



Year 24 and beyond

In case you're coming to this without knowing who I am it's worth a little explaining. I have three touchpoints for review/reflection every year: 26/27 March, 25 September and 22 December / End of year. This is the March touch point reflection.

... for some reason or other, I am a sad exile. In some way or other, our land travels with me and with me too, though far, far away, live the longitudinal essences of my country.

Pablo Neruda, 1972 (Taken from Isabel Allende's *My Invented Country*)

I can't believe it's been 24 years... I know I always say the same thing but it's more so this year than in the past. For the first time since I moved to the US I'm not sure if I want to stay here or what are the next steps forward.

I've broken these notes in three areas: going back, career and moving forward.

None of these are mutually exclusive and, sometimes, you may see contradictions and you may see similarities. They exist and they are an important part of the process...

Going back

The eternal question for me is: ***If home is where the heart is then where is home?*** I've lived in the US more than half my life and longer than I lived in Chile, where I was born and grew up but...

Since the 2016 election I've questioned, for the first time, if the US is my long term home. Then I remember that the main reason why I decided to stay in '94 was that there would be no work on what I wanted to do... back then the dream was an MFA in directing and work my ass off to get somewhere and back then I didn't see a future doing that in Chile.

What about now? What do things look like now that I've taken a different career path and have moved away from arts and more into a technology and humanities world?

When I was in Santiago in '99 it was frightening. I had forgotten how crowded it is and how accustomed I've become to the life in California (and Iowa and Vermont before that). It kept reminding me of New York and how, every so often, I'd have to walk indoors to avoid the gaggles of people who were just going through their day.

I didn't get to see a lot of the people I wanted to see and that sucked.

It felt like I hadn't left San Francisco and that hurt. It hurt how much it had changed and it hurt that I had missed the change (how much of the change was in Chile itself and how much was it me who had changed is open to debate).

Some of my friends were/are insistent that I could do whatever I wanted if I chose to go back but I've never been one of those people who do whatever comes around. I think I'm in a much better position to be picky because my arsenal has widened and it may just widen further over the next year or so.

But going back to the original question: **Would I go back now to live in Chile?**

I would go back to visit. I would go back to travel both north and south outside of the areas I grew up in. I would go back to do Ironman Pucón, Florianopolis, Punta Del Este and Bariloche (Four nice 70.3 events) and base out of Santiago for both events. Yes, I would definitely do that.

But I don't think I could live there long-term anymore. The weight of decisions I made, people I turned away until it was too late and people whom I'd rather not see make it hard to live where the memories are still raw (some brand new and some more than a decade old) or where we'd gravitate to the same circles and people.

Since I let my Chilean passport expire about 10 years ago, and became a US citizen, I don't know what's my status as a Chilean citizen. If I'm not one I have to live/work there for 5 years before I can apply to become a resident and only then, after a period of time, I can apply to become a Chilean citizen (again).

I also love to travel and flying out of the US with an American passport is easier (for now) than just about any other passport in the world.

Career

As I mentioned above this would be the right time to start thinking about what it is that I want to do. Do I want to commit to Geoteaming full time and in a consistent basis or do I want to explore what's out there beyond the constant frustration of never hearing anything from recruiters after the blow sunshine up my ass telling me how well they see me fit the role they are working for.

I've become convinced that money doesn't buy happiness but it sure as hell helps you get there. So I'd be lying if I said that was not a consideration.

But it's not the main one, it may fall into the top considerations but it's not number one. I want to find a job that I can enjoy and where I can push myself and expand the professional toolset.

And if that doesn't happen I can always fall back to web development and instructional design. That has opened a lot of doors and I hope that it'll open a few long-term projects to work on... most of what I've heard about recently is what I call the "we're interested in you but you're not good enough for us" type of projects.

We'll see where things go this time with this batch of projects.

The other big question is whether I'm finally ready to go out consulting full time moving forward? Am I ready to do this full time and take the leap without a net to land in the creek without a paddle?

I think this needs to be a focal point for the year. Do something that terrifies me and do it well enough so that it stops terrifying me.

Moving forward

In July, 2016 I wrote [Slowing down and living in the present](#). I found it again in an unrelated search (I fucking want Kinfolk issue 8, damn it) and I thought I'd surface some of those thoughts and ideas to help me move forward.

Surfacing thoughts from a couple years ago as I move forward with my March touchpoint and review:

Ichi-go Ichi-e

Japanese tradition tells of ichi-go ichi-e, a concept fortified over centuries of practice that says we only have one meeting, at one time—our experiences with one another stand alone. Every encounter we have—a dinner, a shared bottle of wine, a late evening of conversation on an old red couch—will happen once, and then will never happen again. The circumstances surrounding an encounter, the people involved and their exact dispositions and history make each event unique. We may interact with the same people, within similar circumstances, but ichi-go ichi-e says that each interaction is an experience all unto itself, never to be recreated perfectly.

Ichi-go ichi-e reminds us to be mindful, but also to be present, so we may be moved by the natural combination of factors at play in any moment: people, food on the table, the weather outside. In traditional Japanese Noh theater, actors only rehearse a few times before a performance, so the authentic interactions of the performers, along with the natural combination of factors present at that moment, will move the performance. Even in theater, an art where scripted rehearsal is typically of the utmost importance, the Japanese remind us to relinquish control.

Ichi-go ichi-e holds both the purposefulness of preparation and the spontaneity of presence in perfect

equilibrium. The culture I know and live within often celebrates polarity. We are stalwarts of the extremes, either holistically spontaneous or absolutely controlled. And it is the Japanese who remind us that spontaneity and intentionality are not mutually exclusive but become more necessary within the light of the other.

Relinquishing control in my day-to-day existence does not involve a tea ceremony or improvisational acting, but the concept is relevant enough: I relinquish my internal script when I host friends in my home, relinquish my plans of going to bed early when an important conversation arises instead.

For me, *ichi-go ichi-e* looks strangely similar to working hard and also letting go. And it makes complete sense as if that's the way all hospitality should be—purposefulness mingled with whimsy.

I remember how people like Hazard sensei, Tanaka sensei and, more than anyone else, Dr. Hazard sensei and Lowe sensei always cultivated that quality of presence, of being there in the moment. How things moved from a conversation and having fun to *full-on shiai*.

More and more I realize how much I miss that quality in myself and others. I miss the “polite directness” and it has always bothered me that we can't say what we feel and can't/shouldn't expect others to do the same. Perhaps the important thing is to cultivate that quality in me and to hell with the rest of the world.

Momentary Units of Happiness

“No matter how you define success, momentary happiness should have some role in it.... happiness has also been thought of as having a larger, almost spiritual quality that goes beyond both momentary feelings and reflective thought.

Philosophers have talked about this third kind of happiness in terms of the fulfillment that comes from exerting the right kind of effort on the right kind of task (for you) or experiencing a sense of deep connection to loved ones, nature, or the divine.”

Take happiness where you can find it. The world will not be kind no matter how kind you are so enjoy the little things and realize that those little things build the bigger things that lead to happiness... however you choose to define it.

New metrics

I use metrics to measure a lot of my business goals. How are product sales going? How's the blog—who's reading, and who's visiting?

When I was going to every country in the world, I had an easy metric: the number of countries I'd visited, cross-referenced against the total number of existing countries (I'm at 193/193 now, which is... fun)

But these metrics, as appropriate as they are to these kinds of goals, aren't comprehensive for our whole lives. So if you're seeking harmony or just a different way to stay on track with all aspects of your life, maybe you need some new metrics.

Here's a new habit for me: "Every day in 2015 I will write or call one friend." The habit correlates with an easy metric: How many days did I practice this habit?

I started two weeks before the end of 2014, and so far I'm doing great. As with writing 1,000 words a day, I may miss a day once in a while, but the point is that it's a habit—if I get off track, I'll find my way back.

— [7 ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO EVALUATE YOUR LIFE EVERY DAY](#)

Defining metrics is easy, deciding what is worth becoming a habit is harder. I want to start small and set a writing and an exercise goal. The exercise goal is predicated on having money to afford Master Swimming, otherwise it's possible but harder as I don't know if I have the discipline or inclination to start from as basic a scratch as I would be :| .

- I will write 2 blog posts a week (at least 1000 words combined)
- I will swim twice a week (ideally with the Mountain View Master team)

Things I don't know

I've created intentions and goals around this theme but the truth is, I don't know how my theme for this year will unfold.

Life is uncertain.

Because we're human we try to create stability, certainty, and predictability.

When we construct our lives around the expectation of certainty we slowly lock ourselves in – *this is who I am, this is what I believe, this is what I want, this is my goal, this is my future.*

If we don't create space for the possibility of evolution in our declarations and desires we trap ourselves in a life that feels like a prison.

In order to be free we must infuse our declarations and desires with soulful flexibility.

Who you are in the present is different than who you were in the past.

Who you will be in the future is different than who you are in the present.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't set goals, just be sure to add a dash of soul to your plan by creating space for new insights, deeper wisdom, and shifting desires.

Be willing to change course when needed.

There is freedom in uncertainty.
Embrace the unknown.

Declaring a lack of knowing can be a profound act of liberation. It opens us up to exploration, adventure, and possibility thinking. It creates space for magic and miracles.

...

Here's what I do know: when I declare *I don't know* I feel myself light up with curiosity and excitement.

What declaration of *I don't know* are you willing to make in order to add more liberation and love into your life?

From: [my theme for now + things I don't know](#)

I picked this as one of this year's themes because not knowing and not being in control terrifies me.

The only constant in life is change

And I still haven't found what I'm looking for

Links

- <https://chrisguillebeau.com/how-to-write-300000-words-in-1-year/>
- <https://chrisguillebeau.com/units-of-momentary-happiness/>
- <https://chrisguillebeau.com/7-alternative-ways-to-evaluate-your-life-every-day/>
- <https://gemmastone.org/my-theme-for-2015-things-i-dont-know/>
- <https://gemmastone.org/you-design-your-life-every-time-you-make-a-decision/>
- <https://gemmastone.org/how-to-live-a-life-you-love/>

Credits

- [TimOve](#)