

This Ever-changing World™

Cast: Trixie, leader of self-help group, dizzily enthusiastic.
 Bob, new member, perhaps slightly unstable.
 Eric, older member, has found some ways of coping.

Trixie stands facing audience. Other characters are planted in the audience, but somewhere near the front.

Trixie: Hello everybody! Welcome to SPEW, offering Support to People in this Ever-changing World. I'm Trixie, and as always it's ever so wonderful to see so many of you here tonight. And I see we've got a new face joining us!! Do you want to stand up and tell us a bit about yourself? Go on, don't be shy!

Bob reluctantly stands and turns to face audience

Bob: Well, my name's Bob and I'm...

Trixie: Hello Bob!

Bob: *(Already nervous, and further unnerved by the interruption)* um, Hello Trixie... well... what it is, you see...

Eric: Hello Bob!

Bob: Er, yes, Hello... er the reason I came here, you know, is that,

Trixie: Shall we all say hello to Bob? Come on everybody, let's give him a nice warm SPEW welcome. *(Gestures to audience)*

All: Hello Bob!!

Bob: HELLO! *(Pause)* Erm, where was I?

Trixie: Well Bob, you were about to share with us something deep and personal. You were going to tell us all why you're here.

Bob: Oh yes, well, it's because I'm confused by things all changing around me. *(Starts to sit down, thinking he's finished speaking for now.)*

Trixie: *(Pleasantly, but persistently)* Yes?

Bob: Oh. Um, like money. You know, Euros? They've already switched to the new currency on the continent, and maybe we'll join the Euro too, and - and, nobody really tells us about it. They'll probably be changing all our coins soon, *(increasing hysteria)* and none of them will be the same, so they won't fit in the phone boxes, those new grey plastic, open phone boxes. And you wouldn't be able to go out and buy a pound of cheese, because it's all in metric, and I... I'm not sure I can deal with it all.

- Trixie: It's okay Bob, we understand.
- Bob: You do? Even the way they've changed all the city bus routes?
- Trixie: Oh yes, especially the bus routes. We've all been there before. And I think we can help you, but you must want to help yourself. Do you want to help yourself, Bob?
- Bob: Don't mind if I do. Oh, er sorry, misunderstood you there. I mean, yes, I would like to. But what do I have to do?
- Trixie: Well, you should talk to some of the people here, who just a short while ago were standing there, just as you are now. They can tell you how they learned to cope with the confusion of this Ever-changing World. People like Eric here.
- Eric: Hello, Bob.
- Bob: Er, yes, Hello.
- Trixie: Eric, why don't you tell Bob what we talked about last month?
- Eric: Okay Trixie. Well Bob, I was talking to Trixie about how I could put down an anchor in the troubled waters of this Ever-changing World by keeping hold of something constant. Something solid, that didn't change.
- Trixie: Yes, that's right Eric.
- Eric: Yes. It certainly is, Trixie. *(Satisfied grin)*
(Pause)
- Bob: Okay, I see the concept's easy enough to grasp... But what sort of things do you use as your anchor?
- Eric: Ah. Well I'm very glad you asked me that question. That's a bit trickier, and to tell you the truth I haven't exactly got that sorted out yet.
- Trixie: Really?
- Eric: Yes, really. I mean, you must know what they say about the only two certainties in life: Death and Taxes. I didn't exactly want to concentrate on either of those for too long.
- Trixie: But we gave you a whole list of ideas to be going on with! Didn't you find any of them suited you? Like for example, how about *(consults list)* your financial security?
- Eric: As I said, Taxes.
- Trixie: Alright. What about, erm, tradition? Cultural heritage, the importance of being British?
- Bob: Yes, like bright red telephone boxes, and pillar boxes, and the St. George Cross. In fact, lots of red things...

- Eric: And Cricket! And standing up for “God Save The Queen”. And “God Save The Queen”! (*starts singing*)
- Bob: God Save The Queen!
- Trixie: If we could perhaps return to our anchor...
- Eric: Yes, Ah and the Merchant Navy. And the Dunkirk Spirit. And the Stiff Upper Lip. And the Empire. India! Vast herds of wildebeest sweeping majestically across the plains!
- Bob: Yes, (*pauses*) yes, but it’s gone.... All gone.
- Eric: Yes the sun never set, you know. Good lads, every one of them. (*sniff*) And all for what, eh? All for what.
- Trixie: Yes. Perhaps we could come back to the question of our anchor? Maybe instead of dwelling on the past, we could look toward the future. With Science... and technology?
- Eric: Now that sounds more like it! Instantaneous worldwide communication. The digital superhighway! Broadband internet shopping, and 43 channels of widescreen Dolby digital satellite television!
- Bob: Oh I don’t know if I could use that as an anchor. I can already barely manage to set the video to record Blue Peter.
- Trixie: But what about all the other things science has given us?
- Bob: What, like nerve gas, and the atom bomb, and ...
- Eric: Space travel?
- Bob: Oh great, soon we’ll be able to pollute other planets, as well as our own.
- Trixie: But surely there have been some good things too? I mean think of fluorescent lights, soda streams, helicopters – that sort of thing.
- Eric: Computers, yes! Marvellous devices. Getting faster and cheaper all the time, aren’t they?
- Bob: I’ve never really got on with PCs. Or maybe they just don’t get on with me... I’ve got one myself but it never seems to run the programs I want it to.
- Eric: When did you buy it?
- Bob: Oh, about two years ago.
- Eric: Two years?! Well that’s the problem then, you need to buy a new one! You can’t expect to keep that old thing going forever.
- Bob: But I want something I can rely on! Technology isn’t much of a stable anchor if I have to upgrade every year to keep up with the changes!
- Trixie: But that’s the point, you see; the change is exactly what’s constant.
- Bob: Don’t be absurd.

- Trixie: No, I'm serious – I mean, if there's one thing you can rely on, it's that scientists will keep on making new discoveries, and coming up with wonderful new ideas. Continuously pushing back the boundaries of human endeavour and all that.
- Bob: That's all very fine and well, but I thought we were looking for an unchanging anchor here.
- Eric: You can't stand in the way of progress.
- Bob: I've gone off the idea of progress, it's overrated. What else have you got on that list of yours?
- Trixie: What are you talking about? Progress is great! Think of all the ways we're improving ourselves. We can cure almost any sickness, we can grow all the food we need, build all the houses we need, and we're living longer and longer. Do you want to go back to living in caves and hunting all day?
- Bob: Look, all those things you just mentioned are, well, *things*. Stuff. *We're* not improving at all!
- Trixie: How can you say that? Science has enabled us to do so many incredible things.
- Bob: Maybe so, but it doesn't mean we actually do any of the *right* things does it? I mean, look at us! We're as selfish as ever. We'll never feed the world because we're too greedy, and we'll never house everyone in the world because ultimately we just don't care enough about other people. There isn't any medicine for that sickness. Who wants to live longer anyway, without some kind of anchor in life, without some kind of *point*? This isn't progress. (*Trixie tries to interrupt*) No, I'm sorry, but that isn't going to help me at all.
- Eric: You know, I've had just about enough of this. You don't seem to want any help at all... just to find fault with our suggestions. If you're so smart why haven't you come up with any ideas of your own?
- Bob: Well... actually someone did suggest this (*produces bible*). They said it would have everything I needed in it, and that there was this guy in it who I could rely on forever.
- Eric: The bible? But that's nothing but fairy stories.
- Bob: What's wrong with it?
- Eric: Oh you know what I mean... It's all about animal sacrifices and stuff, idol worship, it's all myth!
- Bob: So, you've read it yourself, have you?
- Eric: Um, sort of. Well, that's to say, not actually opened it up but, but ... (*tails off*) Anyway, nobody believes that stuff any more.
- Bob: Nobody?

- Eric: Well of course there are *some* people who still believe it. You know... a few less sophisticated people
- Bob: Hey!
- Eric: who might use religion as a sort of a crutch to get themselves through difficult situations they couldn't handle otherwise because of their own feeble-mindedness.
- Bob: *Hey!*
- Eric: You weren't seriously going to read that, were you?
- Bob: Well, you know, I thought surely it would be worth checking out for myself?
- Eric: Oh honestly, Bob, the whole world's changed so much since that book was written. What makes you think the dusty old thing could be relevant to life today?
- Bob: Weren't you listening to me? The world has changed but *we* haven't. We need a solution that dealt with the problem before these new fangled ideas came along.
- Eric: And you're saying this is it?
- Bob: Well ... you said yourself that this book is old. The person who gave it to me said it's about a real anchor for our lives; a God who was there at the beginning. Surely it's worth a look?
- Eric: (*grudging, not meant at all*) Well of course ... (*animated*) but frankly I'd take that book and ...
- Trixie: No Eric. Remember, in SPEW we always listen to people *before* telling them what to do.
- Bob: (*flicking through bible*) Hey – it's got a whole book of proverbs here!
- Trixie: That's lovely, Bob. Why don't you take that away, read some more of it, and we can talk about it next week?
- Eric: (*mutters*) Waste of time, etc.
- Bob: (*reading*) "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty."¹
Oh - spot on.
- Eric: Will you listen to yourself! You're a fool if you think that book has anything to say to us modern men!
- Bob: "A man who lacks judgement derides his neighbour, but a man of understanding holds his tongue."²
- Eric: I beg your pard....

¹ Proverbs 14:23

² Proverbs 11:12

Trixie: Wow, look at the time! I think we might have to draw this week's meeting to a close. And I think we should all thank Bob for making some really interesting points.

Eric: *(Grumbling)* Thank you, Bob.

Trixie: Yes, Thank you Bob. All right everyone, I'll see you the same time next week!

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