



2019 has been a bruising year both emotionally and spiritually. I'm afraid of what's gonna happen and how bad it will affect me and how much will I have to change my life as a result.

Find it supremely ironic that the album that defines 2019 for me is the American Idiot Broadway Cast soundtrack. Even more so than the band's album, it reflects me, thoughts, warts and all.

Uncertainty used to terrify me, then it would make me uncomfortable, then we kinda made a deal and I learned to deal with it because it was something I could control... But now it's not something I can easily control, I have no control over the politics and what they will do to the individual mandate and how will that affect people with pre-existing conditions and how that will affect the kinds of jobs I get and how will that affect everything else down the line.

I'm reminded of this song I heard on my way to Amsterdam

Dad (TAKE 1)

I had originally written this for a Facebook post. I later changed my mind about publishing it there.

It was 17 years ago today where I heard that you'd passed. I've been thinking about you a lot and have come to understand you more and more, over the years.

The older I get the more I reach out for the phone or start writing an email to ask you something or share something that happened. But then I remember that the number rings somewhere else and that you never even had an email address.

I know what I said and I don't know if I ever managed to say how sorry I was and how much I wish I hadn't shut you down because of anger.

The older I get the more I miss you and the more I want to go back, even if it's for a visit. I know I won't get to see you but it's time to at least pay my respects. Now I just need to plan the trip.

Dad (TAKE 2)

This was the replacement for the previous post. I wasn't comfortable publishing this to Facebook either.

Dad

You would have been 74 this year... instead, I get to reflect every year on how much I miss him and, on his passing, how much we've become alike whether I want to accept it or not... at least my hair is not completely white at 45 like yours was at 40 :)

I remember those little images that always stay with you. They make you smile or they make you frown and they make you wonder if the places where they happened still exist or not.

There is an ingrained fear of change in me. I remember how strongly I felt it in 2000 when I was last in Santiago and can only imagine how much worse will it be the next time I go back... it feels like it'll be as a first-time-visitor and I don't know if I want to deal with it. Without you there Santiago already feels like an alien planet, even more than it did last time.

Always thinking about you.

Fear of Change

There is an ingrained fear of change in me. I've lost many things and many people because of it

I remember how strongly I felt it in 2000 when I was last in Santiago and can only imagine how much worse will it be the next time I go back... it feels like it'll be as a first-time-visitor and I don't know if I want to deal with it. At least in Europe or Asia, I've always understood that was the case and I adjusted my expectations accordingly.

2020 and beyond

There's also the big question of whether I should commit and finish the unfinished shit I have left and how much of it is worth the fight and the energy involved.

In a way I've come to realize that transitions and validations never end because you're never the same person, at least I hope I've continued to evolve and change for the better.

So let's see what are the transitions and validations that I look forward in 2020.

Work. Am I getting too old to keep the uncompromising position that my dad had before he passed away and take the things I want instead of the things I should?

Part of me wants to get a long-term project to sink my teeth in and then travel to Chile, to Spain (would love to rent an apartment in Donostia for a few months), London (and a trip to Warhammer World, Scotland or Ireland) or maybe become an Asian ex-pat and travel the region... but I have to get something that would allow me to do that and that front sucks with disappointment after disappointment.

The other part wants to stick with something for a few years before taking the nomad path and traveling around.

SPECIFIC GOAL: I want to run through January and possibly February doing the recent college grad application frenzy. The goal will be at least 20 applications a week for a technical writer, instructional designer, and trainer.

Family and friends. I'm starting to learn who they are and who they are not. I'm surprisingly at peace with the choices I've made in this area but I need to make sure I validate them and that I'm happy with whatever comes out of the validation.

Of course, some of the validation, one way or another, can only happen on-site so its contingent to travel and whether I want to put myself through it... I have to commit to it one way or another, otherwise, it will continue to eat me for as long as I let it.

Relationships.

I'm perfectly OK being single right now. I'm ok with not actively searching for a partner/mate as I prepare for what 2020 will bring.

There's too much pain still present from past relationships to be comfortable bringing someone else into the picture.

And there's too much uncertainty in my future for me to want to share it. In an ideal world I would find someone who enjoys traveling and being wild and crazy... and who's not married to the idea of a wedding (big religious affair) or children.

You want to think that you learned from past relationships yet you are afraid of what's going to happen in the future, your heart becomes brittle and trust becomes harder to give.

Home. This is an interesting one and has two parts. The first one is whether I'd like to move back to live in Chile, where I haven't lived for the past 25 years and where I've visited only once since I left.

A pair of related questions is who and what do I know there. My dad passed away in 2002, my friends and I have grown in completely separate directions (to the point of thinking I don't know them) and when I was there 20 years ago I didn't recognize the country or the few people I met with at the time (6 years after I had left).

I've also been reminded me of a movie theater that was special to me and that, sadly, no longer exists...

When I was younger my school used to take the 4th-grade class (all 170/180 of us) to watch a movie as an end-of-year activity and that could be considered as my first unofficial date. They would block the first 6 rows so we wouldn't get eye strain and then we would enjoy the movie... when it was our turn we did Raiders Of The Lost Ark. I remember my friend and me sneaking into the center of the third row and watching the movie holding hands... which is a lot for a fourth-grader. This was the same theater where I took her on an official date later in the summer (yeah, yeah, laugh all you want).

When I asked if the theater still existed and I found out it didn't I felt unusually sad. How many other things from childhood and adolescence have changed? How many of those things that still exist would I recognize from memory alone if people didn't tell me what they were?

Back on track...

But if Chile is not home then where is it? With all the bullshit going on with the politics around the world, it's hard to want to stay in a specific place for any length of time... would much rather be the short-term visitor than the long-term guest.

Chile is a special case but it's still one of those places where, unless I decided to do the 4 IM 70.3 races in South America (Pucón, Chile; Bariloche, Argentina; Punta Del Este, Uruguay; Florianopolis, Brazil), I wouldn't want to stay long-term or permanently.

After Brexit, London loses a lot of its appeal as a travel hub in Europe... still worth a visit just for the hell of traveling around London (with a trip to Warhammer World) and to Scotland and possibly Ireland but beyond that, it's not as attractive as it once was.

Time of your life

Whatever you plan on doing, do it now and don't hesitate. If you have to compromise think about the long term implications of your compromise, not just the right now.

Be thankful and take pride on what you've accomplished and take the time to savor the little moments but don't let that past dictate your present or your future.

But on the other hand, don't shy away from fighting for what you believe in. Whatever shape it takes if you're passionate about something don't let it go and pursue it for all it's worth.