Follow The Light’s Path

By Venezia Alana Figueroa
Follow The Light’s Path

Prologue

8:38 AM, July 17th, 2038

Greetings, this is journal entry number 253. Today is a big day for me because today I get to apply for my dream job! It was always my dream to become a construction designer. The challenges, the building part of construction, looking at the plans, all of it inspired me to become a construction designer. You might say, well, physicians and other high-paying jobs could help me too. But construction designing is always high-paying - especially now during these times in the summer of 2038. We have to work hours upon hours in the heat and, trust me, it won’t be easy. You might be thinking, “Where’s the main guy? Who’s the person who’s going to be constructing at a real construction site in 24 hours?” Well to put it simply, I’m Jess Armstrong! And no, my arms are not that muscular if you’re dying to know. I just graduated from my senior year of college and I have a lot of big plans for my future. I have to finish up my resume, fill out an application, take a survey, and interview with my dad’s manager. Oh, I almost forgot to mention! My dad is also a construction designer, so I always looked up to him a lot when I was a young one. I’ve always wanted to work at their company, it’s called “The Work’s Way of Light”. Super catchy, right?

You might be thinking that during this year it’s super technological and that there are a lot of sci-fi related technology/visitors here. Yes, it might seem like a utopia here, but almost everything that they say isn’t true - but I wish it was. Anyway, at least 80% of our energy that powers up our city here in Phoenix, AZ is mostly solar energy. Everyone’s trying to change their ways and go towards using solar energy, but not everyone agrees with making this change; people are protesting right now, trying to convince everyone to keep going back to our old ways.
They’re still wanting to use gasoline, coal, and oil to run objects in our daily lives, but I think solar energy is a better way to use it to run objects in our daily lives. I think that by going towards solar energy we could be able to have and get our energy efficiently and also avoid harming the environment. Plus, all they have to lose is, well, a bunch of money, because it’s pretty expensive to apply solar panels to someone’s home. They also have to lose using gasoline and oil for a lot of things, but it’s what you have to get used to when you want to use solar energy. We’ve changed, so there’s nothing more than we can expect from other people than trying to stop our ways by destroying our solar powered products or stealing them at night.

I feel that using solar energy might’ve been for the better because I’m already getting used to it. Besides, other than that, there are a bunch of solar powered things. Solar powered watches, bikes, cars; solar panels on our houses - there’s an infinite number of objects needed for our daily lives! There is some new technology still in the works, but other than that, life in Arizona is actually a lot easier than what we did with our old ways. You know, because of how hot and sunny our state gets almost every year? I mean, getting a lot of energy from the sun is good for sure, but the excessive heat makes it difficult for solar panels to work in hot temperatures. Other than that, the world we’re living in is getting better and better. Plus did you know that they’ve already built the light rail this year? That’s crazy! So much time has passed and now it’s finally here! And guess what? That same light rail is also solar powered as well!

I can’t see why people would want to go back to using gasoline to power up their cars. They have the light rail and a lot of benefits that they can get from having most of our day-to-day lives have solar powered energy in it!

“The only person trying to stop you is your mother calling you numerous times to come to breakfast, young man!”
Yes, that is my mother. Expected her a long time ago? Well, here she is now.

“All right, all right! I’m heading down there now.”

Well, this is Jess signing off for today, Jess out!”

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Follow the Light’s Path

9:54 AM, July 13th, 2038

Alright, my stomach’s been grumbling for a while now so I think mom was right. She did call me numerous times because my food was already cold. Maybe if I put it back in my toaster I might be able to heat it back up again. I also put my eggs and bacon in my microwave for 15 seconds so that it can heat up again, because that’s cold too.

“You know you should listen to your mother, young man. Not only are you a grown adult, but you also need to learn how to take care of yourself,” my mom said concerningly.

“Mom, you worry too much about me, I’ll be fine, and besides, today’s the day! I already have interviewed with them and took all those tests and surveys. They’ll see how I perform and from there they’ll decide whether to accept me into their company or not,” I explained to my mom.

“Well you better run along because your ‘performance’ starts in forty five minutes!” My mom told me in a serious tone.

“Alright, love you and be safe!” I yelled back at her as I rushed to get my breakfast and walked straight out the door.
I hopped into my solar powered car and drove towards my destination, which will now be called my ‘future job.’ I arrive swiftly and quickly with only 5 minutes to spare. During those five minutes I just took the time to breathe and to prepare for what was going to happen next.

10:09 AM, July 13th, 2038


“Oh, I’ll get going to go meet him right now! Do you mind showing me where his office is by the way? It took me at least fifteen minutes to find a parking spot and the lobby so I need help,” I asked.

“Oh the office? I thought your old man told you before coming here!” Walter said jokingly.

I laughed with him. “No, not today. He was late so he had to get going before I was able to ask him that.”

“I’ll help you out then, go towards the end of the hallway, take a left, and then take a right, last door to the left,” Walter also did hand signals while telling me the directions.

“Thank you very much Walter! I hope to see you at the site soon!” I replied back.

“Thank you, for applying!” Walter said to me happily.

We both said our goodbyes and now I’m heading off to my future job. I keep repeating Walter’s directions over and over again. “Towards the end of the hallway, take a left, then take a
right, last door to the left. Towards the end of the hallway, take a left, then take a right, last door to the left.” I can do this! I reached his office and I was quivering so much, I think I might have made a bad impression on the first day! What if I quiver too much? Maybe I’m too naive to go into a construction site? Besides I’m the clumsiest person in the family and I’m barely 21! I think I might be a little bit underaged because I’m barely 21. I mean my birthday is in January and that’s already passed and it’s too far, and I’m only 20 so that had to make matters worse here.

What if I - oh forget it! I’m going inside of my future boss’s office and I will try my very best to show a good impression. Do I smell good? I sure hope my breath’s okay, but we’ll pop a mint in there just in case. No slouching! Mom and dad always nag about me slouching too much so no slouching. We also have to be graceful, poise, polite, punctual, and well proper.

I hesitantly reached my hand towards the door knob and grabbed ahold of the knob. I turned the knob very carefully and I went inside my future boss’s office. “Please don’t mess up, please don’t mess up!” I know for a fact that I don’t have a lot of courage or bravery to do this, but I hope that this all goes well and that I will able to get a job because I’ve worked too hard to get to this point and I don’t want to lose this opportunity because of a terrible first impression. I got this; I just need to breathe and be calm. ‘Breathe and be calm’ that’s what my mother always told me to do whenever I’m in an uncomfortable situation. Just breathe and be calm.

10:15 AM, July 13th, 2038

Oh gosh, I’m quivering so much and I’m turning red. Is it just me or is the room getting more and more hot? I look around for the boss and he’s right there staring at his computer and
he’s typing away like he’s in a big rush. “Do you have an appointment?” He called out to me before I wanted to speak.

“Yes, I have an appointment with Mr...” I said shakily.

“Mr. Whitehurst?” queried my boss.

“Y-yes! That’s the name!”

I sounded like a lost boy trying to find their parents! Come on Jess get yourself together! You can’t ruin your first impression especially since you’re right in front of the boss right now!

“Oh, well you’ve come to the right place son. What’s your full name again?” he asked.

“Jess Liam Armstrong, sir.”

“No need to call me sir, I’m already too old and I’m getting older so it makes me feel older than expected,” he replied with a chuckle.

I chuckled along too just to brighten up the mood and to increase my courage a bit.

“I’ve heard all about you from your father, Liam.”

“Oh, yes. It was a dream for me to be able to come here one day and well I’m here now. It’s all thanks to my father and from all the grades and scholarship opportunities and the hard work that brought me here up to this point.” I said confidently.

“Kid, it would be an engineer’s dream to be up here at this point and I’m glad you’re here. I have a business proposition for you.”

I liked Whitehurst, he seemed like a pretty good guy and not too bad for being an old timer too, “What are you proposing for me?”

“Kid, ever heard of solar photovoltaic energy?”

“Yes, I passed that in my chemistry and physics class back in my junior and senior year of college.”
“Well kid, I need your ideas, your opinions, your plans; I need your help in trying to make our company better and solar powered! Here, let me show you around our little warehouse and then we’ll see how your imagination can grow from there. Oh, and you might also want to bring a notepad and a pencil, there are a few things you need to jot down during ‘our’ tour.”

Well I guess I’m getting a tour then. But then again going back to my old days, my dad has always shown me the map of the entire place. It’s huge, yes on paper, but in reality it’s more than just huge. It’s ginormous, gigantic, unbelievably large; I just wasn’t able to believe my eyes the minute I went to my first ever take-your-child-to-work day with my dad. By then, Whitehurst was a lot more cool looking and a lot younger too. Honestly, if it wasn’t for my dad I wouldn’t have been able to be inspired nor want to come here.

“Jess? Are you going to go get your notebook and notepad kid?”

“Oh! Yes, sorry to keep you waiting.”

I grabbed the notepad, but I was unsure of where the pen was so I looked around the desk to see if there was anything that I could use to write on the notepad.

“Looking for this?” He held up a pen in his right hand.

“How did you do that?” I asked.

“I have my ways, kid.”

That’s insane! How did he do that? Is he a former magician or something? Whatever; I had a lot of other questions in mind that I decided to save for later.

“So shall we continue with our tour?” Whitehurst asked politely.

“Yes, I am new here so I may want to know where everything is just to have a refresher.”

“Well then, shall we?”
He showed me the way to the door. I stepped out first and then he stepped out of his office as well. We went down the hallway, took a right, took a left, kept going towards the end of the hallway, and out the door we went. He told me to wait for a little bit, so I did. I noticed that he was talking to the receptionist; she was probably telling him that he had a lot more appointments to attend to, but I think he stated that ‘They’re the new rookie that needs a tour of the place.’” I mean, my dad did tell me where some things are and I also experienced some of the places during take-your-child-to-work day, so I kinda know where some things are, but I’m still rusty. All I know is that my dad works in the planning room, where they make plans and bloom ideas for the company.

1:27 PM, July 13th, 2038

Stairs. Why is it that almost everywhere I go, it always has to have stairs? Oh well, I might as well climb 10 flights if the world calls for it. We went up and down, side to side, left and right, East and West, North and South, and all around the whole company grounds were like a maze!

“Still hanging on kid?” Mr. Whitehurst asked confidently.

“These stairs will probably be the death of me if I ever have to climb four more flights of stairs!” I jokingly complained.

“Hah! Well you’re going to have to get used to climbing up and down these stairs, and one day these flights of stairs will become your best friend, but don’t worry we also have an elevator!” He replied back.
“Then why on earth did we take the stairs?” I asked bewilderingly.

“The stairs are calling your name and you also have to get used to them; otherwise, why would I want to hire someone who would only want to take the elevator? The elevator is for when you have to go to meetings, meet the CEO, and special guests, and sadly, I’m not one of "those guys,’ and these stairs are my only way of going up or down nowadays,” Whitehurst said confidently.

“So I have a question, how come you’re not one of ‘those guys?’” I asked curiously.

“Talk to your pops about it, because we happened to have hit the floor where your dad happens to work with his other co-workers and you’re next to work on this floor,” he said to me.

“Where is the room Mr. Whitehurst?” I asked nervously.

“Down the hall, third door to the right. Come on, didn't your pops ever tell you where everything is?”

“It’s the same answer with Walter. We were running late so he couldn’t tell me all the information nor give me a brochure of the map of the whole place,” I said with a chuckle.

“Well, someone needs to grow their bond with their father! Now what are you waiting for? Your father’s presence awaits you!” He said confidently.

“Down the hall, third door to the right. Down the hall, third door to the right.” I kept repeating that in my head and once we got to the door, I shivered a little and I started getting red.

“I’ll give you a bit of time before you go in, Jess. You look pretty uncomfortable, and I’m not forcing you to go in, but whenever you’re ready, we’ll be ready too!”

I think me and Mr. Whitehurst will get along well. He’s like a second dad to me, but let’s be real, he’s my boss and he’s trying to help. I definitely appreciate his efforts so I might want to thank him after the day is done.
“I’m ready,” I said confidently. I turned the knob and pushed the door open little by little and everyone stared at me the minute they looked at me.

“Oh, look at that! It’s Liam’s lil’ young one! It’s been so long!” said one person in the room.

There were a total of six different businessmen and women including my dad and us two, which made nine people in the room. One came up to me gently and calmly and said, “By golly! You have grown so much as a child! Oh, silly me! Introductions! Everyone, this is Jess, Jess Armstrong, Liam’s child! Oh Jess, it’s a pleasure to meet you again!”

“I’m sorry, but I need a little refresher because I forgot everyone’s names.”

“Silly me! I’m Max, your dad’s childhood friend! Pleasure to meet you!”

“It’s a pleasure Max!”

He’s so sweet! He’s like a walking teddy bear and he’s always so happy, I love his personality!

“Hi I’m Derek, pleasure to meet your acquaintance!”

“It’s a pleasure Derek!”

He has a British accent, I think that’s pretty cool to have a British accent!

“Hi I’m Dan, and I’m Sam! We’re the Goodwill brothers! It’s our pleasure to meet you!”

Very creepy when they say things in unison, but they’re too adorable! Plus, they have very identical outfits, facial features, but not the hair features, I guess one prefers hair different but everything else would be different.

“Greetings, I’m Elizabeth and this is my assistant Sheryl,”
“It’s a pleasure Jess, I’m glad you were able to make it to today’s meeting!”

Elizabeth is more of that type of person that just wants things to get over with. Sheryl is the same, but she’s more that she doesn’t show her serious side of her a lot. I think we’ll all get along really well!

“Greetings Jess! I’m James and it’s a pleasure for you to be on our team!”

Now that I think about it, I think James might have the same personality type as me!

“Alright, Chipper, now that you’ve met the crew it’s time for you to share your ideas.”

That’s my dad; he always calls me Chipper and Chipmunk for some reason.

“Alright, are we all here?” Mr. Whitehurst asked.

“We got everyone, Patrick,” Elizabeth replied.

Wait a minute - his name is Patrick? Then why didn’t he tell me in the first place? Oh well, I’ll just keep calling him Mr. Whitehurst.

“Where’s our dear friend, Walter?” Max asked.

“Couldn’t attend; there was an accident in the main building on floor two,” Derek replied.

“We’ll just record the whole conversation for him and send him the recording!” Dan said confidently.

“That’s a great idea, brother!” Sam replied after.

He grabbed his cellphone and started to record our whole conversation. “Greetings Jess, it's a pleasure to have you in our office. Today we’ll be discussing your plans on making our company better and more solar powered; now tell us your plans.” Max stated.
3:34 PM, July 13th, 2038

“My plans to make this company more solar powered might seem impossible, but if we all can do our part, I think we will be able to have our company become more solar powered. The first course of action would be to make our workers who work out in the heat have their powered tools become solar powered. It may seem strange to have them first become solar powered, but they have to use those tools in order to finish their constructions and use them while they’re working. I have a few sketches that might shine a light on my ideas a bit more. Anywho, there’s my first plan of action, and to every plan there might be some problems that we’ll run into eventually.”

“One of my biggest concerns is that it’s expensive to have solar panels installed into our tools, which means that it’ll make the prices of the tools rise and it might not be affordable for all workers. Another one of my biggest concerns is the weather and the seasons. Solar panels work well in the cold, but in the winter there’s mostly sunlight, but not all days are just sunlight. Solar panels, although they take sunlight, if the solar panels get really hot they can’t work as fast when they’re out in the cold. Another concern that I have is that, yes, we have to use these tools to get work done, but because we’re constantly using it, the energy might drain and it takes time for the energy to replenish again. To every problem there’s almost always a solution, and like my mother always said, ‘We have to look on the bright side because that's where we find the best solutions.’”

“We can have indicators installed on the tools so that way we will be able to tell whether they’re done charging or if they’re close to dying. We can also have a solar charging station and portable solar power plants so that way it will be easier and faster to charge the solar powered tools. My next step of action would be to have our generators and our cranes and all the other
bulldozers and all those other things that drive become solar powered. Another plan that I do want to try after this meeting is photovoltaic paint. I know it might seem crazy and it sounds like I made something up, but it’s not made up. There is such a thing as photovoltaic paint and what’s really convenient is that whenever it’s painted on a surface it captures the sun’s energy and converts it into electricity! Some concerns that I have for this is that there might not be any companies that make it, so it might be hard to find in stores. Another good thing about it is the fact that it’s super cheap. That’s really good, especially since we don’t want to spend so much on resources. Not that it’s a bad thing, but we can’t go over our budget - going over our budget is the last thing I want to do. That’s the plan, and I hope you guys all understand where I’m going. This process might take a few years to do, but it will be worth the wait in the end!”

And with that, Sam stopped recording and the meeting was officially over.

Epilogue

7:48 PM, July 13th, 2038

I ate away at my plate full of Caesar salad swiftly and calmly. Each bite has a crunch from the croutons, and a soft crunch from the leaves that I simply cannot resist. Me and my mom were eating at the table and my dad was still deciding what to put on his plate. Ten minutes later, he came to the table and started eating away at his food.

“I wanted to say, that was a really good meeting that you held today. You were really professional. You had a lot of ideas to make this company more solar powered, and that makes me proud,” my dad said confidently.
“I really hope that they consider my plans. The sketches took me a long time to make and come up with and I just hope that they like it. Other than that, everyone at the company is really nice and they’re really supportive of me. I like working there and I can’t wait to continue working with them throughout the years.” I replied to my dad calmly and happily.

“I’m glad, Chipper! They’re really great people and we’re all best when we work as a team. I expect the best out of you and yet you’ve already shown me that. I’m proud of you, Chipper!” My dad said happily.

“Let’s have a toast! To Jess!” My mom exclaimed.

“To Jess,” my dad replied.

“To me,” I replied.

We all clinked glasses and that was the signal of my future plans coming together.

15 YEARS LATER
12:38 PM, November 25th, 2053

“Sir, we have another rookie, and he says that he has a lot of plans to make our company more solar powered!” James exclaimed.

“Oh those days!” The Goodwill brothers said in unison.

“I hope they have some pretty good plans!” Said Dan, “or maybe they have plans to upgrade our company!

“Oh the joy of having more rookies come in!” Max said happily.
“We might consider it, but we also have to be careful of what their opinions and thoughts are,” Elizabeth explained to the team.

“I believe that everything will go well. The statistics of this rookie are the same as Jess when he first joined the team 15 years ago. He has a few years of experience, but he also has a clean record and a good resume!” Sheryl said calmly.

“I say that we should let the ol’ chap have a go. Let’s see what he has to say; we should always be open to new opinions, lads,” Derek explained.

“I have my phone ready!” Sam exclaimed.

“Are we all ready for the new rookie then, guys?” I asked.

“Indeed Jess!” They all said in unison.

“Alright, let him in!”

The knob turned and the rookie came forward, reminding me of the time where I was super embarrassed, but then I met the team.

“Hi, I’m Perry, Perry Parker sir,” he said shakily.

“Hi Perry, I’m Jess, Jess Armstrong; I’m the head of this team. Please come in; we’ve been expecting you!” I said with a smile.

Now let the meeting commence!

Fin

Jess’s Sketches: