



LA
P E T I T E
M ◦ R T



Foreplay

Commitment. The word stirs up a variety of synonyms. Allegiance. Dedication. Devotion. Faith. These are the words we not only say, but in formative moments of our life, these are words we truly feel.

Our decisions shape who we are and our commitments concretize us. The commitments made to us do the same. They forge deep bonds—bonds that we don't want to see break. But sometimes they do, because we are all imperfect and life is not as easy as we wish it to be. Sometimes commitments fail.

This issue will explore these ideas. Whether they're snap decisions that we have made or those we make for the long haul, commitments are solemn dedications to ourselves, our loved ones, our beliefs, and at times, our foes. Let's look deeply into this act, this wont to commit.

It is so essentially human yet so innately complex. In exploring what it offers us, we may just discover something deeper within ourselves.

Astrology

SATURN

The symbols of astrology act as cosmic guides and archetypes for us to understand our experience. Saturn represents self-discipline for focused will power to overcome adversity in our lives. Its symbolism can manifest as external forces of limitation and hardship, but it is through commitment that Saturn's lesson of internal strength allows us to endure challenges all on our own.

During our process, we may encounter low-side expressions: insecurity, cynicism, frustration, fear, and depression. We may feel defeated or we may overcompensate. Overcoming these obstacles takes time and patience, but it is through our intense efforts and perseverance that achievement and mastery are reached.

Saturn's transits through your chart highlight the areas in your life that need to be developed and strengthened; it shows the area of work that needs to be done. For almost 2½ years, Saturn, the planet of manifestation, has been in the visionary sign of Sagittarius. We've been concentrating on carving out our path and understanding the meaning of our work, and we may have faced humbling failures and lessons of cold, hard truth. If this has been a time of slow and steady growing pains, commit to having faith in yourself. The remainder of Saturn in Sagittarius through December represents the long haul at the end of a journey. Since it will be another 28 years before the planet returns to this sign, take advantage of its current retrograde to reexamine the areas in your life that require focused attention and commitment to completing the work.

For deeper interpretation, read for both your Sun and Rising signs.

Gemini:

COMMIT TO PARTNERSHIP

Saturn's opposition to your sign may have challenged how you relate with others. If you've been feeling that others are demanding too much from you, define agreements and set reasonable expectations. Know who your real friends are and choose quality over quantity. If it has been difficult maintaining harmony in relationships, strive for balanced effort; know how much each one is giving and receiving. Understand the scale that balances opposites. Recognize the traits in the other which you lack, cooperate jointly, compromise fairly, share ideas. If a relationship is going well, you may decide to take it to the next level of commitment. Be realistic with feelings of obligations to failing partnerships. Unbalanced relationships without team effort or shared support may feel heavy pressure during this transit.

Aries:

COMMIT TO YOUR VISION

Define your philosophy for living, your personal ethics, and your belief structures. If loss of faith or spiritual doubt has led to cynicism or apathy, search for a new framework of meaning. Your most poignant answers may not come from a guru, but from personal exploration, spiritual discipline, or foreign travel. A pilgrimage or ceremony can reconstruct a hardened divinity concept and provide spiritual security. This is a time for advanced training or focused study to expand your experience and knowledge. If you've been experiencing Saturn's archetype as The Judge, coldly pointing out what you don't know, try to see it as the Wise Elder, teaching life lessons for redefining your vision of the future. Aim high and work hard for professional achievement as Saturn will move into your house of status and reputation next year.

Pisces:

COMMIT TO YOUR AMBITIONS

It can feel like a long climb to the top. Heavy work responsibilities may have delayed achievements or strict authority figures may be demanding too much. But the Mountain Goat archetype that Saturn represents knows that there are no shortcuts to rising to the top; that progress is found within the pursuit. Careful preparation and strong work ethic can fuel productivity. With sustained momentum and the determination to succeed, it will all get done. You may achieve recognition for your hard efforts or leadership and seniority within your profession. This is a time of appropriate and just rewards from the last seven years. You may be feeling pressure from your family, helping an aging parent, or detaching from a dominant parent. While you construct your outer life and reputation, be careful not to neglect your personal life.

Taurus:

COMMIT TO INTIMACY

There is vulnerability in union with another. Fears surrounding intimacy may have brought out the restrictive qualities of Saturn: denied sexual expression, repressed desires, delayed satisfaction, or cold performance. Issues relating to sex go beyond the physical, bringing up the emotional vulnerability behind it. Find out what has true value for developing emotional stability. Passionate exchange and deep merging can lead to transformative unions. Secure your boundaries if there are entangled stories of relationships and money, financial dependence, or control versus support. Structure shared resources into what is "ours" and not "mine." If there are moments of loss, allow for time and patience to accept mortality, impermanence, and the natural cycles of nature.

Cancer:

COMMIT TO PURPOSEFUL WORK

Increased work responsibilities and demanding projects may have challenged your work ethic and energy output. Maintain patience as you plan the work and work the plan. Utilize an orderly routine and learn practical skills for staying on top of a busy schedule. Prioritize the task at hand for efficiency and steady productivity. If duties are overwhelming, find purposeful work that encourages you to keep going. Acknowledge that the burdens of overwork can be a detriment to your health. Do not ignore physical discomfort or mental fatigue if you have overextended yourself. Unite mind and body to understand how stress affects your stamina. Clean up your dietary regimen and notice feedback from your body. Hold onto your reserves and rebuild your strength with a disciplined healing process to fortify deficiency.

Aquarius:

COMMIT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

You may be having a hard time knowing where you fit in, feeling isolated from groups, exclusion from a community, or social awkwardness. Hopelessness or pessimism may have blocked your dreams and wishes. This is a time for developing practical ideals for strengthening your aspirations. Remain persistent and allow for slow and sustained progress for attaining realistic goals. Identify how well you work with others. Find your social network and participate in group work to build support. Form alliances and join efforts that share your ideals. This could be social movements, political awareness, a call to change the rules or challenge authority. Overcome fears of being accepted and construct your role within the community. Feel part of a larger movement that fortifies your principles within the group expression.

Leo:

COMMIT TO CREATIVITY

Having fun may be feeling like hard work. Blocked creative flow can come from lack of enjoyment, little recreation time, and loss of child like wonder. An inability to recognize talents and gifts may have led to feelings of inadequacy and lack of validation. If the construction of confidence has been slow and arduous, redefine your creative self-expression. This may not come through as the fluid, inspirational type of creativity, but rather one that evolves from continuous effort and serious concentration. It may not seem pleasurable at the time, but it can still have true meaning and purpose. There may be pressure to create a legacy, but know that mastery comes from dedicated practice. Do not let your self-expression be limited by complicated love affairs or cold affection without support. Instead, direct your focus to self-love and commit to what inspires you.

Virgo:

COMMIT TO YOUR FOUNDATION

The inner journey you began seven years ago is challenging you to solidify your foundation. Use Saturn's archetype of The Builder to repair what is no longer up to code, be it your physical home or personal life. Having the urge to secure roots or construct a permanent home base may be a manifestation of building your emotions from the inside out. The need for a home may reflect an emotional need for security and personal space. Restructuring your living space can serve as a way of processing nostalgia, sentimental memories, and family stories; or for overcoming cold, detached emotions and lack of support. If you've been feeling more secluded or a homebody wanting to cocoon, you may want domestic life to protect your emotions. This is a time for strengthening your environment and creating your own traditions.

Libra:

COMMIT TO YOUR MIND

This may be a time of deep thought, concentration, or serious conversations. You may be using more of your rational, logical hemisphere or have been developing intense interests. If communication has been difficult, learn methods for improving how you speak and how you listen. Insecurity about speaking or mental ability may have been holding you back or forcing you to carefully construct your sentences. You may have been spending long hours on a writing project or undergoing writer's block. Allow for silence if you have been experiencing limited ideas or a restricted voice. Practice mindful meditation to observe your thoughts and increase awareness. Notice how you perceive and process information and use clarity and reason to strengthen your communication skills.

Capricorn:

COMMIT TO STILLNESS

While your ruling planet Saturn, the planet of solidity, is in the house of dissolution, it may be hard to define borders and boundaries. You may not have experienced Saturn's constructive force, but rather deconstruction of the walls that were built over the past 14 years concerning social identity. Saturn's archetype as The Lord of Karma does not need to be felt as an external force of consequence and fate, but can be one of internal acceptance for the responsibilities of past actions. This can be a time for vipassana or silent retreat to reflect and observe past decisions without judgement. Acknowledge failures as fermentation for change and new life, a natural breakdown for new growth and maturation. As Saturn crosses into the first house next year, you can begin a new 14-year phase of personal construction. This is the end of a cycle and a clearing away of the past before the next stage of self-development and individuation begins.

Sagittarius:

COMMIT TO YOURSELF

You may have been focused on carefully constructing your outward behavior, but this time is more about firming your internal sense of self-acceptance. You may have been experiencing Saturn's archetype as The Hermit: seclusion, withdrawal, or loneliness. But it is here that we learn how to be self-sufficient all on our own. Utilize solitude as a time for introspection, for going inward to strengthen your identity. Examine yourself, learn about yourself, define your individuality. This is the beginning of a 14-year period of internal growth and maturation. If you have been feeling older or your life force more restricted, concentrate your energy to use as fuel to keep going. Defeated efforts need only to be rebuilt into new structures that better represent who you are. Continue to strive for truth as you construct the meaning of your journey.

Scorpio:

COMMIT TO YOUR VALUES

Define your values versus your valuables. Organize your possessions and see what has meaning to you. Materialism and collection will not satisfy feelings of lack. Are your wealth and material items aligning with your ethics? Identify your true values versus the judgement of what you should have or don't have. You may be despising money while still having the urge to accumulate it or denying yourself possessions but still crave ownership. If you have been experiencing financial hardship or limited resources, learn to become more economical. Stabilize your assets and build reserves to overcome financial insecurity and fear of never having enough. Take control of spending habits without being too frugal and learn how to be self-sustaining. Your personal worth is not based on your bank account or collection of objects. This is a time for structuring your self-worth.

Britney Spears Is Causing

Big Changes

In Israeli Politics



BONA
"Exercise freaks are the ones putting stress on the health care system."
RUSH LIMBAUGH ON HEALTH CARE

NPR
Unknown
April 6, 2017



WHO'S HAPPY?

Britney Spears, Labor Leader Yitzhak "Bougie" Herzog



WHO'S SAD?

The politically active Israeli

What You Read Affects

Every day you are bombarded with headlines. Radiating from your phone, flashing on the television while you're brewing a morning coffee, splayed out on the newspaper the man seated next to you is reading on one very cramped train, repeated in conversations by co-workers or friends, integrated within the sidelines of social media platforms. They are designed to be impactful, inspirational, shocking. They are intended to synopsise, to encapsulate, to epitomize. Ultimately, however, they aim at driving traffic. Insufferable Upworthy clickbaits-with-a-conscience alongside thought-provoking NY Times headlines – all of them unified under a shared mission of attracting readers. But in a world inundated with news stories as addictive as the entertainment

in Infinite Jest, how do we distinguish the bona fide from the bullshit? How do we sift through the first impressions and not be led astray by our biases?

It's harder than you think. By the mere choice of manipulative phrasing, a headline can influence your perception of the article so deeply that after you read it, you recall (not necessarily true) details that coincide with what you were expecting. That's over and above any pre-existing conceptions you may have about said article. As truth seekers we must maintain committed to thoroughly sifting through the bullshit and questioning all we read. Not on some Osama-is-still-alive-and-kicking conspiracy theory, but on a contextualized, curious, analytical level.

What You See

Posters by
JESSI BRATTENGEIER

1000 Reasons Why

Global Warming Is

So Totally

Dver

In 2016



"Every time we can't drill a well in America, terrorism is being funded."
HAROLD HAMM ON FRACKING

THE INDEPENDENT
Christopher Hooton
Jan 23, 2017



WHO'S HAPPY?
Global warming conspiracy theorists



WHO'S SAD?
Anyone who cares about the environment



"Any negative polls are fake news, just like the CNN, ABC, NBC polls in the election. Sorry, people want border security and extreme vetting."

DONALD TRUMP ON WHAT PEOPLE WANT

NY DAILY
Associated Press
Sept 26, 2014



WHO'S HAPPY?
Apparently, China



WHO'S SAD?
North Koreans, maybe

Oppa Pyongyang style!

How North Korean Capital Is Stepping Up

Its Fashion

Freedom

Written by
KERRIN SMITH

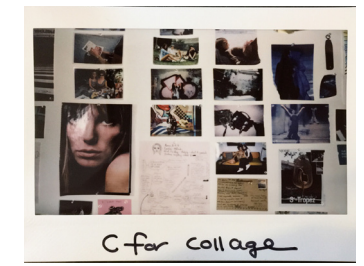
But what is commitment, really? Can you touch it, taste it? Can you point to it, draw it?

When we hear “**commitment**,” something in our stomach can lurch, unlocking a history of ‘broken this’ and ‘made that’ and then the butterflies can start to fly. It’s easy for us to think that **commitment** is something fixed, but these questions seem to suggest otherwise. What if instead, **commitment** is a context? **Commitment** isn’t an outcome of end state; rather it is a fluid state of alignment in which we calibrate our minds, our actions, and our spirits to that which matters to us. When we try **commitment** on as a context in this way, we can be **committed** to ideas that empower us: try being

committed to being joyful, to making a contribution, to learning, to peace. Inside of these contexts, there are infinite ways **commitment** can manifest, for there is no one way to be joyful, there is no one way to make a difference, there is no one way to breathe compassion. Let’s fly a little closer to the ground: when we lean into **commitment** as a context, we can become treasure hunters for that which is the undistinguished backdrop for a “harder” **commitment** in front of it. In the tried n’ true relationship example, we can think that **commitment** means doing ex, why, and zed with a significant other.

Are we **committed** to those actions? Or are those actions expressions of something else, something greater? I assert the latter. In relationship, we can create a context of affinity, a **commitment** to partnership, and then there are countless expressions of each, native and uniquely true to the individual enacting them.

Commitment as context allows us to unlock our creativity and our imaginations, turning **commitment** into something that will always set us free.



P i g m e n t s

Photos by
JULIA & IGNACIO SARASOLA

It has been said that three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth. Without influencing the behavior of its subjects, this series uncovers the wordless stories of those we do not know. When viewed as a collection, a distinct subtext emerges around the intersection of people's outward behavior and their relationship with commitment.



COUPLE HOLDING HANDS IN PARK – ØRSTEDS PARK, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK



WOMAN PRAYING – PORTA GENOVA, MILAN, ITALY



MAN HOLDING BABY – MICROCENTRO PORTEÑO, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Blockchain



Written by
JEFF KEMPLER

We are at the dawn of a new generation of the Internet, powered by a foundational technology (and, importantly, a mindset) that could be as influential as the advent of the Internet itself.

Despite its comical name, the open, distributed ledger technology blockchain presents a powerful opportunity to address a core imbalance in our hyper-connected, digital/mobile culture. While the Internet provides the frictionless ability to find and interact with any type of content and any number of people (and machines) at nearly unlimited scale, substantial barriers, risks, and inefficiencies to establishing and exchanging identity, access, and commitments online thwart that ability in many cases. Blockchain-based systems are rapidly evolving to meet this challenge, particularly in frontier markets and cultures where traditional notions of verification already clash with modern commercial norms. In short, blockchain may become the trust protocol that provides efficiency and reliability for all online exchanges.

For the most part, the gargantuan digital marketplace runs through one or more centralized intermediaries (e.g., ISPs, telecom, big banks, etc.) using standardized transmittal protocols that power the Internet (e.g., TCP/IP). Yet, most online transactions are in truth chaotic and prone to corruption — as recent events illustrate. Blockchain portends a potentially massive paradigm shift by enabling peer-to-peer digital interaction of any type and scale that is secure, reliable, and efficient — yet decentralized and highly resistant to monopoly or manipulation.

Essentially, blockchain is a cryptographically secure, crowd hosted and widely distributed, autonomously administered ledger technology that continuously records transaction data among “nodes” located on different computers. Transactions are automatically ordered chronologically as a “chain” of “blocks”. Because a “block” cannot be retroactively altered, and nonconforming transactions cannot join the “chain,” transaction integrity is very high and transaction records are highly reliable.

There are 5 basic principles of blockchain¹:

1. Distributed Database - No single party controls. Each party on the blockchain has access to the entire database. Each party can independently verify the records of transactions without relying on an intermediary. This has a democratizing and anti-monopolistic effect.
2. Peer-to-peer Transmission - Communications occur directly between peers; there is no central node. Each node (on an individual computer) stores and forwards information to all other nodes. This decentralization enhances the security and democracy of the system.
3. Transparency with Pseudonymity - Every transaction and its associated value is visible to all system participants. Each participant has a unique 30+-character identifier. Users chose to remain anonymous or to share their identities. Transactions occur between blockchain addresses. This enhances trust, protects privacy, and lowers intermediation costs.
4. Irreversible Records - Once a transaction is completed and entered into the database, accounts are updated and the associated record becomes a sequential “block” in a constantly evolving chain. Aspects of the built-in code ensure that the “block” and the surrounding database is permanent, chronological, and transparent to all network participants. This creates a highly secure “ledger” and enhances reliability.
5. Computational Logic - The code underlying the digital ledger is programmed in accordance with unalterable, self-enforcing norms and rules that automatically trigger actions between the system nodes. This supports reliability and efficiency through real-time, unbiased application of previously accepted norms and conditions (in the form of code) for the exchanges at issue.

The best known blockchain system is the controversial crypto-currency Bitcoin.

With this vision of an automated, stigmergic marketplace for digital interaction, excitement around blockchain runs high. Disintermediation and automaticity in a high-trust environment suggests removal of costly inefficiencies for providers and access to otherwise precluded users lacking traditional means of identity verification.

As such, blockchain theoretically can serve as the operating system and real-time ledger and verification system for any form of digital exchange between any number of people, entities, and/or machines. It can be used to pay bills, settle contracts, share music, manage a car or home rental business, or bring reliable identification and bankability to literally billions of people and businesses who are excluded from traditional financial systems.

The best known blockchain system is the controversial crypto-currency Bitcoin, but there is enthusiastic exploration of potential application across a wide range of industries and markets. From supply chain management to tracing the lineage of diamonds and fine art, to banking and healthcare data, entertainment media distribution and monetization, micro-grid energy solutions and the Internet of Things, the vision of a cost-efficient path to a real time digital transaction system capable of unlimited scale without compromising efficiency or security is enticing to many sectors. A recent World Economic Forum report predicted that by 2025, ten percent of global GDP will be stored on blockchains or blockchain-related technology.²

Examples (among many) emerging applications of blockchain include:

- The Gates Foundation (building credit histories to enable banking for the poor);
- Ethereum (smart contracts);
- Stellar (the Lumens crypto-currency, data storage, and B2B currency exchange in Africa);
- Brooklyn Microgrid (IoT-enabled community-managed energy grid);
- Pokitdok (medical records); and
- Spotify (acquisition of Mediachain to apply blockchain to music streaming)

Best practices for designing for adoption and use at scale are very much in a nascent, speculative state. It is at this formative stage that an empathic, considered, and practical approach to systems and communication design is particularly opportune so that the actual needs, resources, and circumstances throughout the affected ecosystem are taken as design parameters in creating truly useful and reliable applications.

As with any frontier, motives and behaviors for pioneering will vary. The Sturm und Drang surrounding Bitcoin illustrates this. Generally speaking, in these early days, market and perhaps

societal forces seem to be pushing investment and attention towards one or more of the following scenarios:

- (a) so-called “high delta” areas³ where intermediaries, systems or infrastructure either do not exist or are too volatile or misaligned to support scaled formal markets (e.g., establishing proof of identity, bankability, property or transaction recordation, or pay-as-you-go models in the developing world);
- (b) established businesses that would derive supply-side efficiency benefits from moving existing transaction systems onto a blockchain (e.g., foreign exchange, mortgage processing, car rentals, business incorporation); and/or
- (c) counter-culture, techno-evangelist, or libertarian initiatives (e.g., crypto-currencies, protest movements, peer-managed sharing models).

In any of these typologies, and particularly in “high delta” markets, a critical design challenge emerges from the paradox that the environments in which a blockchain system could be most beneficial in addressing systemic transaction deficiencies are often commensurately volatile and therefore at odds with the fundamental rigidity (and benefits) of blockchain’s computational logic. Where the addressable market presents the largest and/or most rapidly growing population of underserved or dissatisfied potential participants who could benefit from a blockchain system, the immutability and predictability essential to blockchain’s promise will need to be reconciled with the inherent environmental dynamism.

Essentially, to derive the reliability and integrity of the decentralized system, there must be one “law” that automates consensus and disallows disputes, bias, or manipulation. The underlying computational code objectively determines whether a proposed exchange will be processed and become and remain a part of the growing “chain”. As one commentator remarked, “To be part of a community supporting a blockchain is to accept the rules of the network as they were originally published. In a blockchain transaction, you don’t have to trust your counterpart to perform their obligations[...], since these processes are standardized and automated, but you do have to trust that the code and the network will function as you expect.”⁴ With this in mind, empathic consideration of all aspects of the ecosystem, and cutting twice and measuring once, in system design and implementation is crucial, especially (but not only) in high delta environments, whether in developing or developed nations.

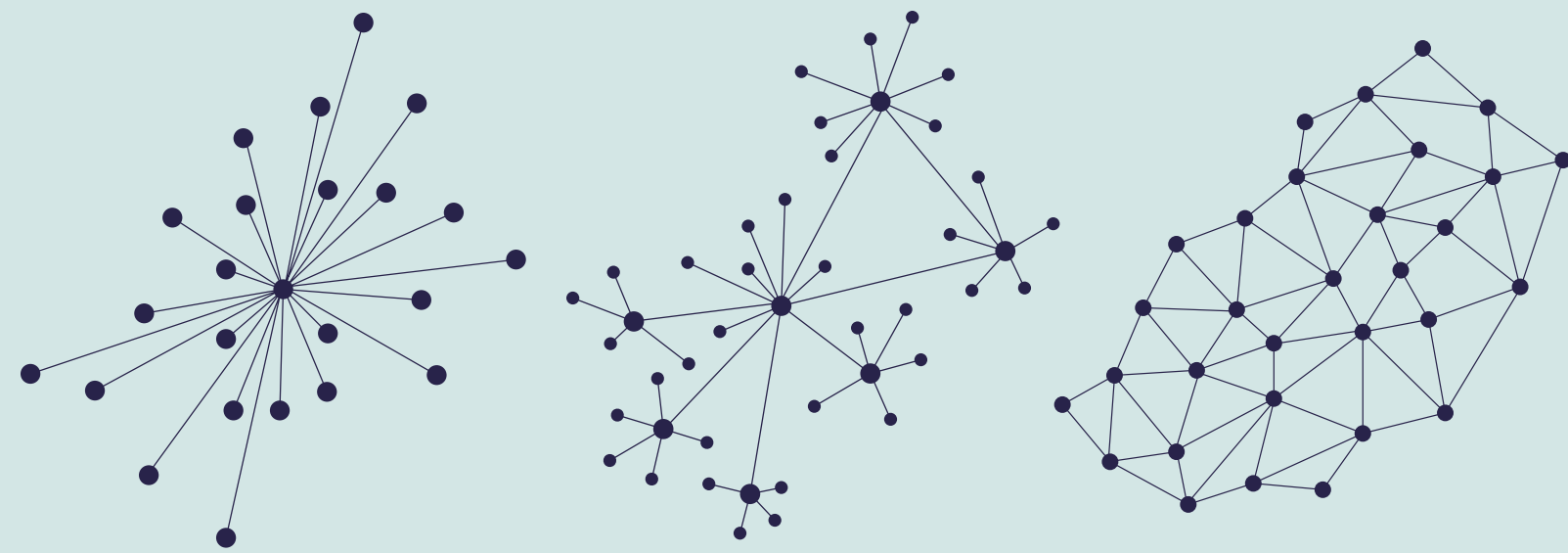
As communities scale, and in any case with the passage of time, the probability and degree of divergence and need for adaptation will only increase. Given the immutability of any given blockchain, and the hardwired technical rejection of

² World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on the Future of Software and Society (2015)

³ Kirshbaum, J., Blockchain in High Delta Markets: Manufacturing Trust in Unstable Environments, Institute for the Future, May 27, 2016

⁴ Murck.

¹ Derived from the Harvard Business Review’s ongoing Blockchain series. See, e.g., Murck, Patrick “Who Controls the Blockchain?” (HBR, April 19, 2017) (“Murck”).



Centralized Network

Decentralized Network

Distributed Ledgers

intermediation or dissent, emerging or evolving communal needs that materially deviate from the premises at origination will essentially force the creation of new blockchains (or “hard forks” that split out non-conformity), thereby diminishing the potential benefits of aligned scale and automaticity. Particular thought must be given to the types and effects of probable evolutions or divergence in those needs and contextual considerations.

Yet, across the growing discourse around blockchain, this critical element of empathy appears to be under-considered. This is especially the case where the technological aspects of this invisible ledger system, for which there is a lack of common norms or language, or clear regulatory guidance, are being nominated or trialed for use in cultures or communities with lesser digital fluency or modernized transactional experience. In such instances, the supplier’s image of a seamless, reliable operating system empowering a previously unbanked community to access its offering — say micro-grid solar power on credit enabled by a blockchain currency and delivery system — could succeed or fail based on suitability to more human realities on the ground, whether on a consumer or business-to-business level, regardless of flawless technical design and application.⁵

Interestingly, the ability to gain the type of perspective necessary for empathic design will typically require a concerted pairing of data-gathering as to more quantifiable factors that can be assessed digitally with hands-on, in-market immersion focused on culture and context. Examples of attributes that will need to be empathically observed and understood through in-person interaction may include:

- Language and communication norms
- Digital and technological fluency

- Virtues and stigma relating to the transaction type at issue, and to honoring commitments generally
- Demographic biases or nuances (racial, religious, gender-based, or otherwise)
- Prior direct or indirect history relative to the transaction type
- Pain or pleasure points in existing or proximate systems

This type of ethnographic sensitivity, combined with the more supply-side forces driving the application (e.g., reducing verification costs and default risk, or reducing intellectual property) will put systems designers in a far better position to harness blockchain technology that is actually suited for use. Starting from a better-informed and holistic approach to such factors, and understanding that any blockchain system will not exist not as an isolated silver bullet, should increase the probability that a system has anticipated some contextual shifts over time. It stands to reason that starting from an empathic perspective at the outset will support receptivity, utility, and durability.

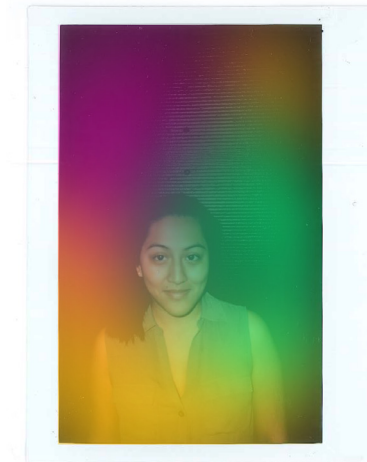
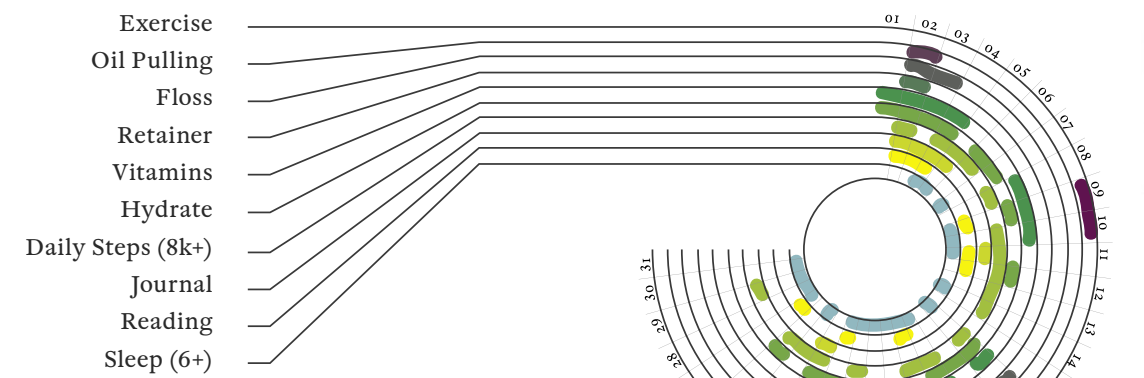
For the premise and promise of a particular blockchain application to succeed, it will be necessary for the system to “fit,” and not merely function. There is no shortage of smart people around the world in academia, philanthropy, technology, law, government, and industry thinking about, investing in, and even applying blockchain. There is an exuberance and fabulist energy (as well as notes of cynicism or caution) to the dialogue that have a gold rush feeling suitable to a frontier moment. There is dramatic potential for blockchain (and an “Internet of Contracts”) to accelerate the benefits and attributes of trust and fitness for purpose, even at scale and in dynamic environment. Applying an empathic, “whole system” approach to designing blockchain applications may be key to bringing that potential to bear.

Blockchain portends a potentially massive paradigm shift.

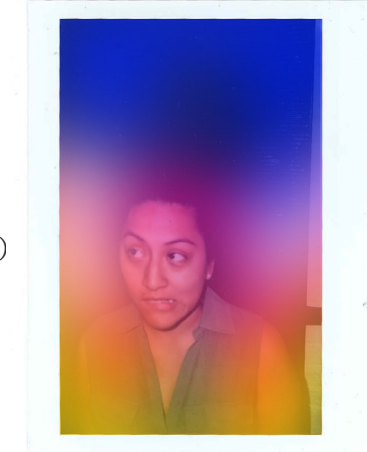
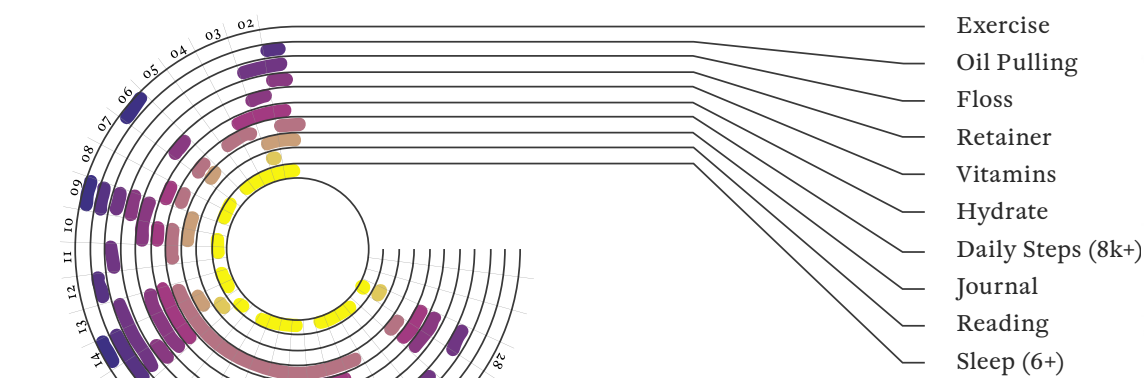
1,247 Boxes

Written by
ALEJANDRA LIMA

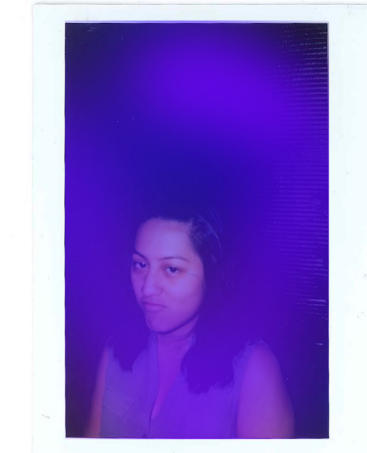
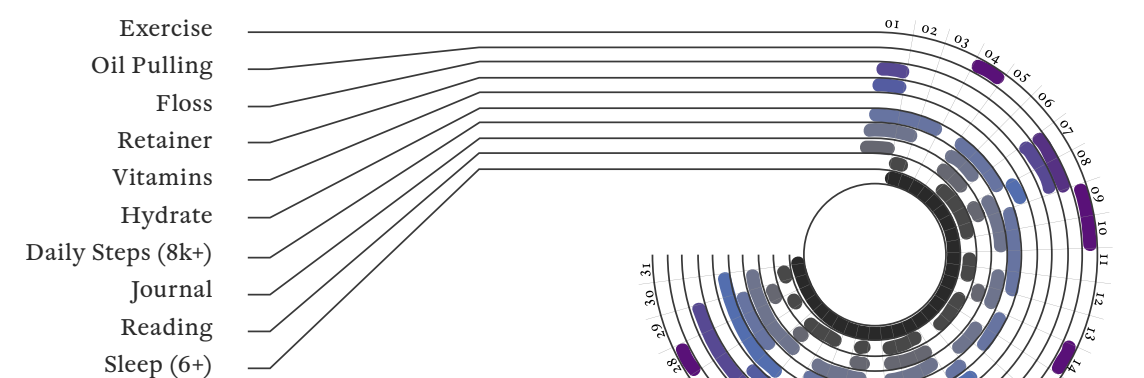
For the start of the year, I set to commit myself in tracking my habits. The more boxes checked off, the better. Ideally, I set out to complete each at least 3x a week.



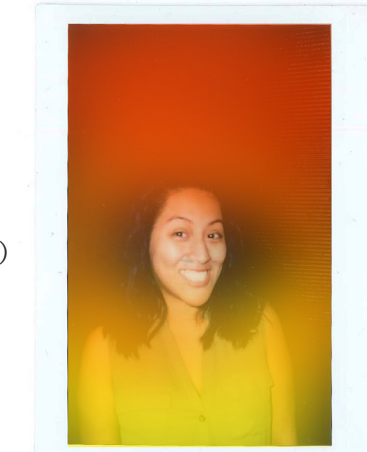
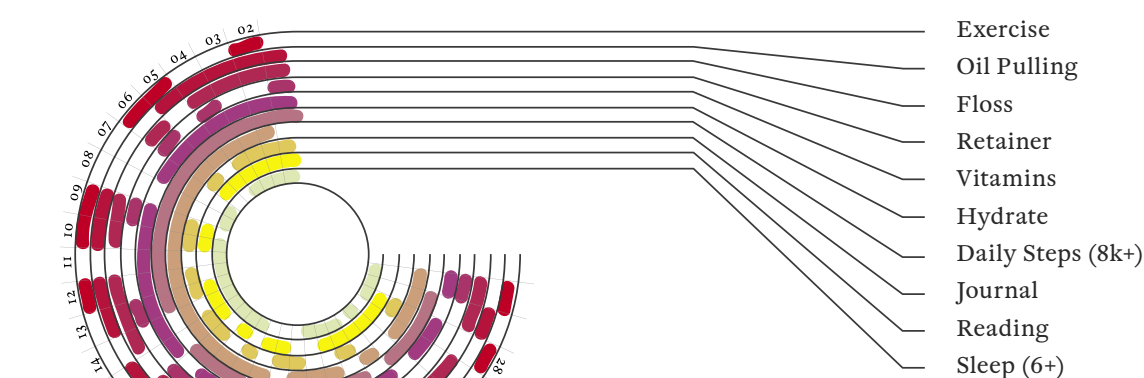
JANUARY 1
Excited to begin a tracker this year
What to commit to is the real question,
Oh dear.
Remember each day
The habits I’ll slay
I’m definitely kicking this in the rear.



MARCH 20
Motivating myself to get these done
How can I make these habits more fun?
A change in routine
Might be the key to be seen
To help finish the patterns I’ve begun.



FEBRUARY 28
How time has gone by so fast
These patterns have left me aghast.
All those empty boxes
I won’t see them not as losses.
Let it be - it is all in the past.



APRIL 20
Onto month four I’m tracking
I’ve gone down with the slacking
This was harder than I thought
There were times I didn’t like this a lot
But I see my motivation’s not lacking

⁵ Zuckerman, E. and Barabas, C., Can Bitcoin be Used for Good?, The Atlantic, April 7, 2016 (citing Palmer, D., Pushing Bitcoin for Third World Issues can be “Techno-colonialism,” United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2016

Letters to

My Father

Written by
JONATHAN BAILEY

The art of letter writing is not lost. Pen to paper and stamp upon envelope may no longer be the dominant or preferred form of communication, but it is by no means dead.

My typewriter is a screen and my keyboard vacillates from the physical to the multi-touch. I use my computer and phone as conduits for sharing articles and my responses to them; the bouncing of ideas and stories of gravity and humor. Email, instant messaging, video chat, text, Facebook, etc. are so intertwined in our day-to-day lives that we have begun to take them for granted. I know I have. I have ingrained my daily life with these tools so deeply that I don't always stop to think about how the person on the other end is absorbing this data. How and when are they receiving what I'm sending? Are they as engaged in this technology as I am? Are they sensing the sarcasm, the rhetoric, the humor, the angst, the passion, the backstory, the heart, and the tone as my fingers smash away in my quest to speak my mind and share ideas? Do they perceive these bits as a gesture of 'you might find this insightful' or a slight attack on their notions of the world?

If it is perceived in the negative, then it is just as easy to ignore and delete what you don't want to read, or hear, than to appraise why it's before your eyes. These tools have served me well with most people, but to my dad it has proven to be overwhelming. I have pursued information sharing in real-time, but he breaks down. I've looked to start a serious dialogue on why he thinks the way he does, but electronic communications just haven't yielded fruitful results. He becomes overwhelmed and frustrated. I need to hone a new tool if I'm to succeed in breaking this cycle. I need to go back to basics. So I've decided to start a series of letters. To get through to him, to try and better understand his mind, to ask tough questions, and open a safe space to receive both tough answers and questions back. The success of this will depend on our engagement to be both open and honest. I have a good feeling, but time will tell.

My intention is one of introspection and extrospection between the views I hold and those views of my father. I hope he will be engaged in this dialogue that I feel is long overdue. My previous attempts have hit roadblocks on so many occasions. Stubbornness and the patience to not take 'no' for an answer keep me from standing down. This may turn out to be futile, but giving up just never seems like a valid option. To me, it's merely an excuse, or a declaration of failure.

For years I've been trying to find the right way to get inside his mind. To understand why he thinks the way he does and why he votes the way he does. I have a growing urge to have a deeper understanding on what makes my dad's brain tick. Why he stands for things he does. To dig deep down to see if his stances are rooted in something tangible or a superficial facade. I don't know because we have never been able to go there. I'm not on a mission to change his political stance, more a quest to understand what grounds him.

Maybe I suffer from disillusion of grandeur that I may dissuade him from the grip which I perceive consumes him. Maybe he thinks I'm wasting my time. I've sent long letters and short notes. My dad dithers in his response and says he will talk and get back to me, but has shown that he is avoiding the conversation altogether. Frustrations between a father and son are not unique. My father isn't a great listener and he knows it. He can be quick to talk over someone and quick to change the subject. He is a bit of a control freak and is clearly uncomfortable discussing a subject that he doesn't have a solid grasp on. The patience to sit still and participate in deep discussion is not his ball of wax. My gut tells me those behaviors can be constructively challenged.

I yearn to go deep into an array of subject matters. The last time we were together we started a conversation about police brutality and I pressed him on a few topics that were lateral to our

discussion. Topics of importance that cascade across our society that affect a great deal of people. When pushed, his response took me aback. He stated he hadn't put much thought in the subject, yet during the initial discussion points his opinion was strong. He quickly pulled the plug on the conversation when I expressed my shock to this admission. Even though the conversation ceased for the moment, it got my noodle cooking. Maybe, just maybe, if I can find an avenue to dive deep, then maybe, our conversation could continue.

The key for me to remember with all of this is the human factor involved. Mine and his. Life is precious, liberty is essential, the pursuit of happiness comes at a cost. We should be willing to foot the bill because this world is all we have. I've committed to six letters on six subjects. Each letter includes a stamped return envelope with paper. The vessel is set, it's the effort that needs to be attended.

Education, environment, health care, personal liberty, religion, and war and peace. Six topics, separated by subject matter, yet interwoven within today's public discourse. In addition to that, areas of interest with which I am no master, but have a deep curiosity. If one jumps to conclusions, this may be seen as a political exercise. I would argue it is not, but for me I want to know why my father votes for a group of people that hold a near antithesis of my views. Why does progress seem to be a bad word?

I, for one, would rather progress a society built for all than conserve the one for the few. I'm hopeful that sitting with paper and pen, sitting with his thoughts, and sitting with his conscience will give him an avenue for us to 'talk' in a deliberate and meaningful way. Maybe it won't. Maybe he won't commit.

We will see where we go from here.

The key for me to remember with all of this is the human factor involved. Mine and his.

+ 1

Photographs by
JEREMIAH CLANCY
ISAAC FRIEDMAN-HEIMAN

We rarely acknowledge the implications of the implied. Particular objects committed through space, time, and language are relationships that we simply never question and always adhere to. These commitments help classify them as a pair, which is directly linked to how we think of them. One, that simply, cannot live without the other.





The Whole Self

Written by

MICHAEL VENTURA

An exploration into the act of self observation in order to more fully commit to a state of presence and mindfulness

His voice had a subtle booming quality to it. He wasn't yelling; he wasn't even speaking loudly, but the gravitas that rumbled within him made his words land on my ears in a way that made me feel at once uncomfortable and inspired. "How present are you?" he asked matter-of-factly. I was 27 and thought I knew everything there was to know about life. I was switched on. I was insightful. I was definitely present.

I relayed as much, attempting to summon a sense of humility through my young and oblivious pride. Gil smiled back at me and followed up with a simple question, "Are you right handed?"

"Yes,," I responded.

"Good. Here's what I'd like you to do...", Gil said. "Every door you approach, I want you to open it with your left hand."

That's it? Easy enough, right?

I was breathing slower. I was in my body. I was getting more present.

This was one of my early visits to Gil Barretto, a man who that would become a mentor, a guide, and an intimate member of my personal and spiritual development for the seven years we worked together before his passing.

I spent the next week walking through countless doors, only to realize on the other side of the threshold that it was my right hand recoiling from the handle and returning to my side. “I did it again!”, I thought to myself. It was beyond frustrating. I couldn’t believe something as simple as opening a door with my non-dominant hand could be so difficult.

But this was Gil’s gift. He knew how to offer a simple action as a means to self awareness. I came to realize I was rarely, if ever, actually present. I was always thinking about something else. Where I was going. The meeting I just left. What I wanted for dinner. Basically anything other than the present moment. The door in front of me and my conscious act to open it with my left hand.

It took a few months of doing this before I began to get a handle on it. I was breathing slower. I was in my body. I was getting more present.

I returned to Gil after lamenting to him time and again that I wasn’t getting it and I told him about my eventual success. “I’m doing it, Gil!” I exclaimed. He smiled a half-grin and said, “Good. Now switch back.”

Gil looked like a Navajo elder. He was in his late 70s when I met him but he still stood over six feet tall and broad shouldered. He always wore a shirt and tie, and expected the same of me every time we met, which was at times upwards of three visits per month.

In truth, Gil was mostly Puerto Rican – hailing from Spanish Harlem – but he had a sense of every ethnicity within him. He was timeless, raceless, and selfless.

He’d lived in India with gurus, he’d studied beside esoteric scholars, he trained with descendants from G.I. Gurdjeff’s school, he was a trained psychologist and a mean saxophone player.

Gil saved my life. He didn’t pull me from a burning building or take a bullet for me, but he might as well have. He stepped in front of a false version of myself who was at the wheel of my mind and body. He spotted in me a more essential, more capable “I” within, and over time, with all sorts of training and dialogue, helped me to regain control of a self that was careening for disaster.

During the time I worked with Gil, I began to more fully understand and come to refine my own philosophies on personal development. It’s been about a decade since we initially met. Gil passed away a few years ago, peacefully and in his own way, but he still walks with me every day.

About a year ago, I endeavored to document a philosophy that was bubbling within me – informed a great deal by Gil and the work we did together. I called this The Whole Self and it has become a helpful framework that I use both personally and professionally to help bring clarity and thoughtfulness to the work at hand.

In short, I believe that each of us is comprised of many “selves”. Aside from the distracting and asleep ones that keep us from our own progress, I believe there are seven distinct facets of self that are within us and aid in the pursuit of our personal growth.

We begin at our roots.
We begin with the Physical Self.

The Physical Self is what helps us to explore the power of our presence and to experience the environment around us, as well as the role of the body in kinesthetic learning.

My early lesson with Gil and the doorknob was this very sort of awareness. He needed me to get in touch with my physical presence. To inhabit the here and now. To be in command of my own body. Without this sort of presence, any other more cerebral pursuits would be futile.

What follows is our Emotional Self. This connects us to our personal needs and our inner voice as a means to achieve greater understanding and self-knowledge. It’s what helps us understand our biases, our fears, our own self-imposed limitations and constrictions. Talk therapy is a great example of the exploration into this realm of the self. It’s diagnostic and ideally, leads to actionable behavioral changes we can make to more fully come into our true “self.”

We then move up the chain into the next facet of self – the Inspired Self. The Inspired Self is the spark that ignites the inherent creative desire to make, do, and solve – and the empowerment that comes from it. Many of us have a compulsion to live in this state. To continually seek inspiration and act upon it. Done in good measure, this is a wonderful state to dwell in, but if done exclusively and to the detriment of other aspects of self, it can hold us back from deeper understanding.

Having grasped our physical, emotional, and inspired states of being, we then can begin to look at our context and the world around us. How do we fit in? What role do we play amongst our family, friends, and colleagues? This is what I’ve termed the Community Self. This self shares responsibility and understanding of how our individual strengths make a stronger collective. It understands what we are most often relied upon by others to do and it assesses the “fit” of those relationships.

If the people around us ask us to behave in a manner consistent with our own views and the intent of our “whole self,” we are working in the right way. But when those around us ask us to deviate from our true north, to act in ways that pull us from our center, work needs to be done to improve our own agency, or the dynamics in the relationships around us.

One way we can effectively address these dynamics and to begin to gain a higher sense of the Whole Self is by engaging with the Intellectual Self.

The Intellectual Self stimulates the thinker within and provokes questions both old and new, micro and macro, and universal and specific to help us get a grasp on – and hopefully control of our intellect. This is the self that helps us to communicate effectively with those around us. To put our emotions and senses into words and ideas that help us relate more effectively.

In so doing, we begin to access the next aspect of the Whole Self – the Mindful Self. Tapping into mindfulness and raising consciousness for our relationship with the world and our place in it is the primary action of this self.

Mindful meditation is a popular pursuit of many people in this day and age. Meditation apps, classes, groups, and one-on-one lessons are growing at rates never before seen. Our collective unconscious is calling for us to be more awakened. More in touch. More tuned in than ever before. It’s no coincidence that in these trying times we are seeing more people, of all demographics and psychographics, beginning to explore a more mindful state of being.

But what is all of this in the service of?
What’s all this self-work pursuing?

The seventh aspect of the Whole Self is the Aspirational Self. Some might call this our purpose. What we strive for and constantly pursue. I tend to think of it as the clarifying of one’s vision of growth and realizing the steps needed to get there.

This is the nature of the self. To grow. To learn lessons and evolve. Many great spiritual teachers, spanning all religions and sects, have shared this lesson with us for millennia. It is in the pursuit and acceptance of this aspect of self that our lives can gain meaning. It is the magnetism that helps keep our compass trained toward north.

And so these are the seven aspects of the Whole Self.

There is no coincidence that these have a correspondence to many other ancient teachings. For those of you who have researched and understood the yogic philosophies of the chakras, you can see how these seven facets of the Whole Self map to the primary seven chakras. They, like other mind-body mapping frameworks such as the Chinese dantians are all forms used to help relay ancient wisdom into understandable states of knowledge.

While I have invested countless hours of my life to think deeply about these matters, to explore my own personal development, and to help relay my thoughts to others who are walking along a similar path, it’s important to note that, in my belief, there is no finish line. These pursuits are never attained and progressed beyond. Do I still open doors unconsciously from time to time? Absolutely. But it is in the daily, hourly, and moment-to-moment act of self-observation that our commitment to a better and more whole self can be better understood and hopefully attained.

Even if just for a moment.

The Inspired Self is the spark that ignites the inherent creative desire to make, do, and solve.

SEEKING HUMAN CANE

I love texting while walking. But I've had a few near-death experiences in West Village crosswalks, and I'm not ready to die yet. Seeking a kind, structurally stable human to lead me through the streets while I text and email, sort of like a human seeing eye dog. Together, we'll get so much done. Preference given to candidates with advanced social media skills.



MISSING PERSON

I was looking the other way when I disappeared. I've been trying to find myself for years now.

ARM OCCUPIER

My arms just hang by my side, and seem to grow longer at cocktail parties and gallery openings, when I least want them to. Seeking someone to keep my arms busy in social settings (e.g. bars, parties, shake m... don't

HELP WANTED

Desperately in need of help asking for help...HELP!

WANTED: Promise Keeper

Inquire within. No experience necessary. Bring your own tools.

This is not a one-time offer but a continuing job with maximum growth potential. The ideal candidate must be highly motivated, a self starter, inquisitive, empathic, and a good judge of human nature. We are seeking a keen eye for subtle, non-verbal queues when discussing matters in person, and the ability to communicate thoughtfully and with compassion (compassion is non-negotiable). This job is a challenging one; circumstances may change, new information may come to light, emotions can trigger adverse reactions, and perceptions on two or more sides can create grey areas.

The ideal candidate will be reflective as to his or her level of accountability, and have a realistic view as to how to navigate the

mutual commitment made in a promise. Were a conflict to arise (which we can pretty much guarantee), the Promise Keeper must keep a cool head, be objective and resolve the situation. Above all, the Promise Keeper must choose his or her words well and wisely, and manage expectations.

The ideal candidate is a snappy dresser who has a sense of humor, and is light on his/her feet. He or she will also be self-aware as to the consequences of broken promises. Reliability and honesty are the Promise Keeper's creed.

Compensation may include handshakes, hugs, kisses and the occasional free round of drinks.

TOPPER WANTED

I just got off the plane with clothes on my back. Looking for someone to shop for my full wardrobe ASAP. Will pay in cash.

GAMEBOY REPAIR

My tetris high score is 247,851; Must be able to repair cartridge and beat my score.

Hiring:
DREAM BIOGRAPHER

Looking for someone to ghostwrite my diary and dream journal. Listen for mumbled keywords; take note when I seem pensive, bemused, ecstatic, or sad. Your insights and musings will be my private testament to these most sublime and desolate moments.

Experience required.

Now Hiring: HUMAN ALARM CL

Ideal candidate will have pleasantly annoying singing voice, an eye for percussive household objects and not be afraid to hurt my feelings.

HELP WANTED

Excellent Steak-maker wanted to teach non-excellent steak-maker how to make an excellent steak.

HELP WANTED

Is this where I write what I want help with?

Wanted:
FRIEND FOR FRIENDS

My friends have tons of issues. They're dating alcoholics or quitting their jobs or have absent fathers. Seeking a passable facsimile of myself who will call my friends for weekly catch-up sessions, "listen" on mute (feel free to eat food or do whatever), and say "love you too" before hanging up.



NOW HIRING

Need someone to help me initiate compelling drunk conversations with my 24hr Chinese laundromat man to help keep him company.

WANTED: Mirror Blocker

Every time I look at my reflection, I see only my multitudinous imperfections. Seeking an agile and quick thinking person to accompany me throughout my day and preemptively shield my gaze from any reflective surface. Position to be compensated handsomely.

WRITTEN BY: Gabbie de Lara

helpwanted@wearesubrosa.com





SALT + PEPPER



PEANUT BUTTER + JELLY

Notes on Commitment

Observations Collected by

VANESSA HOLDEN

An incomplete field guide & accompanying notes, only partially arranged, borne of personal experience

A GOOD GROUNDING PRINCIPLE

Commitment is a verb.

It simply has bigger, longer-term impact if you think about it that way. Making “a commitment” is no substitute for developing the muscles and practicing the actions of:

STRENGTH	DEVOTION
CERTAINTY	ALLEGIANCE
MORAL FORTITUDE	LOYALTY
TENACITY	FAITHFULNESS
RESILIENCE	PRESENCE
DEDICATION	AVAILABILITY

Think about it this way — to best identify commitment use:

THESE	NOT THESE
 	

CLOSE BUT NO CIGAR

A committee: this is quite different. Avoid entirely, especially choices, made by.

THE ONE COMMITMENT

I love you.

The equation typically goes like this: to make a commitment is to MAKE A BIG, BOLD STATEMENT about intended or actual actions to create IMPACT IN ALL CAPS against a SCARY GOAL WITH TEETH. But our most meaningful commitment is the one we can whisper in the way we are every day. Repeating it over and over again, out loud — or better — in action, each of us is able to yield outside impact from the daily, routine, totally unremarkable, completely unsexy ways we’re able to express awareness, presence, kindness and care to each other and the things that are important to us. It’s the one commitment we can make above all others, to all others, and in action it changes everything, and you too. Make it.

***THE TELL: SHARPIES ARE THE TOOL OF CHOICE FOR THOSE CAPABLE OF COMMITMENT.**

Permanent, bold, extremely challenging to remove: the pen of choice on the International Space Station. Enough said. That said, they’re also the tool of choice for egoists. Identifying them is an entirely different Field Guide.

Make no mistake, commitments are cheap.¹ Courage is cash money.

Gardening.

THAT’S COMMITMENT.

What extraordinary imagination, courage and grit it takes. To see a plot of land and in it the feeling of a cool, shady spot on a breezy Saturday afternoon, to see a freshly cut arrangement on the mantel or the table, or a seasons’ worth of produce for family and friends some decades from now. To accept the unpredictability of the weather, the influence of time and all of the miniscule, unmanageable variables in the air, the soil, the plants, your hands and to keep on working at it anyway. PRO-TIP If you’re looking for someone to make a commitment to, you could do worse than find yourself a gardener.

TO SEE WHAT COMMITMENT REALLY LOOKS LIKE, TAKE A WALK THROUGH:

The Edible Schoolyard	Berkeley, CA
Lotus Land	Santa Barbara, CA
Jardin Majorelle	Marrakech, Morocco
Brooklyn Botanical Garden	Brooklyn, NY
Salvation Mountain*	Calipatria, CA

* not technically grown, but most certainly a garden

FACT

It’s an impossibility to make a commitment with any integrity to some *one* or some *thing* before you’ve made one to one’s *self*.

TO BEGIN

Commit to Clarity!

Empowering, stabilizing and freeing, the most underrated use of commitment is in the everyday choices we might make for ourselves. Some good examples: My son is fifteen and only wears Vans sneakers. My husband only wears one brand of navy T’s — he buys them by the dozen. They fade out and there’s a new one. Think of all of the “one less thing to think about for the rest of your life” choices you could be close to making, and start with one. Any one will do.



YOU SHOULDN’T HAVE TO ASK

Real commitments come free. You shouldn’t have to ask for someone’s, so make it a habit not to. Conversely, be polite, but it’s a good rule to ignore people who ask for yours. That’s seeking assurance borne from insecurity, and it should be mutually transparent that you can expect better than that.

COMMITMENT FOR DUMMIES

Hold on loosely, but don’t let go.

A 3:56 minute masterclass in living and keeping commitments, the 1981 soft rock song “Hold On Loosely” by 38 Special contains everything you really need to know. The chorus is key — “Hold on loosely, but don’t let go, If you cling too tightly, you’re gonna lose control.” Change is inevitable and unstoppable. The only commitment we can really make is to what’s right in front us. To the people right in front of you. To the things that are important to us. To right now. That’s it.

SIMILAR BUT NOT THE SAME: The Cars “Just What I Needed”. (1978). Also excellent.

Making a commitment is fine if you want to put on a show. Making a difference is something else done at an entirely different volume.

To paraphrase Steve Martin, talking about commitment is like dancing about architecture. As a general rule, if you’re going to make a commitment and intend to have it stick, write it down; and if you’re going to go to the trouble to name it a commitment and write it down*, make it big and uncomfortable enough to feel it. In this way, a commitment (abstract) becomes a goal (actionable), and, having set a goal clear and straight in your sights, you’re already one step closer to hitting it, no matter how audacious it is. Who has time for small goals anyway? None of us. Not you. Not now.

Commitment is concrete. Commitments are not.

To avoid this common enough confusion, consider Glynn Wolfe, a Baptist minister who lived in California and holds the record for the largest number of monogamous marriages: the shortest lasted 19 days, the longest, eleven years. All are listed below. Setting aside babe-magnet/insatiable Glynn — certainly the least committed character in this story — visualize the woman who wore each of these names. The kicky spark of Marcie McDonald in roaring 1926, the film noir glamor of Charlotte Devane in moody pre-war 1936, and the practical, but perplexing characters of Katherine Archer and Sharon Goodwin, who both married Glynn twice: each of them totally tangible, the commitments he made to them like vapor.

MARRIAGES

Some marriages remain unverified.

1st.	Marcie McDonald	1926 – 1927	her death
2nd.	Stephanie Delaney	1928 – 1930	divorced
3rd.	Victoria Ernest	1931	divorced
4th.	Katherine Johnson	1932	divorced
5th.	Rachel Jennigs-Prescott	1932 – 1934	divorced
6th.	Charlotte Devane	1935 – 1936	divorced
7th.	Valerie Harborn	1936	divorced
8th.	Charlotte Devane	1936 – 1938	her death
9th.	Frances Hunter	1939	her death
10th.	Carol Demmings	1940 – 1944	divorced
11th.	Priscilla Ralph	1946 – 1947	divorced
12th.	Katherine Archer	1948	divorced
13th.	Lisa Waters	1948	divorced
14th.	Katherine Archer	1949 – 1951	divorced
15th.	Nina Morgan-Stuart	1954	divorced
16th.	Chase Jones	1955	divorced
17th.	Kathleen Briggs	1958	divorced
18th.	Sharon Goodwin	1958 – 1959	divorced
19th.	Sharon Goodwin	1960	divorced
20th.	Demerle Goin-Rankin	1964	divorced
21st.	Julia Santiago	1968	divorced
22nd.	Gloria Mascari	1969	divorced
23rd.	Vivan Alvers	1970 – 1973	her death
24th.	Maria Velez	1977 – 1980	divorced
25th.	Guadalupe Chavez	1979	divorced
26th.	Maria Chavez	1979 – 1982	divorced
27th.	Eileen Shelton	1982 – 1984	divorced
28th.	Christine Camacho	1984 – 1995	divorced
29th.	Bonnie Lee Bakley	1995	annulled
‘29th.’	Emily Salerno	1996	divorced
30th.	Linda Wolfe (née Essex)	1996 – 1997	until his death

THINK BIGGER

Think of a better thing to be committed to than consistency — the truth is a good place to start.

The Night Moves

Photos by
**KRISTOPHER
DEAN**

Light is a magical power that changes over time. Images captured over extended periods showcase amazing nuances with a soft and eerie quality, often making the mundane come alive.

**CHRISTINE
BLACKBURNE**

All images in this series were taken with traditional film cameras and techniques – with exposures ranging from a few seconds to 30 minutes.



NEW JERSEY, 2017 / 01:32 – 01:57



VANCOUVER, 2017 / / 20:24 – 20:44



Idol Hands

A mother to son conversation on the importance of making art; not as a life's work, but as lifeblood.

Photos & Words by
ISAAC FRIEDMAN-HEIMAN

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF MAKING?

I have a very clear memory — in Third grade— of being given clay in Mrs. Miller's class. [...] She taught everything. I remember that she gave us clay and we made little dog figurines out of it and it was just, very easy for me. To use my fingers and feel the coordination

between eye and hand. I also remember around that same time watching an educational movie about how Native Americans made their own pots out of coiled clay and being absolutely fascinated by it! But throughout school, any way that I could get art into my work I managed to. For example, if I had a book report, the cover of the book report — the drawing — was more important to me than the actual report.

WERE THE ARTS SOMETHING THAT YOU FELT WAS REALLY ADVOCATED FOR AT THAT POINT IN TIME?

No, not formally. Not really. It wasn't like somebody said, "wow, we should put you in an art class." It just wasn't like that. But within the family I was known as the "artistic one." That was my identity. Both in the immediate and extended family, and in the community. Any sort of function, whether parties, plays, or dances, I did whatever needed to be done that was art-related. I also

had two grandmothers who used their hands a lot. Lena was constantly sewing. She made her own lace and quilts, and all of her children's clothes — she just had to keep her hands busy. My other grandmother, Rose, made bread, but Lena was really the artistic one of the two.

HOW DO YOU DIFFERENTIATE ONE BEING MORE OR LESS ARTISTIC?

Rose was more math and science, and Lena was just more art. When Rose made bread she followed a recipe, and when she taught me how to make bread she was always critical of how I made

mine. She would tell me I didn't cook it long enough, but it wasn't because I didn't know the recipe, I just wanted to make mine differently. I did it the way that I thought looked and tasted better and the way it felt in your mouth. I was also making and teaching people how to make bread throughout my college years. It was just one of those show stoppers. In many ways it's very similar to the response that I still get, but then there were just a lot fewer people baking their own bread.

WAS THERE MORE STRUCTURE AROUND CREATIVE OUTLETS IN HIGH SCHOOL?

I went to a private school in my Junior year, Country Day, that had an art class. They had paints, textiles and a pottery wheel and clay... They had an art room! I had never been in an art room. It was like heaven. (laughs) There was finally a place where I could work and explore and make a mess. Ultimately, it was my high

school art teacher who suggested I apply to art school for college. But still, at that point I had never taken a technical drawing or painting class. The projects that we did were much more craft, batiking, pottery, etc. When I ended up going to Washington University to study art I was totally blown away. It was intimidating and overwhelming, and the students there had already studied art more formally. They understood the fundamentals of color and perspective and how to draw figures and things like that.

I NEVER ENJOYED DRAWING CLASSES.

Yeah, it was definitely a challenging experience. Had I stayed in the program longer maybe I would've had the time to discover a way that it was best suited for me, but the first year was really heavily focused on drawing, design and art history. Years later, when I went





back and looked at how my drawings went from being fairly primitive to much more developed in that year's time I was like... "wow look what I did!" I just couldn't see it then. I didn't have the confidence to stay with it.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD THE DESIRE TO SELL YOUR WORK?

I like the idea of creating work that is uniquely mine, which in a way does mean that I have a niche and could sell my work, but at this point I'm not motivated by the idea of making money. I'm more interested in a fluid process that enables me to continue exploring new and different

work. I'm just so visual and tactile that it's really how I understand things and in many ways see the world. So whatever form making takes I'm usually interested. A lot of it has always been about making for others as a way of sharing and gift-giving. In the purest sense that's really still the why of what I do. So whether it's bread or ceramics, the feeling of giving and sharing in the experience other people's pleasure from the work is really what feeds me.

YEAH THAT IS PRETTY MAGICAL.

It is magic! The idea that you can take raw ingredients and transform them, literally a lump of clay, that becomes a functional mug or a bowl, that's just so cool. It's the same thing as flour and water and yeast that's mixed and kneaded and transformed into something that is completely different and unrecognizable... that's magic. The reaction that you then get from the people you share it with is just validation that the magic is real.



Whether it's bread or ceramics, the feeling of giving and sharing in the experience of other people's pleasure is really what feeds me.

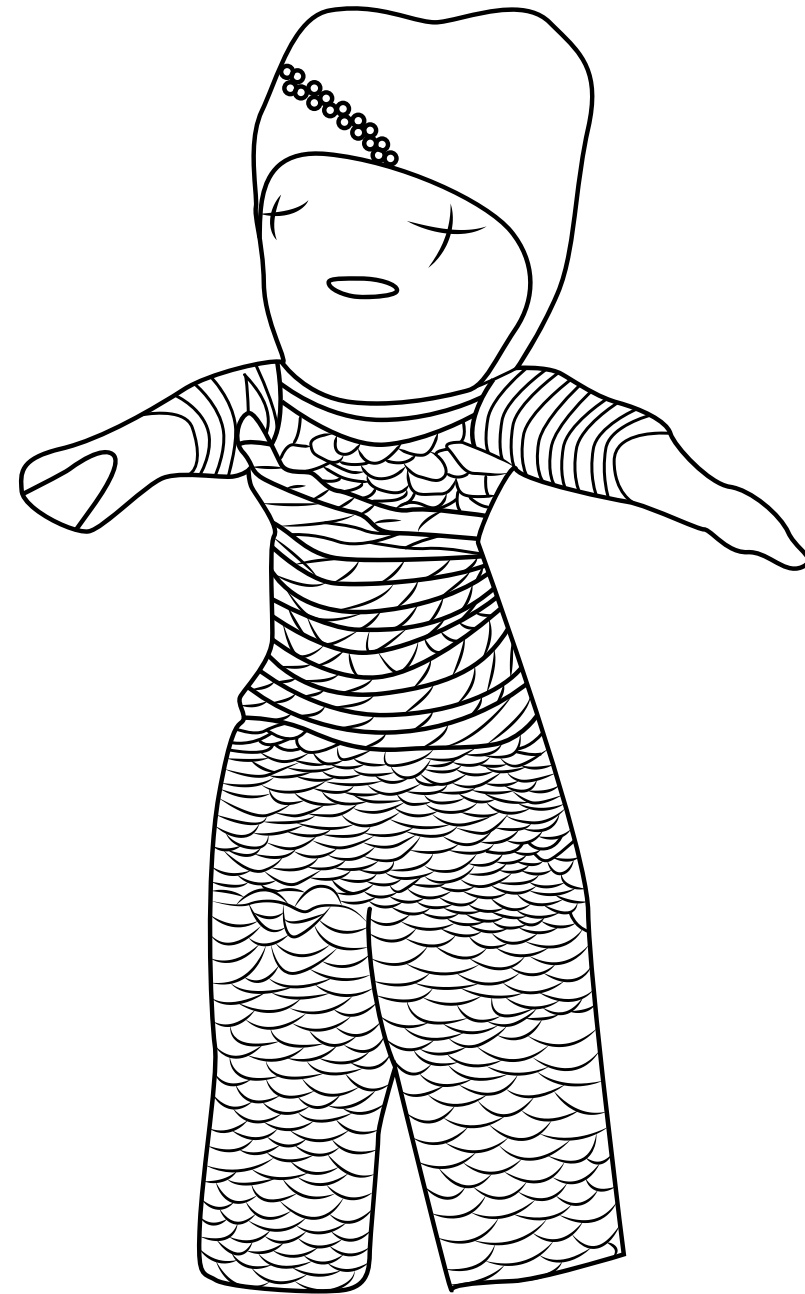
A Little Help from Our Friends

Written & Illustrated by

**RAE
COHEN-
BERNAMOFF**

EVE SMITH

For centuries, people have turned to talismans in times of trial and transition. Imbued with power and personality, these two ritual objects provide benefaction and accountability for those committed to transformation.



When your stress and anxiety keep you sad and stuck, come tell me your woes and then tuck me under your pillow.

Fill me with bright colors and cut me out of the page.

When you wake up, your troubles will be gone and you'll be ready to take on the world.

MUÑECA QUITAPENA

"El temor modifica tu conducta."

Every worthwhile journey begins with some trepidation. But if you find yourself frozen at the doorway to adventure, might we suggest turning to the Mayan goddess Ixmucané. In the highlands of the K'iche' Kingdom and in the pages of the Popol Vuh, legend has it that she incarnates into these diminutive 'worry dolls' to take away your sorrows and solve your problems, all while you sleep.



When you have a goal that requires resolve, tell me and fill in one eye.

Color me according to your aspirations: red for luck, white for love, green for health, gold for prosperity.

When you've accomplished your vision, fill in my other eye so I can finally see.

DARUMA DOLL

"Nana korobi yaoki."

Dreaming is easy. Working to achieve your dreams is anything but. When you're in need of a partner to remind you of your commitments and help you stay the course, call upon the Daruma doll. Named for the 5th century father of Zen Buddhism, Bodhidharma, this doll holds you accountable until you achieve your goal with his steady one-eyed gaze and stable rounded body that never topples.



11523

Each of these photos was taken en route to or from NJ Transit bus stop 11523, off the corner of Dean St. and Palisade Ave. in Englewood, N.J.

Photos by
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