

6529 @punk6529

A few years ago, I was walking around in a blizzard in SoHo (New York). It was late, midnight, and it was beautiful. Some friends, about 15 blocks away, called: "Come over?" It was late, it was cold, I was tired, thought "maybe not worth it" but then...

I said, "Life is short, why not?"

It was a great night, we watched a movie, had drinks and generally had good vibes all night long. Why did I go? A couple of years earlier, I had done the following calculation which freaked me out quite a bit.

Most of my friends from high school lived (and live now) in different cities than I do. These are friends that I had spent every day with in high school and some I even lived with in my first years in New York. We are still super close, I think of them as "best friends"

And I feel that we have all the time in the world.

Sometimes they come for business to my neck of the woods, sometimes for pleasure, sometimes I am in their neck of the woods. Sometimes we manage to meet up, sometimes we don't. Everything is fine, very normal, very nice.

But one day I ran the numbers.

- a. I have hung out with a typical one of these, say, 1,500 times in my life (mostly in school).
- b. We were managing to sync up our travels, say, once every 12 to 24 months.
- c. It is mathematically certain now that about 99% of the time I will ever spend with them, in the rest of my life, I have already done so.
- d. It does not matter if I see them another 10 or 20 or 50 times, it is trivia in the scheme of things.

Prior mental framework was "My boy is in town, maybe we can grab drinks if our schedules allow, if not, no problem, next time."

New mental framework is: "Tonight is one of your last 30 times you can see one of your best friends in your life."

Nothing had changed in substance, I just finally did the math right and it was shocking.

If you don't live in the same city with your parents, the math is kind of similar for them too - you have spent the vast majority of time you will ever spend with your parents already.

I started doing the math, being realistic about being an adult with a serious jobby-job, and about other things:

- a. How many more nights in da club?
- b. How many steaks at Peter Lugars?
- c. How many more trips to India?

WTF. The numbers are all stupidly low. 3, 20, even 100. Peanuts

That was the background to my snowy night decision.

How many more nights in my life will I be walking around in a magical blizzard in SoHo? Will I have friends a few blocks around? Will they be up for hanging?

I explicitly referenced the framework and went.

And boy am I glad I went.

These are very good friends. A few months later they moved somewhat away, then I moved further away, then they moved further away. Now we are on the twice a year schedule. No more magical blizzard nights for us anymore.

And some moves and then two years of COVID have absolutely crushed my very pessimistic estimates to the downside. The depressingly low numbers that I thought I would hit the last few years? Turns out they were very optimistic estimates!

And there are real trade-offs in life. Being safer re COVID, costs social life. Working hard costs social life. Trying to stay healthy costs entertainment life.

Being an adult is all trade offs, all day long.

But coming back to this - life is short, your special moments are much much fewer than you think. Do the math for the 20 people and 20 things you love most. Be realistic about how often you have done them the last 5 years. Be realistic about when you might start losing interest in some activities due to age. Subtract the years, multiply by the times per year and look at that number.

How do you feel about that number? Good? Bad? If bad, can you do something to change it? Often, you can't.

So if you can change it and you want to, then you should. If you can't change it, then you have to make it precious, make it count.

Think of them as tickets, tickets that you use up over your life.

- a. 10 more party nights with Bob
- b. 25 more Indian dinners with Mom

And when you realize how few and how precious these moments are, **MAKE THEM COUNT.**

Don't skip them if you can help it. And when you use one of those tickets, enjoy, have fun, don't let stupid things get you down. None of those things matter. One day we will vanish and our problems will vanish with us.

Problems are a feature, not a bug.

Problems are for the living, not for the dead. Problems are an excellent indicator that you are alive. The state of no problems is the state of death.

But we are not dead, we are alive, so live your life, max out the goodies, the best that you can, max out your feelings with friends and your family. And also your "career" which is just "the thing that you dedicate most of your waking hours to." If you go too long and feel dead inside in your career, make a change, fight to find a better way to spend your hours.

Manage your risk and your obligations of course, but don't burn your very short life on things you don't like to do.

Lives are sometimes cut tragically short (millions in the last 2 COVID years), but that is not what I am discussing.

I am discussing that if you live a normal length of life, it is so so short.

Make it count.