

I can fall off!

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Was about to baby-sit once.
In Glasgow.
A child of some of my best friends.
They were going out on an alone-together-evening in town.
Important that!
Lush springtime it was.
Garden burgeoning with big green leaves and grass and flowers.
And then there was Angus.
Three-year old Scottish boy
with multi-generation Scottish accent on his lips.
As yet ignorant of the magic of Scotch whiskey and
the almost unreal number of pubs in city life around ham.

We stood in the garden.
It was now evening.
And he had been kissed a loving farewell by his parents.
Angus was clearly about to explode.
From all the energy he had inside.
And from all that he and his little body
could hardly wait to show me.

Then it was on the road.
The show.
The art of life show.
The **playground** for the free,
the **runway** for the spontaneous and the courageous,
the **sky** for the unspoilt,
the **universe** for the original and the enthused,
the **helter-skelter hills** for the dedicated and the open-minded,
the **hump-backed pistes** for the playful and the soft-boned,
the "**spare me the filters**"-rivers for the attentive and the colourful,
the "**wake me when I sleep**"-waterfalls.

It was all there.
It was the table of abundance.
Didn't realize I was so hungry.
Had only a hazy idea of what long-term hunger can mean.

Unsuspecting, I stood
in what I thought was an ordinary Glaswegian version of an English garden
on what I thought would be a quite ordinary spring evening.

Enthusiastically he threw himself and his 3-year-old body
at full speed after an explosive take-off
straight into the most lush, green, long-leaved bush.
Did Angus.
With the words: " I can throw myself into the leaves".
Words that rode the wave of a bell-clear and totally charming Scottish accent.

I just hoped that the ground underneath –
what looked like a lush example of
what the Amazonas could offer –
was a totally stone-free zone.
Not long before the football
that lay to the right of little Amazonas
had Angus' full attention.
And with a concentrated combination of dynamic kicking glee and ball spirit
he kicked the ball three narrow gardens away.
On his return five minutes later he declared happily
"I can kick the ball".

Then he caught sight of the carpet of cheerful, tempting blades of grass
and threw himself literally headfirst into them
- the blades of grass that is
with the words: " I can throw over".
The Scottish version of: "I can turn a somersault".
Seen from my perspective it looked more like
a totally enthusiastic and at the same time
totally uncoordinated flailing of arms and legs.

That was when the boy's eyes fell on the swing at the bottom of the garden.
One of the swings had four legs.
Each anchored in the ground
with a "please plant me"-peg.
Of stainless steel.

Angus swung.
Higher and higher.
With spirit.
Full dedication.
Higher and higher.
When the ropes of the swing he was sitting on
began to talk about
whether his swinging would soon be around the horizontal beam,
Angus shouted to me:
"I can do the swing".

I stood and smiled as loudly as the creak of the talking ropes.

Soon after Angus was flying in a beautiful arc
through the open air
in the middle of yet another change of activity on that beautiful spring evening.
He sailed through the air
and landed in a heap on the green carpet of grass
more or less right at my bare feet.

I took comfort in the knowledge that small children have soft bones.
Very soft bones in fact.
And was a little excited about
what new movement was now underway.

The heap moved.
The part of the heap
that was Angus' hair
popped up
and his pale blue eyes saw right into mine
with a very firm and radiant look
while with great glee
and an almost luminous spontaneous pride
he cried out:
"I can fall off".

"I can fall off".
As if it were
the most obviously, joyfully worthwhile thing that could happen to anyone.
"To fall off".
Of course.
And yes – obviously, self evidently worthwhile.
If you say so, Angus.

And why don't we
- next time we anyhow are sitting out there swinging -
revive the art of falling off
- one at a time and together?

There's really no reason to spend half a lifetime
unlearning big chunks of our "don't fall off" learning
if it can be dealt with by swinging a little more often
and a heap of courage to fall off – once in a while.

There's really no reason either to
hold back enormous amounts of talent mass
on a local, national and global level
just because someone once
- let's just say in the middle ages -
decided that to fall wasn't very cool.
And since then large numbers of people have taken it on
to a greater or lesser extent
as a collective and powerful creativity-limiting
and probably rather unconscious fundamental belief.

Could be that falling off might even become a new liberating habit.

Could be that it could even develop into a trend!

Mark my words: the "falling off" trend,
the "leading by falling off" wave may just be at its highest
and deep cult
when Angus reaches confirmation age.

Thanks Angus.
And ride the wave!