

A

STRANGE GAME

Preparation for the rest
of your LIFE!

**TODD
LEMOINE**

4316

MADE IN USA

FOR
ALL AGES
BUT ESPECIALLY
18 & UP

A Strange Game

Preparation for the rest of your life

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*For my sons, Lio and Jun,
that they may recognize the strange game.*

And for Chris. It never ends.

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Introduction

This is not a book about secrets and only barely one about discovery, so I'm just going to be direct here: Modern life is the strange game.

More specifically, the Game is the image of life as it's been sold to us. You've spent a lifetime surrounded by messages, from advertising, from television (which is mostly advertising), and hearing from other people playing the Game that life is something that can be beaten or won, if only you know the right information and buy the right things. Usually, these people and institutions tell you to "do as I do" because they think they're in a position to tell you. More broadly, the Game is also just the weird routines and situations that make up life itself, pressuring you to act a certain way, regardless of your own cultural surroundings and messaging.

All of this is the strange game. And like the observation Joshua makes in *WarGames* (although he was talking about a completely different type of game), the only way to win it, as far as I can tell, is to not play it. That is, the Game often presents you with two choices, as if those were the only two possibilities, when the reality is that more possibilities exist and probably any of those are a better choice.

Take, for example, buying a new car. The Game tells you that you can "have it all" with a new car and implies that you can also settle for less with a used one, and now, which would you like? But what about a third possibility, that you can have it all with a used car, too? For many of us, that's the better decision financially, but it requires us to anticipate and outmaneuver the Game and not be talked out of it by the Game, too.

What this book offers is not another answer or another way to win the Game. It's just a collection of observations and lessons I

think I've learned over the past few decades that help make me (and hopefully you) more aware of the Game and how not to play it, nothing more. You don't have to take all of them to heart, and in fact, some of them you may ignore and some you may just have to discover for yourself. What's inside is neither religion nor recipe. Doing everything guarantees nothing. Find what works best for you. Acknowledge the Game and live around it.

As you read, you should imagine the words, "in general", in front of each of the section Titles, because with the exception of a few, it's hard to put all of these suggestions to use, all the time. Walk the path, and if you step off every now and then, that's fine, just get back on. No one will notice.

Embrace *shoshin*.

Shoshin is a concept from Zen Buddhism referring to a state of mind that is “the beginner’s mind”. It’s an approach to learning that all but guarantees you are ready to learn something because if you are cultivating a beginner’s mind, you assume that as a beginner you have a lot left to learn. If you are a practitioner of *shoshin*, you make yourself open to new knowledge.

Let’s approach *shoshin* from a different perspective to help clarify it. If you approach something thinking you know all there is, or almost everything, or even 50% of everything, you won’t be ready to make the connections between ideas that are necessary to change those separate ideas into true knowledge. You simply won’t recognize the opportunity because your mind is closed to the possibility.