

## April 22, 2024 - Ketadmt

- Overall feeling was dark. Scabby. Spidery. Obfuscating. Smothered. Red. Brown. Mud. That's the way it all felt.
- However, despite all this, I was able to smile. That environment ^ still allows for humor. It might even like humor itself. Nothing is all bad even in that environment.
- Even in that environment, I have my breath with tethers me to safety. I know I'm safe even in that environment.
- That environment, even though it was pervasive, can still be something you just glance at. You don't need to give it your full attention. EVEN though its pervasive, you can still disregard it. You can disregard anything.

## April 26, 2024 - Lodovica

1. Send ketamine to lodovica
2. "From diamonds, nothing is born. From manure, flowers are born." → Italian quote from song
  - When I think about building a company, the worst aspect I think about is the freezing sensation
  - When I think of the freezing sensation, the thing I think it says about me is "I'm not good enough"
  - My proprioceptive needs are more short bursts of intensity
  - Hopelessness feels so wrapped up with sad. Here's the cycle:
    - I see the mountain of problem
    - It makes me sad
    - I compare myself to others
    - It makes me sad, hopeless leaks in
    - I think I push myself closer to sad because I would rather feel that than hopeless. My sadness feels self imposed. I think I also push myself to sad because I set myself up to expect failure.
  - My big reveal is just give myself permission to stay with the thing right now

# April 29, 2024 - Ketamine

- I will NOT fail
- I AM good enough
- I have DONE this before
- Reading my worries from just 3 MONTHS AGO is making me laugh. They were either completely misplaced or I handled them. My current worries are no different. I got this.
- I am not selling a product. I am providing a much needed service.

# May 2, 2024 - Lodovica

1. I think it's a two step thing:
  1. Step 1: I'm scared that things won't work out
  2. Step 2: My perfectionism
2. EMDR might help me lower my perfectionist side. I have a lower satisfaction of learning while going through life because of my perfectionism telling me it's not going to matter in the end.
3. I was in all the advanced groups growing up in school. This pressure to perform that I have can be connected to my educational history. I've always been listed as a gifted child. This is true because:
  1. Academia is such a huge part of my life
  2. Elementary to high school to college it was the same
  3. My identity was academia
4. I have to continue to be the best like I was in academia. But when does this keeping up with the Jones's stop? As soon as I've reached a standard, the goal post moves up immediately.
5. **I need to reflect on the accomplishments I've made as I make them.**
6. Unless I'm chasing something, I'm uncomfortable and I feel unsafe. My measure of safety is needing to prove. I need to be pursuing something more is my realm of safety. There's something that feels safe in the perfectionist voice.
7. When I'm overwhelmed, I make myself feel sad so I don't feel overwhelmed
8. When I'm sad, I make myself feel anxious so I don't feel sad
9. How do we break this cycle? There's something that needs to be processed?

# May 10, 2024 - Lodovica

1. The way in which I talk about the company affects the company. Think of it as a marketing

tool. This will help me be able to talk about the company in terms of how it is working and how it is growing. The ways in which we think about things relates to the ways in which we think about them. If I only think about company's problems then the company is a problem to me.

2. Treat business as if it was child and listening to me talk about my business. Don't keep talking shit on it. Treat it as if it were person sensitive to criticism.
3. It's putting the weight on what you have not done yet. It's not self-validating to focus on everything that's wrong. "What I've done is not enough because look at all the things I have not done yet". This is a trap.
4. Practicing appreciating what we've already done is the seed for growth.
5. **As a mental exercise, whenever somebody asks me how company is going, always answer what we've accomplished so far.**
6. Advocating for the company is way harder than advocating for myself. I have a clear implementation plan for how exactly I can provide value myself. I don't have a clear plan for the company.
7. I'm missing this piece on advocating for the company. It's been hard for the company because there's more ambiguity here. But there are ways to reduce this ambiguity. I have mapped out these ways - but I've been kicking the can on doing these assessments. All this is growth, it's not just doing the assessments that are growth.
8. I HAVE BEEN GROWING. Finding the initial awareness in the first place is growth. As soon as we know notice something new, it can be overwhelming, because we're opening up a whole new landscape of new things we need to learn.
9. If anything new shows up, let's not focus on all the new things and overwhelm that brings. The fact that I'm noticing is growth. I'm already well in the process...it's not a mountain ahead of me. We can also appreciate the fact that we've noticed a completely new part of me to work on. I can tie this to my value of curiosity.
10. I've actually already done a bunch of advocacy. I'm just getting better at this. Some advocacy is already working because I have gotten some momentum here.
11. Is it possible to see advocacy as a continually and ongoing growth? It takes time to keep refining. It will be a lifelong process and evolution.
12. I've done advocacy and it's lead somewhere. What can I keep doing to improve on advocacy.

## May 13, 2024 - Ketamine

1. With growth comes overwhelm
2. Just noticing is growth

# May 16, 2024 - Lodovica

1. "I can accept this" is easier than "i can deal with this" or "i can do this". I need to accept what is before I can gracefully deal with the thing. I can still deal with it, but it won't be comfortable to do so.
2. I can still reject reality with the "i can deal with this" mindset only. That rejection is one of the things that causes suffering.
3. Rather than dealing with it then accepting it, need to accept it then deal w/ it.
4. Accepting goes hand in hand with curiosity. But it might be its own value **acceptance**.
5. Without acceptance, we can never be curious.
6. Acceptance leads into curiosity leads into growth = peaceful growth
7. Non-acceptance leads to non-curiosity, but we can still grow = suffering growth
8. **I'm so great at acceptance in other parts of my life. But why have I put the job in a different category that is harder to accept. What allows me to accept everything else other than job.**
  1. **Where does my mind go when I think of jobs**
  2. It's tied to my sense of self worth and identity
  3. **Remember, I'm the most free I've ever been! If I tie success to freedom, that's wrong.**
9. I am easy going in other categories. I can accept things other people can't. That's a transferrable skill. I know what it feels like to accept. How can I move it?
- 10.

# May 17, 2024 - Ketamine

1. I already DO have the entrepreneurial mindset. I have weathered and pushed through SO much. Things that would have absolutely destroyed others. I've PERSISTED.
2. Even if I don't accept, know that I will always persist.
3. My goal is to accept to make the process more enjoyable, but yeah.
4. The pressures we weather and how we grow from them are the things that define us. Think about how different cultures are. I think a large part of the difference can be directly attributed to the challenges each group faced and emerged from.
5. I have made 10M worth of value within 1 year. This is a direct signal to the market. And if we sell NOW I get 5.2M for 1 year of work. The value I've been producing hasn't been going into our bank account - but it has been going to the company. We have 5.2M.

# May 30, 2024 - Ketamine

1. Rather than "drop it" i should be saying "accept it"
2. "Accept it" is my new mantra to live by

## May Health Notes, 2024

For entrepreneurship, you gotta find what you need to do, then you gotta learn how to do it, then you gotta do it. This might be a direct skill you do or you get someone else to do.

Entrepreneurship you gotta do all 3 in equal measure whereas a typical job might lean heavier to the latter.

These are all in disparate areas which means there's no overlap in repeatability. Whereas in a normal job there's a huge amount of repeatability.

However, the repeatable skill I'm learning is how to complete steps 1 and 2 in general. I'm really growing on those two things.

You need to learn how to do every role in a company in order to be a great entrepreneur. Tech entrepreneurs have a competitive advantage and disadvantage. The advantage is they can most often learn enough to be just ok in those roles (it's a lot harder the other way around). The disadvantage is that those other roles are the roles that will make you money at the end of the day.

## June Health Notes, 2024

I'm rambly because I'm so in the weeds and excited for everything we're doing so I just got off on what I want to talk about, not necessarily what the listener wants to hear. BUT a great storyteller closes the gap between those two. They get the listener to WANT what the person has to say.

It's correct to say that I didn't feel at home in academia or previous roles. Whenever we engage in something, there's the how we think about the thing and then the experience of actually doing that thing. For instance, I liked the idea of becoming a physicist, so it drove me to do it. I respected physicists, and everything about it. And at times that made me think: "god why can't I just like the thing I'm doing right now. I WANT to

I'm under no presumption that any specific person will give me money. Right now I treat everybody as somebody I can learn from.

There is ALWAYS something to be learned about somebody if you are curious. Curiousness is peeking behind the hood, which is something YOU do, not they do. If you can be curious about something then you can learn from it.

I think rather than growth as a value, learning is a better phrasing. Curiosity, learning, freedom.

You need to first peak under the hood in order to learn.

Also, in order to be curious, we need to foster acceptance. If we dont accept, our limbic system takes over. And if our limbic system takes over, there is no room for curiosity.

Nonacceptance = identifying yourself with that thing.

In my vocabulary, learning = growth, but the word learning feels more true to me. Also acceptance = mindfulness to me.

Acceptance = mindfulness --> curiosity = freedom --> learning = growth

Physical freedom is superficial. Because if I were on a boat, I'd only feel free because I'd be curious about my environment. If I can be curious about everything, then I'm truly free. Freedom is not situation dependent or environment dependent - those are external things. True freedom is internal.

So 3 values, acceptance, curiosity, learning which hit so hard for me.

Curiosity, honesty, authenticity, health, play, learning --> Laurens

Growth, learning

Play, curiosity

Honesty and health, authenticity

It's correct to say that I didn't feel at home in academia or previous roles. Whenever we engage in something, there's the how we think about the thing and then the experience of actually doing that thing. For instance, I liked the idea of becoming a physicist, so it drove me to do it. I respected physicists, and everything about it. And at times that made me think: "god why can't I just like the thing I'm doing right now. I WANT to like it because I like the idea of liking it, but I just can't like it". That creates tension and pressure in the person.

I liked the idea of Physics, but yeah I tension.

I liked the idea of BCG, but yeah had that same tension.

I liked the idea of Gemini, but yeah had that same tension.

I don't like the idea of entrepreneurship, yet I do love it. And because of that there is no tension. My expectations of entrepreneurship don't boil over into my experience of it.

I don't want to work with people that are a right fit for the role. I want to work with the absolute highest performers possible.

I got lucky with Anna. I could've done a lot worse.

I am worthy of this life. The thing I think I can do deep down, I can do. The thing I know I can do deep down, I can do.

I am so grateful to have found entrepreneurship. It was deep down, I didn't even know it. I am living up to my full expectation of myself on a daily basis. When the fuck did I ever feel like that in a normal job?

I'm so grateful for ketamine and weed. Ketamine lowers the barriers and weed helpse cross them.

You can try matras in a shitload of ways. Singing, typing, vocalizing, imagining, etc...

Why not assume i'm going to be successful rather than fail.

June 16, 2024 - Ketamine

1. My muscles make me happy and able to get into the “so what” mindset. Just look at those muscles.
  2. Before I do my bad behavior, I now need to do something good
  3. Link bad behavior with something good

4. Right now, it's all just bad behavior

I need to stop doing shit just for the sake of doing shit.

We're gonna get better and better at living with age. All your self learned lessons are cyclic - you'll forget them, you'll relearn them and get a bit better, then you'll forget them again, then you'll get a bit better again. Our mind cannot keep all these at the focus all the time, so we focus on just a little subset. And as you get older then relearnings become more and more ingrained into your brain. Think about cyclic learning in grad school.

Life is a PhD of life.

By doing life you get a PhD in life. Life = living up to your ideal self. There is a north star for all of us. Our journey towards that star is the PhD because you have to continually figure out how do I get there? Let's learn sooner so that we can enjoy life longer.

If I document my experiences here into some format then that'll really help me learn.

Situation, how did I emotionally respond initially, did I come up with any insight, how did we leave that emotion

This idea ties in nicely with my newtonian box idea thing.

There's really no way we won't be successful

## June 20, 2024 - Lodovica

1. I've been sad this last week, without really having something specific to point to
2. Go back to May 2 loop
3. I keep needing to relearn things, which is a slow process. I want to speed this up. [I'm making a spreadsheet of iterative learning.](#)
4. I feel sad, then I don't accept that, then I feel more sad because I'm not living my value of acceptance
5. Worst part is the: physical feelings
6. The cognition that I have about this is: "I'm not in control"
7. Acceptance is hard for me sometimes because I have this fear that by leaning into it, it'll make the emotions more challenging.

8. With sadness and overwhelm specifically, I have a much more challenging time in accepting it. My first response is avoid, stay away & resist. What would allow me to accept this sadness and overwhelm?
9. I use thoughts as a distraction from feeling. I'll ruminate in order to avoid.

## June 24, 2024 - Ketamine

- I think entrepreneurs front as high performers. I think there's some truth to that, but by in large, they're just a smattering of people. There's going to be some distribution of low performers, mid performers, and high performers within that community.
- I think the fronting makes people inauthentic. So I think it's refreshing for other entrepreneurs when they meet me who's like "this guy is legit, he's authentic" I think some of them might envy my approach because they'll say "this is a natural born entrepreneur."
- Again I think this goes back to a lot of people liking the idea of entrepreneurship more than the doing of it.
- **I think that authenticity specifically is the thing that makes great people gravitate towards me.**
- I love the challenge of entrepreneurship. That's actually the thing that excites me most. And because of that, I can be curious about the challenges and have fun with them and learn from them.
- It didn't use to be that way. In fact challenges would crush (and they still do often). But as an entrepreneur (especially a first time entrepreneur) dealing with big challenges everyday is hard. **But time and time again, after they kept coming, I kept getting through them. And noticing that I emerged better on the other side. I have a much stronger correlation now to when I face a challenge, I look forward to it specifically because I know the outcome will be positive. It helps make me see the whole thing in a different light.** It doesn't change the nature of the situation, but it does change how I think about the situation.

## June 28, 2024 - Lodovica

1. Not accepting sadness can lead to dissociation of life. It's not the sadness itself. And it's the dissociation that conflicts with my values, not the sadness itself.
2. The dissociation is when you stop living.
3. If we don't allow any part of us, we block our existence.
4. Cognitive diffusion & "just accept it" are easier for me to practice with some emotions rather than others. Sadness and overwhelm is harder for me to use the practices with. I need to

- use self-compassion for these because we need to tread more lightly around them.
5. To help me accept the sadness and every part of me, envision a buddhist monk that helps me practice self-compassion. They help me release my sadness.

## July 9, 2024 - Lauren notes

- "Hey just reminding you about your wanting to eat healthier" --> rather than "are you sure" which seems judgemental
- Living: didn't check in w/ me
- Sadness

## July 14, 2024 - Ketamine

- When a big new event comes in, it knocks you on your ass. Any big event for any person knocks them on their ass. What this is changes person to person - but be assured that everybody gets knocked down whatever they may be.
- By practicing getting knocked down and up again, that makes you all the stronger when something else tries to push you down. It might still push you down, but not as hard, and not as long. Eventually, it'll push you and you'll just stand there. Eventually eventually, you'll push back.
- Getting knocked down is good. It's like working out.
- The trick with overwhelm and ruminations is to not not think about the thing. It's really to change our perception of that thing. For instance, I keep getting overwhelmed when I think about money and the time pressure I feel for the company. Rather than trying to stop that thought, which I currently couple to overwhelm, try to couple it with something that is closer to my value set. When I'm overwhelmed, I'm not able to live any my values of acceptance, curiosity, learning.
  - **Fact:** I currently don't have much money
    - **Current story:** I'm not going to be able to keep up with bills, and I have no idea what will happen after that
    - **New story:** Even if I don't keep up with bills, it's not going to be forever. I have a supportive partner. I have a house. I have food. I have a gym. I have everything I could ever want.
  - **Fact:** the company doesn't have much money
    - **Current story:** We're going to get shut down because we can pay our AWS and other vendor bills

- **New story:** I've fostered great relationships with all of our vendors, and I'm sure they be willing to be lenient for a bit. The company will go on regardless of anything that happens in the next month or two. Our support network is too great.
- **Fact:** no investor has sent money
  - **Current story:** and we're not going to get money before I have to start facing the above fears
  - **New story:** we'll get money whenever it comes in, and we'll deal with other issues in their own right. This is its own issue irrespective of everything else. And there is an easy fix to this - do fucking outreach.
- **Fact:** jeremy hasn't gotten back
  - **Current story:** and he's never going to get back to me. and he's not on board anymore. did i do something wrong?
  - **New story:** what if he's traveling? what if he's digesting? what if he just forgot to reply? what if he doesn't have cell service or his phone is off? And if he is not on board, there will eventually be someone to replace him. Regardless of whether he's on board or not, I still have to do a shitload of outreach.
- We're not dependent on circumstance to feel safe. We create safety through ourselves internally. Why can't right here, right now be safe? Why is safety just up ahead?
- To foster safety, think of deerpark

## July 23, 2024 - Lodovica

1. Been overwhelmed/sad for past 2-3 weeks. Came with a certain event we can talk about.
2. Been getting through it, still feeling dissociated because of it
3. Noticing that I'll hold my breath throughout the day
4. Disappointment, discouragement, some resentment → all emotions from the memo launch not going the way I had hoped
5. Claude always helps to bring out the growth, the learning, the opportunities. Whereas I come to him w/ failure.
6. **Revise expectation:** Accept the fact that money uncertainty is part of the job & finding ways to tolerate this
7. Entrepreneurship is my ideal job. I need to learn to tolerate money uncertainty because it's part of being an entrepreneur. But I like the rest of being an entrepreneur.
8. What emotions am I trying to avoid when I think about this part of my job? It's the fear that this isn't going to work out → i'm trying to avoid disappointment, trying to avoid failure. I

have this notion that “it needs to work out, I’m in too deep.” It feels like cage - it kills space for creativity.

9. There’s a lot of avoidance in what I’m doing because of the above
10. Acceptance, curiosity (=freedom), learning (=growth)
11. The piece that makes me sad is not living up to my values
12. Not achieving the expected outcome = sense of failure to me. So to reduce sense of failure, let’s modify our expected outcome. When they are not met, we usually don’t revise our expectations - we typically take that as a point of our value. We don’t question our expectations. I should tell myself - **let’s revisit our expectations? Were they right, wrong? Do we need to revise?**
13. Part of the difficulty of my sadness is that I always try to point to why: “why am I feeling this way.”

Lauren notes

- I like to play with myself and dress up - i feel weird doing that when you’re around.
- Passive aggressive: not answering questions directly
- I would’ve said that is complete falsehood esp when you’re in luteal. There is even more interpretation that I need to do.
- A strategy that I’ve been using is I sit with something until I’m out of my extreme emotional state so that I can understand and talk about it better.
- I don’t appreciate scoffing. To me, it’s extremely passive aggressive. There is a time and place to bring up concerns, issues, worries...the time to do that is not right now with a scoff.
- I can’t stretch my empathy to accommodate absolutely whatever. I still will not accommodate acting out. Acting out is still doing things like when you’re in the heat of the moment trying to get into a discussion - which I always try to refrain from doing. I’m typically not going to engage when you’re acting out. I’ve told you this time and time again. I still don’t know if you understand that distinction.

## Aug 5, 2024 - Ketamine

1. I’m still very much in the game
2. This is exactly what it’s going to be like navigating the company. A game. All my partners are trying to fit the pieces on their side too. They need to mitigate risk etc...
3. For every communication I need to make it clear that I am the piece that will complete the puzzle. And nothing less.
4. The game is fun. It’s all about people strategy, not company strategy.
5. This game practice is good for when I start doing b2b partnerships.

- 6. It makes sense that Jeremy is playing the game. He's good at it.
- 7. THIS IS A GAME. Think of it in terms of game theoretic steps
- 8. One of the main hesitations is that I'm lazy. Game theory is all these intense steps.
- 9. I need to balance the above with the following: But you know what...game theory is micro planning. I should just set a vision and go for it.
- I felt what it feels like to be ok with overwhelm and work with it. It felt pretty similar to how working with anxiety feels. It's still there, but I can ignore it just a bit and get to my stuff.

## Aug 9, 2024 - Lodovica

- 1. The fear of failure is the thing that leads to overwhelm, not really feeling like a failure.
- 2. Fear of failure → overwhelm
- 3. Judging my fear of failure → sadness
- 4. The sadness comes from not living up to my values of acceptance, curiosity, and learning
- 5. The current experience of finding funding is the worst part
  - 1. The specific thing that disturbs me the most is the ambiguity
- 6. What I think this ambiguity says about is, I think
  - 1. I cannot get what I want
- 7. The emotions that come up when I think about this are hopelessness, defeated, sad
- 8. When I'm overwhelmed, I tend to nap. And I feel guilty about that for a few reasons
  - 1. I'm avoiding things which conflicts with my values
  - 2. I "shouldn't" be doing that

## Aug 2024 - Mental Health Notes

- Don't confuse excitement w/ anxiety

## Aug 16, 2024 - Lodovica

- There's two ways of saying "so what" and accepting something
  - Way 1: Say "so what" in a lighthearted way
  - Way 2: Resign self, which feels not great. It feels defeating
- I have a tendency to operate in 2nd method
- From there, I have a tendency to kick into productivity drive in order to avoid discomfort

- Way 2 comes accompanied with overwhelm and defeat. Defeat is a big feeling for me. Half of my negative cognition is overwhelm, half of it is defeat.
- If I can do way 1, I can push myself from anxiety to excitement. When I'm able to turn anxiety into excitement, it feels energizing. I have a tendency to associate the tension in my body with anxiety.
- I have a lot of different parts that come into play here. The tension and fighting is part of the thing that tires me. To help with this, try to be curious about each the parts as they present. Really get into the “so what” mentality.

## Aug 19, 2024 - LustLab Reflection

### Negotiation

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- Gotta even walk away from these big guys. At the end of the day I don't fucking care. Both businesses are going to flourish. Whether we do so together or not is nonconsequential. Looks like now is not the right timing, so that's that.
- I'm not of the mindset that "if you don't have my thing, you will fail." It stokes fear. I think they have very smart people on their side, so whatever happens, they'll be able to weather it. Will the weather be stronger because they chose not to partner with me - absolutely. 100%.
- To me it's not zero or 1. It's somewhere in between then it normalizes.
- This is going to be SO powerful in negotiations and deal making, because I am so willing to walk away with positive spirits. In a negotiation, I think people are terrified of it not working out, so walking away is much harder to do. They will perceive this about me, which will make them want to do a deal with me.
- If you're truly on board with me, you gotta get on board soon
- I prioritize vision aligned partners over larger partners. And that's because with a vision aligned partner, we will overtake the big people. We will be disrupting the space and that requires vision buy in to accomplish that.
- We need to be laser focused with our first few partnerships hence the exclusivity in our side. On their side it's also a win because they're onboarding tech nobody else has.
- I don't need all the partners or even the largest partner. I need the most aligned partner because we will disrupt
- Me: lets do a deal Other person: what are you thinking? What kind of deal? Me: At the end of the day, I just want to make YOU money

## General

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- A good way to find out what new roles we need, I can ask myself "what can't I push along anymore.". For instance right now it's sales, which means I really need to get somebody on board for that.
- Ethical creation corresponds to Apollo.
- Ethical consumption corresponds to ares, Athena. Which is interesting because the product the consumer actually consumes is something they made themselves. Which means how do we even approach quality control. We approach it by putting guardrails on our systems. There's going to be markets just for this qc'ing process.

## Authenticity & Mental Health

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- I'm getting confused and overwhelmed about what decision to make. In order to navigate that, I can map everything out, but that's a broad search. To narrow the decision, just ask my authentic self what he would do. Let's bring out authentic Alex to make this decision.
- I have a lot of very high emotion days. The ketamine helps me naviage those day to day more better. And because of that, that in and of itself is impacting the glutamate. My brain is learning that even with "big events" there doesn't have to be "big emotions"
- Whenever I need to make a hard decision in general - hire someone, fire someone, make a partnership, negotiate,,....anything at all, just ask the authentic Alex what he would do
- I'm so tied to lustlab because of how identified I've become with it. I need to detach that identification. I need to be identified with building a business in general, not a specific one. That specific one will 100% change, it will fail, it will succeed - by tying my identity to that, then not only do my emotions throughout the day follow my own, they also follow that of this perceived company entity. I need to be identified to the process by which we build companies - so I need to be curious about that. At each step of the way, I should ask what are the general options here at each step of the way.
- That amount of learning takes time though and as first time founder, there's a lot of pressure to perform. That's why first time foundering is so hard. The crazy thing is, I still kind of like it. Imagine how much nicer it will be when I actually know this shit and I can enjoy the learning process altogether and to actually be curious at each step.
- My authentic self is curious, there's no fear. So when I have fear, I'm not my authentic self. When I am overwhelmed, I am not my authentic self.

## Teaming

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I need to have chats with my team as a whole and individually to know what they need in order

to not have me in the picture. This is how I make them take ownership. Their job will be to design and implement the B2B feature.

Ask them how they think they're going to go about running ownership.

## Aug 23, 2024 - Lodovica

1. Dealing w/ rampager/productivity mode:
  1. **Rework our view of the event:** it actually isn't urgent
  2. **Rework our response to the event:** How can we respond to urgency in a non-urgent approach
2. Think about the triggers that get me to this state. Because this state consumes me. It is a trauma response & I'm trapped. But that's where I can bring my awareness - I can bring my cognitive diffusion here. **I can use a mantra for a trauma response like:**
  1. **“So what”**
  2. **“This is my trauma response”**
3. I feel unsafe in pausing
4. The worst thing about rampager/productivity is the time pressure part. The negative cognition is here that I'm not safe.
5. I feel angst in this mode, and I'm so jittery because when I pause I'm not safe.
6. Maybe a better name for this mode is “worried” mode
7. This part has a really strong grip on me. We need to explore why this is and why it's not willing to give me a break. It has really good intentions but that comes with a cost.

## Aug 25, 2024 - Notes

I don't think I've been fully authentic recently. I just had a little peak through. It's been gone due to my overwhelm. My authentic self has that curiosity. A constant state of overwhelm boots that out. Things like sex and candy provide a temporary mask. The permanent mask comes from me. I don't feel safe a lot of the time is what it is.

"Why can't I be safe right now?"

1. It feels like I'm not deserving of any wins, nor really anything throughout the day. No happiness throughout the day.
2. I still do a shitload to avoid emotions. Especially to avoid the fear and ambiguity of the startup:

1. food
2. weed
3. masturbation
4. ketamine
  
3. To help remedy this, I need to slow down and sit with myself.
4. I've started having physical reaction to when ruminations come in. I shake my head.
5. Already moved the goalpost to the next thing for the biz.

The ambiguity is the challenging thing. That's the thing that causes me fear, which then prompts me to ruminate and go into survival mode. **To handle the ambiguity: so what, we will absolutely figure it out - the fact I don't have it figured out right now doesn't mean anything, that's an opportunity to improve the company which increases the likelihood of success.**

**Let's try to reframe ambiguity as opportunity.**

It's really hard to practice cognitive diffusion on something I avoid. For instance avoidance of overwhelm. So rather than focusing on the thing itself, I can focus on the behaviors I know go hand in hand with that thing. So the common things I typically do in order to deal with overwhelm. Like shake excessively, pick my nails, get too identified with my thoughts. The avoidance tactic here IS to become to ingrained in my thoughts.

I'm so chill about a lot of other things because I AM able to practice cognitive diffusion. So the key to unlocking this is to keep practicing cognitive diffusion.

## Aug 30, 2024 - Lodovica

1. I've been practicing awareness recently. And by bringing awareness, it gives me the ability to act differently and think about things differently. I'm not a pure robot acting anymore.
2. Being able to step back when I'm in the trauma response is the thing I need to work on.
3. There is a conflict in values in playing the game of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs lies, which I'm not super comfortable doing.
4. I can marry the "lieing" with my authenticity by believing in myself. And the self-compassion.
  1. Conviction: I believe in my services, my product, and my team
  2. Right now → I'm relying on external validation. I need to rely on internal validation → i.e. me knowing if it's good enough for me now.
  3. Right now, I'm relying on others to evaluate the product and me & not the other way around. As long as they approve of it, then I'm good.

4. I'm in a vulnerable position now, which is easier to fall into the trap of external validation. It's easier for me to be looking for that.
  5. I need to keep looking for the people I see.
5. For the tech, we differentiate on:
    - quality (give comparison), cost (give KPI), speed (give KPI)
- For our positioning, we differentiate in b2b
- For our offering, we differentiate in features that are first to market. --> type whatever you want experience --> photorealistic replicas w/ a single reference photo --> filter tech
6. I started out with authenticity, then tried to move out to more salesy, but I'm trying to get back to my home of doing things.
  7. This is soul searching, it's hard. I'm trying to find my identity as an entrepreneur. Realize that this is a super complex thing. I'm trying to reconcile skills with values. The diversity of skills you need to pick up as an entrepreneur necessitates probably trying to learn things that might be at odds with your current value set.
  8. I feel like I don't deserve to win because I'm not fully my authentic entrepreneur self yet.
  9. The cold start problem is hard because going from zero to 1

## Sep1, 2024 - Notes

Values = acceptance, curiosity (freedom), learning

What Feels Authentic	Why does it feel that way	How do I live it?
Tech	I've been doing it for a long time, there's nobody to answer to. Absolutely nobody can tell me what's wrong/right here. This is my domain.	
Strategic projections & financial modeling		
Personal Relationships	I really don't care what people think about me	Honest and transparent with people.

What Kind of Feels Authentic	Why does it feel that way
Leadership	
Networking	
Talking about the company (i.e. conviction)	I do care how they see the company though.

What doesn't feel authentic	Why does it feel that way
Investor Sales	
B2B Sales	

How do we bring our authentic selves to the table and not some idealized version of what we think an entrepreneur or CEO should be.

Maybe the point is to bring in what feels authentic over into the things that don't really. The "tech" for instance does not need to take over sales, but it should certainly become a part of it.

I should ask myself, what are my boundaries for myself and for my company. I think establishing those boundaries will help with authenticity.

Another thing that can help is imagining us as the thing I want us to be. That over there is what we are right now. **I need to internalize that. That is positioning. That over there is my**

**position and how I stand out.**

I'm scared of people just seeing us as a middleman, not the fundamental solution. But, we are the fundamental solution.

## Sep 6, 2024 - Lodovica

1. Entrepreneur is just different communication style. I'm used to facts driven communication, just need to change communication.
2. "Facts" are never objective. I do like to paint the picture for other people **to make an informed decision** (thereby not impinging on their freedom), but that picture is still objective.
3. If 100% is not reachable, then what is my foundation? The fact that there is no uncertainty becomes
4. I need to have a why regardless of the outcome and regardless of how things pan out. I need a why not attached to the outcome.
5. If I find my fundamental why, then I can always go back to that when facing a challenge. Reconnecting the challenge to the way is a way to overcome the challenge.
6. **My why is learning how to better accept. I'm on my journey to acceptance and living a worthwhile life (Remember the brownian motion analogy)**
7. I'm in the thick of it and I've already identified my monster (ambiguity) and the antidote (acceptance)

## Sep 9, 2024 - Notes

You need to feel it in order to process it. You can't keep relying on things like ketamine for avoidance. We'll never get through by avoiding. Embrace. Embrace so we can walk through.

There is no I'm trying to close something. There is no hoping I'm going to close something. There is only I'm going to close when I say so.

My mind jitters are ruminations about the future consequences of decisions I made today, and also on what & how I'm going to achieve my tasks the next day. Both are pointless. I've made those decisions, and they're out of my hands. I can wipe the slate clean after every day. And there's no point about thinking about my tasks tomorrow. I'm in absolutely no state to make any sort of decision about tomorrow - that is what future Alex is for.

Being authentic & a negotiator is SUPER impactful. It's like the guy in India. It's a bait and switch. My personality is authentic. But I close it down just a little bit to let sales slip through. As

much as I want to believe my sales is authentic, I'm not sure I ever will.

I'm a person of probability. There's no absolute certainty. What does that mean in terms of conviction for someone like me.

I don't have to think about that shit now. It's such a treat. I'm leaving that to future Alex which he will do.

The nice thing is, I don't gotta think about that right now. That's a nice little treat for me.

Remember the feeling of being in the BCG Boston office for my interview. Like how amazing that was. I was on the top of the world. I can channel that feeling again now.

**I don't have to think about the right now. That decision has either been made or will be made tomorrow or in the future. Right now, all I have to do is exist.**

## Sep 19, 2024 - Ketamine

- Depression
  - When is depression here?
  - When is it absent?
  - When does it change?
- 

## Oct 11, 2024 - Notes

1. I've been able to shift my mindset to seeing challenges as opportunities
2. One of the things that has helped me out think of limits as an opportunity is the support I've been receiving that have made me feel less alone.
3. If we can identify who/what is supporting us and how we're not alone, that can help us adopt a growth mindset. Or do I need additional support & what kind - investigating this area.
4. Money allows me to bring on the support I need for the company. I'm going to feel much more supported when this happens.
5. Stay away from the hindsight mindset. Because that's always going to be true. We can always pivot to something else that would've put us further along.
6. LustLab had indelible consequences to our strategy - think of all the PE stuff. These are opportunities that are still open to me.
7. Where I'm at now is the result of an actual story that actually happened. There is nothing

hypothetical about it. Hypothetical here only takes away joy from my current accomplishments. Hypothetical only diminishes my accomplishment. I should only be celebrating my accomplishment which will then lead to further accomplishment.

## Oct 25, 2024 - Notes

1. My current approach has been to build tolerance with the ambiguity
2. It's almost like I'm currently transitioning over from overwhelm to acceptance with my work.
3. Part 1: Fear of the ambiguity. This sucks.
4. Part 2: "I hear you, this sucks. **And** you must accept this because that's the way it is. There's no changing that. So what do we want to do about it?" This could just be the rampager that has softened up a bit. Because it does feel somewhat like the rampager here - but the rampager is cognizant and aware of how the rest of me is doing.
5. I think the rampager moved over to this way because of all the overwhelm. I think it realized that the overwhelm was counterproductive to what the rampager wants to do. So the rampager has taken a new role.
6. It also feels like there's less fear of keeping myself in work mode. Think back a year ago - I would get super fearful if I tried stepping away from work mode. That's not happening anymore.
7. Rampager is getting softer. That part has seen a reason to change for the better. The goal hasn't changed, just how we get there is different.
8. As rampager was so big, all the other parts had to respond to that. So now the other parts have been able to soften too - so a different equilibrium.
9. It is a little easier to balance work and life. It's a little easier to sit with ambiguity.
10. Job is a continuation of school. And in school its specifically the external validation that we run on. So the educational system has strengthened this piece.
11. The fear really pushes me towards external validation in work life. The fear says "you don't know enough, you need to go elsewhere." It makes me question or lose confidence in myself.

## Oct 30 - Ketamine

What is getting to me?	What is the emotional impact?	Validation	What can I do about it?	What can't I do about it?
Roy being way to pushy	It makes me feel trapped and stifled. I don't like it.	Yeah it sucks to deal with pieces of shit	Sever that tie	He's probably going to be a piece of shit going into the future. I have no control over that.
Unable to pay bills	It makes me want to cry and avoid them	Anybody would be dealing with my current situation WAY worse	It's ok to keep ignoring for a bit. I have 30-90 days to buffer these things. I can also connect with the debtors to explain my situation if they start squeezing harder.	I can't change the timeline to when a lead investor will hop on board
Still just putting myself out there everyday	It's making me feel like curling up in a ball again and do nothing	Yeah that completely makes sense. Running a company <b>is</b> the art of dealing with this.	I've been getting better and better with time on this. It still is challenging for me, but I've also made heaps of progress. I just got to stick day-to-day with what Motion says and not get in a fear flurry. It keeps me grounded.	I can't dictate how other people will respond to me putting myself out there. The right partner is the partner that accepts that part of me.
All eyes are on me				
Am I being fair to everyone?				

## Nov 7 - Lodovica

1. There's the first order fear that's afraid of failure. It's there to protect us from hurt. It is also ashamed of being there because it's been turned on for such a long time, and it has grown somewhat selfaware. That fear is a part of this process and wants to be validated.
2. It might just be asking for me to accept the fear.
3. It feels ashamed because it's been pushing against me even though it knows I'm not going to stop. What's the vulnerability it's trying to protect though? If you keep walking this way, you're gonna keep getting hurt, and that's why it doesn't want me to walk this way. But it's the thing that's doing the hurting. It's ashamed because it knows it's actually causing the hurt it's trying to stop.
4. We can see if it's willing to change

## Nov 9 - Personal

1. My why: so I can live the breadth of life. Think of having living my life without going through the current things I'm going through.
2. I am living life and I am learning.

## Nov 13 - Personal

1. Am I doing the right thing? Did I make the right decision to do AI safety and not webcam and not adult?
2. Do I even want to be doing this?
  - I think regardless of whatever path I would have chosen, I would be facing the SAME EXACT issues. I've already faced the issue for lustlab, now the same for aetherlab. The issue isn't the approach.
  - The issue is getting people on board.
  - I guess i fundamentally don't care the path so long as I think we can be successful.
  - But the thing is I'm second guessing myself and really

## Nov 21 - Lodovica

Dog part (my fear and frozen): Comfort, Neurishment, Protection

My other parts are getting in the way of me and this dog.

The moment this dog feels unseen, it gets even more frozen.

Keep trying to feel compassion to this dog.

If we approach the dog with anger or sadness or whatever, the dog feels unseen. But it needs to be seen.

## Nov 26 - Lodovica

### 1. Healthy Actions

1. Gym
2. Family time
3. Mental health work
4. Going out into the world
5. Cooking
6. Surfing
7. Spearfishing

### 2. Unhealthy Actions

1. Work
2. Caffeine
3. TV
4. Food

### 3. Thoughts/stories

- I'm generating the pressure, the expectations, and then the feelings of failure after not meeting up to those
- My experience of feeling overwhelmed is about not meeting an expectation
- My freedom is really connected to making money, and when that doesn't happen then I experience the feeling of getting trapped
- Feeling trapped leads to overwhelm. They're pretty 1-1 for me in terms of my experience.
- My expectations are the things setting the traps though.

## Dec 12 - Lodovica

1. For ADHD, when the actions are chosen, then executive functioning can be present.
2. Avoidance to overwhelm can happen, but avoidance can also happen when you don't want to do the task

3.

## Dec 13 - Ketamine

1. How am I?
2. I'm generally feeling unmotivated to do things, and I just want to relax
3. I'm feeling anxious because I haven't been doing things and just letting them pile up
  1. However, I Alex just put everything on my motion. So I'm good to go for the next few weeks. All I need to do is what it tells me to do.

## ADHD Notes

1. **Forgetfulness:** Frequently misplacing items, missing appointments, or needing constant reminders for tasks.
2. **Fidgetiness:** Regularly tapping feet or hands, or feeling restless.
3. **Hyperfocus:** Becoming intensely absorbed in tasks of interest, losing track of time and surroundings.
4. **Difficulty Completing Monotonous Tasks:** Struggling to finish repetitive or uninteresting tasks, often leading to procrastination.
5. **High tendency to overwhelm**
6. Challenging time mental switching
7. Transitioning into sex is hard
8. Sleep
9. Rumination
10. **Need for Novelty:** Craving new and stimulating experiences, and becoming easily bored with routine.
11. **Skin Picking:** Engaging in repetitive skin picking, linked to impulsivity and emotional regulation challenges.
12. **Difficulty with Interoceptive Awareness:** Challenges in perceiving and interpreting internal bodily sensations, leading to a tendency to be "in the mind" and lose track of bodily needs.
13. **Perfectionism:** Struggling with unrealistic expectations for oneself, leading to overanalyzing, procrastination, or difficulty completing tasks due to fear of not meeting standards.
14. **Sensitivity to Negative Feedback:** Reacting strongly to criticism, often feeling discouraged or invalidated, which may exacerbate emotional dysregulation or avoidance behaviors.
15. **Rewatching Familiar Content:** Frequently rewatching the same movies or TV shows as a

form of comfort, predictability, or reduced cognitive demand in overwhelming moments.

## Jan 23 - Lodovica

1. Their presence is a threat to the existence of my company
2. Is there any part of me that sees them not as a threat, but something else?
3. Is this a single winner thing or can we coexist and compete?
4. The big thing for me is the unfairness/injustice
  1. They're inexperienced founders
  2. They just don't know AI
  3. They don't have a product
  4. They institutional backing of some of the largest VCs
5. This is a challenge here and how do I want to respond to this challenge. What is my preferred way of dealing with this. What kind of energy do I want to bring into this space?
  1. Brush off the fear and move forward
  2. And I want to crush them
6. There is a part of me that is not willing to accept their worth. And it's that part that's blocking me from admiring their path rather than envying their end state.
7. It's a fighting part of me that feels like the hunter mode when I spearfish. That part feels justified though because it thinks it is protecting the company & undoing the injustice that I've perceived.
8. Can there be flexibility with this part in terms of the injustice. If I'm only fueled by the injustice, then I'm missing a lot here. This is only dimension
9. Probably my academic self is driving this, because that is a world of direct evaluations - things are measured and your performance is judged based on fair evaluations.
10. This is not academia. This is feeding the sense of injustice.
11. Then I can decide when my academic self is useful and when it is not. I might still stand personally by this, but this is not a shared value by the market. These other people are not judging by the standard that I am. There's 2 different standards here. What can I learn from these other standards that I can apply to my business.
12. In high conflict, what polarizes things is the differences. It's a me vs them and all language feeds that polarization. This polarization makes us lose sight of the things that we share, which are possibly the places we COULD find a compromise.
13. Practice:
  1. Remind myself this is not academia
  2. How are we similar

## Feb 7 - Ketamine, Amanda Knox

1. In order to revisit or move expectations, use comedy
2. Comedy is the tool to revisit expectations
3. Comedy allows us to take ownership of what's been taken from us, and to give it meaning other than crushing despair
4. There's a catharsis that comes from expecting a jolt of pain, but finding a pleasant tickle.
  - Comedy pokes fun of the stupid shit in our lives
  - I have **so much** stupid shit in my life
  - What's funny about it?

## Feb 12 - Ketamine, Amanda Knox

1. Life had felt like an unconscious habit. The thing I did when I wasn't doing anything at all.
2. Now, living feels like an active decision. A choice we can make every single morning.
3. That choice can give us sense of responsibility to shape our lives however we want. No matter how small, cruel, sad and unfair it was, it was **my life**. Mine to live to the best of my ability.

## Lauren Jay Thing

1. I'm feeling underappreciated and undervalued in the job stuff and relationship
2. I've been feeling the job stuff for awhile now, relationship stuff just a few days.
3. Feeling unappreciated and undervalued in our relationship is **not** a big at all for me, and I don't feel this way generally at all. I'm just very sensitive to this now in our relationship.
4. Some of the things that are hard for me right now:
  1. This is not a huge thing by any means, but it's still something that has made a small impact on me...so I spent 4hrs trying to help you out with your presentation to alleviate some of your stress. When I wanted to help out more the other day, you scoffed. Again, not a big thing since you apologized right away, but it still made an impact. Part of the difficulty for me is that I don't have much in me that lets me understand your reaction.
  2. For the thing with Jay you said yesterday, I still don't quite have a grasp on why it hit me. I'll try to do my best here, but nothing at all I say is a criticism or a request to do things differently (at least I don't think). I'm just going to lay out my viewpoint/thoughts which are, again, not meant to be critical in any way. I'm just having trouble

understanding the situation.

1. The way I see it is, you've had multiple health things and you haven't been giving time to heal.
  2. You've continued to meet with him despite all this and now you want to see him just to please **\*him\***. I understand you can still feel gratified by pleasing the other partner, this is just how it feels to me.
  3. This all makes me feel secondary and unappreciated.
  3. Lastly, I know there are **so many** things you do for me, including putting me first and appreciating me.
5. I've learned two things today:
1. I now know that he is a priority over me (just to an extent of course). The thought process I am intuiting that's going on in your head is "how can I still see Jay, and then have Alex ok with that." That thought process severely diminishes empathy and understanding specifically for me, because I am the secondary object here. I don't think you would've asked me this question if you were placing me first and being truly empathetic to my situation. "I thought you would be **more ok with that**" is a mental gymnastic justifying your action and lacks actual empathy, especially given my response from yesterday. Why are you trying to negotiate anything at this point? It's clearly not for my benefit. It's actually to my detriment. And if I were the primary object here, I think you would have more empathy for me, and I don't think you would have been trying to negotiate anything related to this situation at all a single day after I was crushed.
  2. I now know that him as a person is the priority and not the sex - something I was giving you the benefit of the doubt yesterday. You are trying to negotiate your way to still see him as the person.
  6. I'm reading between the lines a lot here, and I imagine you won't agree with some of the points, but I would urge you to reflect more on the situation and think what he means to you. Something I can say with a bit more certainty is that at least one of us is blindsighted here.

Still having a really hard time with this one.

The point of the exercise below is to try to further explain how this series of events has felt and looks to me from a broad perspective. This is entirely oversimplified and misses nuance specifically in order for us to focus on perspective.

- Lauren: "I want to do this thing with Jay"
- Alex: "I'm having a really hard time because I'm feeling secondary to Jay"
- Lauren: "Sorry for making you feel that way."
- Lauren: "Hey is it ok if I see Jay?"
- Alex: Has another trauma reaction.
- Lauren: "Ok, now I never know when to bring Jay up."

This round through our open relationship, of the many conversations we've had specific to meeting your needs, this has been the only time where I've had a significant reaction. Where this comes from is that I perceive there to be a lack of perspective.

That is the thing that really gets to my core and has been a challenge for me in this scenario but also for our entire relationship - when I perceive there to be a lack of perspective. Something that, from my experience of this situation, is lacking throughout this entire sequence.

- For Lauren, it feels like if she makes a mistake then there will be this "consequence" of isolation.

## Feb 13 - Lodovica

1. If we're triggered, then following the trigger is just going to make it worse. Just don't pay attention to them.
2. Stop clicking into the resources that are sent my way on them
3. The only thing that is coming from me clicking in to them is making me feel less valued than
4. I am telling my story that seeing them succeeding means I'm not
5. What I am doing right now is not engaging with the fight network...I am showing up more with the showing up network
6. One of the things that I can to help is try to be curious about the shutting down
7. I think I tend to shut down when there is a sense of injustice or when the assessment criteria for judgement is not transparent. When there is an external focus of success, rather than being just dependent on myself, that shuts me down. I can be thrown into a very overwhelming situation, and if success is only dependent on my actions, then that's ok for me. When I am thrown into an overwhelming situation w/ external judgement, my actions don't necessarily map to success at all.
8. The ambiguity of the evaluation is the thing that gets to me. This didn't really used to be a part of academia, and is actually pretty new when I started entering industry. The first BCG interviews were really when I felt this the most.
9. **Be curious about ambiguity of evaluation in any manifestation**
10. **I've been building up the muscle of knowing I can perform in unambiguous**

environments without fail.

11. I've just recently been building up this muscle for ambiguous environments. But I've actually gotten
12. This is a fantastic learning experience → to be able to perform in ambiguity
13. My negative cognition here goes to "I can't win"

## Sex - Notes

- I think my main hangup with sex is this
  - I go into it thinking that the action necessarily needs to get me hot
  - In the end though it probably won't though and ends up leading to pressure and avoid the situation altogether
- However, I don't need to be super into absolutely everything. In fact, if my partner is into something, who am I to deny giving it to them? Especially, I'll be asking for **my exact** needs to be met as well, needs which on their end they might not be super into themselves.
- There's a give and take with **physical** relationships
- I'm very giving in most areas of my life, except for physical giving. There is a thing such as physical giving since that is a need people have. It's a need not a nicety.
- I'm selfish when it comes to physical giving.
- **Mantra: This doesn't need to be about me**
- I actually have needs myself, I just didn't realize them as needs until recently.

## Feb 21 - Lodovica

1. Notice associations between sensations and what I'm feeling especially if I notice something out of context
2. I have a cold fear and a fiery fear in my chest. I get fiery fear for things like surfing and sometimes scuba - but I still push myself to do them. Because it is just me against that thing - there's no judges. The cold fear tends to happen when I perceive there to be judges.
3. If I can have the mentality of "fuck the judges" then I can push through. In fact, I have already eschewed that mentality for LustLab - when I launched on LinkedIn, I was saying "fuck the judges".

## Feb 2025 Learnings → Keep in Mind for March

- Sex isn't about me

I need to validate people's work more consistently. Here's a scenario in which I'm really bad at it and I think it can have big impacts.

1. I ask somebody to do something for me
2. I tinker with it on my end as well or something else comes along
3. I realize that (1) probably isn't important
4. I then just ask them to move on

There's a few steps missing in between (3) and (4).

3a) check what they've done so you can acknowledge their contribution

3b) validate the results

3c) glean something from them that is "helpful", say that out loud, and say that that insight actually already helped us move along so they can stop doing that work and move onto something else

## Lauren Jay

I've started to notice repeated patterns in our conversations here. I've started to notice repeated patterns in our conversations, and below is how these are making me feel.

I feel like you've been approaching this in a manipulative way. I know that might sound harsh, and I don't think you're doing it with bad intentions. But the way these conversations have played out has left me feeling consistently secondary to Jay.

### Here's what I've noticed:

1. The timing of certain actions feels strategic. You often do something nice for me right before bringing up something about Jay. On the surface, it seems thoughtful, but when I step back, it feels like a way to influence my response rather than something done purely out of care.
2. The "I just want more sex" response feels dismissive. Whenever I express concerns or discomfort, the conversation often shifts back to this single point— "*I just want more sex.*" I know that's a real need for you, and I respect that, but it feels like my feelings are being justified away by that one statement. To be honest, I still don't fully believe that explanation either. The way you act holistically—how and when you bring things up, the patterns in your behavior—feels inconsistent with that reasoning. It makes it seem like there's something more going on, but instead of discussing it openly, the conversation keeps circling back to

this single justification. That disconnect makes it even harder for me to engage with this in a productive way.

3. You repeatedly ask me to restate my boundary before you accept it. When I voice a need or a boundary, you often ask me to repeat it multiple times. I realize you might just be trying to understand it better, but the way it comes off to me is that you're trying to get me to explicitly say something like *“Yes, I am asking you not to do this thing you want to do.”* It doesn't go to an extreme, but sometimes it feels like you need me to directly say *“I don't want you to see this person tomorrow”*—as if I have to fully spell it out before you'll respect the boundary. That dynamic makes me uncomfortable because it feels like I'm being pushed to take on all the emotional weight of saying no.

#### **What I need moving forward:**

- Stop framing everything around ‘I just want more sex’ as a justification.
- Make sure that when you do something nice for me, it's because you genuinely want to—not as a lead-up to asking for something.
- Respect my boundaries the first time I express them—without making me repeatedly state and justify them.

I don't want this to be an ongoing cycle where I keep feeling hurt and you keep feeling like I'm restricting you.

## **Lodovica - Couples Therapy**

1. These are the days I see Ray and that's it. Helping establish a plan could help me feel safe. Some sort of structure could help us ease into this stage.
2. Beyond this structure, is there anything I need before/after seeing Jay.
3. A banana time for just open relationship would be helpful
4. Scaffolding
  1. Time for jay
  2. Time for us
5. When I express my needs, L should not require A to say exactly what she can/cannot do. Instead, she should meet halfway and propose a solution right then.
  - This really makes lauren happy. Lauren is just wanting to share the happiness with me. That's why she's doing things for me.
  - Why sex exploration for me scares me is becausae I'm scared of showing the world that side of me.

# Lodovica - March 20 2025

1. Send stuff to investors to garner excitement for them. Ask Ryan if I should be doing this.
2. There's this fear that if I don't keep driving, then this deal could fall through.
3. There's this fear in the weeks from when they said
4. There's this feeling that I should be doing a lot more. Do I really need to be doing a lot more? What "should" I be doing:
  1. Outreach to investors
  2. like literally everything
5. I need to pare point (4) down into a more urgent points. There's always more to be doing, we need to tackle some down.
  1. Need to come up with a single thing to focus on. Focus on LI hype and writing new ideas.
  2. I actually really enjoy doing that and it's taking a step back from investor stuff. I don't think there's much meaningful stuff I can do at this point to push the deal across the finish line.
6. Can I just take whatever has already happened as a success? **Whatever comes next it just an extra. I am already at the top of the mountain. I already succeeded because I'm already further ahead than I was ever before.**
7. What we've been experiencing in terms of fundraising is the normal. This is just the environment now.
8. Timing sadness would be a way to accept it. Part of me is resisting the sadness here (like "why can't I just be happy now"). So let's give sadness a time frame. Schedule sadness.
9. **Next steps:**
  1. **Focus on LI**
  2. **Take what I have done as a success**
  3. **What we've experienced is completely normal**
  4. **Schedule crying sessions**

# March 24 2025 - Ketamine

1. What are my expectations now? It could be those that are leading to my overwhelm. Is there any way to make them comedic so I can revisit them?
  1. Have I piled on too many things? Just focus on one thing right now: entrepreneur vision. This is the good stuff.

2. Am I telling myself some story?
3. Is it the fear of ambiguity getting to me?
  1. **Be curious about ambiguity of evaluation in any manifestation**
  2. **I've been building up the muscle of knowing I can perform in unambiguous environments without fail.**
  3. **I've just recently been building up this muscle for ambiguous environments. But I've actually gotten**
  4. **This is a fantastic learning experience → to be able to perform in ambiguity**
  5. My negative cognition here goes to "I can't win"
4. Is it lack of self-confidence in the relationship? Emotionally? Physically?
  1. **Mantra: This doesn't need to be about me**
5. **I AM LIVING MY VALUE OF FREEDOM. YOU ARE DOING BIG THINGS.**

I've been batting away thoughts and ruminations for years now. I put a goal in mind to get the VC money, and in order to get there, I've been batting away so many ideas. Because I put funding as the goalpost, now that I'm nearing it, all the ruminations are coming in.

- "you're not successful"
- "you won't win"
- "what are you doing?"

Big life goals change you. You need to grow in order to get there. It's tough, but you'll grow.

I need to realize that that goalpost is not the last step. There's always things after it. The only thing that matters is if I want to get to the goalpost beyond. We don't know yet and there's a whole world of awesome uncertainty.

^^ I think this will help me deal with burnout and be more ok with the fear of ambiguity.

I had the exact opposite revelation during my mescaline trip. Basically, I was thinking about how to complete the next goalpost even before finishing my current one and then never taking a pause. Right now, it feels like there is just the one goalpost with a **huge** pause. The healthiest thing to do is to realize that there will be another goalpost after we reach this one, and figure it out when we get there. The healthiest thing has a pause in between the posts...a reflection point. What I currently do is gloss over it (fear and fight) or become scared of it (fear and freeze)

Fear & fight = no time for reflection, being pushing through

Fear & freeze = a chicken with a head cut off in my mind. I freeze up and have these crazy

jumbled thoughts.

# March 28 2025 - Lodovica

Acceptance = mindfulness --> curiosity = freedom --> learning = growth

1. I was not approaching my VC goalpost w my above value
2. However, with the recent ketamine trip, I was more curious, which helped out a lot. There was more acceptance of ambiguity. There was also space for learning and growth because already setting up how to improve.
3. **Make sure that when I have a goal, ask myself whether my values are aligned with my approach to that, and whether the goal itself aligns with the values.**
4. We all get stuck in the moment, and laser focused, and forget the bigger picture of living our values.
5. I've already realized the above before, but mental health is like the gym. This is a specific exercise. You can't just do a single exercise then be good with it. Have to keep practicing it.
6. **The ruminations that have been coming in make it hard for me to live my values, because these stories generate sense of threat for me, and then I can only focus on goalpoast and not my values.**
  - “you won’t win”
7. To help resolve the you won’t win rumination, **Take what I have done as a success**
8. I’m putting my definition of success here as: bring on VC money, get tons of revenue, sell company at high valuation. I’m tying success to this path, with the outcome that I want of being able to unlock my freedom of a lifestyle.
9. BUT, you can still have growth and learning w/o the freedom.

Disappointment of expecting to win

**Where is the story coming from of “you’re not going to win”**

Go back to little things I like to help my system regulate. What do I have control over right now? Not money, ok we know that.

Things I have control over now:

1. Gym
2. Family time
3. Mental health work
4. Going out into the world

5. Cooking
6. Surfing
7. Spearfishing

## April 3 2025 - Ketamine

I am clinging to the story of “I am running a startup and everything will be new and great and fast moving”

I am clinging to the story that “I should be this entrepreneur

## April 4 2025 - Lodovica

- China chat
  - I asked to spend some time with you today - you said ok. You met with Jay yesterday, and you were distant today, so there was already some wedge there. And then you also brought up poly again. It feels like everything is revolving around that.
  - Which makes me feel secondary, which is exactly how I've been feeling all this time.
  - It seems like she wants to spend more quality time outside of this relationship than in it. Today we had an opportunity to have some quality time, but that didn't pan out at all.
  - Can I try to access my values of freedom and curiosity when we meet up?
  - Write down the needs so we're not missing them.
1. **Doc #1:** What are things that make me feel valued?
  2. **Doc #2:** What are the agreements to generate safety? (we've already settled on something like weekly schedule to discuss)
  3. **Doc #3:** What are my needs?
  4. I appreciated when you \_\_\_ → to put into a gratitude journal that we share with each other

## April 9 2025 - Lauren Chat

1. You had some judgement statements last time we chatted with Lodovica and I do think one of them is accurate. Which is I'm carrying the judgement that I don't fully trust you'll come back to **this** relationship as we navigate poly.
  1. For myself, that was highlighted yesterday when you said things like “we don't have the same interests” or “we don't do the same things.”
  2. It seems like you're noticing a number of things that feel off or mismatched — whether

those are truly issues or just how things are landing for you right now — and I get that. At the moment, it doesn't feel like we're in a particularly strong place. But I also believe we **have** been strong, and that beneath everything unfolding right now, that strength is still there. It may be buried under tension, uncertainty, or disconnection — but I don't believe it's gone.

3. In fact, I believe we **were** in a strong place just a few months ago, right before we opened up to poly. I want to remind you of something you said at the time: "We're in such a good place, I don't want poly to ruin that." And I responded, "Yeah, it might be challenging, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try." That was just a few months ago and is almost verbatim.
  4. This also ties into a concern I've had in the past — about a tendency to view things in fixed snapshots. When we judge where we are right now without looking at how far we've come or where we're headed, we risk losing sight of the bigger picture. I've brought this up in the past to highlight how much growth and progress we've made.
  5. From my perspective, it feels like poly is becoming a lens through which you're reassessing our relationship — and mostly focusing on what's lacking. I understand that new connections can bring out new excitement, especially in the early phases. But it's tough when that excitement gets used as a reflection of what we **don't** have. That's why I'm struggling to trust that poly is being navigated in a way that's healthy for **us**. You're identifying unmet needs, which is valid, but it feels like the instinct is to abandonment rather than explore how we could meet those needs together in **this** relationship.
  6. And it seems like you specifically don't trust **me** that that will absolutely happen. The fact that we're not moving at the same pace in poly doesn't feel like a failure to me or proof that we won't get there — but it seems like that's how it might be landing for you. From where I sit, this is part of what growth looks like. We went from zero poly to now just a few months ago, and that's a massive shift. It makes sense that we're adjusting at different speeds, and that some moments are going to feel out of sync. That doesn't mean we're not compatible — it means we're stretching into something new, and that takes time and communication.
2. I also want to share another thought pattern that I just observed, which is the conversation yesterday seemed to focus around chaotic thoughts. And I don't mean that as a judgment. In fact, it reminds me of how I behave when I'm acting from fear where I can start to flip directions quickly and lose sight of the bigger picture. So, out of curiosity, I'm wondering:
    1. Is this a fear-based response?
    2. Is there a fear that your needs won't be met here?
    3. Is there a part of you that doesn't trust **me** or **us** to get there together?
  3. When we had that conversation where you said "I don't want poly to ruin this relationship" I

felt that same fear. I didn't fully realize it at the time, but what I was afraid of was exactly this — that you might not come back to the relationship. A part of me was saying maybe don't do this because of that fear. But I wanted to move forward anyway, not because the fear wasn't there, but because I wanted your needs to be met. This isn't an argument against exploring poly together. I just want you to see that even with the uncertainty and discomfort, I've been walking this path with you because **you** matter to me and **we** matter to me. I also think this fear connects back to our "grey time" where in my mind personal experience of that situation, I felt as if you left me for somebody else. There's still trauma there that I believe this is resurfacing. The closest I've felt to what I'm feeling now was exactly at the beginning of that period. And that overlap is bringing a lot up for me.

4. Lastly, I love you 

## April 11 2025 - Lodovica

1. Am I testing her? → yes.
2. Everything feels like a threat to me. Reconnect with practices that give me a sense of control.
  1. I need to give up control of Lauren
  2. I need to give up control of VC

What can I do to exercise my control? Of things that I enjoy. That give me a sense of reward. My bucket needs to be filled. There's a lack of balance. Regain control of my life and my time. This job is all consuming - I'm all stuck in this space. Is this how I want to live my life? Reassess my life before I include Lauren. Lauren is now my only safe island, and now I'm perceiving that not to be safe.

## April 14 2025 - Lauren & Lodovica

- **Polywise** → **how to navigate open relationships**
- Hobby
- I don't fully trust you'll come back to **this** relationship as we navigate poly.
  - From my perspective, it feels like poly is becoming a lens through which you're reassessing our relationship — and mostly focusing on what's lacking. I understand that new connections can bring out new excitement, especially in the early phases. But it's tough when that excitement gets used as a reflection of what we **don't** have.
  - The focus on the now is important, but the growth is more so for me
  - Connected to trauma of my dad and past relationship

- So rather than focusing on what is wrong with our relationship and how we can fix that, focus on the needs.
- **Doc #1:** What are things that make me feel valued?
- **Doc #2:** What are the agreements to generate safety? (we've already settled on something like weekly schedule to discuss)
- **Doc #3:** What are my needs?
- I appreciated when you \_\_\_ → to put into a gratitude journal that we share with each other
- Lauren does not compare me directly to Jay.
- Want to be connected to others and have those grow however they want to grow. Which will increase the amount of love we have in our lives. That will give us access to a really special place of freedom.
- **IFS:** there's one part of me that feels like I don't deserve happiness until the VC comes through, there's another part that feels like that's a terrible outlook on life. And yet, I can accept all of them.

Things that would give me agency...

1. Cooking
2. Family time
3. Mental health work
4. Going out into the world
5. Surfing
6. Spearfishing

## April 15 2025 - Personal reflections

1. Communicating needs is going to be key. We feel out of whack, and I actually am always 2nd guessing myself around how to act around you. I really don't want to do anything "wrong". For instance, for your birthday, I was like lauren would value cleaning the house more than sushi ota because that would be better for her mental health to come back to that - I have 2nd guessed myself so many times here on I should've gone to ota because I think that would've made you feel more special.
2. I'm still very much heavy on job stuff - do you need me to drop this and spend more time out and about with you and our friends? My priority has been to achieve financial freedom for us, but I've been failing at doing so. In fact, I've done the exact opposite of that.
3. Part of the hard thing about spending time with friends for me is that I feel ashamed to be around them when I feel like I'm a failure and I'm not good enough to deserve them.
- 4.
5. I need to feel special to Lauren

6. I need to not feel like a failure
7. I need validation
8. I need to feel sexy and desired
9. I need novelty and freedom
10. I need assurance that you love me
11. I need to feel curious
12. I need to feel like every day is an intentional and active decision in how I want to live my life
13. I need financial freedom
14. I need to know how you feel about me
15. I need intense activities (big waves, heavy weights, adrenaline...)
16. I need mindfulness
17. I need the ocean
18. I need to feel accomplished in my work
19. I need interesting and tasty food
20. I need some time alone sometimes
21. I need to feel important to you. I feel like I'm just part of existence to you.

## April 17 2025 - Ketamine

1. All of my activities are a big part of me. Going around and exploring the world and surfing and driving around....those were all part of me. Since my job stuff has been out of whack, I've been prioritizing that by subtracting from the other parts of me. I've been treating it as a zero sum game - but by treating it that way, I tend to overdo it on job side when that feels missing. And then since I subtract all the other parts of me, then my job side feels even more out of whack.
2. When my activity side is balanced, that can help stabilize my job side
3. When I subtract from my activity side, that destabilizes my job side even more. It actually doesn't help it.

4. Same thing for my relationship - when I subtract from my activity side, that also throws off my relationship.
  5. There's a triangle
    1. Relationship
    2. My activities
    3. Job
  6. Since job and my activities are down, the last prong I am relying on is relationship. But, because activities and job is gone, that puts even more stress on it.
  7. I am noticing a hierarchy
    1. When I focus on myself → that means I can focus on my job and relationship
    2. When I don't focus on myself → that means I cannot focus on my job and relationship
  8. I get why Lauren thinks I think she's my only hobby. I must get back to myself (and I think trt will help with that)
- **Base of pyramid:** Self-worth
  - Connection, belonging, acceptance, community (that relationship is part of and family and friendships)
  - Purpose (like job)

## April 20 2025 - Ketamine + Weed

There's no need to do something unless one of us want's to do it. That's kind of how I think with respect to roles and responsibilities.

The whole discussion on, "I have no forcing function" is aligning to with what you say is acceptable in the future. I don't care if we don't have a house or place to stay...there's always options. We could live with our parents. We could live in a car. Etc... Those are all acceptable to me and worth the pain of "living to the fullest." The world in which my head is operating in is not "this house means safety, or this car means safety, or finances mean safety." I do think finances mean freedom in the future I want to live, but that's not the same as safety for me. Safety is being equanimous. And I've been learning more and more, specifically through entrepreneurship, that you don't need to place safety on meeting some expectation of all these things around us. If you have 1000 expectations on what it means to be safe, then there are 1000 ways you can feel unsafe. Entrepreneurship has stripped this away from me, because day by day, it pokes at these expectations. And they hurt. They hurt real bad. But, at the end of the poking and healing, I've learned that that thing that caused me so much pain was actually NOT a thing that I needed in order to feel safe. The pain is having perceived safety stripped away

from you. The growth is in realizing that that safety was just perceived.

All I need is you and the doggies (and the other basic needs). Entrepreneurship has really

I think we handle roles and responsibilities different. I'm like, if one of us wants to do it, then we'll do it. Otherwise it's not important to us. I think Lauren very much does not think this way and wants us to agree on what's important. And I think the thing that matters is how each of us define what a partnership means to us. In my mind, it's like "either you got it or I got it...either way it's the same." So for money, I'm like, "she's got it, until I got it. Then after that she can do something else." It's a give and take with me. For Lauren it seems more split and well defined. And I think it's good that we have these differing ways of seeing this, because this friction highlights things that we can now have intentional conversations about - whereas if there was no friction, no intentional conversation might be had. So, finding clashes are the BEST WAY to grow a relationship. It's similar to the growth point I made on entrepreneurship above. In any case, I think it would be useful for each of us to define what "partnership" means to us. And by the way, each of us have some give and take expectations...it's not just me. I just think well defined partnership terms is a little more of Lauren's total approach.

- What partnership means to lauren:
  - Cleaning is split and at a schedule
  - Dogs responsibility is split
- What partnership means to alex:
  - We'll each clean when something bothers us
  - Dogs responsibility is split

Areas to explore

- Cleaning
- Cooking
- Dogs
- Finances
- Cars
- Organizing
- Decorating
- Laundry
- Gardening (which parts)

This is such a good time to be having this conversation as we navigate the next phase in our life together.

Given our challenging time right now, what do those days mean to you? Are they a break from our relationship? A breath of fresh air? Avoidance? Do they have nothing to do with this relationship?

It feels like you've been showing less interest in me increasingly, but I guess this is just because of the money situation. I've crossed your boundary, and because of that, all of your boundaries seem to be flaring up. Which makes sense - I think the same happens with me.

I and I mean this could be because we're moving in a new smaller house together. She has she's getting a job. Our finances aren't as free as she thought they were. The Polly is stifling and I think she perceived all of those as threats to her safety.

What I've learned in entrepreneurship is that you cannot set an expectation to mean safety. that will never happen. Safety can ONLY be in the now.

A lot of us feel unsafe because we have this general sense that things are not as they should be right now. Like our life is somehow off or not what it should be. That itself is an expectation and by putting safety on that expectation it's not going to be met. Which means failure and success don't mean anything at all. Those are just constructs.

I've been reworking my own expectations around poly specifically FOR YOU. I think you need to do the same for me with all these new things. For instance, I had the expectation that I should like poly but I really didn't. I dropped that expectation. Now it's just a thing. I'll eventually get to the point where I even see the beauty in it, but right now, it's a thing.

I think it will be useful for us to each do a "pulse check" on life in order to see what the other's expectations might be.

For me...I see the both of us being extremely successful and having all the freedoms both of us want and deserve. I see us getting there only through the support of each other. Everything else that is thrown our way, never enters into this picture or this vision of life. It stays below it, never entering that. That vision has never broken for me.

I see us sailing on a boat for awhile while you explore and I work. I see us doing the same in a car. I see you having your own place when you want to get away. I see us as having all the relationship flexibility that each of us wants.

## April 27 2025 - Lauren & Alex

I jumped into entrepreneurship without consulting you. We had agreed you would support us until August 2023 and then I would get a job. But I kept going with the startup and you kept

supporting us.

Which means I broke an agreement we made. I didn't forget that we agreed (because I recall it now, but it hasn't been in my mind on a day to day). Which means I did lose track of how important it really was for you. I think part of me thought you were coming more into my way of thinking about money (because I do recall a few conversations where you mentioned you were shifting more towards my value set) and I used that as a reason to just keep going without checking back in.

Underneath, I've been feeling guilty. I feel guilty because I kept trying to pull you into seeing money the way I see it. I didn't respect where you were actually at. I told myself if I just kept grinding, I'd pay you back and everything would be fine.

I convinced myself that if I kept pushing forward, it would all work out and balance itself later. And I didn't check back in with you when I should have.

I can see that my mistakes have hurt you deeply. And for that, I'm truly sorry. In order for us to mend, I am committed to doing what needs to be done. If that means you living in Fargo alone, then I'm going to run downstairs right now and start packing the car to make that happen.

## April 29 2025 - Lauren & Alex

Lately, it feels like you've been really distant—emotionally, physically, energetically. And I understand that to an extent. I know I've had a large part in contributing to that. But I'm also struggling to reconcile that space with what it feels like on my end: disconnection.

I've been trying to keep showing up in the relationship, trying to stay connected, but it's been painful to feel like I'm doing that alone. When I reach out—emotionally or physically—and get shut down, it chips away at me. It's taking a lot of energy and it's starting to really hurt. And in response, I've noticed I've started disconnecting too—not because I want to pull away, but to protect myself from how much this has been hurting.

That hurt was amplified the other day—when I initiated physical closeness, was rejected, and then you shared that intimacy with Jay the very next day. I know we're poly and still figuring this out. I also understand that one of the reasons for poly is so we can get *certain* needs met outside of this relationship. But right now, it feels like you're shifting *all* of your needs outside of us. I need to feel like this relationship still has an anchor. Right now, it feels like you're slowly pulling away.

I've also been thinking about my own patterns. When I feel really hurt by you, I tend to shut

down for a day or two so I can process. That space helps me get clarity. But I always come back in—I re-engage. So I've been wondering: is that what's happening with you right now? Or is this something different? When you say you want to move to Fargo for a month—are you asking for space to process, with the intention of reconnecting? Or is it space to disconnect further? Or is it simply about meeting your need for personal space and alone time?

I've also been wondering something else, and I want to ask it openly—not as an accusation, but as a real question. A lot has shifted in your life recently: needs are resurfacing that aren't being met, my startup falling through, us moving into our new home, being tethered to your parents financially, you starting a new job, and not being able to travel as freely. I know how much independence means to you, and I'm wondering if some of the frustration or resentment coming up toward me might actually be about those changes—and not fully about *me*. If that's true to an extent, I want to be your partner in helping you reclaim that independence—not the person you feel trapped by.

I love you, but I also need to feel like I'm not the only one standing in this relationship.

## Expectations

The reason I have positive pressure for weekends is because I have no expectations - I can do whatever. The reason I have negative pressure for weekdays is because I put expectations on me.

The expectation I set on myself is “this is not how I want to live my life.” I don’t really want to be sitting around and doing this stupid consulting work. I don’t feel like I’m living when I do that. I feel like an automoton. Which means I’m not living my value of freedom.

In my mind freedom=curiosity, growth=learning, acceptance=mindfulness. Those are my 3 values.

## Mantras

“Today I will live freedom through curiosity, growth through learning, and acceptance through mindfulness — in the life I have, not the life I wish I had.”

**Freedom through curiosity. Growth through learning. Acceptance through mindfulness and generosity.**

“I create freedom, growth, and acceptance today — through curiosity, learning, and mindfulness.”

“I live my freedom, growth, and acceptance right here, right now.”

If you feel	Use
Need a <i>morning intention</i>	“Today I will live freedom through curiosity, growth through learning, and acceptance through mindfulness.”
Need a <i>quick reset during work</i>	“Freedom through curiosity. Growth through learning. Acceptance through mindfulness.”
Need a <i>1-second emergency snapback</i>	“Curious, learning, mindful.”

- Look up stonewalling (with respect to toxic behavior)
  - Can still talk to Lauren even if I’m upset. Don’t hold my compassion and my love.
  - It looks like I go behind a locked door.
  - I need to address this differently.
- Sex initiation
- Needs put aside
  - Empathy
  - Trust
  - Living values while living values of partner

## Lauren Validation

I want to acknowledge how much pain is in your question: “*How could you not see how serious this was to me?*” The fact that you even had to ask that speaks to something deeper — the feeling of being completely unseen by me.

The truth isn’t that I didn’t see how serious it was — I did. You were clear. You were grounded. Your needs were completely reasonable. What I failed to do was **track** that seriousness over time. I didn’t carry it forward the way I should have. And I can understand how hurtful and invalidating that must have felt — like your clarity faded into the background, instead of being treated as something that shaped how I showed up.

That’s hard to admit. Because that’s not who I want to be. And I didn’t even realize I was doing it. You were carrying something heavy, and I didn’t help carry it. I left you alone in it. And maybe worse — I made it feel like your needs weren’t worth protecting, or that they could be forgotten if they weren’t repeated.

I want to get better — not just at remembering, but at validating what matters *when* it matters. I want to be the kind of partner who reflects back, in real time, that your needs land with me. That your emotions have a place with me. That you don't have to get hurt before you feel understood.

And yes, for me, that does mean writing things down — not because your needs are tasks, but because they matter too much to leave to chance. Even for the most fundamental agreements I have to myself, I have to write down *anything* I want to remember — from goals to values to even my own emotional priorities. That's not because they don't matter to me — it's because they do. And your needs are no different. They deserve more than momentary recognition. They deserve consistency, care, and presence. You deserve to feel like what matters to you *stays with me* — not just once, but over time. That's the kind of trust I want to rebuild — and earn.

## Random Notes

You have been mentioning stuff along the lines of “repeated behavior” to point to something systemically wrong with my behavior patterns. This way of thinking is something that I’ve pointed out to you in return many many times - we are both ongoing improvements and we are both so much better and more aligned with each other than we have been historically. This notion though that repeated behavior is the bad thing discredits all the growth we’ve done. I don’t like turning the tables around for this kind of stuff, but, for instance, the boundary of mindfulness and not respecting that (at least in my mind) is something that I’ve brought up time and time again for many years, I still bring it up, and I actively bring it up as soon as I feel as its been infringed. I am very vocal about this, and even then, you don’t 100% act in accordance with that - and you shouldn’t, that’s not the point. The point is, I realize that that boundary is mine, and it is my responsibility to let you know when I feel you’ve crossed it, and it is your responsibility to try and

## May 2 2025 - Lauren & Alex

1. Lauren didn’t realize how big of an issue this was
2. I didn’t realize how big of an issue that was
3. When I do, I pivot
4. Literally 3 days later, I started consulting work after you brought this up
5. I pivoted directly when you did

The emotions that won’t go away:

- No trust in keeping boundaries

The expectation that if you say something once or that we agree to it once, if it is not upheld,

then there's no trust. You were making a distinction between a boundary and an agreement.

I point out "hey you crossed my boundary, and remember you're not acting in accordance to what we agreed." At odds w/ actions. That dissonance is hard emotionally to reconcile.

During this period of solitude, how does communication happen:

- Wants more space than a trip, but doesn't know what that looks like
- Start w/ communicating every other day

## May 3 - Lauren & Alex

Are there any of my values that can help me sit with the "if we can reconnect" rather than a place of fear? → generosity

I'm realizing that generosity is part of my values. Maybe I can apply generosity here, to what I perceive her non generosity.

To give an example of this, take a few years back - when I was trying to get onto your healthcare. There was no explicit agreement made (I believe) other than the fact that you would look into this for me. I remember asking for your help repeatedly on quite a number of occasions, while telling you my time constraints for everything. The first year through, you eventually did look into this for me but it was basically too late to risk the other path I had just set up. And even then, the next year through, I asked you again a number of times (though less so than the first round through), but given how risky my whole HC situation was, I didn't want to risk any screwing with that at the end of the day. The point is, in either case, I (1) repeatedly asked you to hold up to your agreement, (2) the help that I did receive came in late enough that I do feel the agreement was not held up to an extent. The other point is, though while deeply hurt (and I was in that case), I still realized it as a difference in eye to eye somewhere. Now, I'm not able to always do that - and in fact I wasn't doing that recently, in the beginning of poly - where I was thinking "why is Lauren doing this, if she realizes it hurts me so much." But that's not the mechanism in her mind. She is thinking, "even though I hurt Alex, I fundamentally need this" so she continues on doing it. I was not seeing that viewpoint at first...I was hearing you say it, but I wasn't empathizing with it.

Also, let me bring up another example of where I did break an agreement (with the cleaning), you told me that I broke it, and then I started to do it (not without fail). I see this mechanism as no different than us agreeing to show up to the relationship somehow, whether that's through boundaries (which are forever things), or specific events. In either case, we have agreed on something. I see agreement as agreement.

Also, consider the agreement you made with me about Jay. Those just started slipping into something new without you really checking on me with.

You seem to be getting upset when I ask you questions along the lines of what your needs are. Then, you seem to get annoyed by that. Then you tell me you don't know.

OR, you will tell me your needs, but not how to satisfy those needs. So, when I even try to satisfy those needs, I don't get it right a lot of the time, and it even goes unnoticed by you. To give a similar situation in reverse, for poly, I told you my need of not feeling secondary...however I did not tell you exactly how to implement that and that confused you in terms of how you behave around me. I really think we need to have a document on needs & how we accomplish them.

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/attachment-theory-and-attachment-styles>

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/stonewalling-in-a-relationship>

## May 5 - Lauren & Alex

The “if” in the “if and how we can reconnect” means:

- That our needs can be met.
- That we have a shared vision for the future.
- That we both define what partnership means for us.

There's a foundation of trust, honesty, empathy, compassion. The people in the relationship are more important than the relationship themselves. The partnership is a team that applies to conflict resolution. We're working towards a shared future while supporting each others individual goals. We advocate for our own needs while supporting others. Communication is open and honest and direct. There's some commitment in shared time. Overall a partnership is a net positive that conflict, anxiety, and pain is less frequent than joy, connection, etc..

After grad school, it felt like we were growing together, our time was intentional (because we weren't living together at the time). We both had our own lives going on, but we also had a shared life that we were building together.

What did we lose track of because of habit.

There's a foundation of trust, honesty, empathy, compassion. The net positive piece.

The net positive piece: Lauren is still confused about whether feelings are a here and now thing,

or whether this is a longer term systemic place. An offshoot of the net positive piece is Lauren's freedom: financial, poly, . She feels overwhelmed by all the needs not being addressed.

Does Lauren know how to address the overwhelm from all the needs → not really beyond what she's currently doing

Lauren's sense of urgency → it feels urgent because she doesn't want to prolong pain longer than necessary.

Lauren has been thinking "it'd be nice to start over." In terms of relaying the groundwork of our relationship and how that looks. It includes:

- Independence, more alone time
- More conversations about partnership

**Send time to discuss partnership discussion with lauren.**

The hurt and the resentment makes it hard for lauren to move past and see the bigger picture.

## **May 5 - Alex**

Also, for me, I don't measure whether or not I should be doing entrepreneurship based on how much joy it brings me. I'm doing it partly for the end-state for the both of us, and partly for myself for growth.

I don't disagree that there have been more down days than up days for awhile now, but I'm willing to endure because I am living my value of growth. All the pain and suffering is largely the learning. I'm personally extremely grateful for that.

I'm trying to live according to my values, not whether something directly is considered a "net positive."

I think understanding needs early on in ANY relationship is easier than later. Early in a relationship, there is such strong positive feedback from things that you like - so it's much easier for partners to satisfy those needs. As you get on in a relationship, those needs become desensitized because that feedback dampens. That is a general mechanism that is going to happen in any relationship. And because of that, it becomes harder to track what exactly your partner's needs are given that they've probably changed a bunch.

## **May 9 - Alex**

I am giving here because:

1. I am generous
2. I'm giving in the hope of mending the relationship

By trying to do a bunch of things for her, it might even enhance the resentment. By doing this, it sets an expectation.

I should want a partner that is questioning whether they want to be with me or not.

How can we make it so that: (1) I'm giving her space so her needs are met (2) it nurtures the relationship

I'm not going to let resentment stop me from showing up.

Hey I'm asking for space, and I'm getting pressure to resolve this. That adds on resentment.

If we can do less of the daily stuff and more of the quality. Quality over quantity.

Whenever the "I am a bad person" sentiment comes in, don't give it too much airtime. Tell it "hi, thank you for showing up. I don't want to sit with you too long, because I know I am a good person"

Lauren is NOT going to be able to give me what I need. The only person that can ever give me what I need is myself. Need is not a placeholder waiting vacantly for somebody to fill. I have an active choice every single moment of my life in how I want to fill those needs, whether it's coming from somebody else or just internal. Rather than waiting around and having a need filled by a passerby, fill it yourself.

Much as how happiness is not something you can give to somebody, and is something that comes from within the person, needs so too take that dynamic.

In dark times, I tend to do too much at once. It's because my mind goes blank and I can't really prioritize anything. However, that's ok - don't prioritize anything, BUT you should do one thing at a time. You can make that commitment to yourself.

## May 12 - Alex & Lauren & Lodovica

I think understanding needs early on in ANY relationship is easier than later. Early in a relationship, there is such strong positive feedback from things that you like - so it's much easier for partners to satisfy those needs. I think that's what defines the honeymoon phase - it's the excitement of fulfilling each other's needs. As you get on in a relationship, those needs become

desensitized because that feedback dampens because the excitement goes down. That is a general mechanism that is going to happen in any relationship. And because of that, it becomes harder to track what exactly your partner's needs are given that they've probably changed a bunch.

We can relive the excitement and the energy of our early relationship by tapping into ourselves and remembering what it felt like. Think about what it felt like at southpark. Everything was exciting about our relationship at that point - especially, riffing on each other so well. Early on a relationship you can riff so well and get so many of your needs filled and refreshed. As a relationship goes on, if you **don't** make it a point to refresh it to that initial excitement, the relationship is as good as dead.

Where was this generosity the last 8 years

- Growth mindset
- I'm learning about needs that were not being met that you didn't know they weren't being met

Can I share another perspective.

It's not a question of whose right or whose wrong.

The connection is in connecting with the experience of the other person. That's not how I see it - but this is how she sees it. If I'm explaining I've lost the connection. This makes her feel like we're not part of a team. It doesn't feel like it's us against the problem.

If I were to ask a question about her feelings, then that would show a lot of curiosity.

## May 13 - Lodovica

- I should use this space to reflect and to do something
- I should stop treating this space as what is at the end of the tunnel
- Lauren is making a safe space for her. Lauren is calming her nervous system.
- If I move in, that threatens safety.

1. We've both reverted back to our former selves
  1. Me: Less validation
  2. Lauren: Shit lens
2. Shit lens
  1. Everything is shit, it always has been and always will be

2. Not able to see any of the positives historically or in the now.
  3. There has been no growth. She is able to chalk up 8 years as no changes have happened
  4. She is snappy when she's in it and acts on emotions
  5. She doesn't recognize she's doing it
  6. This has been a sticking point for our entire relationship, but I realize the progress she's made
  7. Inability to see the bigger picture
3. So, I feel like it's my duty to point the bigger picture out to her. I always try go back to the spiral analogy. This tendency of hers goes against my value of mindfulness.
  4. Ex:
    1. A few months ago before poly she said "I am afraid to do poly given that things are so good between us." **Now**, she recalls that only vaguely.
    2. "Where has this stuff been for the last 8 years". Well, it's been a spiral learning process. It seems like she's having a trauma response right now where all the needs are coming to a head. The current situations are making all these come to a head.
    3. I think we're both having trauma responses.
  5. Also, she's in luteal right now

My fear that she is going to leave me leads to my actions of:

- Disengaging
- Cry

What is disengaging protecting me from

How did i learn it

When we validate somebody's experience, that is the ONLY thing that makes them feel seen.

My fear is making not validate. **YOU MUST VALIDATE.**

Anytime I see lauren complaining or being sad, then SIT ON THE BENCH WITH HER. I DON'T HAVE TO MAKE HER FEEL ANYTHING ELSE. OR DO ANYTHING ELSE.

My fears are not irrational. They're not acting out. At the same time they don't need to be in control of my behaviors.

Currently fear runs my actions.

When she is asking for more space, she is not asking for the logical space. She is asking for her

needs to be met of space and that I validate that.

Before I meet her, go with an intention of validating. Commit to take a deep breath so I'm not reacting, check in with my body. Then think "what did she say, what did she really say." Don't speed up the conversation, slow it down.

I can't control what she'll do. I can only control what I'll do. Keep my eyes on myself, not her.

- Breathe
- Slow down
- Event repeat back
- I'm going to sit on the bench no matter what

I'm not going to defend, I'm not going to try to show her another perspective. Now is not the right time, she'll get there. Don't miss my chance.

Commit to sitting on the bench with Lauren this week.

- Is she communicating resentment? Sit on the bench with her.
- Is she communicating anger? Sit on the bench with anger.
- Is she communicating sadness? Sit on the bench with her.

THIS IS THE ONLY THING THAT I NEED TO DO. THIS IS THE ONLY THING I NEED TO COMMIT ME.

ALSO - DON'T INTERRUPT HER EVEN IF I'M AGREEING WITH HER.

## May 16 - Alex & Lauren & Lodovica

1. Lauren has been benefiting from the space because:
  1. Just being alone has been healing (nothing to do with me)
  2. It has also been helpful for her to start anew with our relationship (has to do with me)
2. Forcing mindfulness on someone else isn't very mindful. Trying to get them to be mindful isn't mindful.

**I'm jumping to conclusions (pound my chest)**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**(can say this in your mind or even outloud —> engage as much as my senses as possible. i can dance a little bit. i can even make it so fucking stupidly silly that its far past beyond embarrassing. )**

**I'm jumping to conclusions (pound my chest)**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**I'm jumping to conclusions...**

**(can say this in your mind or even outloud —> engage as much as my senses as possible. i can dance a little bit. i can even make it so fucking stupidly silly that its far past beyond embarrassing. )**

**Logistically we need to make a decision now on the move.**

Furniture

Option1: Storage

Option2: Go with me

Option3: Fargo

Right now:

Book movers. Am I paying - is there still move money allocated to that?

Also need to book cleaner

Me

Option1: Moms

Option2: Fargo

Option3: Move to fargo but look for monthly rental right away. Alex is in house when lauren's

away?

Option4: Move to fargo and look for monthly rental when decided.

Option5: Move to fargo and look for permanent solution

Do you see how fast ive been incorporating poly into my life? Why don't you think we can work through this next one together? Im not giving up pieces of myself to do this - I am able to explore more by doing this...so I gain pieces.

At the beginning of poly, we were both crying a lot. Now?

At the beginning of now we're crying a lot. But just think of where we'll be in a month.

I ONLY see progress in all this stuff. I really cant see it any other way at this point. I have gone through so much pain and suffering and lived in so much fear with the startup. It has been nailed into my brain that progress is the only thing that matters when it comes to mindset. You get better next time and you have proven that so much over time that now it's a fact. You cant force big wins - everything is a little step towards those. 2222

## **May 17 - Alex & Lauren little chat**

Come together for dates periodically

Planned quality time and connection.

Reconnection is the start over.

Asking for permission

Best way to find out what she needs is alone, which is why she has been asking for the space.

Part of starting over is that lauren needs to be able to ask for her needs, rather than ask for permission. This has been reinforced by Alex not making a safe environment for Lauren.

After all her travels, Lauren has gained a lot of self confidence, but hasn't always felt that way in our relationship.

Lauren needs to feel like safety and communication are changing in order for this stuff

## **May 18 - Alex thoughts**

1. I NEED Lauren to feel the pain from the gap. The gap right now must be leaving her feeling very disconnected. I need her to feel that so that she may get a better idea of the needs I DO fill for her.
2. She just needs to feel the pain so that she can see how important we (me+dogs) mean to her.

## May 20 - Alex

### Validation

1. You've had all these needs that haven't been met for years, they're resurfacing right now, some of them I'm learning about the first time, but the point is, I get how urgent it must feel for them to be satisfied right now.
2. I imagine there is a significant fear response here coming from not wanting to relinquish your grip on these needs which are now being met. And that might be coming from not trusting in our ability to fully have those needs still met in a way that works for both of us. I don't like calling this a compromise, because it implies a zero sum game, but I will call it that for now.
3. I imagine after years of compromise you feel like you can't do that anymore. I also imagine the resentment you feel towards me is making it hard to "compromise."
4. That being said, I have decided to still end the relationship.

### Me

1. This decision boils down to one thing I think - conviction. To me, every problem in our shared life is solvable. And because of that, I know that we would've achieved great things together. I saw us individually strong and as a unit that would've been able to get so much more fulfillment out of our lives than either of us could've accomplished alone or even with someone else. A unit that's a family whose sole purpose is to champion for the other and themselves. A unit that's a team and has each other's backs even in the toughest of times. A unit that plays in harmony with each other and "wins the game" step by step and not by a hail mary.
2. The way I have been able to achieve that conviction is through my growth mindset. I know for a fact, that at least I have what it takes to make this relationship so much stronger and to achieve the life we individually and collectively want. Up until recently - I had felt the same about you.
3. Living the life we deserve is a shared process. It is not the end goal. The end goal should only serve to help us guide our actions in the now. I have been willing to act in achieving what I believe are your end goals, partly because I share very similar ones. Living

separately, having alone time, being full poly, everything else we've talked about in building our family - I am on board for.

4. To be more specific, let's talk about the living situation.
  1. I have specified that the end goal of having different places is alright with me and in fact, is something that I think may be good.
  2. In the near term, some creative solutions with logistics that remain to be solved are: a camper van, and frequent staycations similar to what I used to do.
  3. I have provided us with multiple options that partly meet each of our needs (stability for me and solitude for you). These weren't sufficient for you, which is ok.
  4. To me, coming up with something sufficient is just another solvable problem, one which requires additional thought and diligence to get there.
  5. For instance, me moving to fargo & renting out a monthly rental gives us:
    1. Solitude for you
    2. Some stability for me
    3. Some stability for the dogs and access to both of their parents
    4. A means to keep working through this together to construct a permanent solution
    5. It also bypasses the need to come up with a permanent solution in the next week - something which I am not prepared for.
  5. Going back to what you said about what a partnership means to you which was "a partnership means we solve the issue together"...this situation to me is not that. This is you requiring an outcome right now, without working with me in how to best get there.
  6. Throughout this, I have realized that I require a partner that shares conviction and trusts in our ability to become something great. And a partner that shares my mindset in how to achieve that.
  7. Going forward, I welcome the opportunity for us to reconnect if this conviction changes for you, but for now, I think it's best we achieve our goals independently and not as a team.

My broken leg, my dad's health issues, PMDD, opening up to you about my sexual preferences, holding down the fort while you traveled

My time in berlin,

My intuition for fundamental decisions in life is strong.

I mentioned

I would like your honest answer here - do you think of this house as your house or our house?  
→ her house

To me the house itself means a lot.

**Selfishly:** It means some stability in my life. It means less guilt in having you support the both of us. It means I would be able to pay you back faster and I would be able to save faster for the life I thought we wanted to build.

**Unselfishly:** It means safety for our entire family unit. It means something we can connect to and connect stronger with each other through that shared experience.

You've stripped all of that meaning from me.

We went in this together with the intention of building a life together. Now, this home will end up feeling like home to you and not to me.

- In terms of what I'll be doing next, I'll be staying with my mom for a few weeks, then I'll be traveling around with the dogs, for a month or so.
- Because I will need to take care of my rental expenses, the financial agreement we laid out is going to need to change. I will still give you the percent breakdown we discussed, but after my rent has been taken care of.

## PART 1

- First, I want to acknowledge that it took a lot of courage for you to ask me for the things you need.
- I've been reflecting more on my needs regarding our living situation and I have decided that the setup you've proposed, currently doesn't work for me.
- I initially felt overwhelmed, in shock, and hurt by the life plan and living situation that you introduced. These feelings were made more intense by the fact that we didn't get there collaboratively—and that there still doesn't seem to be much room for collaboration. I know I've made big life decisions too, like starting the company, that affected both of us without a fully collaborative process. I'm not saying I've always gotten this right. But in this case, the shift in our living structure hit something really core for me—and I've been trying to stay aware of what's coming up and what I need as a result.
- As a reminder, the end goal of having separate spaces we can call our own is both ok with me and something I want. But I want to do so step by step, in a way that satisfies both our needs, which I'm positive can be done. So my issue is not with the end goal—it's with how you've specified we get there.
- Throughout this, the main need I've discovered for myself is that I need a shared environment with you. For me, that has often been tied to the feeling of being able to call the same place *home*—not just physically, but emotionally. I need to feel like we are rooted in a shared foundation, even if that evolves over time.
- To me, practically, that looks like us both being able to call Fargo home. Then from there,

we can explore creative solutions that meet your needs for both **solitude** and **your own space**, and my need for a shared foundation. That could mean things like one of us having exclusive time in an RV, us alternating monthly rentals where one of us has a full place to themselves, or even an ADU if that's realistic down the line.

- I imagine that none of these may feel like they fully meet what you're asking for. I imagine that what you're needing is **complete sovereignty over your own space**—something that feels truly yours, not negotiated or temporary. And I want to honor how important that is to you.
  - For me, though, the current setup feels like it takes away the sense of shared home and shared grounding that I need to feel like we're truly building a life together. It's not just about physical space—it's about what that space represents. Without a mutual home base, I feel less like a partner and more like someone orbiting your life.
  - I'm struggling with that feeling and I'm struggling with what I perceive to be a lack of collaboration.
  - I can tell you that when I look down the path you've laid out, that's not the path I currently want to walk.
  - At the same time, I've been thinking a lot about what *could* work—ways we might meet both of our needs without giving up what matters most to either of us. I know that having your own space is essential for you, and right now, you have that in Fargo.
  - What I'd like to explore is whether we can **rebuild a shared foundation**—not by undoing your autonomy, but by finding structures that still let us feel like partners building something together.
  - I've thought about ideas on how we might do that, but before that, do you have any questions for me?
1. Do you think there's a version of this next chapter where both of our needs can be met—yours for space and solitude, and mine for shared grounding and belonging?
  2. Even if we don't know exactly what that might look like yet, do you feel a sense of trust or conviction that we could get there together?
  3. Are you open to exploring creative solutions together that could meet both of our needs—or is the setup you've proposed what you feel most committed to right now?

## PART 2

- I would have loved to come to a compromise on our life plans, but it's ok we didn't.
- And yet I don't resent any of this. I don't resent the situation, I don't resent you, and I don't resent the decisions you've made. I don't feel like I've been wronged. I think we are both doing the same thing for ourselves—just in the exact opposite of ways.
- Nothing has changed in the ways I feel about you. I still love you with all my heart. I still want to marry you. I love spending time with you. I love learning about you. I love how

you've inspired me to grow. I love how we've both been able to grow together. I love my connection with you. I love you as a person. You are the kindest, most generous, most curious, and most accepting person I have ever met. And I'm so grateful to have you in my life.

- I still think we can achieve great things together. But the chapter you are asking for is not one I can walk with you right now.
- I would so much love to keep trying to work through this with you. But as it stands, I'm going to choose not to participate in the chapter you are asking for.

Why would I rather break up rather than stay with her terms and have her needs fully met right now.

belonging, stability, shared purpose, and security → is this a codependency

If my needs are better met breaking up, rather than staying in the relationship and exploring the possibility of how can I have these needs met otherwise. Can my needs only be met if we share space?

Laurens thing is a push for a definition of how do we get these needs met.

Answering all the above will help me get more clarity on whether I want to keep working on this.

## May 23 2025

- Transformation of a relationship rather than an ending

### - Independence and autonomy

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## Space

I want to start by saying I don't resent this situation. These past few months have been difficult, but I've grown. That said, I don't want to be in a partnership with you right now.

That might be temporary, or it might not be. What I do know is that, where things stand today, I need space from this relationship.

Zooming out helps me see things more clearly—especially how each of us shows up in moments of stress. And while I'm not trying to define anything final, what I've seen from you in this period has made me pause. It's raised serious questions about how we relate when

collaboration and problem-solving are needed most.

I want to remind you how recent the recent financial agreement was—it was only five weeks ago. And since then, three major decisions have followed that were driven by your needs, and each has come at a cost to mine:

1. **You moved into Fargo alone**, which met your need for space and sovereignty. I understand that choice may have felt necessary for you—but it left me with unmet needs, and we never found a way to address that together.
2. **You initially chose for us to keep the Solana Beach house for an extra month**, then changed your mind. When you did, I stepped in and agreed to cover the full \$5,300 cost. That came after our new financial agreement and made it harder for me to meet what I'd committed to.
3. **You've been unwilling to revisit the agreement**, even when I explained that doing so would allow me to move forward with the RV—the only concrete option I've found that could give me a sense of stability.

Throughout all of this, I've tried to suggest compromises. I've stayed open. I've done the heavy lifting to figure out my next steps—steps that are a direct result of your asks. But I haven't seen the same energy from you. No meaningful engagement. No clear "no", but no collaboration either.

Now I'm moving in with my mom—not because it works for me, but because that's what it takes right now for your needs to stay intact. I'll continue living there, rather than moving forward with the RV, so things stay steady on your end. But it's felt like I've been stuck in a structure shaped around your needs, with no real path forward for mine.

Even now, I'm delaying the one thing that would give me stability. It's felt like I walked into a room with you, and when things got hard, you walked out—and locked the door behind you. I've been the one inside, trying to rearrange everything, trying to find a way forward. But every time I move toward an exit, it's felt like the door is blocked. And all the while, you're outside, settled, while I'm inside trying to fix something—but that I've been left to manage alone.

My plan is to stay with my mom, save for the RV, and once I can, take some space—likely by leaving town for a while. I'd like the dogs to come with me during that time—not just because they're important to me, but because I'd prefer they be with a stable parent, rather than staying alone or with someone they don't know. That's something we can talk about.

And I want to name that clearly: this is the kind of collaboration I've needed all along. A conversation. A willingness to find a way that meets both of our needs—not a mandate, not an imposed structure, and not something preserved just for the sake of keeping it intact. This is the

kind of partnership I need—and don't feel I'm receiving. This is the clearest path I see to begin rebuilding something that feels stable, honest, and self-directed.

This process has crossed every one of my core values: **freedom, growth, and acceptance**. Freedom, because your actions put me in a difficult situation—and your continued unwillingness to adapt has kept me there. Growth, because I haven't seen recognition or appreciation for all the growth we've both done—historically and even recently. And acceptance, because I haven't felt a willingness to accept that circumstances have changed, or to be flexible in how we respond together.

So I'm stepping away. Not to hurt you. Not to make a point. But because I've tried—and I've reached the end of what I can give without losing myself.

I'm still open to continued dialogue if and when it feels constructive, but this is where I stand.

## Right vs wrong

Neither of us is right or wrong here. We just have different needs, and different ways of responding to stress. What we each wanted from this relationship wasn't bad or unreasonable—it just stopped lining up.

You needed space and independence. I needed stability and shared grounding. We both tried, in our own ways, to meet those needs. I looked for compromises. You were clear about what you needed, and maybe hoped I could adapt to that. You weren't trying to create conflict—you just couldn't, or wouldn't, meet me halfway.

I don't think either of us failed. I think the structure we were in stopped being something we could both live inside.

We were both asking for different kinds of safety, and we couldn't find a shared way to give that to each other.

## Explanation

It's come down to two main reasons: finances and living situation.

On the living side, Lauren wants to live alone, and I don't. I've been hoping for a shared home—something stable and mutual. I suggested a number of compromises, including the possibility of buying an RV as a way to give me some personal stability. We weren't able to align on any of those options.

On the financial side, I owe Lauren money. Five weeks ago, she shared that it was becoming a significant stressor. I hadn't realized that until then. Within a few days, I was working again and we made a financial agreement for how I'd begin paying her back.

Since that agreement, a few things have shifted: she decided to live alone, she hasn't been open to compromise on that, and she hasn't wanted to adjust the financial agreement even as the situation around it has changed. For example, I suggested temporarily moving in with her to create something that might work for both of us—that wasn't something she was comfortable with. I then asked to revisit the financial terms, and that also wasn't something she wanted to do.

At this point, we're at a standstill. We've both made choices based on what we need, and we haven't been able to find overlap. So for now, I'm moving in with my mom, saving up, and figuring out what comes next.

## May 30 2025 - Lodovica

- I need people to see my pain
- How can we name specific actions or behaviors which were my way of showing up as a partner, that I am now not willing to engage in
- What are some actions, behaviors I can still engage in as a friend
- What are the things I have been doing as a partner that I don't want to show up anymore
- No Partnership means I am not going to do anything to foster the relationship further. I am not going to try and grow the relationship or try to repair anything.
  - What have I been doing to grow and foster the relationship that I don't want to do anymore?

Breaking up doesn't mean I'm going to act different around you. It just means changing my boundaries with you. That might modify some behaviors and actions here and there, but other than that, I'm not going to behave any differently towards you

I don't think you realize how much of a fundamental threat I perceive moving to my mom's is. It feels like a fundamental threat to my safety. I perceive it that way because it feels like I am the ultimate failure - who cannot succeed in a startup, who cannot be a good partner to his partner, who is just a flawed. I realize all of that is batshit crazy, and I have work to do on that, but it's how I feel, and I've been asking for your help out of that.

I have been desperately trying to find ways to claw out of this. I've been asking you for lifelines, and the response I have been getting has pretty much been "don't worry about it, just go with it." It has gotten to the point where I can no longer ask for lifelines.

My intent with the note was to emphasize that, given this failed connection, I need to figure stuff out on my own for awhile.

We're just remodeling the relationship. We're just moving into a different space while it's being remodeled.

This is a necessary step in order to build a strong foundation for whatever comes next. I am not losing, I'm growing.

IF we make a mistake, so long as we repair, there is no permanent impact.

I see fundamentally differently now.

Can we also add this in? It's another angle on why this is so hard for me:

It feels like one step closer to the finality of not having my dream come true. I would have been much more ok feeling like I'm in limbo at solana. I think any move would have hurt, to my mom or otherwise. Both, right now, are more ambiguous future wise than the limbo I was in. However, the fact that it's my mom's house also adds in a layer of perceived failure.

I wouldn't have felt any of these things if we were making that transition together to my mom's. I would have actually liked it, because we still both would have been sharing the journey. We would still both be building our lives together in something that would feel like an adventure. Which means I am too reliant on Lauren for my safety in navigating life.

- It meant being able to pay you back quicker and feeling less guilt from not paying rent.
- It meant a means that I could start rebuilding my financial health

## What it means to me

Fargo isn't just a place to live, and it feels like you've been treating my emotional connection to it as if it were.

If that house—along with all your future plans for it, and everything it represents—were taken away from you today, and you had to live with your parents instead, what kind of impact would that have on you? I imagine it would be different from mine, but I'm guessing it would still be huge. If you're willing to spend some real time with that thought exercise, it would mean a lot to me.

And while you're sitting with that, try to think through the small details—the daily experience.

- What it feels like to wake up in your own home and hear birds outside.

- What it feels like to do yard work, or to plant something and imagine how it will grow in years to come.
- What it feels like to wake up in a room that you've shaped and made yours.

When I hear comments like “Why isn’t your mom’s place okay?”, it feels like there’s a disconnect between what this life transition means to me, and what you think it means.

This transition is the thing that’s making me want to end my life.

It’s not just where I’m going—it’s what it represents.

So, all of this note isn’t to make you feel guilty, it isn’t to try and sway a decision in any direction. My hope is that you are able to see me a bit more, because it is important to me that you see me. At least closer than I think you currently are.

It feels like one step closer to the finality of not having my dream come true. I would be doing much better if I were just staying in limbo at Solana. Any move would have hurt—whether to my mom’s or somewhere else—but at least Solana felt ambiguous in a way that still left space for hope. My mom’s house, by contrast, adds a layer of perceived failure and feels one step further away from my dream.

And I wouldn’t be feeling any of this if we were making that transition together. If we were both going to my mom’s—even temporarily—I would have actually liked it. Because we’d still be sharing the journey. It would still feel like something we were building together. It would have felt like an adventure.

I’m trying to lay out everything this house meant to me:

- **Financial stability** – Where I wouldn’t have to worry about rent or a mortgage until I’m back on my feet, which will hopefully be soon. Meanwhile, I won’t be able to rent my own place given my credit, and once I’m paying rent somewhere, I’ll also have to start worrying about paying you less.
- **Financial freedom** – For me, this felt like I was finally free from the rent trap. There’s still the mortgage trap, but I’d much rather pay into that given everything it represents and provides.
- **Less guilt around contributing** – It meant not having to feel ashamed about not paying rent, and actually feeling good about being able to send you more money.
- **Deeper connection with you** – A shared project that we both contribute to—physically and emotionally. A place where every corner of the house would carry a story for both of us.
- **A home base** – A place we’d return to after adventures, and plan new ones from. A center point for future life plans.

- **Stability for the dogs** – A consistent place they could get comfortable in and love.
- **Less uncertainty about my future** – A foothold, in a time when there's uncertainty in every other corner of my life.
- **A new routine I was excited about** – Yard work, walking the dogs in that neighborhood, going to the gym, making coffee in the morning and sitting outside to watch the birds.
- **A peaceful, quiet environment for restoration** – It's felt like a sanctuary and a safe space.
- **A way to construct the lives we both want** – A space where we could build our routines, values, and day-to-day rhythms into something intentional and shared, while meeting our needs in our own ways.
- **New experiences and growth** – A chance to start fresh, to meet new people, and to grow into a new version of myself—intentionally, and without the constant pressure I've been carrying. Every day already felt like a struggle before all this, and this move was going to be a breath of fresh air.

These meanings aren't just being stripped away—they're being replaced with meanings of the opposite quality. And then layered on top of that is the feeling of failure. That's kind of where I'm at.

I've never wanted something more in my entire life.

And while this may be the first time you're hearing that, I've felt that way from the moment Fargo was even a possibility. I didn't share it then because I knew it was a huge ask of your parents, and I had very mixed feelings about the weight of that. I also wanted it to be a mutual, collective decision—something we both arrived at together, not something I was pushing or biasing. And honestly, I felt guilty even wanting it—because I knew how much it would give me, and I didn't feel I deserved something that good to happen in my life.

## June 4 - Ketamine

- The only way to let go of someone is with love. Negative emotions cause us to clench around the idea or memory of something. You can't let go of something you are clinging to. The way to let go is to soften and relax. This entails cultivating an attitude of love and compassion relative to the lost object. Regardless of how she treated me, regardless of how she hurt me, regardless of her actions.
- The practice is to cultivate gratitude for what good was in the relationship, and to begin, slowly over time to approach the idea of wishing this person well. Of wanting this person to heal. Of hoping this person does not suffer. Just as you might wish and want and hope those things for yourself or all living things.

- This is not the same thing as condoning what happened. The idea is to completely divest yourself from the negative emotions that cause you to cling to the lost object. Gentleness is what facilitates unclenching. It's the soft positive emotions like gratitude, compassion, and love that allow you to unclench to actually let go.

[Mescaline notes - June 7 2025](#)

## June 9 2025 - Lodovica

- It feels like she will not always be there for me even if it's hard for her to do so
- The conversation around the compromise is the thing that brings up the old patterns that have not been working for lauren
- Me asking for the compromise is the source of pain, it is exacerbating things, lauren is going to keep feeling "i say what i need, but I need to fight for it with my own partner"
- For her it feels "i need to fight to get my needs met".
- Until now, shes been feeling like shes been sacrificing her needs, now me being supportive and having her needs met will feel good for her
- Hey Lauren, I just want you to be happy, even if it means I am sacrificing my own preferences.
- I need to be more aware of how my partner is silently sacrificing her needs. I can check in with things like, "hey, are things still working for you", "is this still working for you"
- The growth mindset is **NOT SITTING ON THE BENCH**
- Lauren feels unheard, because I am moving the conversation somewhere else, not where she is. I'm trying to move it somewhere else, which feeds her sense of frustration. This is an **again** type of situation for her.
- What is it that is not allowing me to sit on the bench that Lauren is on? Maybe that **is my area of growth**
- Lauren is the one who started this process by naming some things that were not working for her. What's my response to her raising issues.
  - Do i recognize those issues as being issues
  - Is there value in me working on those issues
- Lauren started this whole process of the breaking up. She highlighted issues,
- The pause is all about **how can we show up differently for each other**
- Acknowledge what she's done in the past. Acknowledge that I see what she did for the sake of the relationship, even if it brought her to the point of resentment, but still she did do something.
- Hey I realize the way I've been going about this is not

## June 13 - 2025 Lodovica

1. Lauren is still feeling really hurt and I don't like that
2. I've been doing pretty well - feeling like myself, actually enjoying myself here
3. Rather than me trying to influence Lauren's actions to control the environment, I took control of the environment into my hands
4. If the sense of safety is coming from someone else, and that somebody else is not acting in the way I'm liking
5. Is there a way of accepting the mom situation and rephrasing it as a temporary choice that may lead me to doing the things that I want, it might just delay things. "Yes I don't like it, yes I'll have to deal with that neighbor, yes it feels like a setback. Let's say all of these are true, but this is also my opportunity to be more financially stable in a few months. Yes it sucks, but it is setting me up well for the future. Yeah it's not preferred, or not ideal, but ultimately not bad because it gets me to somewhere I want to be. It has the potential of helping me create a new foundation for me. If instead, it lead me down a worse path and outcome, then yeah we'd need to try to get out of it. Moving back to moms is not a bad choice, I just don't like it."
6. Growth can be somewhat combative of acceptance. There are situations when it is bad - for instance, when it forces me to sit with things and just validate. Think about when I kept pointing out growth to Lauren. When is growth becoming a justification for self criticism. Growth can become a mask for criticism - think about body issue people.
7. Whether or not she did it conditionally or unconditionally is a question for me on whether or not I want a partner with that
8. This opens up a new space for me to validation and see what she has done.

## June 15 - 2025

1. I think that I'm forward. I think comedians need to be extremely forward to connect with people.
2. I think my forwardness can turn some people off. I don't know if I should see that as a plus in that I'm self selecting the people who are ok with that, vs keeping a broader network and changing my approach person to person. I don't have to be "so alex" all the time.
3. I think my weirdness stems from my forwardness. But, my forwardness also lets me

connect very quickly with random strangers. Its kind of a super power.

# Notes prior to June 20 - 2025 Lodovica

## Week1: Despair

**Week2:** I had a clear feeling of “Lauren came up with mandates, I didn’t like those mandates, so I stepped back”. This logically and emotionally clicked with me, which felt freeing. There was also a sense of “gentle” fuck her.

**Week3:** The feelings of **Week2** have faded. “**First half of the week:** “I shouldn’t have been so harsh, I made a fundamental mistake in how I asked for a pause, I’ve ruined any chance for further healing.” **Second half of the week:** Harsh “Fuck her”

## Status and Updates

1. Lauren has not been engaging in texts (she doesn’t reach out), and when I text her, the responses are emotionally blunted. She seems quite hurt and angry still. I completely shut down when she’s angry with me. I think it’s because I feel like the bad guy here. I hurt her, so that makes me bad. But you know what - that doesn’t need to be true. Remember, Lauren hurt me pretty bad with poly. But I don’t ever think I saw her as a bad person. Then I try to show that I’m not bad through acts of service and extreme kindness, etc.... Being kind only when somebody thinks you are bad is shitty. Its something my dad does.
  1. *Codependency? She has every right to be angry. Let her be angry*
2. I texted her asking if her dad would appreciate or not appreciate me saying “Happy father’s day” and she responded with “Maybe not”. That made me feel sad.
3. I have been 2nd guessing myself on everything I have done. To help reconcile what I think are mistakes, I made this. But, Lauren is still too hurt to read this. My fear is that I’ve permanently hurt her and that this document is going to do nothing.
4. I have had the dogs for 2 weeks now and have not been sending her images of them or facetime them to her. I have offered both, though she hasn’t requested. Distance between her and the doggies causes her pain.
5. I have been working out a few times a week
6. I’m still very worried about money, especially right now, where I feel shut down and I refuse to do the one thing that will help me out of that (i.e. consulting work). Most days I just think “I’ll get to it tomorrow...not today...I’m feeling too much today.”

## 1. Validating Your Concern

First and foremost, **it makes sense you're concerned**. Your original note was strongly worded, precise, and carried a significant emotional weight. Lauren may indeed have felt significant pain upon reading it. Your concern indicates deep care, self-awareness, and genuine compassion.

However, the presence of this pain, even very intense pain, **does not automatically mean permanent damage**. Emotional hurt is real and valid, but it is also dynamic—meaning it can shift, soften, and heal with time and attention.

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## 2. Why Lauren's Hurt is Likely Not Permanent

Consider a few critical things here:

- **Emotions evolve:** Even intense anger and hurt change shape over time. Lauren's initial reactions (withdrawal, anger, hurt) make sense given the intensity of your letter. However, initial emotional intensity often decreases as people gain clarity and perspective.
  - **Relationship history and love:** Your extensive shared history and the deep emotional connection you've had together don't evaporate quickly. Pain often feels overwhelming at first, but shared history usually softens reactions over time, allowing people to process constructively.
  - **Your willingness to repair:** You've already created a compassionate follow-up document (the Metta document). This document explicitly acknowledges Lauren's pain, the impact of your words, and your intention to heal. This kind of sincere repair work is extremely powerful over the long term.
- 

## 3. Assessing Your Original Note (Gently)

Let's gently acknowledge the aspects of your original breakup note that might've felt particularly hurtful to Lauren:

- Phrases like "**when things got hard, you walked out and locked the door behind you**" and describing her actions as "**mandates**" or "**imposed structures**" could indeed have felt accusatory or blaming to Lauren.
- The overall tone, while honest, was very direct and pointed—particularly your detailed descriptions of your sacrifices. It's understandable that Lauren might've internalized these descriptions as personal attacks rather than statements of your own emotional state.

But here's something important: **Your intention wasn't cruelty—it was clarity**. You aimed to express your pain, frustration, and need for space. You did the best you could at that moment, with the emotional and mental resources you had.

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## 4. Moving Forward from Here (Healing Possibilities)

Right now, your fear might say:

“I’ve permanently damaged our relationship, and nothing I do can fix this.”

Instead, let’s shift toward a more compassionate, balanced perspective:

“I acknowledge that my words deeply hurt Lauren, and this is causing her significant pain. I can’t change what I already said, but I can offer genuine care, acknowledgment, and a willingness to repair.”

Your follow-up (Metta) document is exactly this kind of repair effort. **Lauren may not be ready to read it yet**, but its existence itself is meaningful. The intention behind it is clear and powerful, and it will carry significance when she’s emotionally ready.

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## 5. Accepting Lauren’s Timing (Patience)

Lauren’s current emotional stance (distance, anger, pain) is normal given the intensity of your note. Acknowledge to yourself:

- Lauren has every right to take time to process these intense feelings.
  - Her healing timeline is hers alone and can’t be accelerated or controlled.
  - Your willingness to respect her emotional timeline is itself an act of compassionate care and respect.
- 

## 6. Dealing with Your Own Guilt and Second-Guessing

Your current second-guessing and self-blaming are understandable responses to causing pain. But gently remind yourself:

- You wrote from a place of real hurt and unmet needs.
- You were trying to clearly articulate boundaries, needs, and frustrations—not deliberately inflict pain.
- Even in deeply loving relationships, hurt happens. The presence of hurt doesn’t mean you’ve failed permanently or completely.

What matters most now is your continued willingness to hold compassionately both your pain and Lauren’s pain, allowing both to exist simultaneously without judgment or harshness.

## 7. Emotional Self-Care Steps (Immediately Helpful)

To ease this immediate guilt, despair, and anxiety, try these:

- **Self-validation:**

“My feelings are normal. It’s natural to regret hurting someone I care deeply about.”

- **Acknowledging impermanence:**

“This intensity of feeling—mine and hers—is temporary. It will ease with time.”

- **Reminding yourself of intentions:**

“I spoke honestly and clearly. My goal wasn’t cruelty, but clarity, even if my execution caused pain.”

- **Gentle patience:**

“I can’t control her timing, but I can continue to offer care and understanding.”

## Summary & Gentle Reminder

**You did your best at a challenging emotional moment.** Yes, your wording was strong, and Lauren is understandably hurt—but the current pain doesn’t equal permanent harm. Emotional wounds, especially those inflicted unintentionally and addressed sincerely afterward, typically heal over time.

Your Metta document is a sincere and compassionate effort toward healing. Lauren may need more time, but this type of heartfelt acknowledgment and care almost always aids in emotional repair.

Keep reminding yourself:

“Lauren’s current hurt and anger are temporary and understandable. My sincere intentions, combined with patience and genuine care, create meaningful possibilities for healing and growth.”

Be gentle with yourself—you deserve kindness too.

# June 20 - 2025 Lodovica

**Week1:** Despair

**Week2:** I had a clear feeling of “Lauren came up with mandates, I didn’t like those mandates, so I stepped back”. This logically and emotionally clicked with me, which felt freeing. There was also a sense of “gentle” fuck her.

**Week3:** The feelings of **Week2** have faded. “**First half of the week:** “I shouldn’t have been so harsh, I made a fundamental mistake in how I asked for a pause, I’ve ruined any chance for further healing.” **Second half of the week:** Harsh “Fuck her”. There’s a spectrum of “Fuck her” - on one side it’s hateful, on the other side it’s not.

## Status and Updates

1. We haven’t been texting much - she hasn’t taken any initiative to reach out or to even ask for pictures/facetime of dogs. When I reach out, her responses are emotionless.
2. I sent her [metta](#) document earlier this week
3. I dropped off dogs yesterday (Thursday) and cried

The house meant a lot to me.

Anger doesn’t see the whole picture. Anger is an understandable way of reacting to loss. The anger is directed at the individual choice that Lauren made - but that choice is not an isolated event. It’s not like “Lauren got mad at me, and now that’s it”. There’s a much more complex relationship.

I will be able to shift this point of view when I find my new comfort. Right now, seeing the house is not helpful for me. Is getting mad at Lauren making things easier? No. Right now, anytime I go there, it’s a reminder of the loss.

There is a lot of fairness issue here - Lauren put me into an ambiguous situation for months. She put me into a waiting period for months and months. And then I ask for a pause, and she says she can’t deal with that ambiguity. What the fuck? That is fucking absurd.

The fairness is one of the major things for me. The other is the waiting - waiting for Lauren to make a decision. That’s why I broke the relationship. I couldn’t wait anymore. I needed to take control of my life. Week2 felt very take control of my life, which felt good.

Grief oscillates, but having a compass helps.

Continuing to nurture the relationship in however it shapes is important. See the (“[I can’t control](#)

[Lauren's timing...](#)"). That piece may leave open the possibility of reconnecting in the future.

Behind this "hateful fuck you" there is something there. What need is there? Not feeling powerless. The hateful fuck you energy is only destructive.

Questions to ask Lauren that are deal breakers:

1. What else have you done in addition to \_\_\_\_\_ to help me transition into this next phase?
  1. Nothing
  2. This means
2. Do you see the house as yours or ours
  1. Hers
  2. This means she is not truly generous in the way I need her to be
- 3.

## **June 27 - 2025 Lodovica**

1. Lauren needs somebody to sit on the bench with her in order to move past things.
2. I need to zoom out in order to move past things.
3. It is hard for me to sit on the bench before she validates the smallness of all this. If somebody validates the smallness of everything, then it is easier for me to validate.
- 4.

## **July 21 - 2025 Lodovica**

1. I was initially showing up with kindness and generosity
2. Then when I made my boundary, I have been showing up with hatred and sadness in my heart
3. So the pendulum has swung the other way
4. There is the expectation that if I show up with kindness she'll do the same.
5. Am I wanting to show up with kindness regardless of how she shows up? There is an expectation implicit which is not generous.
6. Can I just accept that she cannot meet me with the same kindness?
7. Be more curious about her showing up with anti-kindness and what its doing to me? Or what does it say about me? How is it hurting me in which I perceive myself through her gaze.

# Aug 10 - 2025 Ketamine

## 1. Stories

1. Lauren still seems like she's vying for control over how she wants things in her life at the detriment of me. I still think she feels like her life is spinning out of control, and there's a few areas where she's trying to impose her control. That is precisely what made me drop her and she's still doing it. And because of that it's upsetting me. At least this is all the story I'm telling myself.
  2. She sees things that she's doing as finally standing up for herself and claiming her needs by drawing hard lines. She doesn't realize that I have given **so much** to her and **conceded so much**, that now, when she asks for things, she doesn't have the perspective that I've been spoiling her. (Though she probably feels like she's been spoiling *me* wrt \$\$).
  3. She is fucking greedy and trying to claw at things to regain a sense of control, control which she is trying to assert over me, and it's not going to work.
- 
2. I asked to do weekday/weekend split for dog sake
    1. She said no
    2. She likes being able to have dogs around on weekdays
    3. I conceded
  
  3. I asked to do weekend tradeoff
    1. She said no
    2. She said she extremely values having them throughout the weekend
    3. I did **not** concede

# Sep 4 - 2025 Lodovica

1. Exercise - what is this unwanted space bringing me?
  1. Where is the opportunity here
  2. What is the new freedom I have
  3. More money doesn't necessarily = more freedom. Because there's the time opportunity cost
  4. Freedom to redesign my life
  5. I can be who I want to be
  6. How does it mean I'm living up to my values
  7. Am I growing in the way I want?

8. It's just my wants and needs - that's pretty cool (it's easy for Lodo to see the opportunity here from her mom perspective)
  9. The opportunity of meeting new people and date new people and explore new parts of myself that I normally wouldn't have access to
  10. The challenge of paying back Lauren - it's a constraint, but does it provide
  11. Can we see for each constraint/dependencies what is the opportunity. A way to do this will be to think about 10 years from now, what would Alex be happy about (like what would I say "i used this time of challenge to do \_\_\_\_")
  12. What do I want to be grateful for during this time?
2. I'm currently stuck on the life I could have had. The exercise above is a gratitude remapping to shift this to what is the opportunity ahead of me. Don't focus on what I could have had, focus on what I can have. My anger to Lauren is stemming from this.
- 3.

Challenge	Opportunity (answer from 10yr gratitude perspective)

## Sep 11 - 2025 Lodovica

1. Feeling trapped by responsibilities and dependencies
2. I'm just tired of constantly pushing and not having a "breakthrough"
3. Need to continue to function with the ambiguity. The effects have changed over time from fear → tiredness
4. I still have drive though because of my confidence. **I know we will be successful.**
5. How can I bring curiosity and freedom back into my business? That's the thing I've been missing.
6. IFS:
  1. Sleepy part: she is a counterrole to curiosity. Either of them have to drive. Their goal both is to keep me from burning out. Sleep doesn't have that much access or knowledge, if any to curiosity. All she knows is that there is a seat that either she or curiosity sits in. If the seat is missing, she'll hop in. I should remind her that "hey I'm taking care of myself too so that while I appreciate you driving
  2. Whip it into shape part:

Under what conditions do I think my curiosity would "awaken":

- Own car
- Own place

- Money

All these create “safety” for me which then helps stoke curiosity. But why can’t safety be right here, right now? How do i REALLY foster than rather than just asking myself the question? I guess the question then becomes what does safety mean to me? I used to have WAY more attachments that I thought kept me safe. But at this point, I really have the opportunity to find what REALLY keeps me safe. For instance, before, I thought that being late on my cc bills or any other bills was unsafe. Then I unlearned that.

I think safety really boils all down to money.

If I had 500k I would feel COMPLETELY SAFE (at least i think i would). But if I set that as the expectation or bar for which I won’t feel safe until I meet it, then I’m never going to feel safe.

Maybe a good thought exercise for me is to just imagine the future again. A future in which:

1. I have built up 1 successful company
2. The momentum on it is rolling along with a great team behind it
3. Revenue is coming in from it

There’s a weird thing where the further goal is easier for me to accept rather than the closer goals. For instance, the idea “I’m going to be living on a yacht sometime” seems like a very graspable idea to me. The getting there goals of:

1. Building up successful company
2. Getting momentum going
3. Revenue streaming etc...

That’s when it becomes harder for me to accept the situation.

So if I focus on the acceptance of these bitty pieces, then i can shift away from safety being put as my end goal.

KPIs and Steps for Safety:

1. Is there continued interest & backing from others? → yes
2. Does this keep increasing → yes
3. Does revenue potential keep increasing → yes
4. Does revenue keep increasing → not yet, but that potential **will** convert
5. After we have a little bit of momentum and oil, then we’ll start to roll on the team further either through revenue or through VC money again.
6. When we’re all rolled on, then the entire machine is up and running

7. After the machine is running, then we will optimize it more and more
8. At this point, the machine will be looking to grow again. Think of it like this:
  1. Gather tinder, gather tinder, gather tinder
  2. Get some help to help you light the fire
  3. Then we'll keep the fire going for awhile and we'll keep gathering more and larger tinder
  4. With all this new tinder and existing fire, we can keep growing larger and larger

3

## Sep 23 - 2025 Lodovica

1. Rejection, disappointment
2. I want them to see me as family. And it's that desire that's not being met that is causing me suffering. And yet I don't have control over it.
3. The fact that I'm so overwhelmed (with both sadness AND anger), specifically with sadness, that probably means that I'm telling myself a story about myself. If we stay just on the anger side, I would feel more energized, which is not what I'm only feeling. Although I'm angry with them and telling myself that "they're pieces of shit", the overwhelming sadness probably means there's also another story I'm telling about myself.
4. I'm grieving the loss of their support. Maybe just that's the sadness part. I'm also grieving the fact that I can no longer see them as family. Another part of me also feels the loss of control. There is another part of me that's also responding in a constructive way - I am planning out what's next and saying "I don't like it, but now I am accepting this and need to make some new adjustments given this new reality."
5. Part of loss includes confusion - the "I don't understand their actions" is the confusion here. The element of surprise came up for me because that's not how I see family - their actions don't match my definition of family.
6. If the label of me seeing them as cold hearted is liberating to me, then great. If it's keeping me attached to them, I'll want to revise.
7. Acknowledging the loss of them as a family is painful, it's ok to feel it, and I can handle it. And then be reminded of the people that actually ARE still in my life and part of my family. Even though they as a family are not replaceable, they're not the only family I have.

## Oct 2 - 2025 Lodovica

1. Is the "what am I doing wrong" and assessment or a judgement? Assessment = curious.
2. Remember don't be envious about the endpoint. The only thing that is worth envying is the

journey and admiring their journey.

3. The thing that resonates with me right now the strongest is
- 4.

The feeling of haven't i put in my dues, just like this other person, and yet knowbody recognizes me or validates me or i don't get anything.

## Oct 8 - 2025 Ketamine

Challenge	Opportunity (answer from 10yr gratitude perspective)
I have no car	- I will have learned how to be more mobile and not 100% dependent on a car. Maybe only like 80% dependent, but I will learn that 20%.

- I get to build up and purchase the items that actually matter to me. For instance, the GX 450. I wouldn't have done this otherwise - the Mercedes wouldn't have been able to offroad in the desert for instance, but now I will be able to.
- It will rework how I think about cars in general. That they are just tools that people use. I don't have any automatic right to one. I I I live at home I - My mom may be dead by then. I will have regretted not spending more time with her and getting to know her better. Although the day to day is currently challenging, and although I am not engaging with her "to the fullest", it is still infinitely better than had I not been here.
- I brought my mom joy in the last stages of her life. Imagine being at the end of your life and being able to see your kid "getting into it". That would be cool to me as a parent. I I I'm sad all the time I - I am learning how to deal with really hard times, which will help me deal with hard times throughout my life. Dealing with grief and misery is a muscle, and I've been exercising it.
- I understand more the challenges of everyday people. I have lived more of life. I will be able to understand people better.
- This will serve as a stark reminder that I can and will get through anything and always emerge the better. Always keep pushing. Always believe in yourself. I

## Oct 24 - 2025 Ketamine

1. Replace "shoulds" with "coulds"
2. 6 ways to be resilient
  1. [Listen to chumbawumba](#)

## Nov 18 - 2025 Ketamine

Operations is all about how do you get to the next step with extremely constrained resources. And you need to know how that next step gets you to the next step after.

It's that link by link thinking that non-operators don't have. They only witness a single link. Or they witness the end construction of the chain. But they don't experience the construction of the chain with the infinitude of complexity that comes in assembling it.

I am only getting good at ops because I have had to operate in an extremely constrained environment and still make tangible progress.

## Dec 8 - 2025 Ketamine

I really am engaging in some glutinous behavior. I wake up, do 20 nicotine shots throughout the day, have 4 cups of coffee, have vyvanse, have ketamine, eat a shitty dinner, eat a ton of dessert, take sleeping pills. That is my current daily habit. As someone who doesn't like habits, I've chose the fucking worst sequence of them to form my day.

Now, all this being said, this sounds incredibly harsh. However, I know there is a part of me that is driving this behavior. It's the part that is trying to keep me comfy, feeling warm, happy, not thinking about sad things. I think that part is still on overdrive, and I think it reared its head to help me get through the pain of Lauren by being a distraction to me. I love that part for thinking of me.

And you know what though. That's actually not quite true possibly. Yes, I think that part got a lot of exercise in moving on from Lauren, but I think I'm just in a cycle. Think of how healthy and valued I have felt in other months.

I think something tat is so awesome about me is being able to realize I'm in a rut very soon - anybody else that has had to deal with life's situations as me would have been in a very similar position to me, and might not have realized they were in a rut until much later.

Here's the reason why "eh I'll do it tomorrow" doesn't work. It's because we lie to ourselves. But, we need to be able to trust in the things that we say to ourselves about ourselves. If you lie to yourself

The slyest motherfucking person out there is your mind. It knows literally everything about you. And it can micro-lie on the minorist of truths 10s of thousands of times a day. How do we start fixing this? We fight the micro-lies with micro-truths. We tell ourselves we will do something that

moment, then we do it. The little microtruths throughout the day will start to take over the microlies, We tell ourselves we will do something that day, and we achieve it.

The reason I like novelty is because it helps me live a valued life. The microtruths automatically come more so then the microlies come when I'm in a novel situation. It's when things are familiar and the same, that my microhabits tend towards microlies rather than microtruths. My default mode network, or the global minimum, I seem to drop into is one of microlies.

All this is to say, the part of me that's trying to protect me with glutony, is lying. I love it for trying to protect me, but I need to be firm with it and tell it it needs to stop lying.

**“You need to stop lying, glutony.”**

IFS is so fucking awesome because it lets us isolate the exact loops or cycles of patterns that rear up, it allows us to isolate specific members of that, it allows us to .... it basically just feels like I'm able to draw my own boundaries within myself better when I think of myself as distributed. It is easier for me to talk with, have a conversation with, and draw boundaries with people if they're other people (as distinct from myself). When it's just myself, it's like “where the fuck i draw the boundary?”

IFS helps us have interinterpersonal relationships much better.

Psychological health/progress could be made either through interpersonal relationships first then interinterperson next, or the other way around. I guess its a question on the individual whether or not fixing themselves internally first is going to help them connect with others, or if it might be the other way around. For people that have really low self compassion, it might make more sense to establish those healthy interpersonal relationships before turning inward - because at that point you have the learned practice of how its done and looks, and then you can apply it to yourself which was harder in the first place. At least now you're coming to it with some practice.

## Dec 14 - 2025

- She's leaving town basically on our anniversary
- She went to spend time with Jonathan on thanksgiving without her family - she had never done that before
- It's generally just been hard around the holidays. And I'm still here at home with my mom. She has completely moved on. It feels exactly like I did during our last gray period.
- I see it as she functionally left me before I broke up with her. It didn't feel fair to me to stay in that.
- I'm still in love with her. And I have a lot of hatred in my heart towards her too.

- I don't seem to be a part of her family anymore.
  - When I'm in my most despair, it feels like there's no life without Lauren.
1. What if she's just a friend in the end? How would I feel about that?
  2. It's been hard for me recently, because this a family time time, and you are still my family.
    1. It feels like you have chosen a new family
    2. It feels like your parents don't consider me as part of their family anymore
    3. I still want you to be my wife
    4. It feels like we're heading further and further away from that
    5. I can't describe how badly i've wanted to hug you from behind and wrap my arms around you and never let go
  3. I've had a lot of hatred in my heart the past few months. Despite all that, I'm still in love with you. Every time i see you, I'm reminded of that.
  4. I imagine youve felt a similar family loss, but I've asked everybody else in my family to still reach out to you. I don't know if they have been.
  5. As my present I'm wondering if I can give you a proper back hug, and if we can push aside all our shit for a few minutes and just pretend.

## Dec 18 - 2025

1. Anger gives us a sense of agency because it gives us the illusion of getting some power back. Power that I feel she took from me.
2. Writing the music gives me a sense of agency that is less destructive with a sense of empowerment. I'm regaining power through creativity rather than rage.
3. Her choices have a big emotional impact on me → I have no choice on her actions → that makes me feel powerless → there are many different ways to regain power
4. How can i regain power through creation rather than destruction. What aligns with my values here.
5. My wish: I want us to be good, to be partners again, for things to be ok → this wish is not being met, which is also a source of disempowerment.
6. How do I want to show up → how

Freedom through curiosity

Acceptance through generosity & min

Growth through learning

What are the obstacles that are keeping me from showing up in the way that I want to show up.  
Acceptance = equanimity for the situation.

How do i regain power through creation rather than destruction?

## Dec 21 - 2025

I am feeling helpless and I keep thinking “what have i done” which drives me further into despair and suicidal ideation.

I keep looking around and thinking, how have I had this many losses. I compare LustLab to somebody else and they’re killing it - “if i could have actually sustained that company it would have been so fucking awesome by now”. The hardship I guess is ops - doing what you can with the limited resources you have. My whole ops has been: try this and that, quickly move on if it doesn’t catch quickly, and hopefully something will come through. A big win that will fuel the rest of my endeavors. Being in scrape by mode for so long means you have a really hard time navigating optimality - there is no optimality. There is only I did the best I could at the time.

Stop focusing on the losses from the relationship, and focusing on the fuzzies. That loss of a fuzzy is not a bad thing or a good thing. I can recall a fuzzy, then put it back into the library. If I lament a fuzzy, what that is is, I check out a fuzzy with sad overlaid - the sad is a reminder of “youll never have this again.” So there’s a companion that goes along with a fuzzy. It can be sad. But it can also be a fuzzy - a fuzzy companion that reflects on the positives and knows other fuzzies will be around the corner. So, you’re either dragging the past (**AND NOT GROWING**) or finding new fuzzies.