staffs are going to be coming in here all day. We’ve got to get them seated, served and fed, and on their way—fast! We won’t have to worry about their bills; the convention organizers are covering everything. You just need to keep things moving. Think you can handle it?”

Christopher swallowed hard and licked his lips. “Why not?”

Arthur smiled, gave him a curt nod, and walked off to check with the kitchen staff. No sooner had he left than the first group of special guests entered. Christopher started seating them, and

then trickle quickly turned into a torrent. Within ten minutes, the place was packed.

Over the course of the morning and into the afternoon, the dining area was loud and lively, and the seats always full. Christopher proved himself equal to the task: none of the customers complained about their meals, and many complimented him on his efforts.

At the beginning of the day Christopher, Arthur, and the staff sat around and relaxed over a well-earned meal. The cooks didn't even have to prepare it; Paul came by and showed them just why his restaurants were so popular. As they dined on his world-famous (according to him) chicken à la king, Arthur gave Paul a full report on their efforts. Christopher was quite sure that his face turned about ten shades of red over the course of the meal.

When they were done, Paul rose and lifted his coffee cup. "A toast: to the best staff in town!"

They all raised their cups and glasses and drank.

Setting down his cup, Paul gave a big grin. "And now, if you'll all look under your plates, you'll find a small token of my thanks."

After looking at one another with puzzled expressions, they all did as he said—and each one found a hundred dollar bill! Each one except Christopher, that is; he found one of those, plus an envelope.

"What's this, sir?"

"The address to my new restaurant," Paul said. "You ready to start Monday?"

Christopher gave him a big grin. "Why not?"



On Monday morning, Christopher got ready for work by putting on his new suit. He again surprised his mother by looking so nice, and he left to catch his usual bus. He again sat with Kristin, and they chatted until the bus reached her stop. Christopher continued on, checking the address on the paper a couple of times to be sure he was headed for the right place, and he got off at the nearest corner.

Paul's new restaurant wasn't all that far from the deli, but it was in the central downtown district—a very fancy area!

Christopher stood on the sidewalk in front of it and looked up at the sign. It was fancy, *very* fancy. He got the distinct feeling that this was the sort of place *he* couldn't afford to eat at.

As he stepped inside, he realized that he was right. It was a large, plush establishment, with linen tablecloths, crystal glasses, and fine china and silverware. And there, right by the front door, was the assistant manager's station. It was a far cry from the dinky podium back at the deli.

Christopher had to wonder, was he truly equal to this challenge? Well, good things had been happening to him since he had started saying "why not?" instead of "why?"—so, could he do this? Why not?

Chapter 9

Over the course of the next month, Christopher did a good job at Paul's new restaurant. He gradually built up his confidence, and he looked great in his new suit. In fact, he looked so good—and did so well—that he had to get some more suits.

So one Saturday he dropped by the clothing store of Mr. Morris. Stepping inside, Christopher looked around, and he smiled as Stephen Morris came over to him.

“Well, well, Christopher. Back to see me, eh? What can I do for you, my boy?”

Christopher explained about his job at Paul's new restaurant. Stephen stood and listened patiently, slowly nodding at all the right points.

“So, you need some more suits, eh? Not a problem; I never forget a customer's size. Come on, I'll fix you up with some nice ones—and at a discount!”

Christopher left with three new suits. He also made a point of inviting Mr. Morris to drop by the new restaurant some time for lunch.

So he was not surprised when Stephen walked through the entrance of the restaurant the very next Monday. Christopher gave him a smile and showed him to a table.

“Well, Christopher, this is quite a fancy place, I must say,” Stephen said. “It seems you’re moving up in the world, eh?”

Christopher felt his face grow warm. “I ... ah, well ... I guess so. Have a nice lunch; I have to get back to work!”

With that, Christopher returned to his duties, and soon the place was jammed with people. Over the next hour, he managed to juggle dozens of parties, and kept nearly every table filled through the lunch rush.

Finally, as things began to slow down, he managed to swing by Mr. Morris’s table to ask how his meal was.

“Everything okay, Stephen? You need anything else?”

Stephen gave him a big smile as he wiped his mouth with his linen napkin. “No, son, this is just great. I’ve got to tell you, Christopher, I see a new confidence in you.”

“Oh, ah ... thank you, sir. I’m just ... trying to do like you suggested.”

“Yes, I can see that. Look, I hate to sound like I’m playing matchmaker here, but ...”

Christopher’s eyebrows shot up. “Matchmaker?”

Stephen laughed hard. “Yes, I know what sort of ... connotation that word carries, but I’m not trying to do that. It’s just ... I see a lot of potential in you, son, and I’d like to invite you over to my place this weekend. We’re having our daughter over for Memorial Day, and I’d like to introduce you to her. No pressure, mind you, I just think you two could be ... friends.”

Once again, Christopher felt his mouth turn into a desert. He thought about Kristin, the girl he’d been talking to on the bus.

They'd become—sort of—friends, and he was trying to build up enough courage to ask her out, but it wasn't working. Why was it that he always knew exactly what he wanted to say to her *except* when he was with her?

He looked down at Stephen, remembered his words of wisdom, and gave him a small nod. "Sure, why not?"

Chapter 10

That Sunday evening, Christopher got ready for his date. Mr. Morris had said to come by to pick up his daughter at their house at 7:30, and he did not want to be late. He also didn't want to overdress, so he went with something casual. Of course, his mother made him change his shirt three times! He finally managed to get out the door, and he hopped in his new car, on which he'd just made the down payment (with the money he' was now earning as assistant manager).

He got to Mr. Morris's house well ahead of time. It was a nice place—neat and with a beautiful flowerbed running along the front. Christopher had to laugh; it even had the classic white picket fence running along the sidewalk, and roses grew all up and down the fence. He had never been a fan of rosebushes. His grandmother had them along her porch, and all those prickly thorns had made it tough for him to climb onto the porch when he was a little boy. His grandmother told him that roses had thorns to remind you who was boss. He decided at a young age that roses were something he did not want around.

In spite of the roses, he parked in the driveway and walked up the stone steps to the front door. After he rang the doorbell, a

girl answered the door. Christopher was amazed: it was Kristin, the girl from his daily bus rides!

The first thing she said was, “The guy that says ‘why not’ on the bus—the ‘why not guy’!”

Christopher choked on his own saliva for a moment, and then finally found his voice.

“Ah ... yes, I am the ‘why not guy.’”

A moment later Mr. Morris stepped up next to her, all smiles. “Ah, Christopher, I see you’ve met Kristin.” His brow wrinkled as he looked from one of them to the other. “Okay, I may not be the sharpest tool in the shed, but I can tell that ... something is going on here.”

Kristin laughed, and promptly explained about their meeting on the bus. They all had a good laugh about it, and then Christopher and Kristin left to go on their date.

As they practically knew each other already, a lot of the initial tension that is typical on a first date was avoided. Christopher took her to a little place he knew called the Crow’s Nest. It was a nice little restaurant with an open deck area that looked out over Detroit. It was a cool evening, and they were able to sit there in comfort.

After they had been there about an hour, a band started to play and a bunch of people got up to dance.

Kristin smiled at Christopher. “So, you want to dance?”

He looked at the people on the dance floor and swallowed hard. Dancing had never really been his ... thing. As his mother always said, he had the classic two left feet. He also thought

back to school, and being saddled with the moniker “Chicken legs.” But this was Mr. Morris’s daughter; he was the man who taught him to say “why not”, and this was Kristin, the girl he’d been talking to on the bus. She even called him the “why not guy.” How could he say anything else to her?

He was going to give it a shot!

“Sure, why not?” he said with a smile.

They got to their feet and moved out to the dance floor. Yeah, Christopher was right: he was no dancer. He’d be voted off of *Dancing with the Stars* on the first rehearsal! Still, he wasn’t about to give up. They danced for a little while and then returned to their seats. They had a good laugh about his inability to get his feet to do as he wanted.

Kristin gave him a big smile. “So, it would seem dancing is not your ... forte. Still, it’s a strong man who can laugh at himself. Hey, how about we go to Sonny’s? They have karaoke.”

“Karaoke!” Christopher said, his voice going up an octave. He cleared his throat as she smirked. “Ah ... singing, huh?”

“What’s the matter, you not want to try it?” Kristin said.

“Try it? Ah ... sure, why not?”

Christopher paid the bill, they got in his car, and she gave him directions to Sonny’s. He parked and they went inside. It was quite a nice club. A grand piano sat in the center of the room, ringed by a piano-shaped counter. Across from the front door, on the other side of the piano area, was a small stage. It was clear that that’s where the karaoke machine was.

He and Kristin took seats at one of the small round tables facing the stage, and she promptly grabbed the catalog of songs.

“So, what’s your pleasure?” she said. “Classic rock, new stuff, heavy metal, easy listening?”

“I was always partial to Britney, actually.”

Kristin’s jaw dropped, and Christopher laughed.

“Just kidding! They got any Stones in there?” he said.

She flipped some pages and nodded. “Yeah, what’ll it be?”



Christopher bent closer to her and looked over the list. He couldn't help but sniff her perfume; it was most delightful. Tugging at his shirt collar, he couldn't help but notice that the temperature seemed to be going up in the room. Must be the bright lights on the stage; yeah, that was it.

Kristin pointed at the list. "How about this one, want to give it a try?"

"Sure, why not?" Christopher said as he got to his feet.

On stage, he gave the emcee the name of his song, picked up the microphone, and waited for the words to start appearing on the screen. As it turned out, Christopher managed to get through the song without mangling it too badly. Then Kristin got up and sang, and then they did a duet, which proved to be the most successful of their endeavors.

At the beginning of night, Christopher pulled into the Morrisises' driveway, parked, and walked Kristin to the door.

"So, I had a nice night," she said with a smile. "It's great seeing you somewhere other than the morning bus!"

Christopher laughed. "Yeah, I'd been hoping we could ... ah, that is, I was going to ask you about that ... one of these days."

A small smirk played across Kristin's face. "Oh, I see; just trying to build up the ... nerve, eh? So, do I have to ask for a goodnight kiss?"

Christopher took her in his arms, and gave her that kiss. Separating slightly, he looked down at her and smiled.

"Sure, why not?" he said.



Chapter 11

Christopher wasn't sure how he made his way home that night. The last thing he remembered was the kiss from Kristin; after that, he was sure he heard a symphony orchestra, and he seemed to just sort of float across town. The next thing he knew, he was walking into his mom's house. Funny how, with his brain switched off, his hands and feet knew enough to get him home safe and sound.

The next morning he had breakfast with his mom and headed off to work—all of it just as usual. Yet there was something different about today

It was Christopher; he was different.

That day at work, he started to see himself differently. Now that he had a good job, and the start of a real relationship with a girl, he saw his life in a slightly different light. He was a young man, and he was still living at home with his mother!

His expressions obviously betrayed his inner turmoil. Long before the day was done, Paul stepped up to him.

“Penny for your thought, my man,” he said.

“Huh, what?” Christopher said, snapping back to reality. “Oh ... ah, well, I've been thinking about ... getting my own place, and I was just wondering how to go about doing that.”

“Ah, getting your own apartment, is that it?” Paul said.

Christopher nodded. “Yeah. I just don’t know what I can afford, or where to look.”

“Tell you what, let’s sit down after closing tonight, and I’ll give you a few pointers. What do you say to that?”

“Why not?”

That evening, Christopher got a lesson on personal finances. Paul outlined what he would need to do in order to get a place: placing deposits, setting up utilities, and so on. Christopher was very grateful, and he went home and promptly drew up a monthly budget using a spreadsheet on his computer.

The next day he again must have been wearing his heart on his sleeve, because over breakfast his mother asked what, if anything, was wrong.

“I’ve just been ... thinking,” he replied.

“Must be some very *big* thinking, to give you such a sour look!” Silvana said.

Slowly, reluctantly, he told her what he was thinking of doing. He was frankly a little worried that she might get upset at the prospect of losing him.

When he was done, she smiled and rose to her feet. “When are you moving out?”

Christopher rolled his eyes. “Gee, Mom, are you *that* anxious to get rid of me?”

Silvana laughed. “I’m anxious for you to stand on your own two feet! Besides, your room would make a lovely sewing room for me.”

“So ... you’re okay with it?” he said.

“Sure, why not?”

They both had a good laugh, and he headed off to work. Later that day he told Kristin of his plan, and she immediately offered to help him look for a place over the weekend.

So that Saturday, they had a sort of “working date”: he and Kristin went on a date to look at apartments. All in all, they had a great time, and they found a place perfect for Christopher. It was close to work, yet not far from his mother’s, and equally close to the college where Kristin was finishing her studies.

Over the next week, he packed up his stuff (including all of his comic books and action figures). Then he, with his mom and Kristin, got everything moved into his new place the very next weekend.

“So, Christopher, you collect *dolls*, huh?” Kristin said with a smirk as they unpacked.

Silvana giggled as she put some dishes in a kitchen cabinet.

“They’re action figures, young lady!” he said in a mock scolding tone. “And don’t you forget it. That Data is first edition, first season. You got any idea how much it’s worth?”

With that, Kristin stopped kidding him about his stuff (although she thought a bunch of old comics were a silly thing to collect too!).

Life was looking pretty fabulous for Christopher. He and Kristin continued to date, and just over a month later, right before the big Fourth of July holiday, Paul asked him to stay after work.

As Christopher sat down in Paul's snug little office in the back of the building, Paul offered him a cappuccino and made one for himself.

"So, Chris, business is going well for us, and I wanted to talk you about something," Paul said.

"Sure, sir, what's up?"

"Well, given the way things have gone at all my restaurants, I need more help. So I'm taking the manager out of this place and putting her in a new restaurant I'm opening across town."

"Wow, that's great, sir! So, what, you need a new manager for here?"

Paul nodded. "That's right. So what do you say, my boy? You think you can handle a promotion to the position of manager?"

Christopher felt the air rush from his lungs like a balloon being deflated. For a moment, he got a bit light-headed, but he quickly recovered.

He gave Paul a smile. "Why not?"



Chapter 12

The Fourth of July proved to be a big weekend, in more ways than one. Christopher started his new job as manager, his mom invited Kristin and her parents over for a big dinner like she used to make long ago, and he and Kristin continued to find more things they had in common.

Christopher and Kristin arrived at his mother's house well before Mr. and Mrs. Morris; they wanted to help Silvana set things up. Upon their arrival at the house, Silvana greeted them at the door and ushered them into the kitchen. The smell of the food was overwhelming.

"Oh, Mrs. Mayhew, it all smells so wonderful," Kristin said. "What are you making?"

"Well, I thought we'd start off with a little antipasto, then some cheese and wine before the flank steak and pasta. After that ..."

And on she went! Christopher had to bite his lip to keep from laughing. Yeah, that was mom, cook enough to feed twenty when there was only five. Long before she was done listing the full menu, she had plates of food in front of him and Kristin.

"Oh ... but shouldn't we wait for my mom and dad?" Kristin said.

Silvana nodded. “Oh sure, but you should eat something before then. Oh, and I need to bring up some wine from the cellar. Be right back!”

With that, she headed down into the basement.

“What, she wants us to eat before we have dinner?” Kristin said.

Christopher nodded. “Welcome to my world. This is what comes of having an Italian mother.”

“She is?”

“With a name like Silvana, what else could she be? Her married name might be Mayhew, but she was born and raised in Italy.”

“So ... what, your dad died with a smile on his face and a fork in his hand?”

They had a good laugh, ate a little bit, and then waited for Kristin’s parents to arrive. Then Silvana fed them like there was no tomorrow! By the time they were done, they could barely get out of their chairs to head down to the city park to see the fireworks.

The rest of the summer passed pleasantly. Christopher continued to work at the restaurant, and he and Kristin continued to see each other. She had finished her classes, so they got to see a lot of each other.

One afternoon, in the lounge of Christopher’s apartment complex, they began talking.

“So, Chris, have you thought about taking some classes at college?”

He nodded. “Actually, I have been thinking that maybe I should. After all, I’m a manager now; there are things I need to know, and some things I’d like to learn.”

“True,” Kristin said. “What did you have in mind?”

“Well ... to start with, I thought about learning a foreign language, say Spanish. After all, we get a lot of Hispanic customers; it probably wouldn’t hurt to learn it.”

Kristin nodded. “Yeah, that’s a very good idea. What else?”

Christopher rooted around in his bag. “Oh, that’s it ... for now.”

“Huh, just one class? Why?”

“Why not? I’ve got something else to focus on just now.”

“What’s that?” Kristin said.

Christopher held up a small box and opened it. Inside was a small diamond ring.

“A marriage—ours. That is, if you’ll have me.”

Kristin’s eyes got big as saucers and her jaw dropped. For a moment, it just moved up and down, but nothing came out.

“I—I—I ... you—you—you,” she stammered, her eyes filling with tears.

Christopher grinned. “I know, a proposal in the lounge of the apartment building isn’t the most romantic, but—”

“It’s perfect!” Kristin squealed, throwing her arms about him. “Why not?”



Chapter 13

They decided to have the wedding during the Labor Day weekend. It was Paul's idea; that way, he said, they'd have a three-day weekend for every anniversary.

"Yeah, and then maybe Chris won't forget when their anniversary is," Mr. Morris said with a smile.

Naturally, Mrs. Mayhew insisted on making the pre-wedding dinner, and she outdid herself. How one woman armed only with a small stove could feed so many, Christopher could never understand. But it didn't matter; there she was, in all her glory.

On Sunday the service was held in the church down the street from Silvana's house. She cried tears of great joy through the whole thing. Mr. Morris walked Kristin down the aisle, and she looked like an angel straight from heaven in her stunning white gown.

Christopher's father having passed away some years before, he asked Arthur to be his mother's escort and Paul to be his best man.

Standing there at the altar, watching Kristin seemingly glide toward him, Christopher felt his heart rise to his throat.

Paul leaned toward him. "You okay, my man? You're looking a little green around the gills."

“Just ... totally in awe of this day,” Christopher whispered back. He kept his eyes rooted on Kristin. He didn’t want to miss a moment of this event; everything had to be stored in his memory for all time. “I never thought a dumb schmuck like me could get a girl like her.”

“Why is that?”

“I ... ah, huh. I don’t know. Why not?”

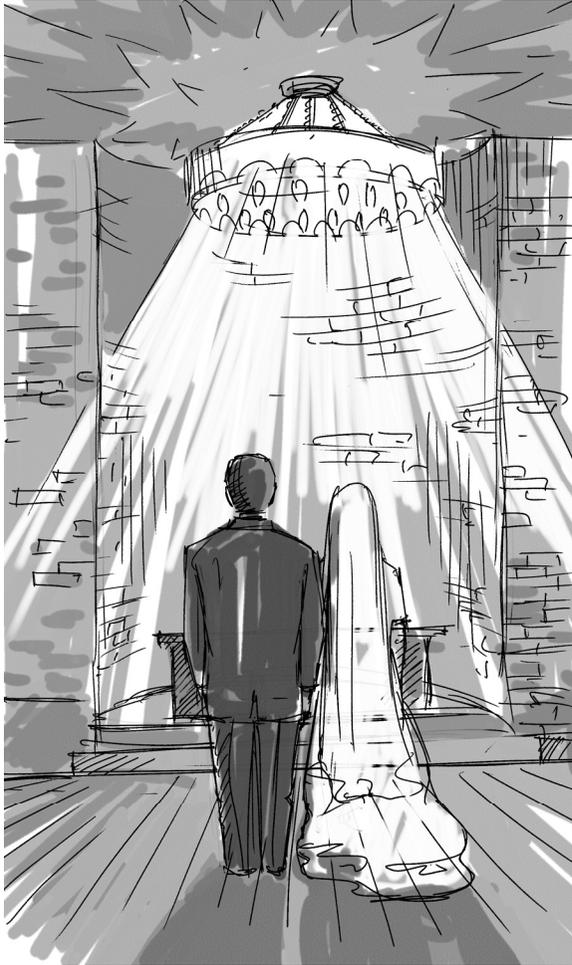
Kristin came up next to him, and they turned to face the minister. Behind them, Christopher could hear Mr. Morris whispering something. It took a moment, but he finally figured out what it was; he was saying “I do” over and over again. Christopher’s brow wrinkled. Now, why would he be saying that?

“Who gives this woman in marriage?” the minister finally said.

Mr. Morris stepped forward slightly and put Kristin’s hand in Christopher’s.

“I do!” he said firmly.

Ah, there, Christopher had his answer. He gave his full attention to the minister, and the ceremony proceeded.



Later, they all enjoyed a wonderful reception held—of course—at Paul’s restaurant. It was his wedding present to them, and he even made the cake himself: three central tiers, and then two smaller cakes off to the side connected by miniature plastic flights of stairs. The bride and groom sat atop the uppermost layer, and figurines on the stairs represented the members of the wedding party.

After the dancing, which Christopher managed to do fairly well (due in no small part to lessons by Kristin), came the time

for the toasts. Silvana gave one, then Paul, Stephen, and so on. When they were all done, Silvana, Stephen, and Linda, Kristin's mother, stepped up in front of the happy couple. Silvana presented them with an envelope.

Christopher took it, his brow wrinkling. "Mom, what's this?"

"My final present to you two," she said.

"Open it!" Stephen added.

They did so, and inside were two plane tickets to Los Angeles.

"Oh, Mrs. Mayhew, that's so wonderful," Kristin said with a smile.

Her Dad held up his hand. "Ah, but that's not all. Your mother and I have our present to ... present."

Linda handed Kristin a second envelope. "Have a look, sweetie."

Kristin opened it. Inside were two tickets for a cruise plus a stay in a beautiful hotel. Christopher was dumbstruck. He had never been on a plane, let alone a cruise ship; he had never been outside the city limits of Detroit! Now here he was facing the prospect of doing all three at once—another "triple header"!

Silvana gave him a big smile. "So, what do you say, son. You up for a little trip?"

"Mom, do you have to ask? Absolutely, why not?"

Chapter 14

Later that day Stephen and Linda drove the happy couple, their bags all packed, to the airport. Christopher was a little nervous; he'd never been on a plane, and he was just a bit hesitant about boarding it. But, equipped with his new mantra, he set his mind to do it.

In the plane, Kristin had to practically pry Christopher's fingers from the back of her hand. "Chris, you're cutting off the circulation! Please, retract your claws, okay?"

He snatched his hand away and gave her a sheepish grin. "Sorry."

"You a little uneasy about flying, sweetie?"

"What makes you say that?"

Kristin held up her hand to show off the fingernail gouges. "These!"

Christopher rubbed the back of his neck. "Sorry. I've just never ... flown before."

"It'll be fine."

And she was right; the flight passed without any trouble. They landed at LAX and then took a cab to the cruise ship pier. The harbor was a large place, and the ship looked like something out of the movie *Titanic*. Of course, because they

were cruising to Mexico, there was little chance of them hitting an iceberg.

The check-in took a while, with such a long line of people shuffling back and forth through the big open room. As it turned out, Stephen and Linda had gotten them a large suite, which was fine by Christopher; he didn't relish the notion of trying to get around in one of the tiny cabins. Although he'd never been on a cruise, he kept hearing from people in line how small most of the cabins were, and how most didn't even have a window!



When the crew found out that Christopher and Kristin were on their honeymoon, they gave them the four-star treatment. A photographer took a bunch of pictures of them as they went on board, and then they settled into their suite. What a room it was! A king-size bed next to a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows, a little couch and TV, even a dressing area with closets and a makeup table. The bathroom was as big as most of the cabins and had a whirlpool tub.

Standing at the window, holding the white curtains aside, Christopher could see the lifeboats below, and the open ocean outside the harbor. “Wow, what a view! I think this is going to be a fantastic trip.”

“So do I, darling,” Kristin said from behind him.

Turning, he saw that she was reclining on the bed. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out what was on her mind!

Over the next couple of days, they went to shows in the ship’s theater, swam in the pool, and went on various excursions at the ports of call. Christopher tried his hand at parasailing and snorkeling, and he even took a lesson in scuba diving. Every time he was faced with a new challenge, something he’d never tried before, he resorted to his standard response:

“Why not?”



The crew took note. During the last part of the cruise, they offered a program in which a passenger got to be the assistant theater director and help put on the big, end-of-the-cruise show. Kristin noticed the sign-up sheet on the purser's desk.

"Hey, Chris, what do you say about trying this out?"

He looked it over and gave her a nod. "Why not?"

After signing up for it, he and half a dozen other passengers went over to the main theater for a little audition—of sorts. Each

one had to get up on stage and make a speech about their qualifications and their “vision” for the final show.

When it was all done, Christopher was pretty sure he wouldn't be selected. Some of the other people seemed a lot more experienced at working in the theater. So it was with monumental surprise that he learned of his selection.

“Why me?” he asked the cruise director.

She smiled at him. “We like your ‘can do’ attitude! So, you up for this?”

He smiled back. “Why not?”

For the last few days of the cruise, Chris divided his time between excursions and fun with Kristin and working at the theater. Of course, the show was pretty much done (it was something the cast did cruise after cruise), so there wasn't much room for innovation. Still, they listened to Christopher's ideas. The musical number he designed had a simple theme: Embrace the Power of Why Not!

Chapter 15

Finally, the cruise arrived at the destination of their honeymoon: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. It was a beautiful seaside community, and their Spanish-style hotel sat on a small bluff overlooking the harbor. Christopher welcomed the chance to try out the Spanish he'd learned, and their room had a lovely little patio that was perfect for private breakfasts and intimate dinners.

Sitting there one morning, Christopher looked down at the waves crashing on the beach below. "Hey, sweetie, how about we go down there today and try our hand at surfing?"

Kristin looked shocked. "Surfing! You've never surfed before, have you?"

He shook his head. "Nope, but why not give it a try, huh?"

"You're right, why not? Okay, I'm game, but no laughing at me when I wipe out, you got it?"

Christopher crossed his finger over the center of his chest. "Cross my heart, and hope to die."

After they finished eating, they got into their swimsuits and headed down to the beach. A long, winding stone staircase meandered down the hillside from the main buildings to the sandy beach. The hotel had set up a little shaded table there

with surfboards, snorkels, masks, fins, and other beach supplies. They each grabbed a board, and they paddled out into the warm ocean waters.

Kristin was right: Christopher was no surfer! Still, the two of them had a good time trying. Finally, taking a breather, he sat astride his board and looked over the beach.



“Gee, I’m thirsty, and I could go for a snack. It’s too bad the hotel doesn’t set up a bar and refreshment stand down on the beach.”

Kristin nodded as they paddled into shore. “Yeah, they’d probably make a mint!”

Back at the beach, they turned in the boards and stretched out on some towels.

Looking up at the hillside, Christopher said, “I wonder what all those little cottages are.”

“They almost look abandoned.”

“They are,” came the sound of a man’s voice.

They sat up and looked around. A tall, solidly built man with a long handlebar moustache was standing next to them. Christopher recognized him; it was the hotel manager, Mr. Gonzales.

“How do you know about them, sir?” Christopher said.

“I own them,” Mr. Gonzales said, and sadly shook his head. “But, they stand empty; I just can’t rent them.”

He went on to explain that while people liked the idea of staying in the little bungalows by the beach, it was too long of a walk up to the main dining hall of the hotel. In addition, the lodgings were too hard to service for the housekeepers.

Christopher listened intently and proceeded to make some suggestions. His first was the idea of a bar and little restaurant on the beach. Then he had a solution to the problem of the bungalows. In a way, it tied back to his work at the restaurant and his days playing video games. It was all about fitting the pieces together the best way, and keeping the people happy.

“If you set up the center bungalow as a combination kitchen and housekeeping station, the staff could serve all the people

staying in the other buildings, and then it wouldn't be a long walk for anyone."

Mr. Gonzales smiled and slowly nodded. "Not a bad idea, my friend. I like you, young man; you've got a great attitude."

"Hey, why not?" Christopher replied.

Chapter 16

Over the next few days, Christopher and Kristin worked out a very nice deal with Mr. Gonzales: free surfing lessons in exchange for ideas on improving things around the hotel.

The morning of their last day there, the newlyweds sat out on the little patio and had breakfast.

“Oh, Chris, this place is paradise, don’t you think?” Kristin said.

He nodded. “Yeah, sure is a far cry from Detroit. I bet the winters here are sweet!”

“Yeah. Hey, there’s an idea: we ought to come back here for New Year’s or something. It’d be great to get away from the ice and snow for a while each year.”

After that they headed down to the beach for a final swim—and one last try at surfing. Christopher did pretty well, actually; he managed to stay on the board two times in ten tries. For him, it was a new record!

Once more sitting astride their boards, the two of them grinned at each other as they looked over the beach and shoreline. The new bar (still under construction, but already serving clients) was a big hit, and staff members were cleaning out the bungalows.



Hector, which is how they now addressed Mr. Gonzales, treated them to lunch and then asked if they'd care to try waterskiing.

Kristin's face lost all color. "Do ... *that*? Oh, I don't know. I tried that once on Lake Michigan. It did not end well!"

Christopher smirked. "You end up face flat in the water, sweetie?"

"I wish! No, I went over backwards and landed on my ... ah, other end.

Christopher pressed his lips together as hard as he could and bit his tongue; he was desperate to keep from laughing, but it was a losing proposition. He snorted, and the laughter came out of his nose.

Kristin smacked him playfully in the arm. “You big lug; you’re supposed to be sympathetic!”

That was it, Chris lost it. He dissolved into a fit of giggles, and soon he was laughing so hard he was crying. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, sweetie, that image is just so funny!”

“Well, if you’re so tough, are you up for trying? Or do I even have to ask what you’re answer’s going to be?”

He nodded. “Why not?”

So it was with some trepidation that they returned to the beach after lunch. Hector got the boat ready, and Christopher paddled out into the water and slipped his feet into the skis. Once the boat was in position and Christopher had hold of the line, Hector turned to look back at him.

“Ready whenever you are, amigo!”

“Hit it!” Christopher shouted.

Hector did so. The engine revved, the rope went taut, and Christopher shot into the air—and promptly fell flat on his face. He wasn’t sure, but he thought he heard laughter just before he hit.

Bobbing to the surface, he looked around and saw Hector swinging around to come alongside him. “You okay, my friend? Want to give up, or try again?”

Christopher smiled. “Why not?”

With that, they again got into position, and he again gave the signal. This time he made it about fifty feet before making a nosedive into the water. Again he thought he heard laughter from the shoreline. Yet Christopher was not deterred.

It took another three tries, but he eventually managed to stay upright for two runs past the beach—before again plunging into the surf. For a first-timer, not a bad effort. When he had swum back to shore, Kristin bounced up to him and hugged him as the other beachgoers applauded.

“Sweetie, that was some good effort! You sure did a heck of a lot better than I ever did,” she said.

Christopher grinned and gave her a kiss. “Yeah, although I do feel like I’ve got about a gallon of water up my nose.”

They all had a good laugh, and then he and Kristin went sightseeing for the afternoon.

That night Hector invited them to be the guests of honor in the main dining hall. It was a big, beautiful room with wrought-iron chandeliers, stone-topped tables, and lovely wooden chairs. Normally, the small square tables were spread out in the room, but Hector had put them all end to end to celebrate and honor Christopher and Kristin, who sat at the head of the table with him. He raised a glass of wine to toast the happy couple.

“Here, we drink to my new friends!” he said.

All present did so, and then Chris got to his feet. “Thank you, Hector, you’re too kind. Kristin and I have had the time of our lives here; we only wish we could stay longer.”

“Sí, this is true?” Hector said.

Christopher and Kristin both nodded.

“Well, then why not stay?” Hector replied. “I am not so young as I once was; why not stay and help me manage the hotel? You have such good ideas, you would make a fine manager!”

Christopher felt the blood drain from his face. He sat down—before he could fall down—and looked at Kristin. “I—I ... you—you ... honey, what do you think?” he finally managed to say.

Kristin had a “deer in the headlights” look on her face. “I ... I don’t know. I mean, this is so sudden!”

Hector and the others laughed, and he set his glass down. “No answer needed now. You two sleep on it, and give your answer in morning, okay?”

Christopher smiled at him. “Sure, why not?”

Chapter 17

After dinner, Christopher and Kristin went for a walk on the beach in the moonlight. It was actually rather cool, but walking gave Chris a chance to think. Later they headed up to their room to retire for the evening. Still later, wrapped in each other's arms, they talked about their future and Hector's offer.

"So, what do you think about moving here, Chris?"

He sighed. "I don't know. It's a pretty big change! I mean, this is my first trip anywhere. I'm used to Detroit."

Kristin nodded. "Yeah, I know what you mean. I've thought about moving now that I've finished college, but that was to places like New York or St. Louis, not another country! Besides, all our friends and family are back in the States."

"Yeah, it's a huge change in our lives, and there was a time when I'd say, 'why?' But after what your dad taught me, and the changes in my life, I'm tempted to say, 'why not?'"

Kristin nodded. "So you really want to move here to Puerto Vallarta and help to manage this hotel?"

Christopher swallowed hard. "Why not?"

The next morning they sat down with Hector and hashed out all of the details related to Christopher's relocating and coming to work for him. They could live in one of the little

bungalows—at least for the time being; the places were a bit small and not really suited to housing a couple permanently.

After they flew home and broke the news to their parents, Silvana was less than enthusiastic. “Move to another *country*?” she said, her voice betraying her sadness. “But ... when will I see you again? What about my grandchildren?”

Kristin’s face turned eight shades of red. “Mrs. Mayhew—Silvana! Please, aren’t you rushing things just a little bit?”

Silvana managed a small smile. “Oh, I know, dear, but ... in time. And then how will I see them?”

“Mom, all my life I’ve been an underachiever, and now things have started turning around for me because of my change of attitude. I think this is a tremendous opportunity! But if you’re against it, I’ll tell Hector no.”

Silvana got up and slowly walked around the living room. She tugged at her hair for a moment, and then turned to face Christopher. “No, I won’t be selfish. You’re right, this *is* a great chance for you, and you need to grab it.”

He smiled and hugged her. “Really, Mom, you’re okay with this?”

“Sure, *why not*? By the way, are there flights from Detroit to Puerto Vallarta?”

They all had a good laugh, and then for a similar confrontation with Kristin’s parents. That went a bit more smoothly: Mr. and Mrs. Morris were all for it.

“There, you see, the power of a positive attitude!” Stephen said.

Linda slowly nodded. “Yes. Ah ... how about we take a little vacation this Thanksgiving, Stephen?”

“To somewhere ... south of the border?” he said.

They too had a good laugh, and they invited Silvana to join them for a congratulatory dinner.

The next day Christopher broke the news to Paul. He was sorry to lose Chris, but he also saw the enormous opportunity it presented and he accepted Christopher’s two weeks’ notice. It took about that long for Kristin and him to settle all their affairs, pack their things, and say their good-byes.

On their last night in town, Paul threw them a farewell dinner at his new restaurant, and all their friends and family came. There were toasts and tears, and hugs and kisses all night.

The next day Silvana, Stephen, and Linda drove the happy couple—who didn’t look or feel all that happy at the moment—to the airport. There followed another series of hugs and kisses (and tears), and then they were off.

In their seats, hand in hand, Kristin and Christopher looked into each other’s eyes.

“So, Chris, you ready for this?”

He nodded. “Sure, why not?”

Chapter 18

Over the next few years, a lot happened in the lives of Christopher and Kristin. They worked with Hector and the staff to make the hotel the best place possible. Christopher's idea for the bungalows was a hit, and he came up with many more improvements.

They soon had the chance to move out of the bungalow, when Kristin announced she was pregnant! That, of course, caused Silvana and the Morrises to reschedule their visit and come earlier.

"So, what you going to name the lad?" Stephen said. "You know, Stephen is a fine, strong name."

Kristin rolled her eyes. "Thanks, Dad, we'll ... take it under advisement."

"Just don't name the baby something silly like those celebrities do," Silvana said.

Christopher smirked. "What, Mom, you don't want a grandchild named Moon Unit?"

Both Silvana and Linda gasped.

"No, absolutely not!" Linda snapped. "Do that, and I'll disown you both."

They all laughed, and Chris gave both of their mothers a hug.

“Mom, Linda, don’t worry. We’ll come up with something reasonable,” he said.

He was as good as his word. In the spring, on May 19, little Alexa joined the family. Now their bungalow was truly too small, and they had to consider the prospect of buying a house. “This is even scarier than becoming a father!” Chris remarked.

“Well, of course, sweetie,” Kristin said. “I did all the work on that!”

They laughed.

Hector helped them find a home not far from the hotel, and they made the decision to buy it. Of course, why not?

Over the next ten years they worked the hotel, raised their gradually increasing family (with three more kids), built a life, and periodically visited with their relatives back in the States. Christopher and Kristin helped make the hotel a smashing success with their “why not?” attitude.



So it was with a great deal of surprise and sadness that they faced the death of their friend and boss, Hector. They were equally surprised when they learned that he'd left the hotel to them!

"Us?" Christopher said to the lawyer.

He nodded. "Sí, Señor Mayhew. Hector had no familia, so it was his wish that you have the hotel. Here, look at what he have me put at end of will."

Christopher took the document as Kristin and the kids gathered around. He smiled. Hector had handwritten in: Why not?

The Beginning

List 100 things you have already said "why not" to in your life:

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List 100 things you will say "why not" to in the future:

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92 *Why Not? How Two Words Can Change Your Life*

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Take the Why Not Test!

Why Not?

Is it really possible to change your life by simply saying "why not"? The answer is yes. However, it goes without saying that you must be judicious in its use. Are you going to say "why not" to people, places, ideas, or things that can be harmful to you? Of course not. That would be crazy.

Saying "why not" to everything could potentially cause you unimaginable problems. For example, if someone offered you some street drugs to be cool, would you say "why not?" I don't think so! You would be a complete imbecile to say "why not" to something that could totally mess up your life and even kill you.

"Why Not" is a powerful thing to say...and should be used only under the right circumstances.

Under the wrong circumstances, it can get very ugly, very fast.

In order to help you understand the power of saying 'why not', answer the following questions.

By practicing, you will be much better prepared to embark on your new journey of fun, excitement, and opportunity.

In other words, life is a participation sport. It's time to start participating in a more powerful way by opening yourself up to the positive possibilities.

...Why Not?

- 1. A shady looking character offers you an opportunity to buy a brand new laptop computer out of the back of their car for 50 bucks.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 2. A friend asks you if you would like to go to a concert to see one of their favorite bands. You typically like Blues, but this concert is classical.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 3. Your brother asks you over for dinner. He asks you to try a new Hungarian food you have never tried before.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 4. Your spiritual advisor tells you about a great speaker visiting from out of town. He suggests you go.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 5. A crazy driver cuts you off. He rolls down his window and asks you to pull over because he wants to talk to you.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 6. Your friend is volunteering at a local fund raising event. He asks you to come along and help by working at the registration.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 7. Your friends are adventure seekers. They ask you to go with them to chase tornadoes.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 8. Your boss asks you and your co-worker to stay a couple extra hours on a Thursday night because he needs your advise on a new project.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 9. Your boss offers you a promotion. She needs a person to handle a new division. You need to move out of town for the promotion.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 10. A friend heard you singing in her car. She loved your voice. Your friend wants to go to Karaoke tonight and put you on stage.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

11. Your family is having a big holiday dinner. They asked you to cook something special. You have never cooked anything in your life before.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

12. Your significant other loves reading about gardening. You think it is boring. There is a famous gardener coming to town for a lecture. Your significant other wants to go.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 13. You are at a party. Some people who you do not really know ask you if you want to try a new drug that can make you feel like you are floating.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 14. You know your boyfriend or girlfriend loves poetry. They ask you to write them a poem.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 15. On your way home, you see a group of ducks crossing a busy intersection.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 16. On your way to school, you see a dog that looks like it is lost. You have a cell phone with you.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 17. A college friend has passes to meet some famous football players before the big game. They want you to go. You can't stand football.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 18. A group of students are marching for a cause that you believe in. You are asked to join the march.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 19. You have been asked to write a guest posting on a blog.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 20. A Magician asks for a volunteer from the audience.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 21. A hypnotist asks for volunteers from the audience to be hypnotized.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 22. A friend asks you spy on an ex-boyfriend.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 23. A friend asks you to give you some of your mother's prescription medication because they need to it to calm down.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

24. Your long lost cousin asks you to come visit in a foreign land.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

25. You can't stand hockey, but you are asked to go to a Stanley Cup game.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

26. Your friend gives you a religious book he thinks might be of interest you.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

27. Your friend gives you a religious necklace and says it will bring you good luck.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

28. A person you do not know propositions you via the Internet.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 29. You are at the mall, and there is a stand giving free seated back massages.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 30. A new friend has invited you to a dinner party. The new friend says that it is a party for people interested in overthrowing the government.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 31. A new friend has invited you to a dinner party. The new friend says that the party will be filled with poets, musicians, and painters.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 32. You have a chance to march in a parade in costume.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 33. You have a chance to meet an important politician at a luncheon.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 34. You have a chance to meet a famous rabbi, priest, or monk.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 35. A person who you do not know invites you to the bad part of town for a party.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 36. You are at a coffee house reading a newspaper, and an attractive girl /boy asks if she/he can sit next to you.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

37. Your best friend wants to set you up on a blind date.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

38. You are invited to a black tie charity event. You do not have a tux/

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 39. A total stranger wants to set you up with a guy 30 years older than you.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 40. Your friend rides horses, and asks you to go to the barn with her to clean the animals.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 41. Your friend is a writer. She wants your thoughts on the book she is writing.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 42. You are parked at the mall and a stranger asks if you can help them do something inside their van.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 43. You are parked at the mall and a 90-year-old woman looks like she needs help loading a bag of groceries.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 44. You are sitting at a bar, and very interesting person asks you if they can buy you a drink.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

45. You like making videos about animals. A contest is announced for the cutest dog video.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

46. You like to play guitar. A guitar conference is coming to town.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

47. You are interested in holistic health. A new holistic health center just opened in your neighborhood.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

48. You are interested in politics. The President is coming to campus to speak.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

49. You like designing websites. A contest is announced by a company to redesign their website. Winner gets \$1000.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 50. You like camping and writing. An essay contest is announced to write about wilderness adventure. Winner gets an all expense paid trip to Costa Rica.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 51. You are interested in Interior Design. A new hotel opens an hour away that has everyone raving about the design.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

52. You are interested in bible study. Your spiritual advisor asks you to start a study group.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

53. You are interested in psychology. Your mom's friend is a psychologist and asks you to go to lunch.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

54. You are interested in computer gaming. A computer gaming convention is coming to town.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 55. You build computer programs. A spammer asks you to build a spamming program.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 56. You like fashion. You are asked to volunteer at Fashion Week.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 57. You have never tried sushi. You are asked to join your friends at the city's hottest sushi bar for dinner.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

58. You have never played a musical instrument. You see an ad for a professional instructor who lives two doors down.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

59. You have never been on a white water rafting trip. You are asked to go on one.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 60. You are asked to give a toast at a wedding. You have never given one before.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 61. Everyone you meet says you are very funny. There is an open mike at a local comedy club for amateurs.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 62. You have a great eye for website design. A friend asks you to critique his new website.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 63. There is a great new job opening in a city you have never thought about living in.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 64. You meet a beautiful man/woman on a plane. You talk for two straight hours. The plane is landing and you do not have a contact number.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 65. The mascot of your college team is your best friend. He gets hurt before the big game and asks you to put on**

the costume and be the mascot for that afternoon's football game.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

66. There is a big Halloween party that all your best friends are going to. You think dressing up is stupid. The only way to get in is to wear a costume.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

67. You are walking down the street and a street magician is performing. You love magic.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 68. You see a person who is choking at a restaurant. You learned the Heimlich Maneuver in first aid class.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 69. You know how to do Yoga. At class, the Yoga instructor gets an emergency phone call and has to go. They ask you to finish teaching the class.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 70. You have no interest in politics. You have a few minutes to spare, and there is a political rally going on.**

There is a speaker at the podium that has a political position exactly opposite of one you have.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

71. You are invited for a religious observance. You are not religious.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

72. You are invited by a friend to go to watch a documentary about fishing. You hate fishing.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 73. You want to have a barbeque for friends, but you have never made a burger on the barbeque.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 74. You are offered to eat a fried cricket on a trip to Thailand. It is a local delicacy.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 75. You believe the Annual Seal Slaughter on Canada is terrible. There is a protest in your town.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

76. A local charity is asking for volunteers to handle phone calls during a telethon.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

77. Your Grandfather asks for a favor to help him organize his World War Two memorabilia.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

78. There is an art fair in your town. They are offering free painting classes.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

79. There is a wild party after winning the Super Bowl. People begin to turn cars over in celebration.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

80. You have been given an amazing gift. You can play the piano beautifully. A local Senior Center is looking for a volunteer to play piano once a month for their seniors.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 81. Your Dad's friend takes a liking to you at a picnic. He tells you stay in touch with him because he says he will hire you in four years after you finish college.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 82. You are driving down the road and see something suspicious. It looks like a person is breaking into a neighbor's home.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

83. You are walking down the beach and groups of people are trying to save a whale by pushing it back out to sea.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

84. You are driving down the street and an elderly man and woman are pushing an car. They have run out of gas.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

85. You are on an airplane, and you see something suspicious from one of the passengers. Everyone on the plane is sleeping except you.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 86. You are at a restaurant and see a man secretly drop a pill into the drink of an unsuspecting girl.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

- 87. You have a chance to go on a backpacking trip through Europe with a group of people you do not know very well.**

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

88. You love music. Your college radio station is looking for a DJ to play music from 12 midnight to 3 AM.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

89. You love to dance, and everyone agrees you are amazing. There is a competition for new young dancers being sponsored by VH1.

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

90. You have read a book called Why Not. It has changed you attitude about life. The author wants you to tell everyone about the book!

Would you tell everyone about the book?

What would you do?

Would you say why not, ask more questions, or walk away from it?

Why would you do this?

Have fun, and enjoy!

Andrew Jacob

