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ADD-100

Writing for the Web

**(Early) Life**

I was born in Elgin, IL in 1987 and grew up in the Chicago suburb of Prospect Heights. My early years were fairly normal for your average middle-class family in the 1990’s. I never had any brothers or sisters, so even when considering the advantages of being an only child, there’s a loneliness to it.

From around probably 5 years old until 8ish years old, I’d ride my bike around the neighborhood with some of the other local kids, exploring, playing, just doing dumb kid stuff. This was back when kids could enjoy their summers and go out to play, parents not knowing where they were or what they were doing, and then be back by dinner, almost every day.

I was a cub scout and later a boy scout, so I went camping at least once or twice a year. My family took yearly vacations for Disney World in Florida while sprinkling in a few days in the mountains of Gatlinburg, TN or a weekend at the Dells or Door County in Wisconsin here and there.

Outside of those things, I spent a lot of time either playing video games or reading. I think I loved both equally and would equally devote large blocks of time out of my day to both of them. I loved getting strongly invested in (read: hyper-focused on) a story and watching what I read play out like a movie in my mind. My mom also somehow knew that reading had to be gamified for me to get to that point, so every summer I was enrolled in the library’s summer program. For every book I read, I’d earn points which could be spent on small prizes and free books, tangible things that felt rewarding. I loved that aspect of it.

And that’s about as far as I’m going to take it on this page.

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Born in Elgin, IL in 1987, I grew up in Prospect Heights, a Chicago suburb. My early years were typical of a middle-class 1990s family. As an only child, I experienced both the perks and the loneliness that came with it.

From about age five to eight, I rode my bike around the neighborhood with other local kids, exploring and playing—just doing dumb kid stuff. Back then, we could enjoy summers freely, our parents not knowing where we were until we returned for dinner.

As a Cub Scout and later a Boy Scout, I went camping once or twice a year. My family took annual trips to Disney World in Florida and occasionally visited the mountains of Gatlinburg, TN, or spent weekends in the Dells or Door County in Wisconsin.

Besides that, I spent a lot of time playing video games and reading, loving both equally and dedicating large chunks of my day to them. I got deeply invested in stories, watching them play out like movies in my mind. My mom knew reading needed to be gamified for me, so each summer I was enrolled in the library's program where I earned points for books read, redeemable for prizes and free books—a rewarding experience I loved.

And that’s about as far as I’m going to take it on this page.

**Hobbies**

It’s difficult for me to maintain hobbies. I tend to hyper-focus on one or two things, then dedicate most of my time to those one or two things for the next 6 weeks to 4 months before getting bored and moving on, though some things rotate back in once or twice a year. This has resulted in the build-up of half-finished projects, parts for projects that haven’t been started, and many sets of “beginner equipment” for a variety of interests. That isn’t to say most of what you’d call my hobbies are time-wasters. As I’ve gotten older, I focus more on self-improvement in one form or another and less on wasting time on entertainment. This led to most of my hyper-focuses involving some amount of self-improvement or quality of life upgrades. The problem is, like my other hyper-focuses, These things don’t last, and returning to bad habits after a few months of making a hard effort can be pretty painful, turning what was tolerable and normal before into a major drain on mood, energy, and motivation.

One of my current hyper-focuses is 3D printing. I’m just getting back into it after probably 6-8 months of non-activity though, but I feel the hyper-focus building. At the moment, I’m printing things that are aimed at improving my quality of life in small ways. I’m experimenting with a few minimalist wallet designs right now, and I’m also looking to print out a set of 5-6 pull-out drawers to mount under my adjustable desk. I was able to get a good deal on a pair of table legs that have a motor in each leg (instead of one leg being powered by a rotating shaft from the motor on the other side) by getting it without a tabletop, then picking up a 60”x30”x1.25” sheet of pine from Menards to use as one. Since it’s semi-DIY, I figure why not put some holes in the bottom to play around with 3D-printed drawer designs. The more drawer space I have to use, the less clutter will be on the desk itself!

While it’s not a current hyper-focus, I’m hoping I can get serious about my health again. I have some medical issues which are greatly improved by a couple of restrictive diets, keto being a big improvement and carnivore working like magic, and I’ve been able to stay pretty strict about them for periods before. My first time doing keto, I lost 30lbs in a month, returned to a health 180lbs within a couple moths, saw a huge reduction is symptom frequency and severity, and felt more energy than I had since I was a kid. I was hyper-focused on it for a year, and gained a lot of knowledge about metabolism, inflammatory diseases, blood sugar, and mental illness. But without that hyper-focus, I have struggled to maintain their restrictions. So I’m exposing myself to some of the YouTube channels I used to watch on the subject to try and trigger the hyper-focus again. Another benefit I’m looking forward to is that the restrictions of those diets provide a ton of motivation to experiment with recipes to improve variety. On a standard diet, it’s too easy to pick up frozen pizza or eat out. On both keto and carnivore, that’s not really an option. Everything gets made from scratch with fresh, natural ingredients. It makes a huge difference on quality of life.

**AI Re-write: (see link above)**

It’s difficult for me to maintain hobbies. I tend to hyper-focus on one or two things, dedicating most of my time to them for 6 weeks to 4 months before getting bored and moving on, though some rotate back once or twice a year. This results in half-finished projects, unused parts, and multiple sets of beginner equipment for various interests. That isn’t to say my hobbies are time-wasters. As I've gotten older, I focus more on self-improvement rather than entertainment. Most of my hyper-focuses now involve self-improvement or quality of life upgrades. The problem is, like before, these things don't last, and returning to bad habits after months of effort can be painful, turning what was tolerable before into a major drain on mood, energy, and motivation.

Currently, I'm hyper-focused on 3D printing. After 6-8 months of inactivity, I feel the focus building again. I'm printing things to improve my quality of life in small ways, like minimalist wallet designs and pull-out drawers to mount under my adjustable desk. I got a good deal on motorized table legs without a tabletop and used a 60”x30”x1.25” pine sheet from Menards. Since it's semi-DIY, I figured I'd add 3D-printed drawers underneath. The more drawer space I have, the less clutter on the desk itself!

Though it's not a current hyper-focus, I'm hoping to get serious about my health again. I have medical issues greatly improved by restrictive diets—keto helps a lot and carnivore works like magic—and I've been strict with them before. The first time I did keto, I lost 30 lbs in a month, returned to 180 lbs in a couple of months, saw huge symptom reductions, and felt more energetic than since childhood. I was hyper-focused on it for a year and learned a lot about metabolism, inflammatory diseases, blood sugar, and mental illness. Without that hyper-focus, I've struggled to maintain the restrictions. So I'm revisiting YouTube channels to trigger the hyper-focus again. Another benefit is these diets motivate me to experiment with recipes for variety. On a standard diet, it's easy to grab frozen pizza or eat out, but on keto and carnivore, that's not an option. Everything is made from scratch with fresh ingredients, greatly improving quality of life.

**Person**

I’ve always been a little bit of a weird person. Growing up, I wasn’t exactly an outcast, but I was different than the other kids and that made sustaining friendships difficult. As I grew older, that didn’t really change until my 20’s. As a teenager, I didn’t have many people that’d I’d consider antagonistic towards me, and while I was known and tolerated by most of my classmates, I wasn’t a part of any cliques or social groups either. I was more of a loner that was on good or neutral terms with most people, weaving in and out of the various social groups in my small graduating class of roughly 145.

When I entered adulthood, the newfound freedom to do as I pleased proved to be a little too much freedom, and I became reckless in my decision making. At 18, my parents sent me to England for two weeks to visit with family, and I spent almost $2000 on alcohol in those two weeks. This sort of reckless behavior continued for the next few years. In my mid-20’s I was diagnosed with ADHD, which served to explain some of my poor decision making as a fixation on dopamine, which my brain knew it needed to function, even if I consciously did not. I became a part of a tight-knit group of friends around the age of 19 and spent the next 5 or so years hanging out with them practically daily. When I was 21, two of them rented a house in Johnsburg, one of Al Capone’s old bootlegging houses, surprisingly. Given the age this happened at, I’m sure you can imagine the lifestyle we all partook in during the next 6-8 months. I won’t go into it, but I’ll just say it was a party, every single night. This experience is why I no longer drink alcohol, if that tells you anything, haha!

At 25, I met the woman who would become the mother of my child, though our relationship was not what you’d call a storybook fantasy. It lasted for almost 4 years, was turbulent, and she was… well, I’ll put it this way: I’m still dealing with the damage she caused.

Not only was I diagnosed with ADHD in my 20’s (which turned out to be quite severe), but a year and a half ago at 36, I was diagnosed as autistic. These two diagnoses helped to explain every difficulty and struggle I’ve dealt with in my life.

While I haven’t gotten into many of the darker aspects of my life and personality from my early adult years, I am a much different person today than I was back then. Over the last 10 years, I’ve slowly worked on myself, exploring new concepts from philosophy, theology, and political science, studying human behavior, and working to improve my critical thinking skills. I’ve spent a decade undoing the indoctrination into the hedonism of contemporary society, detaching myself from it and working to open my mind to the nuances of how subjective experience melds with objective reality, while forming solid and unshakable foundational principles which both guide me yet ground me in my intellectual exploration, so I do not become taken in by self-destructive belief systems and behaviors. So while I am still and perhaps even more of an outcast than I’ve ever been, I am happier now, more stable, and have, at the very least, gotten myself on the path to finally achieving my potential.

While I do not recommend anyone mirror the choices I made in early adulthood, I do believe I would not have become the person I am today without them. Our mistakes and our failings are lessons that give us the opportunity to grow and become better. We are given the choice of victimizing ourselves from our own lack of self-control and discipline, or rising above victimhood, holding ourselves accountable, and becoming greater than we ever thought possible of ourselves. Given my developmental disabilities, given the narcissistic abuse I’ve endured, given the lying and manipulation and theft and mistreatment that’s been directed at me, I could easily give in and allow myself to become a jaded, resentful individual. But that’s something I refuse to do, and while our modern culture seems to reward self-victimization, making the path I’ve chosen the more difficult one which is the frequent target of hate, condescension, gaslighting, and strawman argumentation, I feel happier, my struggles are no longer perceived as insurmountable attacks on me by reality and have instead become meaningful, positive opportunities for growth, and I feel more aligned with God and His will for me.

So the message here is that life is hard, life is painful, and we will all make stupid, self-destructive mistakes. These things are unavoidable. But in these things, we have a choice: become victims cursed to an existence controlled and manipulated by the will of circumstance, or… We can grow to become greater than the sum of our life’s experiences, reject victimization that’s pushed on us from every angle, and take control of the direction of our lives. The latter option is the more difficult path, but it is also the more rewarding path, and when chosen, then at least on our dying day, we can look back on our lives with a sense of dignity and honor, knowing that our lives were our own, and we did the best we could.

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I've always been a bit of an oddball. Growing up, I wasn't exactly an outcast, but my differences made sustaining friendships tough. This persisted into my teens; while I was on good or neutral terms with most classmates, I wasn't part of any cliques, weaving in and out of social groups as a loner in a graduating class of about 145.

When adulthood hit, the freedom was a bit too much, leading me down a path of reckless decisions. At 18, during a two-week family visit to England, I blew nearly $2,000 on alcohol. This reckless streak continued for years. In my mid-20s, I was diagnosed with severe ADHD, explaining my poor decision-making as a dopamine chase my brain craved unconsciously. Around 19, I joined a tight-knit group of friends, spending the next five years practically glued together. At 21, two friends rented one of Al Capone's old bootlegging houses in Johnsburg. You can imagine the lifestyle we indulged in for the next six to eight months—a party every single night. That experience is why I no longer drink alcohol, if that tells you anything, haha!

At 25, I met the woman who became the mother of my child. Our relationship, far from a fairy tale, lasted almost four turbulent years. Let's just say I'm still dealing with the aftermath of the damage she caused.

A year and a half ago, at 36, I was also diagnosed as autistic. These revelations helped explain the struggles I've faced throughout my life.

I haven't delved into the darker facets of my past, but I'm a much different person now. Over the last decade, I've worked on myself—exploring philosophy, theology, political science, studying human behavior, and honing my critical thinking. I've spent years undoing the indoctrination into contemporary society's hedonism, detaching myself, and opening my mind to how subjective experience melds with objective reality. By forming solid, unshakable foundational principles, I guide myself away from self-destructive beliefs and behaviors. So, while I'm still—and perhaps even more—an outcast, I'm happier, more stable, and finally on the path to reaching my potential.

I wouldn't recommend anyone mirror my early choices, but I believe they shaped who I am today. Our mistakes and failings are lessons offering opportunities to grow. We can choose to victimize ourselves over our lack of self-control, or we can rise above, hold ourselves accountable, and become greater than we imagined. Given my developmental disabilities and the narcissistic abuse, lies, manipulation, theft, and mistreatment I've faced, I could easily become jaded and resentful. But I refuse. Despite modern culture rewarding self-victimization—making my chosen path harder and a frequent target of hate and condescension—I feel happier. My struggles are no longer insurmountable attacks but meaningful opportunities for growth, and I feel more aligned with God and His will for me.

So, the message here is simple: life is hard and painful, and we'll all make stupid, self-destructive mistakes—it's unavoidable. But we have a choice: become victims controlled by circumstance, or grow to become greater than our experiences, reject victimization, and take control of our lives. The latter is the tougher but more rewarding path, and when chosen, we can look back on our lives with dignity and honor, knowing we lived authentically and did the best we could.