

Coffee Talk: Two Sugars One Life

The Art of Misplacing Things

Clayton M. Myhill

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I found the birthday card three months late.

It was tucked inside a book I'd meant to read, which was buried under a jacket I'd meant to hang up, which was draped over a chair I'd meant to move. A perfect archaeological dig of good intentions.

The card was for my mom. I'd bought it in plenty of time. I'd even written in it—something heartfelt about how much she meant to me. And then I'd set it down “somewhere safe” and proceeded to forget it existed until her birthday had come and gone.

If you've ever found something important weeks after it mattered, you know the specific flavor of guilt I'm describing.

This is the curse of people like me. We don't lose things permanently. We lose them temporarily, repeatedly, in ways that make us question our own sanity. The keys aren't gone—they're in the pocket of the coat I wore three days ago. The wallet isn't stolen—it's wedged between couch cushions like it's hiding from creditors. The phone isn't missing—it's exactly where I left it, which is apparently inside the refrigerator.

I've developed systems. Key hooks by the door. A designated wallet spot. Phone in the same pocket, always. And these systems work beautifully until the one time I'm in a rush, or tired, or thinking about something else, and suddenly I'm twenty minutes late because I'm tearing apart my own home looking for objects that are actively mocking me.

The search itself follows a predictable pattern: calm checking of obvious places, then slightly frantic re-checking of those same places, then the accusatory phase where I convince myself someone must have moved my things (they didn't), then the defeated

acceptance that I am, once again, the architect of my own chaos.

You're not forgetful. Your brain just has more important things to track than where you put your sunglasses.

The things we misplace aren't random. They're usually the things we set down while our minds were elsewhere. Car keys dropped while worrying about a work deadline. Wallet abandoned while answering a text. Birthday card tucked away while planning what to say at dinner.

The irony of that card still stings. I was so focused on finding the perfect words that I forgot to actually send them.

So now when I find something I've lost, I try to remember: the misplacement wasn't carelessness. It was just evidence that I was human, juggling too many things, doing my best. The card was late, but the love wasn't.

I called my mom when I found it. Told her the whole ridiculous story. She laughed and said she'd gotten plenty of birthday cards on time in her life—but that phone call, three months late, with me confessing my scatterbrained chaos? That one she'd remember.

Cheers, Clayton

Coffee Talk 2.0: For everyone whose "safe place" has become a witness protection program for important objects.

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