

Just for fun, I want to compare my life now with my fundraising days

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I have several pairs of sneakers that are at least a year old. Most are still wearable. On MFT, the life expectancy of sneakers was three months. After that, holes in the soles and split seams galore. Treads worn down on one side.

When I wear a bathing suit, or shorts, the hair on my right leg matches the hair on my left leg. When I was an MFT grunt, there was a big bald patch on my right leg. Why? That's the pocket I put the 'donation change'. On some runs I had \$20-30 in change bouncing up and down as I jogged around the Kmart lot. Wore the hair right off my leg.

Third, my shirts and pants are mostly cotton or bamboo fiber. Only one or two polyester blend shirts. Back in the day, it was all polyester. You sweated like a fountain in it, but you could roll up your Kmart polyester pants, use them for a pillow, then unroll them and wear the suckers and nobody would know the difference. Not that there was much of one.

Speaking of pillows, I have one now.

I sleep in the same place now, and know where I am when I wake up. After 3 years on mobile teams, this seemed like total luxury. Mike Irwin, a fellow MFTer, was matched to a missionary to Nicaragua. When told he'd be joining her, was he phased that there was a civil war, starring Marxist guerillas? Heck no, he was psyched that he'd be sleeping in a bed.

And eating off a plate. Of course, now I can eat off a paper plate if I want to. But I don't have to. And I have my favorite mugs, cups and bowls that I use every day. I ate over a thousand meals bouncing up and down on the vinyl bench seat in an Econoline van, crammed in between two other people. Food most often eaten out of your hand, or in a red plastic cup.

I know how to tear the lid off a yogurt tub to make a spoon. And I didn't frikking google it or learn it from Youtube.

I can sit, sometimes for hours, reading, writing or talking to people. At my 21 day workshop in New York back in 1982, you could tell who was from MFT. We were the ones in the back, pacing up and down during the lecture. We could stand and sing, but after sitting down for 15 minutes, we had to get up and move. Or we'd explode.

My car has the lining on the ceiling mostly intact. In a fundraising van, the ceiling was for pounding on while you sang holy songs – the marching ones, thank you very much. Didn't sing "Suffering Jesus" much on the front lines. Econoline vans had sheetmetal roofs with a satisfying ring to them.

I do still 'fix up' the bills before I offer them at church – smooth out the dogears, line them up facing the same way.

I don't shop big department stores much, but when I do, I walk right in the front door without feeling weird. After 5 years of cruising parking lots avoiding managers, cops and the front door, it felt profoundly strange to walk into a store as if you belonged there. To go shopping. And not be stared a suspiciously by the manager. (any guy in a white shirt and tie) (Short-sleeve, polyester white shirt) When you were working a parking lot, you never went near the front door, and you walked away from people in white shirts. It was a reflex.

And I no longer dread to hear "Excuse me, sir"

When I enter a restaurant now, I automatically look for the table I'd like to sit at. As a fundraiser, I instantly scoped out the area farthest from the manager's eye.

And when I walk through a restaurant, I just look at people because I'm interested. On MFT, it was always 'who do you talk to first?'

I don't clean the interior of my car every day. On MFT, the inside got wiped down every morning, and windows washed. Oh, and when I go to wash my car, I either get a hose or hit the carwash. I don't go to McDs, fill up my bucket from the tap in back, throw in some soap, scrub my car with a rag, then rinse it by tossing a couple more buckets of water on it, all before the team mother comes back out with breakfast. And, 9 times out of 10, before the manager comes out.

And I walk places everyday without a box or a bucket under my arm. When I first joined IOWC after 5 years of fundraising, it felt very strange to be walking around without something under my arm.

I'm still good at walking through doors with both arms full, or backing through a door with a handcart full of pictures. Can hit the push bar with my hip, knee or foot. Use my knee to turn the bar handle and open the door.

Nowadays I only run when I'm about to get run over.

And I can still be fully dressed in 3 minutes flat. Notice I didn't say neatly dressed. But still.