

My Own Captain

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Imagine you're on a boat; imagine the peaceful waves; feel the crisp sea breeze; feel the rocking under your own two feet. Suddenly the sky goes dark, your vision unclear, the waves roaring, one blink too long and you feel like you could be sent overboard.

The captain's nowhere to be seen.

The question is, can you steer, take the wheel?

"I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul." This quote by William Ernest Henley will forever be remembered.

Life is like a boat. The storms are your obstacles, and you are the captain.

I've felt lost in the waves many times in life. Life seemed to move too fast, I felt like I couldn't keep up, like I was the only one being left behind by everything. That's when I would stop trying, quit doing the things I told myself I'd do, the promises I kept to myself. I'd procrastinate on every little thing in my life, from school work to the smallest, easiest of tasks. I'd tell myself I'd wake up early, I made goals on my notes app that ended up getting deleted one by one, I told myself I'd do this, I'd do that, but always ending up in the same exact position; lying to myself. I let myself down and I didn't keep my word; my boat was slowly drifting. I felt like I sank my own boat. My hands were off the wheel, and I was hoping, praying that someone would step in, play superman and steer for me. I depended on the people around me to make decisions for me and I waited for family and friends to notice my selfish struggles.

No one did.

I realized that depending and waiting on people for navigation is wrong.

Everyone has their own boat to steer, their own map; so why would anyone wait for you, reroute for you? A captain who lets go of the wheel has given up responsibility. I made the mistake of letting mine go for a long time. This was where I truly came to realise that I am responsible for myself.

I've also felt like drowning in the waves many times in life. Regretting my actions, regretting my words, and honestly regretting everything and anything I could think of. From replaying the simplest conversations with my family, to the arguments with friends that led to losing them, I'd fantasize back to a reality where I'd say all the right words, achieving the perfect ending I wanted. I would spend hours lying awake in my bed at night, staring up at the ceiling just to think back to every single decision I made and wondering if things could've gone so much more differently and all the possible better outcomes they could have led to. I memorized every scratch, every indentation, every little thing to the smallest marks on my ceiling. I didn't notice it then, but I was slowly but surely losing my mind, night after night, thinking this was normal, just a part of my daily routine, like it fit right in. The immense uncertainty eventually took over, and I wished so badly that I could go back to erase and redo things.

But I couldn't. How could I?

So I turned to other options. That's when I knew it was time to draw a new map; to start fresh from scratch. I tried to wake up earlier, take the time to reflect on my own goals, talk things out with someone, and just grow as a person. A real captain doesn't circle the same seas, wander the same paths, turn back hoping for something better, with more treasures; they explore the seas. They explore new waters, new fates, new destinations.

Storms hit without warning. People leave, plans fall apart, things never go the way you want. And suddenly there's no captain on deck but you.

That's when responsibility shows up, not as some big speech or a slap in the face, but as small choices. Grip the wheel. Check your compass, your values.

Drop the anchor when you need time to catch up. Set the sails when you're ready to move again.

Tools don't work unless you use them. Whether it's taking that one step forward, asking for help, changing direction, admitting you were wrong, all the little things, that's steering.

You can't control the ocean, but you can control your direction. Don't drift. Choose. That's the truth in responsibility; it's nothing dramatic, it's nothing poetic, it's nothing heroic, but it's practical, it's ordinary, it's daily. It's the simple act of choosing to move instead of drift.

I've read somewhere that sharks need to keep swimming in order to live, that the moment a shark stops, it drowns. This made me realize that maybe I'm not that different. That if a shark needs to move to breathe, maybe I should move on so I can breathe.

The moment you stop moving, you sink. No one else can truly guide you, steer for you, replace you. So keep steering.

It's your fate, you seal it.

This is how I realized that I am my own captain.