

These memoirs were fun they started as a form expression, in the early days of my youthful T.B.I. recovery a way to express, experience and engage with the novelty around me. This shit was brand new for me here and I, equipped with the neurological equivalent of your nephew, was consumed. Lack of filters, impulsivity, bias and confusion ok; crazy relations to follow, abstract and speculative startup ventures to suit, hot and twisted cohabitation with personality disorders in-hand along the way, we ran in hot. And wrote it out, as Dr. Ellis shared often “Justin step one is to get it out, there is a lot of funny business up in those clouds now, and it will stay funny until it gets out”. With filters albehaveit, he taught those too you were just slow to adapt you can’t just say everything you know, they do call the cops sometimes – to share later perhaps lessons learned and recovery progressed!

These efforts began to take shape in the early youth of my recovery, years one to two circa 2015-16, solidifying to record and form through years three to five and the progression began. These *memoirs*, or journal entries as you may have it were an experience, a therapy and form of identity for me then, I had to retrieve and relive who I was it was all still there, just under some layers now and stirred up something new, it would take time to retrieve that. But – still there! Amen, and the path began.

Walk a few years further down this path and the story exacerbates though, to such levels I feel almost falsified on review, left to a soft chuckle and I would carry on. “Yeah, this TBI recovery has gone great, things are back on track! All failed middle eastern tech startups, African refugees and failed food ministries aside, things have gone great!” became my immature mantra in response when catching up, a clean and humorous summary.

What a story this was. What a gift, given back amen! The lessons; virtues and spirit, efforts and trials, learnings and growth - this was a game changer for Justin. “Welcome to the new you” I heard often at the UW Med in recovery and it progressed, this became perspective in life is a gift, for all, in all and at every step. Now I can see that, a novelty to me of epiphany on arrival, changing me at my core and instilling a new drive, setting forth the path and quest that lay next. Hopefully I can share that in these memoirs, perhaps this act but another step of that path, laid in the form of this text.

And I am composing these today, circa early 2020 amidst some really tough times. You know what they didn’t factor into traditional T.B.I recovery? A world-halting, jaw-dropping pandemic, circa COVID-19 and my recovery march and life go on a pause. Ouch this is painful, so quiet and lonesome, the yearnings for partnership and longings for self-respect (e.g. no more belly, nice clothes, my fitness back, etc...), the desire to get my career path re-established now go on pause, a hard pause without escape when will this end? Someday... they think. Shit! How can I survive!? How will this work?

And then I reflect, step outside of my Justin-bubble and peer out for a moment you’re not the only one, not even the worse. Much worse out there, oh goodness! And you, with your cozy new Microsoft research job, beautiful oceanside abode and family securities have it safe now. No partnership you say? Oh this is rough, no kids to calm and family to support, no continuous barrage of risks to mitigate and novelties to suppress, your quiet, and gorgeous waterside abode in Mukilteo may take top dollar in this, this is a gift. And with your tech labs, workout arena and gorgeous, open deckside looking down the hill you got lucky, perspective my friend and here’s to what’s next.

In writing this introduction, one late Sunday evening at my favorite niche quiet spot up by Stanwood, the hot and bothered exit 205 rest area off I-5, littered with people and active cars amidst this current quarantine (probably 40-45 cars here tonight, sounds like people are running laps and playing drums on their cars alongside, a busy place circa 10pm on a Sunday, lol!), I come to realization that the progression of these memoirs has indeed progressed, in strength and with such timing –

We need this now, these experiences with lesson, stories with adventure and learnings with heart, we would get to the other side of these trying times today and this may be a tool, it is an option. For Justin, circa tbi recovery and his entrepreneurial persistence and for you, for us, amidst these trying uncertain times of novelty and strain, we shall step forward, together and with confidence, here’s to what’s next!

And now I head home, working remotely amidst quarantine will be such fun tomorrow...