

*“I didn’t have the time to write
a short letter,
so I wrote a long one instead.”*

Mark Twain

A mini saga is a story told in exactly 50 words—not 49 or 51 but in exactly 50 words.

Benefit #1:

Writing a mini saga expands your creativity. Constraints typically expand creativity or induce flight. When you have to put everything in 50 words, you have to “leave behind” a lot. That’s where the creative juices start flowing.

Benefit #2:

Writing a mini saga stretches your thinking. What will you write about? You have to think about topics that will fit in 50 words or squeeze them to fit in 50 words. That puts thinking on overdrive mode.

Benefit #3:

Writing a mini saga enhances your discipline. Deciding what to write about, deciding what to leave behind and putting it in 50 words requires discipline throughout.

#1 The Interview

That was her last interview for the day. She had done well. The job was almost guaranteed. While the pay and position were good, there was some discomfort. She didn't think that she was reporting to a person who could lift her to the next level. She silently walked away.



#2 The Book

John loved the library. That day, he was engrossed in a book. He hoped to finish reading it completely. It was

almost the end and then... there was a surprise - the last section was missing. "Alas" John thought "this book is close to real life. You don't know what happens next..."



#3 The Airport

He was running late. Very late!
That was the last flight and he
didn't want to spend the night
at the airport.

He ran as fast as he could.
There were only thirty minutes
left. When he reached the gate
his panic turned to a smile—
his flight was delayed.



#4 The Deal

The sales team in a startup was jazzed after a great customer presentation. The startup VC had a prior relationship with the customer. He called the customer and asked if he would buy the system from them. The customer politely responded “No way. The meeting was only for market research”



#5 The Choice

The guy at the store showed me all sorts of phones—sliding, flipping, PDA phone, camera phone, slim phone and more. There were too many good phones there.

I needed to do some more research before I buy. Two months have passed and I have not made a decision yet.



#6 Giving Back

This particular book had changed his life. He checked the price again. Thirty dollars! “It’s a steal” he thought.

He wanted to give back something to the author. After thinking for a while, he decided to buy ten of the same books and sent one to each of his friends.



#7 The Goal

He turned sixty and it was a time for reflection. Last thirty five years, he was very busy. He had reached almost every career goal. He was successful, rich and famous. The only problem—he was alone and he knew that money couldn't buy the kind of relationship he longed.



#8 The Team

It was the lack of oxygen. Jane collapsed just when the team was a few hundred feet away from the summit.

Two out of the other three volunteered to return with Jane. Rob could continue the climb with another team. He thought for a second and decided to turn back.



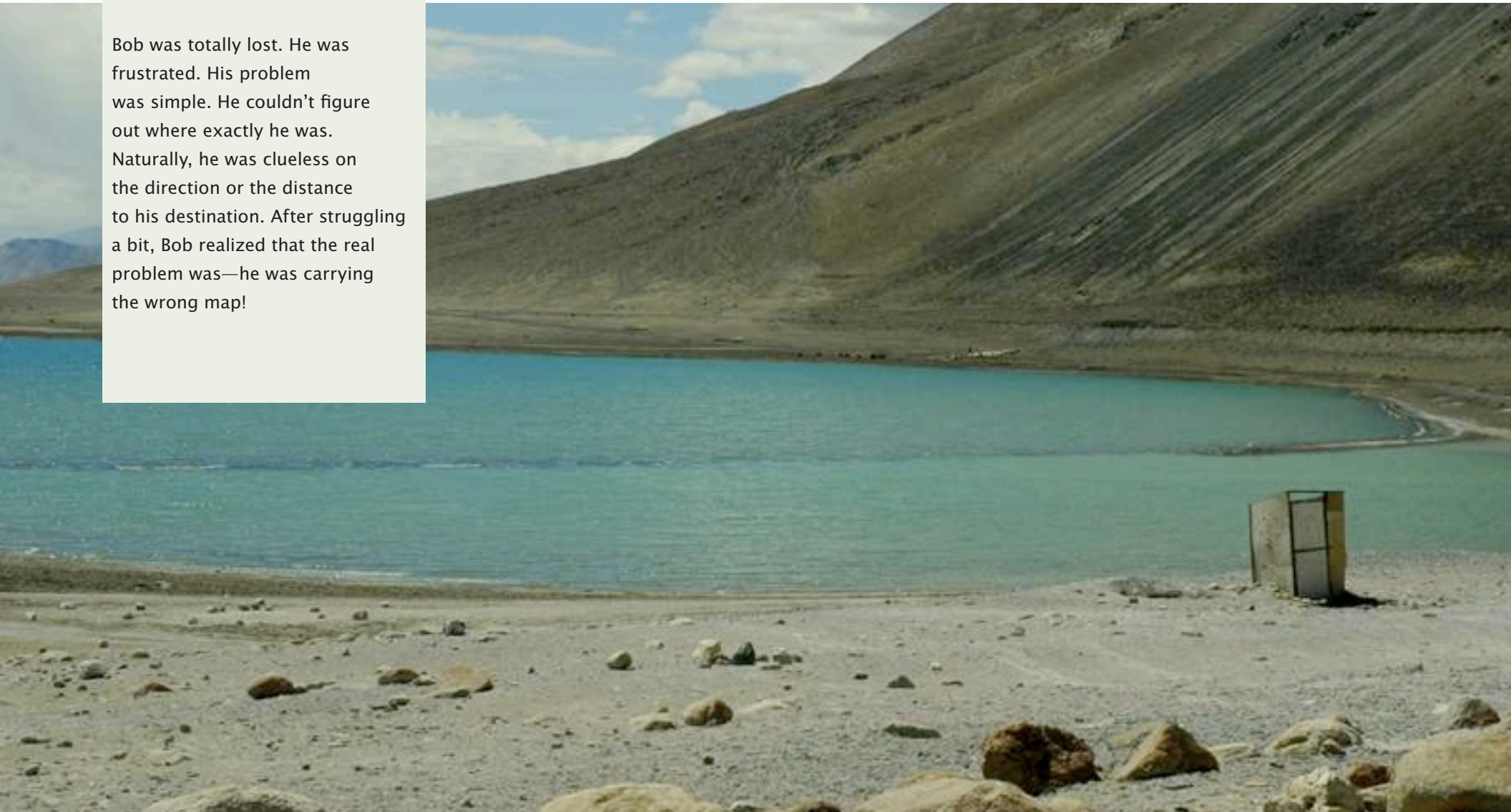
#9 The Block

Being a professional writer, it was hard for him to not write for the last six days. That day, he was determined to write. He forced himself to write about fourteen pages. That night, after reading through everything, he ran every single sheet of paper into a shredder and slept.



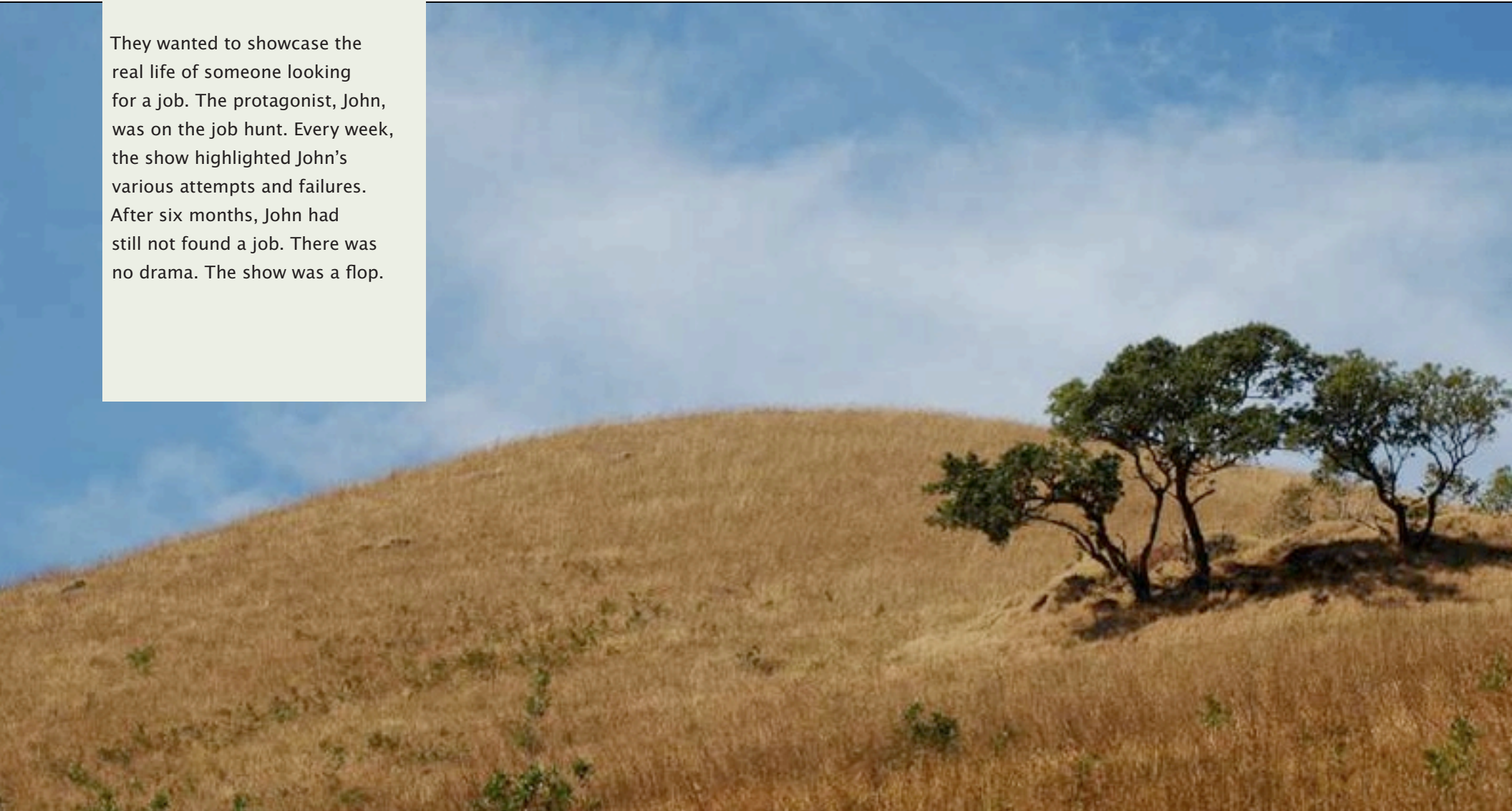
#10 Lost

Bob was totally lost. He was frustrated. His problem was simple. He couldn't figure out where exactly he was. Naturally, he was clueless on the direction or the distance to his destination. After struggling a bit, Bob realized that the real problem was—he was carrying the wrong map!



#11 The Reality Show

They wanted to showcase the real life of someone looking for a job. The protagonist, John, was on the job hunt. Every week, the show highlighted John's various attempts and failures. After six months, John had still not found a job. There was no drama. The show was a flop.



#12 The Sales Seminar

John was eager to learn to sell. The promise was compelling. \$99 and a day with the gurus of real estate, John would be a better sales person. All the speakers were good. By the end of the day, John had purchased goods in excess of \$1000. John was sold!



#13 The Missing Piece

I was at a writers' conference earlier this week. The moderator asked for people to list their expectations from the conference. The expectations ranged from wanting to sell more books to building a good network.

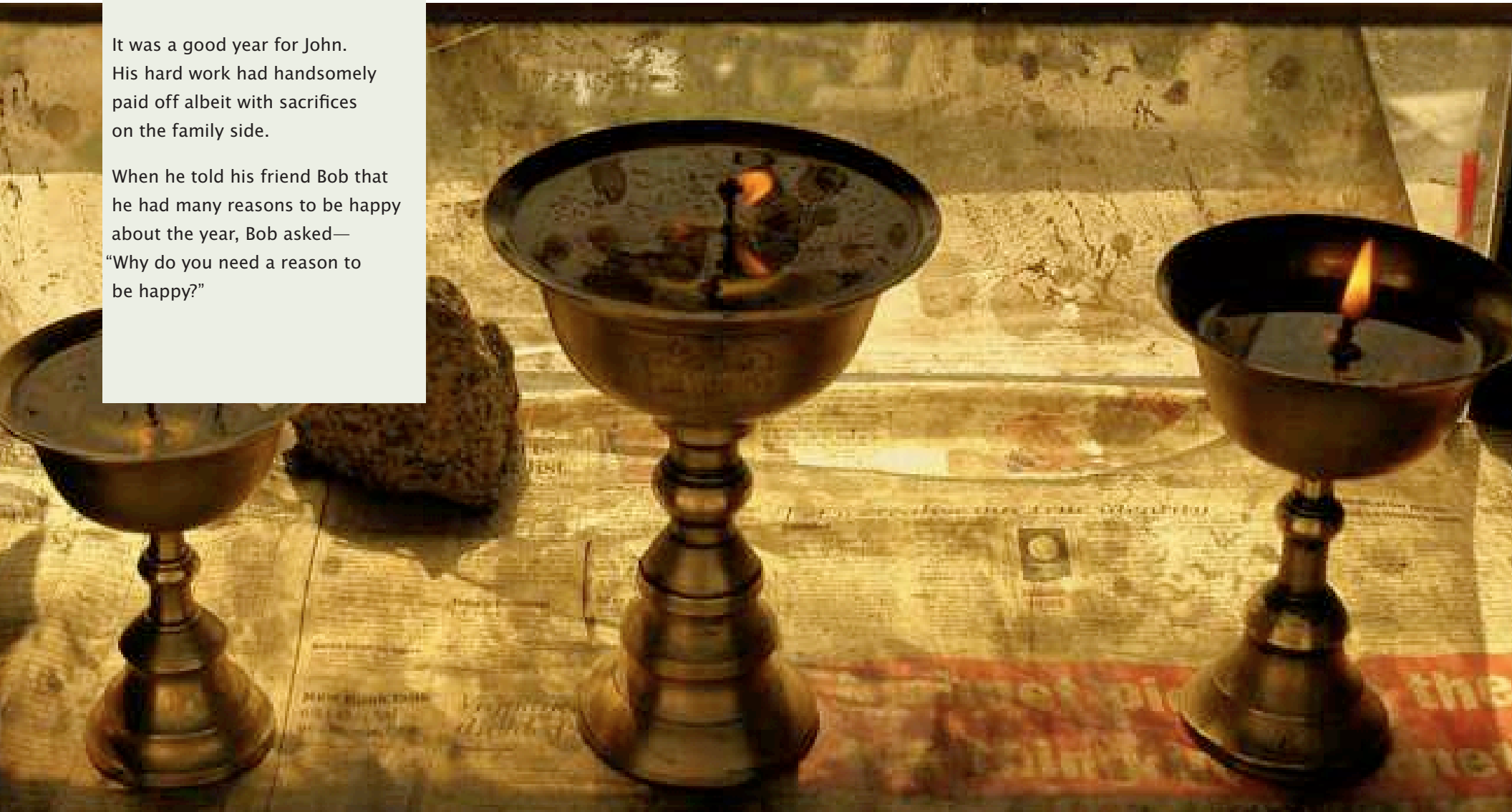
What was strikingly missing was that nobody said "I want to become a better writer."



#14 Happiness

It was a good year for John.
His hard work had handsomely
paid off albeit with sacrifices
on the family side.

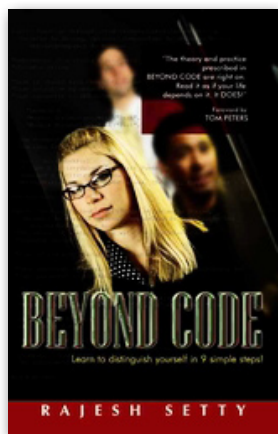
When he told his friend Bob that
he had many reasons to be happy
about the year, Bob asked—
“Why do you need a reason to
be happy?”



#15 Requirements Analysis

Little Tommy asked Mom—
“Where did I come from?”
Mom struggled for twenty
minutes to explain things around
sex. Tommy responded with
a blank face—“This is a bit
confusing. Johnny told me he is
from Columbus, Ohio and
I wanted to know where I came
from...”





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