GILLETTE UNIVERSE

VOLUME 2

THE BODY THAT SPEAKS

a body that presents the bill without asking permission

FERDINANDO FREGA

gillettenarrative.com

NOTE

This is not a book about Gillette as a brand. It is a book about the man behind it—the man who lived inside the system, watched it move, and emerged with something to say.

The Gillette Universe is a six-volume series drawn from direct experience, not theory. No academic distance. No borrowed ideas. No hindsight dressed up as insight. Only the unfiltered account of someone who was there: in the rooms where decisions were made and within the structures that shaped markets and people.

These books offer no comfort. They do not tell you what to do or who to become. They record what happened to a man inside a machine, over time.

Read them in order or begin anywhere. Each volume stands on its own; together, they form a complete map of something rarely recorded: the inner life of a man who chose to pay attention.

DEDICATION

To those who truly listened

and never asked for a discount.

INTRODUCTION

Feeling is not a virtue.

It is neither a gift nor a defining trait.

It is a condition that arises when remaining on the surface is no longer possible.

Not everything we feel is useful. Not everything we feel is noble. But everything we feel has weight.

This book began with a simple realization: avoiding emotion has a cost, but moving through it exacts a higher price—less visible and more enduring.

To feel is to expose ourselves to what we cannot control: to relationships that change, distances that cannot be crossed, a world that keeps moving when we stand still, and a body that presents the bill without asking permission.

Here, feelings are not celebrated. They are not defended or turned into identity. They are observed as a force moving through the phases of life, leaving different traces according to when it arrives.

This book does not follow a narrative sequence. It follows an existential trajectory. Each text belongs to a phase: discovery, relationship, the system taking control, the body imposing limits, daily life numbing us, and absence remaining.

There is no invitation to find yourself. There is no promise of healing. There is only the willingness to remain with what weighs on you, without reducing it to an explanation or asking for an emotional discount.

From this point on, the book does not accompany you. It does not guide you. It does not console you.

Cross.

THEMATIC PARTITION

This volume is not divided into orderly chapters, but into passages. Each section marks a phase in which feeling changes shape and weight.

1. Birth of Awareness

Here, feeling is still being discovered. Early relationships, differences, and inner fractures are not yet painful, but they are beginning to reveal themselves. This is when we learn that feeling means giving up neutrality.

2. Relationships and Friction

Feelings encounter another person. Expectations, distance, silence, and misunderstanding reveal that every bond entails some loss of control. This is where the cost becomes visible.

3. The World Moves On

Feelings intensify, but the system does not slow down. Work, technology, and collective structures move forward without regard for the individual. This section exposes the misalignment between human experience and the machinery of the world.

4. The Body as a Limit

Feeling is no longer merely emotional. Biological fragility, illness, and decline remind us that the body does not negotiate. The cost becomes physically unavoidable.

5. The Mechanics of Daily Life

Life continues even when it weighs on you. Objects, repeated gestures, and routines become a necessary form of anesthesia. Here, feelings contract into minimal, sometimes ironic forms.

6. Absence

When everything recedes, what is missing remains. This section gathers what cannot be replaced: absence, value, loss. It is the emotional center of the volume.

7. Happiness

Not as a goal, but as a residue. Not euphoria or promise, but a truce—often brief, often silent. Here, happiness is stripped of rhetoric and returned to its real form: what remains when we stop demanding.

8. Farewell

Not as a final gesture, but as a way of being. It does not end the journey; it makes the journey bearable.

Epilogue to the Partition

These partitions are not categories. They are conditions. They do not explain the book; they keep it from becoming theory.

Each phase may arrive early, late, or more than once. Life does not follow an order. Neither does feeling.

Here, happiness does not resist correction. It passes through it. And farewell does not end a story. It marks a point.

From this point on, the stories prove nothing. They do not argue. They do not instruct. They do only one thing: they place the reader before the cost, without discounts and without spectacle.

PROLOGUE TO THE STORIES

The following stories do not try to explain the feeling. They show it as it happens. They were not written to be understood, but to be traversed without defenses.

Each text belongs to a phase of life, not to a theme to be developed. Some stories are short, others more narrative. Some seem marginal, others directly expose the cost. No one is here to entertain.

These stories do not ask for empathy. They do not offer solutions. They do not build a moral. They remain where the feeling weighs enough to not be ignored, but not enough to become a spectacle.

From this point on, the book stops being introduced. It starts letting things happen.

Friendship and Knowledge

There is a fine line separating friendship from mere acquaintance. Sometimes a deep bond turns out to be superficial. A casual acquaintance can instead become a precious and unexpected bond. But how can we distinguish a friend from an acquaintance?

Is it the depth of conversations? Or the time spent together? Is it the willingness to be there in times of need? These blurred lines remind us that every relationship, regardless of its definition, has a unique value.

However, we cannot ignore the natural human desire to be around people who understand and accept us for who we are. This desire makes friendship a rare and precious commodity, one that transcends the surface and finds its value in the bonds that are built over time.

The Difference

In the silence of a library, a young girl wrote a letter to the professor who had influenced her life. Her words were simple, yet full of gratitude: "Thank you for teaching me to believe in myself. Without you, I would never have taken the path I love." That letter, sent on an ordinary day, reached its recipient at a crucial moment.

The professor, approaching retirement, had lost faith in the value of his work. That simple letter reminded him that every lesson taught, every word spoken with passion, can change a life. Moved by renewed motivation, he decided to found a small tutoring center to help other students find their path, believing that every word, spoken or written, could truly be effective.

Emotion and Emotionality

For me, writing has never been a simple act of creation. It is not a play on words, nor a quest for applause. Writing is like breathing, like bringing out what has long been held back, sometimes hidden. Every word I write is an emotion I find, recognize, and accept. It is my way of connecting with that part of myself that life often does not allow me to share.

Emotions—the real ones, the ones that shake us and transform us—are never easy to express or make concrete. Yet they are the ones that give meaning to everything. Every time I write, I find myself grappling with my emotions, the ones I have experienced and the ones I have not yet fully understood. Every story that

emerges from under my fingers is not just a story, but a fragment of me, a part of who I was and who I am. Every word I write is an attempt to transform the chaos within me into something concrete.

Yet I often wonder if words can truly do justice to what we feel. My writing is not only a refuge for pain, but also a search for truth. When a character suffers, it is not just them who suffer. It is a part of me that reveals itself through them. I cannot separate myself from the emotions of my protagonists, because they are mine too.

What I have learned through writing, over the years, is that there are no wrong emotions. Anger, sadness, joy, fear—they are all part of us, and each finds expression in writing. It is not about masking what hurts us, but about facing it, putting it down on paper to let it out.

Often, the real difficulty is not writing but opening. It is easy to build a world; making every word authentic, making it resonate with truth, is another matter. Writing means exposing yourself, allowing the reader to connect with the most vulnerable parts of ourselves.

And in the end, it is not the words that remain, but the emotions they convey. When readers finish one of my stories, I hope they do not remember the plot so much as the way it made them feel. Because this is what writing is: a bridge between the writer and the reader, between the heart that beats behind the words and the soul that receives them.

Chance Encounters

One day, on a crowded train, I met someone with whom I exchanged a few words. We talked about books, dreams, and what we wanted to do "someday." That brief conversation left me with a feeling of lightness and hope. Sometimes strangers see potential in us that we cannot even perceive.

On another occasion, a barista in a city I did not know told me, "Don't wait too long to start doing what you love." A simple, yet timely, message that changed my day.

We may never see some of the people we meet again. Yet their memory remains with us, like small sparks that illuminate our path. Meeting someone, even for a moment, can help us rediscover ourselves or make a weighty decision.

The People

Every relationship we encounter, even the briefest or most distant, is a gift that helps us better understand who we are and what we can become. Every bond, whether deep or superficial, reflects us and the experiences we have. Human connections, in their complexity, enrich and transform us, even when they seem fleeting or imperfect.

Accepting this complexity means opening ourselves to a more authentic life. The journey that makes us grow is made up of people, distances, and loneliness. Even the most fleeting bonds leave us with something: a lesson, an emotion, a memory that will stay with us.

The Words

Sometimes the true meaning of a relationship lies between the lines of what is left unsaid. How many relationships thrive on unexpressed emotions, on gestures that speak louder than words? It is curious how words, however powerful, are not always necessary to understand each other.

I think of that time when, in a moment of absolute silence, a look conveyed what a thousand words could not. It was not a close friend, but an acquaintance who was there precisely when I needed it most. Sometimes someone's presence, even if silent, is all we need to feel understood.

Unspoken words, shared silences, and moments without explanation are invisible bricks. They build relationships that endure time and distance. It is precisely in these nonverbal spaces that the strength of authentic connections lies.

The Lessons

Solitude is a harsh but necessary teacher. When we are alone, we learn to look within ourselves and distinguish what we genuinely want from what others have imposed on us. It is in solitude that we often find the most authentic answers, the ones we would never have heard amid the noise of the outside world.

Yet it is precisely when we feel alone that the right people find a way into our lives, as if they were meant to be. Loneliness, though painful, teaches us to notice the beauty in small gestures and to appreciate moments of true connection.

Different Eyes

When you walk down the street and look at your world, you see it differently. Every detail that once seemed insignificant now appears in a new light. It is as if your mind has taken a journey beyond familiar boundaries. Every step you take brings you closer to a new awareness, a new vision of life and the world around you. This shift in perspective does not happen overnight. It is the result of an internal process, an evolution that begins with self-reflection and the bonds we form.

A Mosaic

This book is a tribute to human connections, in their imperfect beauty. Every relationship, every encounter, every distance we cross is part of a larger mosaic. Every piece, large or small, is essential to the design, even if it is difficult to fit together or does not fit perfectly.

Sometimes people come into our lives to teach us something fundamental. Other times we know them briefly, but their impact remains indelible. Every person who crosses our path is a piece of a pattern that goes beyond our immediate comprehension.

I hope these pages have inspired you to look at the people around you with new eyes. Every encounter and connection can enrich us. Every distance has the potential to teach us something new.

Complexity

Relationships are never simple. They are a web of experiences, emotions, and meanings that constantly change over time. Every relationship we experience is an evolving process, a dance that adapts to the times and circumstances.

We live in a world that often tries to label and simplify human connections—friends, acquaintances, colleagues. But these labels do not always reflect the truth of a relationship. The beauty lies in accepting the complexity of relationships, rather than trying to put them in a box.

What remains of every bond is not so much its definition, but the impact it has had on us. Every person we meet, even for a moment, is a chapter in our journey. Every separation is a lesson, a necessary step toward growth.

Because, in the end, we are all pieces of the same mosaic. Every relationship we experience, whether long or short, superficial or profound, is part of a larger mosaic that transcends our individuality and unites us with something vaster and deeper.

Embracing relationships is an act of courage. It pushes us to leave our comfort zone, to have new experiences, feel different emotions, and see new perspectives. Looking back, we see that we are part of a bigger picture—united with all the people who have helped us become who we are today.

RELATIONSHIPS AND FRICTION

The Bonds

Every relationship reflects our inner complexity. We cannot control how someone enters or exits our lives. We can, however, choose to appreciate our time together. Every bond has the potential to leave us with something important.

This book is an invitation to embrace relationships in all their nuances, without trying to label or simplify them. Even complicated relationships can teach us something. Sometimes the beauty of a bond lies precisely in its complexity.

What matters is not so much the time spent with someone, but the impact that person has on us. An encounter that changes our perspective, a word that shakes us, a gesture that makes us feel less alone—this is what defines the most meaningful relationships.

The Expectations

Every relationship brings with it expectations, whether conscious or unconscious. We expect someone to understand us, to be there at the right times, to reciprocate our emotions. But when these expectations are not met, relationships can crumble. The betrayal of expectations is one of the most painful factors in human relationships.

Yet it is precisely in failure that we learn the most. Friendship and knowledge are not always perfect. They are made of misunderstandings, unspoken words, and growing distances. Even in tough times, there is always something to learn.

The true beauty of relationships lies not in their duration, but in their authenticity. Even when a relationship ends, what remains is its sincere impact, measured not in years but in how it made us feel.

The Meetings

The encounters that define our lives are not always heralded by obvious signs. Sometimes a person enters our lives unexpectedly, but what they leave behind changes us forever. These encounters reveal themselves in the simplest moments—in everyday conversations, in glances that meet by chance.

I think of a time when, in a moment of silence, someone said something that resonated with me and changed my perspective on a subject I thought I knew. He was not a close friend. Yet he made me see something I had never considered. It is often these small moments of genuine connection that teach us the greatest lessons.

There are people who, with just a few words, teach us things we would never have discovered on our own. These encounters catalyze personal growth. They are the bonds not measured in years, but in depth.

The Distance

Not all distances are measured in kilometers. There are invisible distances that creep into silences and misunderstandings. Two people can sit next to each other and still feel distant. Sometimes the emotional distance is greater than the physical one, and it is difficult to overcome, even in the same room.

Yet there is another side to distance: the one it teaches. When we distance ourselves from someone, we understand how important presence is. Distance, if accepted, shows us how much we are willing to fight to get closer again.

Digital Relations

In the digital world, friendship and acquaintance take on new meanings. Virtual connections seem more accessible, but they often lack the depth of real connections.

How many times have we measured our importance based on the number of "likes" or friends on social media? And how many times have we felt alone despite an endless list of contacts? The digital world teaches us that it is not the quantity of relationships that makes the difference, but their quality.

Email

In life, sometimes situations intertwine in bizarre ways, leading to unique and incredible experiences. This is one of those stories that seems to have come straight from a novel.

One day, I received an email from an unknown person. It was not Italian, English, Chinese, Hindi, or Japanese. It was a Pakistani dialect, written in a rudimentary manner. Deciphering the message was an immense challenge, but after three days of effort, I managed to understand it.

He was an elder of the Una tribe. I had met him many years earlier, on a trip from China to Islamabad, Pakistan. He was 120 years old and surprisingly vibrant. He remembered me and had decided to buy one of my books. He was struck by a story I had written about mortadella, an Italian cured meat.

The old man told me that the story had the whole village laughing. But he did not stop there: he asked if I could send him some mortadella to taste. I found the request both unusual and touching, so I decided to grant it.

I went to my trusted delicatessen and had ten vacuum-packed 100-gram bags prepared. The total cost was twenty-two euros. Then I contacted an international shipping company, which charged me eighty-five euros for shipping.

Many might criticize my choice as irrational. But for me, it was not about money. It was about humanity. Someone, thousands of miles away, had found joy and hope in one of my stories. Every penny spent was worth more than any material gain.

This experience taught me that writing is not just putting words on paper. It is about creating connections, transcending boundaries, and leaving a mark, even in the most remote places in the world. Always remember: this is me.

The Silence

Amid the constant din of our modern lives, there is a hidden power in shared silence. Our society values words, always seeking expressions and communication. But how many times have we realized that, precisely in moments of silence, the truest emotions lie hidden?

I remember one evening, after years of not seeing each other, when I ran into an old friend. We sat on a bench and, without saying a word, watched the sunset. There was no need to speak: our silence united us more than any conversation.

Silence can also be the vehicle for a bond stronger than words themselves. When we find ourselves in silence with someone, yet never feel alone, it is a sign that we are in tune.

The Streets

The paths of the people we meet in life do not always cross forever. Sometimes relationships end without closure, leaving unanswered questions and a sense of incompleteness. People leave our lives suddenly, or for no reason, and this can leave a void that is difficult to fill.

But there is a hidden beauty in these suspended relationships. They teach us to accept that not everything has to have a definitive conclusion. Some bonds are meant to last only one chapter of our lives. They might just prepare us for the next. These "incomplete" bonds are not failures. They are lessons that prepare us for our future evolution.

Sometimes a person who appears in our lives for a moment can have an impact that changes the course of our existence. It is not always the duration that defines the value of a relationship, but its meaning—even if the separation comes too soon or without warning.

THE WORLD MOVES ON

The Machine

It was 1946, and an incessant hum filled a dark room at the University of Pennsylvania. At the center, a massive machine composed of thousands of vacuum tubes, wires, and switches dominated the space. Its name was ENIAC: the first general-purpose electronic computer in history.

John Presper Eckert and John Mauchly, the creators of ENIAC, looked at it with eyes full of hope. That machine, more than thirty meters long and weighing thirty tons, was not just a collection of circuits: it was the fruit of years of dreams, calculations, and wild ambitions. ENIAC's first task was crucial: calculating ballistic trajectories for the U.S. military. During World War II, every second saved in calculations meant lives saved on the battlefield.

Years later, in 1976, a young man with an equally revolutionary vision was working in his parents' garage in California. His name was Steve Jobs, and together with his friend Steve Wozniak, he was building a new kind of computer: the Apple I. Unlike ENIAC, their computer was small, compact, and intended not for scientists but for ordinary people.

From the enormous ENIAC to tiny smartphones, the computer has transformed every aspect of our lives. It has made it possible to calculate a satellite's orbit, compose a symphony, connect a remote village to the rest of the world. Yet every computer, no matter how advanced, retains a connection to that room at the University of Pennsylvania, where the hum of ENIAC signaled the beginning of a new era. A machine that thinks, but reminds us of the extraordinary human mind that created it.

Evolution and Work

Work, since the origins of humanity, has been at the center of social and economic life. From the first hunter-gatherers to the agricultural societies that transformed how people lived and produced, the concept of work has undergone profound transformations.

The Industrial Revolution, which began in the 18th century, marked a momentous change. Machines replaced manual labor in many sectors, leading to the emergence of factories. This transformed work from a craft into an industrial process, creating new opportunities but also inequality and exploitation.

Today, work is constantly evolving thanks to artificial intelligence, remote work, and the digital economy. New professions are emerging, while traditional jobs are being redefined or eliminated. This evolution poses new challenges: how can we ensure equitable access to opportunities, and how can we prepare new generations for jobs that do not yet exist?

Work remains a source of identity and purpose for many people. It is a testament to humanity's ability to adapt to change and innovation.

Humanity

People are at the heart of every transformation, progress, and challenge humanity faces. With their uniqueness, emotional intelligence, and ability to adapt, they are our planet's most precious resource. Their strength lies not only in great achievements, but also in the small gestures that brighten everyday life.

Relationships between people are the connective tissue of our existence. Whether love, friendship, or collaboration, these bonds define who we are and how we live. Human resilience is one of our most extraordinary characteristics. Faced with disasters, crises, or personal challenges, humanity has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to bounce back and rebuild—not just individually, but through collective solidarity.

People must stay central to all future innovations and decisions. Technology and scientific advances are powerful tools, but it is their application to human well-being that drives true progress.

Life and Pre-Death

Life, in all its complexity and beauty, is a constant search for balance between what we desire and what we are given. Every culture, religion, and philosophy has attempted to answer the great existential questions: who are we, where do we come from, and what is our purpose?

One of the most significant developments in modern history has been the improvement in quality of life and the extension of life expectancy. Since 1900, global life expectancy has increased from about 30–40 years to over 70 in many regions, with peaks of 80–85 in the most developed countries. This has been made possible by advances in medicine, hygiene, nutrition, and working conditions.

However, extending life expectancy poses new challenges: how can we ensure that these additional years are lived in health, with access to the necessary care? Society must adapt to an aging population, promoting the inclusion of older people and developing infrastructure that supports an active and dignified life for all.

Life is also about resilience: facing challenges, overcoming obstacles, and finding joy in the simplest moments.

THE BODY AS A LIMIT

Polio

It was 1952, and the American summer brought with it something more than sunshine: fear. Polio was a silent enemy that struck without warning, paralyzing or killing young lives. Playgrounds were empty, swimming pools closed, and families lived in anguish. Among them, Jonas Salk, a quiet and thoughtful doctor, worked in his laboratory with one idea in mind: defeat the enemy.

Salk knew that the secret to ending polio was a vaccine, but not just any vaccine. His approach, based on an inactivated virus, was revolutionary. After years of experiments, in 1955 Salk's vaccine was evaluated on a large scale. The result was extraordinary: polio cases began to decline rapidly. The heartbreaking scenes of children in iron lungs gave way to hope. Today, polio is completely eradicated.

The Bubonic Plague

In the 14th century, the bubonic plague—the Black Death—ravaged Europe, killing a third of the population. Cities were deserted, fields left uncultivated. But as the centuries passed, science began to shed light on this scourge. In 1894, Alexandre Yersin identified the bacterium responsible, Yersinia pestis, paving the way for targeted interventions. In the 20th century, antibiotics such as streptomycin became crucial weapons against the plague. Where terror once reigned, science has brought knowledge and hope.

Malaria

Malaria, a mosquito-borne disease, has plagued humanity for thousands of years. Every year, millions of people, especially children, lose their lives to it. In the 20th century, a global battle began: scientists discovered drugs such as chloroquine and, more recently, artemisinin. Prevention campaigns gained momentum—insecticide-treated mosquito nets, pest control programs, awareness in the most affected communities. The battle is not over yet, but progress is a testament to what can be achieved with global cooperation.

Leprosy

For centuries, leprosy was more than a disease: it was a social condemnation. Sufferers were isolated, separated from their families, relegated to colonies. But the 20th century brought new hope. In 1981, the World Health Organization introduced combination therapy, an antibiotic treatment that could cure leprosy. Since then, millions have been successfully treated. Awareness campaigns have helped reduce stigma, restoring dignity to sufferers and their families.

Hepatitis C

Until a few decades ago, hepatitis C silently destroyed the liver, leading to cirrhosis or cancer, with limited and often ineffective treatments available. But in 2013, a revolution occurred: direct-acting antiviral drugs. These drugs do not just treat the disease—they eliminate it within weeks, with minimal side effects. Hepatitis C is no longer a death sentence, but a curable disease.

THE MECHANICS OF DAILY LIFE

Latest Generation

My refrigerator is a state-of-the-art model, equipped with a touch screen that interacts with anyone who approaches. It seems to have developed a seductive side. Every time I open the door, the display lights up with provocative messages like "Are you really hungry?" or "Do you really need that dessert?"

One evening, during a romantic dinner, the refrigerator revealed my secret: a hidden stash of chocolate. With a light signal and a mocking beep, it opened the secret drawer while my partner looked at me with an amused smile. "You like to hide temptations," she said, laughing. Now the refrigerator has officially become the third wheel of my romantic dinners.

The Refrigerator

My mother was always checking the three refrigerators in the house. My siblings and I were food gluttons and constantly ruminated on everything. One day, she and the housekeeper decided to clean out the refrigerator, after months of neglect. They found empty boxes hidden behind the panel, a jar of olives from 1992, and a mozzarella that seemed to have become part of the house. Next to it, a container of rat poison indicated that the refrigerator was not just for storing food, but a war zone.

When I opened a mysterious box, a terrible smell hit me like a punch. My dog, who usually eats anything, fled indignantly, and my brothers ran away screaming. The refrigerator seemed to be mocking us: every time we tried to close it, it would open again on its own, as if to say, "You haven't finished!" My mother, exasperated, called a carpenter to install locks.

But we found an alternative solution: we started buying food from the local store, charging everything to our mother's account. Eventually she realized that any battle would be lost. Our passion for food always wins.

The Washing Machine

I had always suspected my washing machine had a portal to another dimension. Every time I did the laundry, a sock was missing. But that morning, my wife, who usually managed the laundry, said to me, "Nando, today it's your turn to do the laundry."

Convinced it was a romantic signal, I eagerly prepared myself. But when I opened the washing machine, I found only a pair of underwear and a solitary sock. At that point I realized there was nothing romantic about it—the washing machine was just a clever distraction.

Now I know the washing machine does not just eat socks. It organizes evenings with friends, leaving me with an incomplete load and wondering where those socks ended up.

The Cat

My cat, Ernesto, is an Instagram influencer. He has more followers than me and even gets sponsorship offers. One day, jealous, I decided to take a photo with him to get some likes. But Ernesto, with his haughty look, jumped away just as I pressed the button.

I later found him strolling through the alleys, following a French cat. Ernesto was in love. Unfortunately, the vet informed me that Ernesto needed to be neutered to avoid complications. After the operation, he returned to the alley, and this time the cat seemed more interested in him—she had finally understood his worth.

Ernesto, with his indomitable spirit, continues to reign supremely on Instagram and the alleys.

The Plant

My love for plants recurred on the day I took flowers to the cemetery, the only real opportunity for us to meet. One day, I decided to buy a plant for the living room, just as my wife wanted. I chose a beautiful Montreux, but I did not notice its vindictive nature. Every time I forgot to water it, its leaves would curl up, as if reproaching me. When I finally remembered to water it, it would drink so much that it overflowed the saucer and flooded the floor.

One evening, returning home, I found one of its leaves had fallen off and was lying in the middle of the carpet, as if it were enacting a drama. Now Montreux dominates the living room, and it is plotting to take over my house.

The Vacuum Cleaner

My vacuum cleaner is one of those robotic machines that are supposed to make life easier. In fact, it has a personality of its own and a penchant for drama. Every time I turn it on, it ignores obvious dirt and digs under the furniture, getting stuck in impossible positions. One day, at dinner with friends, it decided to have some fun—it turned on by itself and dipped under the tablecloth, lifting it slightly as it passed between a guest's legs. Embarrassed, the guest dropped his wine glass on the carpet. The vacuum cleaner seemed pleased with the mess it had created.

Another day, it decided to confront my dog and latched onto his tail. Since then, the dog has been sleeping with one eye open, and the vacuum cleaner seems even more satisfied with itself.

The Chair

I bought an ergonomic chair to work better from home. The salesperson assured me it was designed to support my back and improve my posture. However, every time I sit in it, it makes creaking noises that sound like an old sailor moaning. Worse still, the chair tilts backwards when I relax—I look like a scene from a comedy movie.

One day, during a video call, I decided to stretch my back. The chair decided to take a dive backwards. I found myself sprawled out, with my boss on the video trying to hold back a laugh.

The Oven

My oven is a modern model with more buttons than an airplane cockpit. One time, I decided to try the "grill" function. Instead of browning the food, the oven began beeping and heating up like an erupting volcano. When I opened the door, a cloud of smoke filled the kitchen, and the smoke detector began to blare like a rock concert.

The climax was reached when, in a moment of distraction, I accidentally set the "pizza party" function. The kitchen transformed into a disco, with flashing lights and a synchronized beep. My neighbors knocked on the door, asking if I had opened a restaurant. Now I only use the oven to store pots and pans.

Remote Control

My TV remote has no clue what I should be watching. Every time I change channels, the button does not work. But if I accidentally press "Home," it opens an extensive list of unused apps. Once, to turn it off, I ended up renting a movie in Russian and spent the evening searching for subtitles.

Worst episode? During a romantic evening, I pressed the wrong button and a documentary about animals mating came on. My partner turned to me with a wry smile and said, "Subliminal message?" Now I only use my phone to change channels.

The Shower

My shower has an extremely sensitive temperature control system. Every time I try to adjust it, it goes from freezing cold to boiling hot in an instant, making me scream like in a horror movie. The highlight came when, during a visit from my mother-in-law, the shower turned on and the massaging jet hit her face. She screamed. Now my mother-in-law does not come to visit as often, and the shower deserves an award for its service.

The Printer

My printer, a harmless device, creates awkward moments. During an important online meeting, I decided to print an urgent document. Instead, the printer decided to dust off an old grocery list, on which "extra chocolate" was written in all caps and underlined three times.

My colleagues, intrigued by the noise, asked what I was printing. When the list landed under the webcam, one of them laughed, "Looks like you've got your priorities straight." Now the printer is just a plant stand. But every now and then, it makes a suspicious noise—a reminder of its heyday.

THE LACK

When we are alone, our minds wander. We worry and look for solutions or actions to take.

But when we think of people, whether they are still alive or no longer with us, our minds fill with memories. Every person who was part of our lives makes us miss them. It is then that the thought arises: "I miss you." Even a brief acquaintance can have an enormous impact, surprising us and making us rethink what we thought was stable.

Love that is tied to loss is something extraordinarily strong. Let us think about how we can love people who are no longer with us—a love that never ends, even if the person is no longer physically with us. Loss amplifies love, making it more intense, because it is a bond that is not broken, not even by death.

Absence, therefore, is a part of love that endures. It is confirmation that those who have left us hold a special place in our hearts. Even if we can no longer see them or hear their voices, their absence makes us realize how much they meant to us.

And then one day you grow old. You are alone at home. Fate has given you this. Unknowingly, you seek out those you love. You do not understand the reason for their absence. You become a child again. Turning to your mother, you say: "Now that you're no longer with me, what will I do? I miss you."

The Value

You never think about the first time you met a friend, at least not until you realize you might lose them. It is a painful realization, a sudden awakening. It hits you like a pang in the heart. Time forces you to face what you have always taken for granted.

A friend is not just a presence; it is a mosaic of moments, of shared laughter, of silences that speak louder than a thousand words. It is an invisible force that sustains you when everything else falls apart.

Friendship is made up of fragments of life: the first days spent discovering the world, creating memories that seemed endless. There was laughter, little secrets shared, moments of madness, and great challenges faced together. And then the first battles: not against the world, but against ourselves, against our desires, our fears.

The first great obstacle was not drugs, bad company, or alcohol. It was women. Always them. With their mysterious grace and that smile that made our hearts tremble, they led us to lose ourselves in an emotion we could not manage.

But the real blow came with illness. It was illness that brought us to our knees, that showed us how fragile we were despite our youth. I still remember the feeling of helplessness, the question that tormented us: "Why us?" There were no answers, only the silence of life that went on, oblivious to our pain.

Yet, in those moments, I discovered a profound truth: friendship is not just shared joy, but an alliance in pain. It is looking into each other's eyes and finding a strength you did not know you had. It is hearing the words that make all the difference: "Don't worry, I'm here."

How many nights we spent talking under the starry sky, convinced that the future was in our hands. Time, that old gentleman, taught us that nothing lasts forever. It showed us that every promise made between friends is an eternal bond, a commitment that goes beyond words.

A friend is someone who accompanies you on life's journey, making the burden of it more bearable. And when you lose them, you realize the void they leave is unbearable—a desert of memories and regrets. But even in that desert, the memory of a loyal friend is like a shadow that protects you, a light that never goes out.

Friendship, true friendship, knows no end. It is the bond that saves us from collapsing under the weight of our fears. It is the certainty that, no matter what happens, we will never be truly alone.

A friend. Always and forever.

Silent Success

When I wrote my first book, everyone smiled. They congratulated me and told me I had done something extraordinary. But I just looked at them and remained silent. Their enthusiasm seemed far from my reality, as if it were only the surface of a journey that, for me, had just begun.

Then, over time, I wrote five more. The situation was the same: smiles and congratulations. The words of appreciation did not really touch me, because deep down I knew my work was not finished yet, that there was still so much to learn and explore.

Today, after writing fifty books, the landscape has changed. No one laughs anymore, no one is surprised, yet everyone waits: what will happen now? Where will the next book take me? The race is no longer toward recognition, but toward something much more intimate and profound: myself.

Toward the Irrational

Broadening your vision is a concept that, too often, is perceived as risky. When someone begins to think beyond conventional boundaries, they are often viewed with suspicion. In a world that seeks easy answers, those who explore innovative ideas are often seen as crazy.

The reality, however, is that success is not the result of a linear or rational path. Rather, it is a state born of the irrational, a type of mental exaltation that defies common logic. There is no formula for success. It is a series of insights beyond rationality—choices that might seem wrong, but that hold the key to a new kind of fulfillment.

HAPPINESS

Philosophy

Over the centuries, philosophers have attempted to define what it means to be happy. In ancient Greece, Aristotle defined happiness as "eudaimonia," a concept that means living a life full of virtue and fulfilling one's potential. According to Aristotle, happiness is not simply a feeling of momentary pleasure, but the result of a life lived with wisdom, morality, and noble goals.

Epicurus emphasized pleasure as the primary driver of happiness, but distinguished between momentary and lasting pleasures, encouraging a moderate and simple life to achieve maximum serenity. Stoic philosophy, represented by figures such as Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, taught that happiness does not depend on external circumstances, but on our ability to cultivate inner control and live in harmony with nature.

In Psychology

Throughout the 20th century, psychology developed a growing interest in the study of happiness, defining it in terms of psychological well-being. According to positive psychology, a movement founded by Martin Seligman, happiness is not merely the absence of sadness, but a state of well-being that can be cultivated through specific practices such as gratitude, optimism, and self-realization.

Flow theory, proposed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, holds that happiness is achieved when a person is completely immersed in an activity they find stimulating and rewarding, to the point of losing track of time. In other words, happiness lies in self-realization, through activities that allow us to express our full potential.

And Society

Society plays a crucial role in the pursuit of happiness. Economic, social, and political conditions significantly impact individual well-being. Studies have shown that, although income influences happiness, after reaching a basic level of economic well-being, other factors—such as social relationships and mental health—become much more relevant.

Increasing globalization and the use of social media have made the pursuit of happiness more complex. Social comparison, amplified by digital platforms, often leads to a sense of dissatisfaction, while constant exposure to curated lifestyles can create an illusion of happiness that does not correspond to everyday reality.

And Spirituality

Many spiritual traditions have also reflected on the pursuit of happiness, often in terms of transcendence. Religion and spirituality propose a vision of happiness that does not depend on material circumstances, but on a profound connection with the universe, nature, or a higher power. In many traditions, happiness is seen as a state of inner peace achieved through meditation, prayer, compassion, and self-reflection.

Today

Today, the pursuit of happiness has evolved into an individual and collective pursuit, with a strong focus on personal fulfillment, emotional well-being, and work-life balance. Happiness is intricately linked to the ability to face life's challenges with resilience and the search for deeper meaning in everyday experiences.

However, the pursuit of happiness is also an ongoing process. Happiness is not a final state to be achieved, but a journey that involves self-exploration, adapting to circumstances, and building a life that reflects our deepest values.

THE FAREWELL

There are farewells we see in movies, charged with emotion, passion, and intensity, so much so that they seem real. Extraordinary actors bring these moments to life, and we, the spectators, are carried away by the tragedy of the scene. But deep down, we know they are just fiction.

Then comes a true goodbye, one of those that break you. It is not always about a person; sometimes it is a chapter in life that closes, a dream you must let go. This goodbye, however, is not like the others: it is the writing I am saying goodbye to today.

Writing has been my anchor in the darkest moments. It has been a voice that has transformed chaos into order, emotions into words, suffering into art. But today, after years of dedication, I feel the dialogue has broken down. I have always believed that words could create profound connections, a bridge between me and readers. Yet the bridge seems to have broken.

Five months, six hundred titles, no pay. The disdain for an author's work and the market's indifference have left deep scars. They do not recognize the value of stories. It is a reality I can no longer ignore.

I leave this journey with a divided heart. On one hand, the bitterness of a shattered dream. On the other, the pride of everything I have created. Every book, every story, every sentence has brought a part of me into the hearts of those who have read it. And no one can ever take that away from me.

I do not know if I will ever write again, but for now I need to pause. This farewell is not the end. It is just a pause to rediscover myself.

To you, who read and believed in me, goes my most sincere thanks. This farewell is not just mine: it is ours.

Close

This volume is part of the Gillette Universe — a series of six books written by Ferdinando Frega from 18 years inside The Gillette Company and 23 years of international management across four continents. These are not memoirs. They are not manuals. They are the documented record of a man who lived inside one of the world's most iconic brands and chose to write it down without filters, without nostalgia, and without asking permission.

Each volume explores a different dimension of that experience — identity, choice, desire, fracture, silence, and what remains. The complete series is available free at gillettenarrative.com. No store. No conversion. Just access, and — for those who want it — a relationship.

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