The Observer Years

A letter to a 6 on the roof

If you have a 6 in your profile, your life runs in three seasons. Almost nobody tells you that, so most 6s live the middle one without knowing it has a name.

The first season runs from childhood to roughly thirty. It is trial and error: you learn by doing, you make real mistakes, and some of them are visible. Around thirty you climb onto the roof. The third season begins somewhere near fifty, when you come down and become what Human Design calls the role model, a person others learn from simply by watching how he lives.

This letter is about the middle season, because it is the one that gets misread.

What the roof looks like from the inside

From the roof, you step back from the middle of things. You answer fewer messages. You turn down invitations you would once have taken. You want long stretches of quiet. You watch a room more than you join it.

From the inside, and certainly from the outside, this looks like a problem. It looks like isolating, like coldness, like failing at friendship, like something wrong with you. A 6 on the roof is the person most likely to hold that verdict against himself, because the pulling back feels like his own character and he has no other explanation for it.

It is not a defect. It is a phase of a design, with a purpose and an end.

What the roof is for

The roof is a vantage point. A 6 gets up there to see how life actually works: how people behave when they think no one is watching, which systems hold and which only look like they do, what is real and what is performance. You cannot see that from the middle of the crowd. You have to be above it.

Nothing you observe up there is wasted. Every year adds to a view you will carry back down, and the view is what the role-model years are made of. The trial and error of the first season gave you experience. The roof turns that experience into understanding.

Watching and hiding are different things

The roof is for watching. It asks that you stay interested in life, that you keep looking out at it with curiosity, even from a distance. It does not ask you to disappear.

A useful test is this: when you step back, are you stepping back to see more, or to avoid being reached? Stepping back to see is the roof doing its work. Stepping back to avoid is worth noticing and being honest about. Only you can tell the two apart, and the answer may be different on different days.

A few things the roof asks of you

Keep one or two windows open. The roof does not require a crowd, but it does well with one or two people who know you are up there and do not need you to come down. Those few connections keep the view from turning into distance.

Get real solitude, not just empty time. Silence that clears you out is different from hours alone that leave you more cluttered than before. Protect the first kind.

Say no when you mean no. A person who observes carefully knows what he actually feels, and the roof is a poor place to keep promising what he does not want to give.

Let yourself be called out. A 2 line, the hermit, does not go looking for the world. The world comes and finds you, and your gifts show up when someone asks for them. You do not have to initiate anything for this season to be working.

The way down

The roof has an end. Around fifty, something shifts. You find yourself wanting to be in the middle of things again, and this time you arrive with the view you built up there. What you carry down is what you become a model of.

Until then, the work is simple. Keep watching. Stay reachable to someone. And understand that the person on the roof is not broken. He is early in a very long view.