

A Personal Statement

Preface

Warning: This was written during a depression. I promise I'm content or playful like 97% of the time! Also, pardon breaking the rule of not double-spacing, it just didn't feel right.

Intro (what I'm like)

I'm second generation Indian American, the third child of a very smart and progressive father, the youngest. Playful. Independent Irresponsible?

I grew up exploring the world via bicycle adventures after school, playing video games at night, and a little later, in high school, exploring the Internet, and as you will soon come to know, I haven't stopped.

But I have a problem: I self-diagnosed myself to have schizoid personality disorder (SPD). I often withdraw from social situations, have narrow focus, have trouble maintaining relationships, and am indifferent to social norms, despite all of this, I require interaction with people, especially those that I admire or have similar objectives, even if my objectives often change. I rely on communities and/or games to be social. I've been struggling with interaction with people my whole life.

Objective (What I'm passionate about)

My passions wax and wane depending on what I consume at a certain time, but one element is consistent: interaction, especially with the public. I believe the interaction between people have a greater affect on people than the interaction between person(s) and an inanimate medium. It's simple: moments are more memorable when shared.

When I travel I often have extreme, schizoid-affected feelings from external stimuli. I become extremely playful and confident, like my childhood. I want to explore everything, do everything, and talk to everyone; Empiricism; Learning through play.

My life's objective is this: I want to make people always feel that the world is a playground, the way I feel while traveling, that there's always the option to stay out, to physically explore, play, socialize, collaborate, with friends, family, and strangers of all classes of society alike, maximizing physical social time, therefore maximizing memories.

I think in daily life useful interaction can be maximized, filling in interactive gaps -- public interaction via big games, played with the people around, something anyone can stumble over in a city: in the park, on the subway, inside, and outside; To decrease academic and art barriers, to prevent the social barrier from forming, talk to people, and maintain playfulness. Playfulness begets confidence.

My passion for exploration extends to technology, new media, urban planning, games, systems, design, and that's excluding their endless applications.

Places (places I've been and things I've done there, people I've met, and how I've realized that passion so far):

I've been following my intrinsic motivation since I graduated from college, and so I feel that I'm constantly realizing my passions.

San Francisco

From suburb to San Francisco, I began to interact with the public everyday during the little free time that I that my hastily chosen job allotted me.

New York (my favorite collaborations, people I've worked with, and people I admire)

I then went to New York with a buddy, and within two week, I attended a game jam hosted by Babycastles and Parson's Game Club, and immediately joined Babycastles. The power of games as a medium and public interaction was realized through them. I merely helped with installation. U-hauling arcade cabinets from Brooklyn to MoMA, making a silly website in an hour for an event which unknowingly ended up in the Hayden Planetarium, making hackish software to handle indie games in arcade cabinets in Brooklyn hole-in-the-wall venues. The organization is an image of me: serious in intention, playful in implementation. I always tell myself I will come back to them.

Also while I was in New York, I "interned" for Zack Lieberman. He was the in planning stage of create a graphic novel, film, and game, all in 3D, and actually making innovative use of the technology. It wasn't really collaboration. I merely passed my knowledge of 3d in games and tagged along for a film shoot. Yet, just being with him, eating pizza and watching art-house films in his apartment studio was an enlightening experience.

San Francisco part II (my greatest failure)

I went back to SF to give the city a proper chance. During that time I was developing Pinkies Up, an iPad game, remotely working with Jon Stokes, and it was a spectacular failure, but the reason it failed: my inability to manage lone projects is my greatest failure.

India (my greatest success)

Jon and I planned to create a game in India. After travelling, I had become a lot more social, and Jon is already was a very social person. We felt that it didn't make sense to toil over creating an iPad game in rather contrastingly upscale cafes. Instead, we quite successfully ran a game jam. We went to a nearby university, found the computer science department, and asked the dean, whom replied, "ok". We planned everything out the two days before the jam. In retrospect, I feel this moment sums up everything I love: the DIY Babycastles style production, travel, social, creativity, and fun.

Travel

After programming for several months alone, I set out to Asia. My goals were simple: I wanted to do more social work: volunteer, teach, and learn Chinese. Over time I've volunteered at a school in Taiwan, made a short film in Malaysia, motorcycled north Thailand, explored Laos, taught a game development class in India, and learned some Chinese at a university in Taiwan. The people I've met and the things I've done seem unimaginable as I write this.

Future (what to do with the passion next)

My future is always open.

My current plan is to go back to Taiwan, try teaching full-time, continue learning Chinese, and creating a new media studio / public arcade / interactive space akin to Silent Barn, Babycastles Gallery, and the Exploratorium.

After some time I believe I'll crawl back to the loving NYC gaming community, hopefully being more social, more consistent, yet as impulsive and confident as I was while traveling. It's the only place in the world I feel I belonged.

Lessons learned

My personality requires teammates, or at least a community, to visualize progress.

It only takes a moment to do something really meaningful: run a workshop, have a great conversation, create a game, film or anything; But it takes long-term relationships to consistently do it.

How can I contribute to a team (how to apply and share lessons learned with classmates)

My greatest contribution to a team is my reluctance to compromise, pushing myself, the people around me, and design.

Why ITP

The reason I want to go to ITP (and to New York) is because I want to place myself among diverse people with great potential. I also want to take diverse classes: big games, Google Glass, openFrameworks, and biotechnology. I prefer breadth over depth. Heck, I'm trying to find a way to make this dang application process more interactive!