

3000

The year is 3000. A 17-year-old girl named Alexa and her younger brother, Aaron, are at The Museum of History & Technology. In one of the museums display rooms, there is a collection of ancient computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones and other early devices - a few of which have been maintained and restored in order to still function. Specifically, one laptop on display is set up for visitors to use. On it, there are old digital tools used for things like information storage, digital art creation, communication and personal upkeep; as well as browser applications used to access early forms of the internet. As part of the experience, the laptop has a selection of archival web pages that pertained the exhibit about early-stage digital content creation and internet communication. Alexa and Aaron play about on the laptop for a little, while their parents participate in another exhibit.

While scrolling through the internet pages, they come across a webpage of a video sharing platform with a video titled: "Internet video of an animated voiceover". The description of the video reads "This video is an excerpt of what is believed to be an interview, speech, podcast or self-produced video essay created between the late 20th and early 22nd century. It simply serves as a sample for how individuals sought to use the internet to communicate during its early stages of development and integration. The source of the video is unknown due to digital dissemination, false attributions, synthetic media replications and possible intentional anonymity". Alexa clicks play, and the video starts...

"One last question. When it's all said and done, how would you like to be remembered?"

It's sort of a funny question isn't it - asking how you want to be remembered after you're gone. No one ever knows how they're remembered, nor does anyone ever experience it. And yet, for some reason, we still ask ourselves these sorts of questions.

It's a paradox really: to want something after I'm dead, but only be able to want anything while I'm alive. The question is really more about what I want to imagine while I'm alive then, isn't it? What I want to convince myself my life can be for, beyond my own life; seeing as how I can only imagine beyond my own life while my own life still exists. If I were to humour the question though, I don't think I would want to claim any sort of banal, grandiose answers. I don't think that I would want to say that I want to be remembered as significant, or influential, or smart, or famous, or wealthy, or powerful, or successful. Or that I changed the world in some way. All of that would suggest that I can know what any of that even means in the bigger picture. In truth, I don't know what it means to be influential in a world that lacks clear direction. I don't know what it means to be wealthy in a world filled with poverty. I don't know what it means to be powerful in a universe that trumps everyone, and everything. And I don't know what it means to be smart, or successful, or to change the world - as a member of a species that's restricted from understanding what anything might really mean or cause. I suppose I'm attracted to these things as much as the next person, but I cannot say with certain honesty that I believe that in the end, any of these things are worth being remembered for.

I guess the next answer would be that I want to be remembered as someone who tried; someone who tried their best to care, to help, to love, to be okay, to air on the side of sympathy and compassion as best I could. To be a good friend, good son, father and husband. Someone who lived honestly, with both conviction and a willingness to adapt in what they think and believe. Someone who contributed towards something they enjoyed and believed in, simply because they could. I'm not entirely sure how good I am at any of these things though. And I know that this answer might sound equally cliché, but if anything is an answer to how I want to be remembered, I think it's that.

But the truth is, history is coated with innumerable amounts of people who lived with these qualities, and mostly none of them are remembered by anyone at all. Perhaps being remembered isn't all that important then, if most people aren't remembered for what's important. Of course, some people are remembered long after they're gone for things that do currently seem important or useful. But even then, if one is remembered because they have done something that's considered useful - isn't it the useful thing that is truly being remembered, and not the person in it of themselves? I mean, how does anyone know Albert Einstein, if not in terms of scientific contribution? It's not as if the world likes Einstein inherently; the world likes his contributions, or him solely because of his contributions. Any exploration of his character in life is always contextualised or confined within the borders of science genius. In the eyes of history, Einstein would be no one if it were not for his scientific contributions. But, of course, Einstein was not no one, regardless of his contributions. His contributions deserve celebration, of course. And so does he. But does our celebration of him now, change anything for him then? I don't know if Einstein was happy, or if he wanted to be remembered in some grand way, or if he just wanted to understand more than what was understood. But isn't it possible that his contributions are a byproduct of his experience of life, and not the source? And isn't it possible that this is the case for all people that are remembered as great throughout history?

I'll certainly admit that there's some longing inside me to be remembered, or thought of long after I'm gone. I believe it probably comes from the same place that yearns to live forever and lose nothing. But nothing lives forever, and everyone loses everything. To live for, or care about being remembered is like planning your own birthday party on a day that you can't go. If I want to celebrate my life, I can only do it now while I'm still here. I believe everyone should still dedicate themselves to the something or somethings they want to be remembered for. Be it a cause, a passion, a good heart, or all of the above. But not because it's something that they will be remembered for, but it's because it's what they want to imagine their life is for. And what you imagine your life is for, is what your life is for, isn't it? Whether one is remembered for five thousand years or five minutes after their gone, it makes no difference to the person who lived for it.

Ultimately, I have no illusions that I'll last beyond the minds of a couple generations after me, at best. And so, what I do now, what I dedicate myself to, what I experience behind the eyes of my own self; must be enough.

If it isn't, nothing is.

The video fades to an end and the screen prompts an arrow pointing to the right, with text that reads "Next Page". Before clicking, Aaron says "Well that's five minutes well never get back". He pauses and says, "And who's Einstein?"

"Yeah I don't know", Alexa replies. "Think he must have been a scientist or something? I think I've heard his name before. That's what it said, at least"

"Hmm", Aaron murmurs. "Alright, well do you want to go check out something else now?", he concludes. Alexa agrees, they walk away from the laptop and onto the next exhibit of a different time in history.