

# Give the **FUTURE** the **Finger**

words Chris McPherson

*A small mishap at a New York City club led one student to explore those deep questions usually reserved for near-death experiences.*

People have sudden realizations every day. Overeaters decide to put down the donuts and pick up the dumbbells. Smokers take a pass on the puff. And some people find God, or some other higher being. Those epiphanies probably all start from different triggers. The overeater may have had a hard time fitting into his favorite pair of skinny jeans, the smoker could have just seen a clip of a lung cancer patient on a new NYQuits commercial, and the new believer could have just survived a near-death experience. Just like those hypothetical scenarios, I, too, recently found a new view on the world. Not exactly a near death-experience, but a minor injury recently opened my eyes.

It all started on the winter streets of Greenwich Village in Manhattan. After going out to dinner for a friend's birthday, my group decided to see what else was interesting around town. I was already a little buzzed from an on-the-go mixed drink I had made at home. We found a club that didn't have a cover charge. It seemed nice — dark lighting, fancy couches, and wooden tables. I felt like at any moment I could have run into a celebrity sipping a sex on the beach.

While I was telling my friend a joke, I leaned against the wall near a door. Little did I know, I had placed my finger in the crevice of the door's hinge. I was fine for a few minutes because the door was wide open, but when someone let it go, the door came slamming

onto my fragile finger. At first, I felt a steady pressure on my pinkie. Second after second, the pressure increased.

Before I knew it, my finger was in distress — to put it lightly. I reached over with my right hand to see what was wrong. I had some saving to do. In the heat of the moment, I mustered up the strength and pushed on the door to save Mr. Pinkie. I pulled my finger out from the door's jaws. It was a modern day fairytale. Luckily I didn't crack the nail, but I did have a pretty red indent.

"Oh my God, Chris, are you OK?" my friend Nicole said after she witnessed the spectacle-turned-heroic rescue.

"Yeah, I'm fine. That was a close one."

"No! You need to put some ice on that. I know this stuff, I'm an EMT — hold on."

She gulped her drink down so she could give me the glass of leftover ice. I swear, one EMT class her senior year, a *Grey's Anatomy* marathon later, and this girl thinks she can to save everyone's life. Still, I appreciated the effort.

As my finger throbbed in pain and Nicole continued to sip from her straw, deep thoughts loomed over my brain. What am I really doing with my life? Am I headed in the right direction? Was it a good idea to get a master's degree in journalism? It's often said we don't miss things until they're gone, until it's too late to do a damn thing about it. Kind of like

the WB, or the Pussycat Dolls. Maybe if I had actually bought their album instead of illegally downloading it, they'd still be around. Although I quickly shook off the pussycat guilt, in that moment I couldn't stop questioning my life.

It might have been the pinkie pain. It might have been the vodka. It might have been the adventurous DJ who decided to play Fatboy Slim's *Funk Soul Brother* as a follow-up song to Biggie Smalls' *Juicy*. Regardless, I was in a weird mood.

I think it was then that I realized life was too short. I know, pretty cliché. Things like that happen when someone survives a plane crash or overcomes a deadly disease, but here I am, a grown-ass man, distraught, all because of my pinkie finger.

I came upon a life without my pinkie finger. What would I do if I wanted to be snooty while I was drinking a cup of tea? And if I ever decided to give the "rock on" sign, how many eyebrows would that raise? Let's not even get into the "we come in peace" sign.

I had no idea where all those rambling thoughts came from. It was like my brain was flooded with a thousand what-ifs, hypothetical scenarios of a four finger life. Like any college student, I solved the problem the only way I knew how — I ordered a vodka cranberry and went on with my life, pinkie in tow. ■