

HOW A PASSWORD CHANGED MY LIFE

“How could she do something like this to me?” said a voice in my head. All the time. Everyday.

Back in 2011, when everything had gradients, iOS icons made sense, and people used deodorants, I was stuck in middle of a pretty bad depression due to my divorce.

Thankfully, I think I was smart enough (and had great people around me) so I managed my way out.

One day I walk into the office, and my day begins at my computer screen. It was all great, until I saw this message:

Your password has expired.
Click ‘Change password’ to change your password.

No joke. I thought clicking ‘Change password’ was gonna do something else.

I read this dumb message in my mind with *angry grandpa* voice: **The d*%# password has expired.**

At my workplace, the *Microsoft Exchange server* is configured to ask *thousands of employees* around the planet to change their passwords. Every 30 days.

Here is the bull: The server forces us to use at least one **UPPERCASE** character, at least one **lowercase alphabetic** character, at least one **symbol** and at least one **number**. Oh, and the whole dang thing can’t be less than 8 characters. **And I can’t use any of the same passwords I’ve used in the last 3 months.**

I was furious that morning. Tuesday, 9:40 a.m. -It was so hot that my torso was already sweaty even though I just got to work. I was late. I was still wearing my helmet. I think I forgot breakfast. Something tastes like cigarette in my mouth. I need to get stuff done before my 10 a.m. meeting and all I have in front of me is a huge waste of my time.

So there it was... This input field with a pulsating cursor, waiting for me to type a password that I’ll have to re-enter for the next 30 days. Many times during the day.

Then, letting all the frustration go, I remembered a tip I heard from my former boss.

I’m gonna use a password to change my life.

It was obvious that I couldn't focus on getting things done with my current lifestyle and mood. Of course, there were clear indicators of what I needed to do -or what I had to achieve- in order to regain control of my life, but we often don't pay attention to these clues.

My password became the indicator. My password reminded me that I shouldn't let myself be victim of my recent break up, and that I'm strong enough to do something about it.

*My password became: “**Forgive@h3r**”*

I had to type this statement several times a day. Each time my computer would lock. Each time my screensaver with her photo would appear. Each time I would come back from eating lunch alone.

In my mind, I went with the mantra that *I didn't type a password*. In my mind, I wrote “**Forgive her**” every day, for one month.

That simple action changed the way I looked at my ex-wife. That constant reminder that I should forgive her, led me to accept the way things happened at the end of my marriage, and embrace a new way of dealing with the depression that I was drowning into.

In the following days, my mood improved drastically. By the end of the 2nd week, I noticed that this *password* became less powerful, and it started to lose its effect. A quick refresh of this ‘mantra’ helped me. I thought to myself **I forgive her** as I typed it, every time. The healing effect of it came back almost immediately.

One month later, my dear exchange server asked me again to renew my password. I thought about the next thing I had to get done.

My password became **Quit@smoking4ever**

And guess what happened. I kid you not. *I quit smoking overnight*. This password was a painful one to type during that month, but doing it helped me to *yell at myself* in my mind, as I typed that statement. It motivated me to follow my monthly goal.

One month later, my password became **Save4trip@thailand**

Guess where I went 3 months later. Thailand. With savings.

Thank you, password.

So, I learned that I can truly **change my life** if I play it right. I kept doing this repeatedly month after month, with great results.

Here is an extract of what *some* of my passwords have been in the last 2 years, so you get an idea of how my life has changed, thanks to this method:

- Forgive@her ← to my ex-wife, who started it all.
- Quit@smoking4ever ← it worked.
- Save4trip@thailand ← it worked.
- Eat2times@day ← it never worked, still fat.
- Sleep@before12 ← it worked.
- **Ask@her4date** ← it worked. I fell in love again.
- No@drinking2months ← it worked. I feel better.
- Get@c4t! ← it worked. I have a beautiful cat.
- Facetime2mom@sunday ← it worked. I talk with my mom every week.

And the one for last month:

- **Save4@ring** ← Yep. Life is gonna change again, soon.

I still await very anxiously each month so I can change my password into something that I need to get done.

This method has consistently worked for me for the last 2 years, and I have shared it with a few close friends and relatives. I didn't think it was a breakthrough in tiny habits but it did have a great impact in my life, so I thought I would share it with you all.

Try it yourself! Write these statements with the right mindset and attitude, and you'll change your life. [Let me know how it works for you!](#)

Remember, for added security, try to be a bit more complex with the words. Add symbols or numbers, or scramble a bit the beginning or the ending of your password string. S4f3ty_f1rst!

Pass the tip on to those who might need it.

Updated on Jun 21, 2014: She said yes.

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