

Life Is a Trading Game

Once upon a time, there was a man who traded a red paperclip for a car.

Now granted, he went through *a lot* of intermediary trades to get there – from paperclip to pen, pen to something else, and so on. He traded up.

Not all of us are as savvy at bartering. But in a sense we all are playing a trading game in life itself.

Instead of a paperclip, you start with a clumsy, unformed body. Your life is basically just the process of “trading up” from what you have to something better.

When you work out, you’re “trading up” on your body. When you learn, you’re “trading up” on your knowledge. When you literally trade, you’re trading up on your wealth and resources. All of these things can make life better.

But the more valuable application of this “trading game” thought model is as a way of putting bad things in proper context. Life is going to hand you some pretty terrible things (like sickness, etc) and some pretty mediocre things along the way.

You can choose to look at these things like paper clip guy looked at his paper clip. Everything – even the smallest thing – can be traded up. Suffering can become wisdom. Poverty can become freedom. Facing evil can cause you to become more firmly good.

That you’re stuck with the cards life gives you is not up to you. But life is only like poker insofar as we’re talking about the first hand. Everything after that is a trading game.

Originally published at JamesWalpole.com