Whenever I’m trying to habit-change, I take long, persistent looks at what the original habit is truly costing me.

I think addiction is on a spectrum, and that anything you can’t control is likely to eventually cause harm. If i both “want” and “don’t want” something on equal levels, you live in constant conflict inside your own head. That sounds like anxiety. Something I’m trying to \*lessen\* in my life, and ironically one of my primary reasons that it freaks me out to stop drinking alcohol. “Alcohol makes the anxiety go away”… Ok, sure, but apparently not. You need more words when you are battling inside of your own head. Alcohol makes the anxiety go away for a half hour right when i drink it, but it causes \*additional\* anxiety through its absence the entire rest of the time. Net loss.

So part of me \*knows\*, and has known for an awfully long time, that alcohol is bad for my body. I \*feel\* it, it is an undeniable empirical observation of my own experience once I tried to see it objectively. Independent from what science proves or asserts. So the thinking part of me knows that i want to drink less than I do, but I’m constantly \*craving\* and longing for this thing that I know I shouldn’t have. I plan and look forward to the next time I can rationalize or justify having more.

I’m \*tired\* of living this way. I already discovered an uncannily-similar addiction/craving scenario with sugar. I am very sugar-addicted. When I’m on it, it preoccupies my thoughts. I’m keenly aware of exactly how much I have left to enjoy of something, and i will consume it as quickly as my Rules will permit me. … and most importantly, it torments me all the while. Because it is never enough. For near-decades, I believed that this was just “me” or my genetics. Something unchangeable. And getting \*off\* sugar is super hard – because you have to hold strong with willpower while the ‘addiction’ component within the body wears off. But it does and it will. It can’t not. Our bodies are continually adapting to us, evolving. If we give different inputs, it will adapt. But adaption is not instantaneous, hence, the holding strong.

For me and sugar nowadays, it lasts about a week pretty intensely, and then drops off steadily. Of course, that is all dependent on “how deep I went”. The sooner you catch it, the easier it is to stop its momentum.

But that knowledge is HUGE – because what I LEARNED, that shocked me the most, is there was a sort of utopia on the other side… This \*thing\*, that had so much control over me, that I was powerless to ignore, got really, really quiet. … It was peaceful there. I had thought I ‘could never’ give up sugar because of the joy it gave me. Eating is an exquisite pleasure. Yet what I discovered was that the joy caused in those fleeting moments did not add up against the long durations \*when not eating it\* and I was held in a conflict about wanting more of it. I could not, for example, ever “forget” i had cookies or chocolate or whatever in the pantry. You can’t forget about something your mind is always tracking on some level. And always tracking something on some level is \*exhausting\*.

I was truly surprised there was a way to live without that “noise” always going on in the background. Of not having what I want. But it turns out 80% of why I was wanting it was only because I was \*having\* it, and if i stopped \*having\* it, that part drops away, into glorious peace and silence.

The other 20% is where the “maintenance” comes in. We are SURROUNDED by sugar. It is advertised to us heavily and is everywhere we go. It is accepted and encouraged in society. And no doubt, these things are DELICIOUS. But, what’s the cost? That 80% misery of never being satisfied.

So eventually I decide to do it anyway – my birthday week or whatever – when I want to “spoil” myself. And sure enough, I can notice now when the trigger flips. And that is NOT to say I should never do that either or label it as ‘wrong’ – it means that I want to have the CHOICE, rather than being in eternal inner conflict. Sometimes, I say “bring it on”, full KNOWING that I’ll have to “do the work” and “hold strong with willpower” until it wears off again. But, it’s easier than before, because I know I CAN, because I UNDERSTAND the dynamics of that in the body, and that it will not last forever. And that giving IN to that craving and putting it into my body is actually the very thing that PERPETUATES the craving cycle… which I find to be exhausting.

But I had to go through that cycle a few times for me to really “see” it.

And the way I see it now, it doesn’t vary that much from the problem I’m having with alcohol. Regardless of drinking “in moderation”, or even less than others around me, \*I’m\* sick of being in inner conflict with a craving that is relentless. And using what I learned from sugar, I can have \*faith\* that, if I give my body and brain and life time to adapt, that there will be a clearing on the other side that doesn’t \*feel\* nearly so hard to make the choices that I know would feel better physically for me. And that that \*peace\*, from that battle and inner-deliberation and negotiating, is perhaps an even better benefit than the actual physical benefits that prompted me to start questioning it in the first place.

And what are those?

Science shows that alcohol affects sleep and temperature regulation. My personal experience echoes that. I sleep like crap and I go from hot to cold and back constantly. I vividly know this for the “night-of” the drinking, but I’m less aware of what the “long tail” effect of that might be, cumulatively speaking.

Not even talking about a “hangover”, but even from one or two drinks I can get headaches, nausea, plus fatigue and general ickiness. I feel like a lead weight.

A super-informative video I discovered covers ALLL the effects, if you’re interested, check out [What Alcohol Does to Your Body, Brain & Health](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkS1pkKpILY). Very illuminating.

And what are the \*actual\* costs that YOU are paying? For that thing you can’t live without because it makes you so happy. If you were being honest… (My advice, if you are trying to cut back, is to observe it in yourself over time, and really try to be honest. Try to take longer breaks and see what feels different. Start experiments and observe. )

I claim my body and my health are SO important to me. I’ve done SO much to help it, to try to love it. Yet I continue to do this, well, up till now. I wanna see what its like on the other side. To give it up so indefinitely as to no longer plan for it in the present moment.

And i think that’s important. I did a 3-month break before. And I was super-proud of that, as is good to be. But I was always “planning” to go back to right where i started. So it is different mindset.

Yet, the idea of giving it up \*forever\* freaks me out and brings down resistance all around it. I can \*feel\* it because it is so visceral. Like it makes your back arch and hair stand up on end like cat. People freak out when you threaten to take away their addictions. I know I do. That, alone, is all the proof I need that I’m having an “addiction” problem… because why would I react that way if I didn’t? And can I really convince myself any longer that this relationship of addiction isn’t having a negative effect the whole rest of the time in my life, not just when I’m trying to negotiate with myself about needing to cut back.

But what’s interesting is, regardless of the fear and impossibility it triggers within me when “threatened” to “not drink”, I know I felt the same way with similar intensity when I first was giving up sugar. Yet now, even when I’m “back on it”, it is easier to stop, because I’ve been there, to the other side. Basic exposure therapy.

So, I know that it is entirely possible that alcohol could be the exact same way. I bet everyone has different Threshold Volumes for different trigger foods/drinks. Maybe for me alcohol will be the same as sugar, where I can carefully let a little in for special occasions, as long as I’m aware for when the “compulsion flips” and it becomes less of a choice. Or maybe for alcohol it will be even more sensitive, and it turns out to just not be worth the amount of “hold strong with willpower” until it wears off again. I won’t be able to find out until I first get to the other side where calibration to zero is. It is also possible I find that I don’t even want it anymore, this thing that feels like a poison in my body. It’s possible.

I’d even go so far as to say it sounds “plausible” – because when I really look at the realities and the costs of the fleeting moments, the math just doesn’t add up of why I keep it as part of my one great, precious, brilliant life (to quote Kris Carr 😉 ).

I’ve been focusing on other things than writing, immersing myself in embodying that I am an artist.  I’m a painter and a singer/songwriter. It took me a long while for my mind to let me ‘claim’ that, and I still struggle with it. And it is **not** about whether I’m good or not. It took me a while to realize that doesn’t actually matter as much as I thought. I acted like i had to be ‘good’ before I’d let myself start (or at least \*know\* that I could be), which is absurd since very few are innate prodigies at anything. It **is** about whether these things are a part of my life cadence. They are a regular part of my life and thus a part of me. And it feels good. And despite what my brain tells me, the fact that it feels good (and nothing else) is more than enough reason to allow it to take up some of my time.  It is about time, after all, that we treat time as precious as we claim.

Once I started acrylic painting, I couldn’t seem to stop.  The colors just lit me up in a way that … well, my engineering/computer/medical research kind of life never did. As if it came from an entirely different realm than the ordered one of accomplishment in which I resided.  That, or … I’ve just been learning too much about quantum physics and I’m just starting to think funny.  Anyway, now I’m drowning in art and I realize the energy is plugged up and I need to get it out there.  I’ve been meaning to post it online somewhere for more than a year – but, that sounded like computer work … which didn’t feel like art. So, I procrastinated.

I’d had the thought to maybe put my portfolio on Amazon, so that if I got into selling it’d already be ready.  I thought it could be fun since I already work there, it’d be ‘keeping it in the family’, in an ironic way.  But, I decided on Instagram because it just makes more sense for where I am at (and actually finally [got it loaded up](https://www.instagram.com/anastasiaguspan/)!).

Turns out I may not have been wrong in the thought though, I just didn’t realize I do MULTIPLE forms of art. Because I’m also into music, another thing that just was NOT remotely a part of my zero-creativity, zero-imagination reality. How insane is that? Me?! That had been as impossible as Santa Claus being real.  So now I’m not sure what to believe.

I am starting to accumulate songs too. Eventually, I’ll want to post them, share them, because yes, I’m proud of my lyrics, even if the rest is a work-in-progress (WIP).   That’s not why I’m doing it. It’s, finally, no longer about needing external validation to get permission to do it.   Because, deep down in my Belief Onion, I needed to know it was validated to make it a valuable investment of my time.  But that’s not what matters. I finally SEE that I was looking at the wrong thing. The wrong measure.  What matters is how I feel when I do it, **not** how I feel when it’s done … not whether it becomes “anything”.  It’s not about what might be. It’s about now.  It’s about taking the FEELING of the thing you want, regardless of any measure of perceived skill.  I still feel like I suck, but MAN am I better compared to how truly incapable I started 3 or 4 years ago! Because, of course, I had spent no time on it in my life.   Whatever you spend time on, you will, actually, improve. It is pretty much a fact proven by quantum physics. The trick to win **the Game**, however, is that it’s not about getting good enough to meet some external metric. The external metrics are actually things only as a RESULT of other people spending time on it for the love of the doing **of**it.  Or put another way, those metrics are a side effect – the result of something else, not the focus.  What it **is** about is letting it out, allowing yourself the unknowingness of doing it.

And it is not, in any way, that people that DO arts, or have arts in their life, are any “better” than people who don’t. (Though I sure believed that when I was someone who didn’t).  It’s because for some reason I ALWAYS WANTED IT. \*Something\* in me YEARNED when I saw visual art that lit me up, or the way I feel when I sang a good song from a great artist.  Something attracted me.  I’m a moth and it was my personal light.   And we follow the light (yes, Brain, I know a lot of moths die that way but don’t follow the rabbit).  Something in me wanted it and it never went away despite it being ignored for so long that it-was-no-longer-a-possibility.  THAT’S what makes it wonderful that now it is stuff that I have in my life … and doesn’t make anyone else remotely wrong who doesn’t and doesn’t care.

But if you are someone like me who felt a yearning – however much unilaterally and completely impossible – stop worrying about where it could go, stop worrying about if you ever share it with anyone, most of all, stop worrying “how it will be an epic waste of time”.  That is your mind projecting failure first and then doing the math against your eternal judgement that you don’t measure up.

Just start. Just play. Just Be. You never know where it might lead…

Our brains are filled with rules. Rules, judgements, and criticisms that we’ve piled on over time – maybe that served us once, but don’t in our current life. Or maybe something that does keep us safe (e.g. “is smart to do”) in some circumstance, but have since been sloppily expanded to broadly encompass far too much. Either way, we are the ones missing out on living, and we are the ones suffering from it.

 Our own rules are what stifles our lives. We clamp down on so many parts of our lives – individually, many of these ways are tiny and so subtle that we don’t realize it – but cumulatively, they have a huge impact and restrict our ability to ENJOY our experience of living.  For example, we rob ourselves from realizing we have imagination and creativity because we have rules that block the possibility of ‘wasting time’.  We don’t ALLOW ourselves to “go there”.  We may WANT to go, logically. But we literally CAN’T. Our own RULES block the way. Close it off for us.

JUST like this road closed sign at the end of my street. It is NOT just a metaphor.  Our subconscious rules block us from paths we could otherwise take in life. We have rules: if we did \*that\* then we’d be like \*that type of person\*.  If we did \*that\*, what would people think? If we did \*that\*, what would it say about me?   We fill ourselves with worry and conjecture. And we wonder why we’re depressed and exhausted.  We ‘think’ the rules keep us safe, but we’ve forgotten why, and also forgotten to question it. But without questioning them, these unspoken rules block us off from simply living and expressing with ease – block us off from following the flow of life. Just allowing.

Examining and unpeeling my rules has really started to change my life. The \*feeling\* of living is slowly opening up and changing for the better – it feels bigger somehow, more at ease, more relaxed. And that’s what keeps me coming back for more!  It feels good to get in there and clean out some old crap.

But, changing beliefs is hard. Very. I’ve done it enough times now (through slow, clumsy stumbling in the dark) that I’m starting to notice a pattern to it:

* ***Identify***something you want but reject or otherwise say “I can’t do that” (example: I have some old, crappy blankets from my childhood that I was going to hang up in the sliding glass door to keep the heat in. But, I found a really pretty blanket I’d love to look at for $35 dollars.  My rules block me from considering buying a blanket decoration I don’t “need”. I have lots of blocks regarding money because I didn’t have much as a kid. That’s not true anymore but I don’t ‘let’ myself enjoy it (get joy from it) because I’m still operating under the same rules).

*How you do anything is how you do everything.*

-famous quote from who-knows-where

How you do anything IS how you do everything IF you are operating on autopilot.  But once you observe, identify, challenge those thoughts, you can better differentiate circumstances – and create rules that protect you when you need it, and better serve your happiness when you DON’T (which seems to be the majority of the freakin’ time).

* ***Examine***what the block is. What do you fear? What would happen if you did that? What would it say about you? What type of person would you become? (in this example: My beliefs believe I’d become someone that always had to spend more money to be happy. I’d become a snob that is never happy with my stuff).
* ***Reflect***: is it true?

               -Yes, there is always an example of a case where it IS true. The mind loves to exaggerate to substantiate a point. It also loves grossly lumping things together that aren’t, necessarily, causally related.  I can argue I’m happy and get joy from a $10 bottle of wine. I wouldn’t want to be someone who is ‘snobby’ and needs a $50 bottle of wine to be \*equally happy\*. (note: I’m not saying or judging there to be anything wrong with this circumstance empirically… I’m saying it feels wrong for \*me\*, it is something I feel resistance to). Own that. Acknowledge it. It’s an endpoint, a point of calibration.

               -But, if I were to buy a blanket that was pretty to look at, to put up on my wall instead of staring at something old and ugly (just because the thing I have is old and ugly and does nothing visually for me) then wouldn’t I be “enjoying” my stuff \*more\*?  I’d get more JOY from my stuff because I’m allowing myself to purchase things I enjoy.  So it becomes obvious, that the very thing I ‘fear’ is the thing I’m \*actually creating\*.  I’m enjoying my stuff less than I otherwise could be – which is what I am judging snobby people FOR – not getting JOY from their stuff. Not APPRECIATING their stuff. If I bought something that lit me up and that I wanted to look at (even if I don’t “need” it by criteria and justification) then I’d be appreciating it more.

Weird, right? And I’ve found this to be too often the case.  We are trapped under rules that actually do the OPPOSITE of what we think they are doing for us.

* ***Expose***: then, once you’ve logically explored the rule, and realize it is being more broadly applied than \*what serves me\* (my enjoyment of the act of living), only then am I empowered to choose differently.  But, choosing differently is UNKNOWN. Because we haven’t allowed ourselves to act that way. Maybe ever.  It is unknown and it is scary.  So, we like to stay with what is familiar. That is where the importance of exposure therapy comes in. We have to step into that discomfort. We have to take an ACTION, that is not so big that we are TOO scared, but big enough to give us some anxiety – a little discomfort. Just the right amount, however much that is. Step into it. Even a baby step.  Expose yourself to acting contrary to the engrained (and wildly misapplied) rule that governed and restricted your behavior (and in turn your reality) for so very, very long.  Once you expose, and then discover empirically that you are still safe (and you will be, because it’s a baby step, you logically know the world is not as scary or rigid as to not allow for a baby step – it’s those exaggerations we really fear, that we really are protecting ourselves from, and the only place where it \*actually\* applies and serves us to apply the rules in the first place.) Thereafter it becomes a little easier the next time.  Your bravery is positively reinforced because you get rewarded – life opens up just a little bit, because you are not holding back the flow of it with a rule (restriction). And that feels GOOD.
* ***Rinse & repeat***. Unlocking our rules is very much like peeling an onion.  One layer at a time.

 was reading an article the other day about someone lamenting the aches and pains and fatigue of growing older to their even-older and even-more-falling-apart parent.  The 88-year-old responds, “Yeah, but the alternative is worse”.

The alternative.

I love that, because it short-circuits that crazy part of my mind that loves to say all the ways the world “should” be, or fictitiously “could” be, rather than the ways it actually is.

(Yet, if you are like me, you’ll engage in that type of “make-believe” all day, yet tell myself I have no creativity or imagination!  No, it’s not that I didn’t have creativity, but I only used it as arsenal to make me feel worse, instead of making me feel better (because \*that\*, on some level, would certainly be *irresponsible …. Right*?)  Anyway,…)

I had clinical (e.g. devastating) depression in college.  I \*know\* now that one of the most foundational building-blocks of that depression was my low self-worth and self-esteem;  my permanently low opinion of myself – of how I compare to “others” in the world. Somehow, I always come up “short” (for those of you that know me, that’s hilariously ironic, *amiright*?).  I know \*now\*, accept and admit on some level, that it was my \*measurement\* that had always been off. There was nothing “wrong” with me, or how I performed, or what I was doing or not doing.  My measurer was broken. So I really \*did\* feel terrible about myself because in the world that exists inside our own minds (which, quantum physically, **is** the only **real** world there ever really is) I really didn’t meet the bar.

And yet, despite that (profound) awareness I now possess, I feel disappointed for not being ‘better’ than I am.  I mean – it has been like TWENTY years ish. I’ve been long “recovered” from the true awfulness of “clinical depression”.  It is an awful place that I hope to never visit again.  And despite being SO much better than \*that\*, and SO grateful to feel like I do now than that… I still have far too many days where I’m just “off” and just feel like the world is awful and I am awful and everything is just … awful.  In the last couple years, I finally started making real progress in adjusting my self-image and doing things I “couldn’t” do.  Life has opened up in ways that feel \*wonderful\*, and yet, there are \*still\* days every month or week, where life just feels awful – like I can’t get the slightest pleasure from anything.

And I think, …shouldn’t I be “fixed” by now? Nobody else can possibly be \*this\* defective to have learned so much yet still be struggling with the *exact same issues* after two decades… *right*?  And somewhere my mind \*realizes\* that this is the exact same pattern as before – I’m criticizing my performance, and thinking I’m not doing something “well enough”… in this case, recovering from depression.  So, for all the freeing thoughts and beliefs that I’ve liberated from my prison … I’m still in the same pattern of reacting to myself with criticism instead of compassion when things don’t go as they “should”.  Because, of \*course\*, they “should” be better by now…

But, then, what is compassion? Realizing that, perhaps, I AM someone that is just biochemically predisposed to be miserable.  Norepinephrine, dopamine, serotonin … that’s chemistry, baby.  The chemistry of ‘feeling good’. **Maybe** all the nutrition and meditation and quantum physics in the world cannot permanently change that fact, maybe it’s not my ‘fault’ or something I’m doing wrong or too stupid to figure out.  This new world of quantum physics where I’m seeing how much my choices (from the external to my internal thoughts) really DO have REAL influences on my external reality is spectacularly awesome. It is empowering.  Yet, the **dark side** of self-help for depressives/overachievers… when you feel empowered to be capable of FIXING something, that means you can also fail at it and then it can feel like it’s your fault, if you’re not careful). But maybe that chemistry is just the parameters I was born with. My challenge.  I’m challenged with feeling darkness in this world. It could, actually, \*be harder\* for me to feel good than some other people. Is that compassion? To realize I’m not to \*blame\*, that no one is to \*blame\*, because it simply “is”.

I can choose to feel like I’m still inadequate because I’ve had a lot of ‘downs’ during the pandemic. Or, I can acknowledge how far I’ve come, that now when these low days come, I can step out of it just a little bit more – into the place of being the observer, e.g. that there is now a little bit \*of space\* between me and the experience of it.  And that space is critical and profound  – because it gives us an awareness that we are separate from it, it will pass, and that we can weather the storm. So, I’m still miserable and exhausted, but I *engage* with it less and just let it pass on through – which, is *less* exhausting.  I can be thankful that I’ve held on, and clawed myself back to a ‘healthy mindset’ time and time and time again.

But, when that mood/chemistry-cocktail is calling the shots…*uuggh, why? Why bother? It’s not even worth it, it never fixes me. I give up trying! …*

Then I hear it, “The alternative is worse”.

I \*know\* what happens if I really give up in my belief that I CAN make myself feel better than I do. I *have* influence. I *have* power.  Despite it not working as-much-as-wish-it-would, I know it \*IS\* helping, or else all the stresses of the pandemic would have surely been enough to tip me back into full-scale depression.  As it sadly has for so many.  And I can \*realize\*, with compassion to myself, that what I’m doing IS working so I will keep trying. Why, because I’m ‘fixed’ and magically ‘happy’? No, because the alternative is worse. I \*know\* what happens when I allow myself to dwell in the negative thoughts. It’s a road that leads to more misery.  I’m good, and I love my life, most days.  And maybe I \*am\* just someone predisposed to be biochemically off, so I’ve woven self-care into the very fabric of my life. Keep recharging that battery through my choices. And I’m going to keep digging myself out of that rut – keep reminding myself that how I’m seeing the world through those hormones is NOT how it actually is, and that I don’t need to engage in ‘it’ to ‘fix it’…because the inadequacies are illusions. The only thing I need to work on is fixing my mindset and fixing my focus. I need to focus on the feeling I want back, not the one that I’m in.  And yes, some days it is more exhausting than others, but I’ll do it, no matter how many times it takes, because the alternative is worse.

I’ve been focusing on other things than writing, immersing myself in embodying that I am an artist.  I’m a painter and a singer/songwriter. It took me a long while for my mind to let me ‘claim’ that, and I still struggle with it. And it is **not** about whether I’m good or not. It took me a while to realize that doesn’t actually matter as much as I thought. I acted like i had to be ‘good’ before I’d let myself start (or at least \*know\* that I could be), which is absurd since very few are innate prodigies at anything. It **is** about whether these things are a part of my life cadence. They are a regular part of my life and thus a part of me. And it feels good. And despite what my brain tells me, the fact that it feels good (and nothing else) is more than enough reason to allow it to take up some of my time.  It is about time, after all, that we treat time as precious as we claim.

Once I started acrylic painting, I couldn’t seem to stop.  The colors just lit me up in a way that … well, my engineering/computer/medical research kind of life never did. As if it came from an entirely different realm than the ordered one of accomplishment in which I resided.  That, or … I’ve just been learning too much about quantum physics and I’m just starting to think funny.  Anyway, now I’m drowning in art and I realize the energy is plugged up and I need to get it out there.  I’ve been meaning to post it online somewhere for more than a year – but, that sounded like computer work … which didn’t feel like art. So, I procrastinated.

I’d had the thought to maybe put my portfolio on Amazon, so that if I got into selling it’d already be ready.  I thought it could be fun since I already work there, it’d be ‘keeping it in the family’, in an ironic way.  But, I decided on Instagram because it just makes more sense for where I am at (and actually finally [got it loaded up](https://www.instagram.com/anastasiaguspan/)!).

Turns out I may not have been wrong in the thought though, I just didn’t realize I do MULTIPLE forms of art. Because I’m also into music, another thing that just was NOT remotely a part of my zero-creativity, zero-imagination reality. How insane is that? Me?! That had been as impossible as Santa Claus being real.  So now I’m not sure what to believe.

I am starting to accumulate songs too. Eventually, I’ll want to post them, share them, because yes, I’m proud of my lyrics, even if the rest is a work-in-progress (WIP).   That’s not why I’m doing it. It’s, finally, no longer about needing external validation to get permission to do it.   Because, deep down in my Belief Onion, I needed to know it was validated to make it a valuable investment of my time.  But that’s not what matters. I finally SEE that I was looking at the wrong thing. The wrong measure.  What matters is how I feel when I do it, **not** how I feel when it’s done … not whether it becomes “anything”.  It’s not about what might be. It’s about now.  It’s about taking the FEELING of the thing you want, regardless of any measure of perceived skill.  I still feel like I suck, but MAN am I better compared to how truly incapable I started 3 or 4 years ago! Because, of course, I had spent no time on it in my life.   Whatever you spend time on, you will, actually, improve. It is pretty much a fact proven by quantum physics. The trick to win **the Game**, however, is that it’s not about getting good enough to meet some external metric. The external metrics are actually things only as a RESULT of other people spending time on it for the love of the doing **of**it.  Or put another way, those metrics are a side effect – the result of something else, not the focus.  What it **is** about is letting it out, allowing yourself the unknowingness of doing it.

And it is not, in any way, that people that DO arts, or have arts in their life, are any “better” than people who don’t. (Though I sure believed that when I was someone who didn’t).  It’s because for some reason I ALWAYS WANTED IT. \*Something\* in me YEARNED when I saw visual art that lit me up, or the way I feel when I sang a good song from a great artist.  Something attracted me.  I’m a moth and it was my personal light.   And we follow the light (yes, Brain, I know a lot of moths die that way but don’t follow the rabbit).  Something in me wanted it and it never went away despite it being ignored for so long that it-was-no-longer-a-possibility.  THAT’S what makes it wonderful that now it is stuff that I have in my life … and doesn’t make anyone else remotely wrong who doesn’t and doesn’t care.

But if you are someone like me who felt a yearning – however much unilaterally and completely impossible – stop worrying about where it could go, stop worrying about if you ever share it with anyone, most of all, stop worrying “how it will be an epic waste of time”.  That is your mind projecting failure first and then doing the math against your eternal judgement that you don’t measure up.

Just start. Just play. Just Be. You never know where it might lead…