

20 Years: Before and After

# 20 Years: Before and After

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# 1

## 2 First Things

### 2.1 For More Information

For more books and information, visit me on the web at <https://benjamin-newton.com/>

Feel free to send me e-mail regarding the books and website at <mailto:ben@benjamin-newton.com> I even enjoy constructive criticism

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## **2.3 What is Failure?**

### **2.3.1 My Life**

When a general devises a strategy for a war, they can only plan the first part, because everything in the war afterwards has to take into account what the enemy will do, which is unknown because the enemy doesn't know how you will respond to what they do. Life is like this too. You can make all the good choices you can, but you never know what life will give you.

I was going to go to college and become an international business manager for distribution. Things changed very much for me in the next few years after high school that changed the direction of my life forever. I never would have guessed I would be doing what I am now or living now before then.

What is failure and what is success? This website was founded on absolute failure. I left the military early, I did poorly in college and wasn't able to finish. Then I found out I was mentally ill since the military, after my psychotic episode.

I have a very short official work history, so that while I believe everyone contributes equally by merely working their job for money, I want to contribute as well. I have tried to work with local non-profits, but they have not worked out because I could never do anything that felt significant to me. I do my writing as a kind of volunteer work to help make a contribution to society in lieu of my working. I realize this is not required or expected of me by anyone.

I have kept in a repeating cycle of learning to rest and take it easy and then working hard to document that. I don't plan on giving up writing, but I do plan on doing less in the future and feeling less like I need to do more.

20 years later I have published many important books, even though I only started it to share poetry with my uncle. I plan little ahead on what I am going to add to my website or books. I am not sure what I have accomplished or not is worthy of calling my work a success.

Websites are just so much work to do now. I think we have reached a critical point where computer security really needs to be addressed on a much more profound level and must be resolved to a certain degree, or the entire world system could easily collapse on itself (sooner than it would otherwise). I still want to share my writings with others, but I need to find a way to make it easier to do and less error prone.

There is only so much I can do in life as I am mentally ill and dealing with that alone is a huge deal and accomplishment in and of itself. I especially want to be able to document what I learn about Schizophrenia so that others can learn without having to learn by experience.

### **2.3.2 The Industry**

In a business, you can do everything right and then things change that are out of your control and then you lose your business. We are in a position now globally where there is no growth

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anymore. This does not mean everything will stop, but everyone will have the same wealth or less over time, averaged out. People have bought the last things they needed years ago and the iPhone was the last thing people wanted to buy that made more than peanuts.

Everybody today wants to sell something to make extra money, but nobody wants to buy anything. Electronics are dirt cheap, but no one has a job anymore. Online stores like Amazon.com are now putting out of business physical stores. Everybody wants to either become the next Amazon or Google or give up.

Computers continue to reduce the need for jobs by automating them. Businesses also need less and less people to make the programs over time as well and now everybody wants to be a programmer. If you want to sell something, you have to get people to upgrade and survive the big name players copying you and putting you out of business. The internet helped the lunatic fringe at first but is now going to help the big technology companies solidify their market control.

Right now there are some huge changes going on in the technology industry. There are now two sets of people in developing websites: the ones that create the software that runs them and those who assemble the pre-made parts together. There is very little design work available, because businesses generally don't care about design because it is considered unnecessary, pretty, and takes a lot of time to do right (although users care very much about this).

Everybody now just copies the stuff Google, Facebook, Amazon and the like do. In design, the middle has disappeared and so you either use a child's toy tools on the iPad or iPhone, or the mega-complicated, old, and unreliable Adobe software on Windows. The other choice is to just write the whole design in an elaborate program yourself using hundreds of different interlinked programs.

There are huge problems in how to make money off websites as well. Advertising or in app purchases worked for a while, but there is so much junk out there that only the biggest names/ established players survive. Advertising is being blocked because the ads are out of control and makes the websites unusable. They cannot charge for access as few people will pay making the amount they have to charge ridiculous.

They never should have offered services for free. People like me are offering better quality for free. People are now making money off our personal information and connecting the digital world to the physical one to track everything we think or do anywhere.

These same companies are constantly having this personal information stolen, because of poor choices in building their software to save money up front and saving money by not maintaining them. Even those that aren't cheap, and do all the right things security wise are affected by the leading security software being full of holes.

### **2.3.3 Avoiding Pain in This Life**

The best thing in life to me is to avoid suffering when possible. Be responsible and follow rules

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(including the Ten Commandments) and common sense, because that will enable you to control the problems that you bring to your life – the only ones that you can fully control. Keep taking care of yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Eat lots of vegetables, take all medicines as prescribed, go to counseling, volunteer, and keep reading the Bible, praying, and going to church.

In general, thinking long term is the key to making good decisions. Bad signs include doing things in secret or you have a bad feeling about it. If you are not sure of the morality of a particular decision, don't do it. Always side on caution and use your conscience.

Avoid anything you don't want to tell your mother about and stay away from anything addictive. Avoid anything too good to be true or something that comes too easy. Nothing is free and everything costs something.

Keep learning as much as possible and find joy in it. Be as self sufficient as possible. Never rely on anyone for anything you can do yourself.

Keep busy doing something productive (like a job), work hard at it and give it your best, to keep yourself out of trouble. Always keep a huge amount of savings on hand and always allow extra time to do things. Always obey authorities who rule over you without complaining.

Try not to anger other people, because they might be vindictive later on. Remain as anonymous and unimportant as possible so as not to get unnecessary or unusual attention of criminals, the government, or angry neighbors. Do not trust anything someone says or how they appear for anyone asking for money or personnel information from you.

Be careful not to break things, especially other people's things and even more other living things. Never loan anything to others – give or don't. Forgiving others sounds hard, but it is harder to stay angry. You should forgive others for yourself not for them, just as God wants us to stay away from sin for us, not for Him.

It is good to have others like you, it is better to like yourself, and best of all God already likes you no matter who or where you are in life. It is good to care, better to empathize, but greatest of all is to forgive and love unconditionally. It is good to take care of yourself, better to take care of your family, but best to take care of your everlasting life.

### **2.3.4 Avoiding Pain in the Next Life**

You will find in life you serve God or the devil as there is really no option to serve yourself. It is actually an great honor that God still cares and wants us to be His children, even though we brought suffering into the paradise He created.

Avoiding unnecessary suffering by ending up in Heaven rather than Hell can be achieved by through a complete change of heart and submitting your will to God's. This is not demanding or abusive as God is not a person and is actually our Creator. Emperors and leaders of vast religions have submitted themselves before God throughout all of history.

The important thing to realize is that life is a kind of waiting room, where what happens

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afterwards makes what happened before hand largely irrelevant. Life is like being in the womb and death is like being born. Just like they say to middle and high school kids to just stick with the program and then most of life will be much better. Just as we live the vast majority of our lives as adults, so life on earth is really a very small part of our entire life which will be everlasting after death.

So do not worry about what you achieve on earth, because you will do so much more in Heaven. You will look at the greatest things people accomplished on earth like middle school science projects or like still putting on their resume what they did in elementary school when they are over 40. Just get your key to Heaven and try to find something constructive to do in life, to pass the time.

We are all born once, are all called to be born again, and will all live forever. Heaven is free but it will cost you your pride. God will forgive you for anything, but the catch is you have to truly be sorry for it, change who you are and submit yourself to God wholly. You also have to forgive everyone else, no matter what they do to you or those you love.

I once found it difficult to deal with many people on the bus, but after several encounters, I think that others see me as a bus person now, too. I thought of complaining about the smell of pot on the bus but realized that I might smell bad sometimes too.

It is not very good to be hypocritical about anything in life, especially not for someone who tries to follow any philosophy or moral code. Jesus did not like hypocrites and unbelievers and believers alike feel the same. It is extremely bad for the spread of Christianity.

# 3 Mission

## 3.1 Intro Page

I have written up what I have learned over the years and put it online, because I would rather learn from reading than experience. Learning from experience is too painful. My experiences are useful to learn about because these areas are not written about very well and they have a very strong effect on those who live through these experiences. The most important things I document are serving in the military and living with Schizophrenia along with the faith and philosophy that helped me through it.

Another major area I have documented are my design decisions on my website and how I decided to present my experience and ideas. I am learning all the time how to be as clear, concise, and direct about explaining things as possible. I want to reach as many people as possible and my website to last as long as possible so I focus on performance, accessibility, maintainability, compatibility in all my design work.

My big goal in life is to reduce the pain both I and others suffer, unnecessarily. I also seek to get

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closer to God and continue to help my family, as both have done so much for me. I am Christian and in some ways like other Christians and others ways very much unlike other Christians. I am doing fine financially and realize that there is very little money to be made in this kind of writing, so I am happy to produce and maintain my website at no cost to the visitors.

If you want to give money, I recommend the farm sanctuaries as my preferred charity. Everything they do is legal and they do some very nice things for animals that are not easy to do. Unfortunately even though people are often treated like garbage throughout the world, most people think animals are even less important than people. Animals are God's greatest creation.

More importantly, if you want to support me better, pray for me and my family. We could all use prayer but nothing in particular. The best thing you can pray, if you don't know is to pray that God's will be done. One of the most powerful things to pray is to thank God for what He already has done for us. Prayer is just talking to God.

Should you follow my advice? The better idea than just thinking the same as me is to think critically about everything and everyone, including me. Do I want to change your mind? I would rather convince you to think and create things by yourself. I like the idea of teaching others the importance of thinking and creating as I do not have time to everyone's thinking and creating for them.

I also can be and likely am wrong on many things. You should never follow anyone blindly other than the One Creator God. I definitely do recommend the Bible and the Christian God, unconditionally. My values are humility, compassion, kindness, and seriousness. I also think creativity and hard work are very important too.

### **3.2 *Shifting Values***

#### **3.2.1 1 Corinthians 1:17-31**

this subsection quoted from the Bible

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

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Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

### **3.2.2 No Power**

this subsection written by me

You may have failed in life and have no power, like me, but you can still save us all, while being perfectly peaceful, unknown, and perfectly safe.

You can accept reality, follow all laws, risk nothing monetarily or your personal safety, with no money or power, be a threat to no person or group, and your contribution left entirely unknown, without needing any followers or to convince anyone of anything and still truly revolutionize the world.

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We all know the world is going in a bad direction, and we fight war after war and start revolution after revolution, trying every solution we can think of, and things have just gotten successfully worse, in every measurable way, from every point of view. What if we are going about it all wrong? Consider the enemy is really us. People are the problem, but specifically we are our own problems.

We see that things are wrong, because we are blindless followers and not in control, but our real problem is that we are in full control. We need to give up control to God. It is not that we need to avoid following, but just that we need a better leader. God is our true, best, and most natural Leader. He will save us from ourselves, if we choose to accept His help.

The evil within is the ultimate battle. If you can defeat the evil within, and achieve full self mastery and control, you have one the war. But we need to understand that we cannot do this on our own and need direct divine intervention. The good news is that God cares about us and intervenes constantly. He only wants us to ask, as He wants us to control our own fate and make our own decisions. Luckily God is all powerful, perfectly good, and merciful.

What we need to start this journey is the forgiveness of our sins. We need a miracle and that is convince us, to submit ourselves to God's will. All human plans have failed. We need to follow God's plan now, everyday and constantly.

### **3.2.3 Complete Failure**

this subsection written by me

I started my website, after my complete failure in college and the military, ending my tour in the military early and failing out of college. At the time, I was studying Chinese Literature, for my Business Management Major breadth requirement and I learned about Confucianism and Taoism. I was inspired by reading Chuang Tzu, to write poetry, which I put online, to share with one of my uncles.

Along the way, I tried again, at college, as a Journalism major and that summer, and, when I was making up credits, I took an Existentialism course. As I later found out, I had been mentally ill for several years, in addition to my chronic allergic pink eye. I used ideas from Philosophical Taoism and Christian Existentialism to help me deal with my personal crisis: trying to figure out how to manage my Paranoid Schizophrenia.

### **3.2.4 Most Important Jobs**

this subsection written by me

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Many people feel that they are just a cog in the machine and their jobs and roles in society are boring and unimportant. Nothing could be further from the truth. The things we as a society don't value are the most important of all. A modern society could function, without some of the leaders and specialists, but not without the cleaning, transportation, waste and pest management, and various other types of maintenance.

The "dirtiest" jobs are the most important. What is the biggest difference between modern and premodern life? It is modern plumbing, trash removal, and chemicals that make it easier to be clean and pest free. If you want to stay healthy, you have to take care of your body and mind. The same goes with any housing, factory, office, road, or plot of land. Even though you may not have time, to do more for others in your free time, you are already doing a helping job, like nurses, school teachers, and social workers.

We can all find significance spiritually, because God is concerned with every one of us, as individuals, regardless of whatever we have done or what place we find ourselves in, geographically, socially, and financially. He knows everything about every one, but He uses it to help us, and free us, not force us to conform or scam us. God cares about who you are, not what you have done, or your place in society.

God cares about stuffed toys and animals, just like He does people.

### **3.2.5 Rich and Famous**

this subsection written by me

Most people want to be rich, famous, and young and believe that they need to take a lot of risks, to have a happy life. When I joined the military, I took on many risks, but it was not fun: I did have a lot of adrenaline going, but it was all very scary.

Right now, I feel similarly, although in an entirely different situation (because of having Paranoid Schizophrenia). It is not fun either. When you have a high, you have an equally low level of depression afterwards. On anti-psychotic medication, you have both happening, at the same time.

Since then, I have I tried to live as low a risk life, as possible. Taking risks and going on wild adventures is not as fun, as you may think. Living what most call a boring life is really quite a blessing. I am also much happier being older and learning certain things about myself and the world, than I was when I was younger.

I found that I am in a very good situation, where I live in both United States and in the northwest corner of it. I already "won the lottery". Even if you were born in America, and were in the luckiest 5%, you would have a real hard time finding a job in this state, as the job market is

extremely brutal and unforgiving.

There are some many interesting parts of the world, but I would never want to live there. There are many more poisonous, aggressive, and larger pests there. Furthermore, there is even less concern for the environment and it is often very hot there.

The best of the interesting parts of the world can be experienced in literature, which I can get in English very cheaply and easily. It also is now very unsafe for Americans overseas, especially in the touristy areas.

### **3.2.6 Slaves to Technology**

this subsection written by me

Technology is designed to liberate us, but it actually makes us slaves. We see our society as us vs. them. We see the struggle as material and we see it as outward. We can't seem to accept that technology is really neither good nor evil, but just gives us more power. Why does technology become mandatory and we end up serving it?

It is because we make technology an idol. We are merely projecting our internal battle onto the development of technology. What would an artificial intelligence think of us? We think of computers as being objective, so what would they make of our situation? Computers would likely see us as the problem.

If we have self control, why do we let computers pull us in and keep us dependent upon them. We talk about society forcing us to serve machines, but we never consider that we never struggle against, it in ways that we do have control over. Are we really addicted to how we use computers at work or are we addicted to them for entertainment or distraction?

We may not be able to be free from technology, or be able to truly live off the grid and be independent of others' choices, but it is our choices that have the most control over our lives. What is bigger than corporations, the government, or our pride? - the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is always bigger than any of our problems. The solution to our sins always begins with prayer. Make time for God and He will make time for you. Seek God and He will answer you. Trust God and He will help you overcome.

Obeying laws and contributing to society is not weakness. We all think that, if we had the power, that we would fix everything. Submitting to authority and following rules is a good thing. Certainly there is evil in society, as we are governed by other people, but it does not fix it to put someone else in charge.

Our biggest problems in life are not caused by society, but by our own bad decisions. Society

and the physical world are illusions and its concerns are misdirects. We are being distracted, to fight and struggle against each other, rather than with the evil within.

### **3.2.7 Alternatives to Reason**

this subsection written by me

Our society ingrains deeply in us, from a very young age, to never question fact or reason. We see being "irrational" as a negative. It is not that we should reject reason, but that we should broaden our view of the world, like the rest of the world does today and the entire world, throughout the vast majority of history. Facts will never answer our most important questions or help us find solutions to our worst problems.

There are many other ways to decide what is true or right than just facts. We learn from world religions and philosophy that many other things (faith, tradition, scripture, prophecy, history, fate, theology, prayer, worship, charity, volunteer service, religious laws, forgiveness, free choice, intuition, common sense, life experiences, divine intervention, mystical experience, meditation, and similar methods of inquiry) can provide us with better answers, than just reasoning with facts alone.

### **3.2.8 What is Faith?**

this subsection written by me

Faith is not about understanding; it's about a choice. You will never fully understand God, because He is infinite. We are not asked to fully understand God, to believe. The decision to believe, by definition, has to be in absence of full understanding.

If you try to fully understand God, before you choose to believe, not only will you never make that decision, but you will also never provide complete "proof" for your belief. But we make most decisions without full knowledge, explaining everything about the situation or topic. It is perfectly natural, to not fully understand and that is what faith is about.

Paraphrase from Discovery Channel Documentary

If everyone is crazy but you, you should take a long look in the mirror. -- paraphrased from the Manhunt: Unabomber series on Discovery Channel

### **3.2.9 What Should You Do?**

this subsection written by me

Do not believe what I say, just because I say it. I am mentally ill. Consider the ideas yourself. Do

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they make sense to you? There are undoubtedly errors in my thinking. In any discussion about opinions, you should agree with some things and not with others. I do not want any followers. My ideas make sense to me, because they are not my own.

Anyone who has studied Asian philosophy and religion know that these ideas go back further than the time of the Buddha, Lao Tzu, or Confucius. the same is true with Plato and Aristotle. There are no new ideas in philosophy. There will be none, in the next few hundred years. What is different is the combinations.

Existentialism has some similarities with Taoism, but I have not read any books uniting the two schools, before I started my writing. I have combined these two schools, to create my own unique combination. The big similarities are paradox or non-dualism and humility.

Some of the greatest philosophers united major schools of philosophy. Some examples were: Bodhidharma, Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas, Kabir and Nanak, and Hegel and Sartre. Existentialism is not ancient, as it comes from the 19th and 20th centuries, but the ideas come from the Apostle Paul's writings, and the ideas are timeless and classic.

### **3.2.10 Popular Misconception of Nietzsche**

this subsection written by me

Look what happened to Nietzsche. He is often described as an Existentialist, but there is much more to his philosophy. Nietzsche was an independent thinker, much as Kierkegaard was (and they desired to read each others works). He wanted people to not be weak in their exercise of free will, to stand up for themselves, and not just blindly follow leaders. He wanted strong people, not strong leaders.

Nietzsche was a fan of the philosophical and artistic ideas of ancient Greek paganism. He based his ideas on the Greek philosophers, before Socrates (these Pre-Socratic works only exist in incomplete fragments). He wrote many books, one about aesthetics (The Birth of Tragedy) and composed a volume of poetry (in The Gay Science - no he was not gay). He had some original ideas on the afterlife (eternal return).

Nietzsche did not like Germany (or German Culture) or Christianity (or the New Testament). He was a fan of the Eskimos (north men) and the Old Testament. He was a big critique of Nationalism and Fascism (or faith used to promote politics). He was an anti-Christian, because he believed that the traditional Church ideas about following the government ("God and country") and New Testament ideas like forgiveness promoted the idea of a "slave race".

Nietzsche was a "positive nihilist" - he believed life had no meaning, but this did not discourage him from enjoying life (like Camus). He also served as an inspiration for Postmodernism and the deconstruction of opposing ideas, like modern religious values (The Antichrist and Thus Spoke

Zarathustra).

He died of syphilis and his sister was a NAZI (and inherited the copyright for his work). She heavily edited one of his unfinished writings (The Will to Power), to reflect Hitler's views. And Nietzsche gets blamed. Heidegger was a National Socialist (although not a fan of Hitler) and Hegel helped inspire communism, but you never hear that used against them. This is the context I am writing under.

### **3.2.11      What I Believe**

First and foremost, I believe the Bible (and Murphy's laws), but doubt everything else. Consider reading the Bible, to see if my ideas fit into your understanding of your Biblical worldview. If you don't respect the Bible, try to find the parts of my writing that reaffirm what you already believe.

I am not here to change your mind, but to re-enforce what you already believe. Too many people think they are the only ones that are right. If my ideas are right, they likely come from somewhere else. So what is different about my philosophy is that I admit my ideas not unique.

### **3.2.12      1 Corinthians: 2**

this subsection quoted from the Bible

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have

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crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

### ***3.3 Spiritual, Emotional, and Physical Reality***

To many today, the only real world is what they can experience physically. Many of us know that there are many more ways to suffer and many other ways to understand and experience things. Physical suffering pulls us into the physical world violently against our wishes to leave that reality. But those who do not know that suffering transcends the physical world do not truly know suffering. Suffering comes from our own bad decisions, but it takes place in our minds, where the physical and spiritual world intersect.

To say that the physical world is the only one, because it is the only thing you can experience is like saying because you are blind, the physical world does not exist to you. We may not identify the true sources of our pain and of what drives change in the world, but that does not make it any less real. Just like not knowing about the history of another nation or the personal lives of individual people make those experiences any less real to them. Not knowing why you are in pain does not make it hurt less.

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So whether we believe it or not, the spiritual world does affect us greatly. We may not want to accept why it works the way it does or purposely keep ourselves ignorant of this understanding, but that does not make something less real. You may not understand why someone hates or distrusts you nor they be able to even verbalize it, but people feel the way they do regardless of evidence. Whether or not there is evidence available to prove what we know to be real by experience, finding the evidence does not actually change anything.

So evidence will not change reality. Our opinions rarely change, because of this either. Some things that all of us agree are real can be hard to define. Emotions are one example. We know we love certain people, but we don't know why we do. Life is filled with us running into things we don't understand and dealing with them, without us ever fully being able to explain them. We make decisions like career choices, where even after years of training, we later find that they are not like what we thought they were.

We make decisions early in life that affect us more greatly than we could ever imagine beforehand and then later experiences like illness or injury dictate our life to be entirely different, than we could ever have believed. Life is full of uncertainty, but we still feel the effects of what drives reality.

Cause and effect seem simple enough and they explain a lot, but they operate in more areas than just our bodies and minds. We feel all the effects of other people's choices, even if we do not know what they were and our own, even if we don't think that they are significant enough to be consequential.

Reality is what it is regardless of what we want it to be. We hurt emotionally, even when we have no rational reasons, to feel the way we do. But our choices, especially how we respond to others choices, can be what we want them to be. We cannot change what someone else believes, or even what they choose to do, but we can choose our attitude towards the situation.

We will suffer and we will make bad decisions, but that does not need to define us. We can find hope beyond the physical reality and we can overcome our own issues, but we need to look to a higher power, while still acknowledging our complete responsibility, for our own choices.

When you do something wrong to someone else, it does not matter much to them, if it was unintended. You don't stop having a broken arm, because the person who gave it to you signed your caste. It does of course matter spiritually why you do what you do. The significance of intent is one of the most basic differences between physical and spiritual reality. Just like the physical world, the emotional and spiritual worlds operate according to specific parameters.

Faith is when you believe in something you do not fully understand and that is the way in which we perceive God. Of course, believing in God does not make Him real, but Him being real gives you good reason to believe in Him. Belief in something does not make it real, but believing in

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someone real has value.

God has no responsibility to solve our problems or prevent our suffering, because He never caused sin to happen. But God does still intervene constantly in the world. In fact, if God did not intervene at all, after He created the world, believing in Him would not solve any problems. Knowing God to be real and following Him matters, because He intervened, to take our place in suffering the penalty, for our immoral choices.

It is great that God is perfectly good, so we know He won't create problems for us, but it is essential for our protection that He is also merciful, because we do create problems, that we seek God to help us through. The full penalties for our bad decisions are incomprehensibly horrid. That is why God treats immorality or sin as such a serious issue. He went to the greatest lengths possible and likely suffers eternally for our sins.

It is hard for many to understand why God chose to forgive any and every sin and base the criteria for salvation solely on what He did for us. It does not seem to make sense, from a human point of view. Humans have a hard time accepting the idea of forgiveness, until they need someone to forgive them. Animals understand forgiveness though, although they seem to be the only ones doing the forgiving. So what we really need as people to overcome our bad decisions and immoral acts is the forgiveness of sins. And for our world to heal, we need to forgive the sins of others.

### **3.4 Meaning in Life**

Many people talk about finding meaning in life, but what do they mean? What exactly does one do that is meaningful and to whom? How do we know we are doing enough? For many people, sports, video games, Hollywood, drugs, or music are the key to a fulfilling life. But that is not enough for me and many others. But at the same time, is more than that realistic, especially when you have a severe disability? I think our expectations are too high.

We are expected as Americans to solve everyone's problems, because we have so much more wealth than the rest of the world. Most Americans though have very little extra time and those that do have very little money. To most people, their family is more important than anyone else's and so they usually devote most their free time to that and the single over-achievers often spend their free time putting themselves into better shape financially. And with all these vices on the Internet, we have very little left to give.

Is it even possible to find meaning in life and how should we respond? Reading is one way to find meaning in life, but if you spend so much time on that, you sacrifice time to spend on other life experiences. The more you learn, the more you learn that you know very little and this knowledge helps little to improve your or anyone else's life and you can get easily discouraged.

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To see the cause of our problems, in the world today, you have to have a very wholistic worldview, which is contrary to the way society wants us to think and act. Our leaders say that we are unwilling to do what is right and stand out from the crowd, but the work world does not support that premise. Famous people all want you to think for yourself and be open minded by doing exactly what they say.

This is where I see religion providing an answer and Christianity actually providing a solution that works. Life is short and has little meaning by itself. God is the ultimate source of meaning, perfectly good, all powerful, and wants to help us out. We are really the source of our own problems.

The situation we are in, where we find no meaning in life, is caused by our decision to attempt to live without God's help. Just like it doesn't work well for us to live well without a good diet or enough rest, spiritually we need to find meaning. The only meaning in life that will improve our lives is Christ. And the situation in which we will find that meaning will be after we die.

So it seems odd to many people that Christians only really expect to be happy after they die, as it appears as nihilistic and cynical. Life is hard and short for most people throughout history and there is only so much time and money to try to deal with life's continual challenges and setbacks. You don't need to do something immoral to destroy your life. You can do so by just not taking care of your health or failing to engage in networking.

Do not get discouraged, if life is very difficult, and you feel like giving up. Just find and then maintain your faith until you die, and you will be happy forever. Americans are mostly unhappy, because they expect too much out of life and we think because we have more money, we can avoid the principle causes of suffering in this life. Intelligence rarely help avoid many of these problems and self control only solves some.

Many solutions to finding purpose in life are based on making yourself smarter, imparting you with special knowledge, developing more discipline, or making yourself richer. Creativity and motivation seem to me to be the best ways to make your position in life all it can be. Combine that with prayer and praising God and you will find it more encouraging than just trying to become smarter or richer.

What does a psychologist often tell you to do when you are feeling depressed or having a lack of meaning in life? Volunteer. When you change your focus on solving your problems, to solving someone else's, you get perspective and often find out your situation is much better. That is actually encouraging. We need to expect things to go wrong, get worse, and life to generally be difficult and just surviving is quite a challenge. This is the way things are in the other 95% of the world and the other 99% of history.

### **3.5 Neighborhood by the Road**

Like a room full of wood fire smoke  
Like a low fog down by the river  
Like the neon green grass constantly being mowed  
Like the splashing of rainwater under car tires

Each step I take and as I look around  
There are big groups of people walking together  
The trashes are full of new electronics  
And people on bicycles root through the trash

Walking along the side of the road  
Littered with dog poop and broken glass bottles  
The street is a tribute to a great leader  
And the big thing here is a football stadium

I don't go one way because I fear falling off the bridge  
I don't go another because the apartments are depressing  
I don't go to the nearest mall because of the homeless trash  
I don't go to down to the park and river because everyone is fishing

Everyone has a big dog and a big car  
But not everyone has a job  
The stink of pot is everywhere  
Except in front of the pot store

When you have so many trees  
There are many little birds  
When you have so many cell phones  
You get poor reception

We are all looking down walking  
Me to avoid stepping in poop or glass  
And everyone else  
To play a never ending game

We take everything with us on these little machines  
Be careful not to drop yours  
They cost a lot to fix  
But they still work with broken screens

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What is the cost of modern life  
Less and less jobs over time  
Everything costs a dollar  
But no one has even that much money

I consider today's world  
And compare it to others  
Before, after and parallel  
We have too much of a good thing

People can even die of water overdosing  
Too many things are too easy  
We can afford too much sugar  
No wonder everyone has diabetes

We have the local mental health, National Guard and juvenile detention  
Just a short walk away  
And this is the wealthier end of the road  
The police seem to be constantly patrolling

Maybe there are too many students  
Or just too many apartments  
At least the stadium keeps expanding  
And we can buy more cars just up the road

### **3.6 Gift of Boredom**

To many people  
Life should be an adventure  
They want to be a hero  
In an action movie  
Or be famous  
And have a huge number of fans  
In real life  
No one plays a theme song  
When you are going through something tough  
No one claps or pays money to see you  
Your adventure does not end in 2 hours  
You do not get advertised in commercials  
And you are not monetized with games or toys  
You do not get your own website

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You don't get a gold star in hollywood  
With the other famous people  
You cannot afford to travel between LA and New York  
You do not have time to show up in the best clubs

A hero in real life  
Often cannot release what happened to them  
Life in the military is far from exciting  
It looks cool to jump out of an air plane  
And it sounds cool to fire assault rifles  
But the greatest adventure in the Army  
Is carrying things around and cleaning things  
It looks cool to be in combat  
But this part of the military is terrifying  
Until you get a leg blown off  
Or catch on fire  
You are either terrified or bored to tears  
There is no in between  
Torture is not cool in anyway  
Even though most action films  
Seem to think it necessary for their plots

A life of boredom  
Sounds like a movie without a plot  
And a life lived like that  
Of no importance  
But today the real luxury  
Is being off social media  
And not having to carry a smartphone  
You surely can do great things with fame  
But is distracts you from your own life  
Who you are matters more  
Than what you do  
Just because you do not record something  
Does not lessen its importance  
You have only so much time and energy  
No matter who you are  
Do you want to spend your life  
Gaining low quality friends  
Or spending time with people  
Who care about you unconditionally

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Jesus changed the world  
More than anyone else  
But he didn't travel far  
He wrote no books  
We do not know what He looked like  
He didn't even own a house  
And He would be considered homeless  
And likely mentally ill today  
He received no awards  
And no one paid any money to see Him  
He did not live to middle age  
He only really spread His message for 3 years  
He had not children or wife  
His entourage was by no means special  
And His friends uneducated and poor  
He was not even a citizen  
Of the empire He lived in  
But He did forgive sins  
And we can live forever because of Him  
Not in the underworld of the pagans  
But in the paradise of the Bible

# 4 Religion

## ***4.1 My Approach to Religion***

Christians seem to combine an older way of looking at the world with passion, they are mostly honest and direct, seem to be motivated by entirely altruistic means, and the very base of their arguments and identity is humility and compassion. So if the content and methods of evangelism are sincere and even highly logical, why are people so often argumentative or dismissive of Christians and their values?

Many Christians expressions of their faith may come across as formulaic, using common terms in esoteric ways, overly technical, assume basic background knowledge, emphasize old school ways of teaching and learning rituals like memorization and daily devotions, and seem uninterested in modern kinds of celebrations. Christians are not very good at controlling their branding, networking effectively, adopting technology in a timely fashion, and utilizing contemporary vocabulary.

In short, they have a great message and are they are very concerned with actually making a real difference and go to great lengths to not be offensive, they are extremely generous, and only

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persistant, because they want to help others. They just have an image problem. They are intellectual in a nerdy fashion: they are nerdy to everyone.

They are most known for the most controversial and least popular aspects of their message, which are not even fundamental to their beliefs: gender issues and being too pro-business, which are mostly not true for the average Christian. Christians need to work on their presentation, not their content.

Some of the biggest criticisms of Christians that are often true is they are very conservative politically (the financial side) and they ask for money. Christians are also very organized in some very visual ways. Many people see the common problem with religion to be when it is organized. Also, feminism (depending on how extreme) is not really ever going to be compatible with Christianity as they don't want a male God or men to have authority over women in any way.

The way in which I approach religion is by using plain simple words, natural conversation, personal experiences, I explain things in an intellectual way by comparing religions, and I try to be subtle about calling out non-Christians for unbiblical behavior. I hold Christians to a much higher standard than non-Christians. Just like being overweight, it does not matter how you got there: I just want to promote being healthier spiritually so we can live happier lives. God didn't make a set of rules for us to follow for His sake: immorality/sin is bad because it hurts us.

Christians need to understand how different their worldview is from the typical American point of view. Most Americans don't know even the most basic things about Christianity, but the good part is that we don't have to fight against subversive theology anymore. The Catholic Church and Protestant churches ran some of the greatest educational institutions all over the world for centuries. But today, the Church is considered anti-intellectual. The universities embraced several things that made it hard for Christians to coexist in the universities: the rise of feminism and evolution.

Sadly, it is still true that many Christians do not prioritize the global catastrophes so innocently called Global Climate Change and are heavily involved in politics. Political involvement is hard to justify scripturally and climate change related destruction is described in detail in Biblical prophecy. Most of the judgements of God on corrupt Christians and non-believers in prophecy are one in the same as what we now call environmental disasters.

Many people around the world see American Christians as joining together the ideas of Capitalism/Imperialism with Christianity, but the Chinese government has seen this to not be true as it is legal in China to be a Christian if you register your church or with no registration for a Bible study group. The Orthodox Church is coming back in Eastern Europe and Russia after being violently forced out for many years under Soviet communism.

One of the biggest overlooked part of Christianity today by other Christians is their

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demographics. Most Christians live in the third world, are some of the poorest people in the world, and they are often persecuted by wealthy Muslims. Christians also outnumber Muslims 2 to 1 and are the fastest growing and most cross cultural belief system in the world.

Islam has been in most parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia between 1000-1500 years and Christianity only penetrated most of these areas in the last 100 years. Most white people are not Christians. Christians are outcasts in Europe and there are more Muslims in Europe than Christians.

Also, the center of Christianity up until the time of the Crusades was in Iraq and Iran, centered near Baghdad. Christianity did not penetrate all of Europe until the Renaissance. Atheism had little traction in Europe before the 19th Century, before Napoleon. As late as they time of the Crusades, Vikings were torturing Christians to force them to convert to paganism. America has always had a huge amount of unbelievers as were most of the founding fathers (what we now would call terrorists or anarchists).

Even at the start of the 20th Century, 1/2 of the Ottoman Empire was still Christian (and at that time the Ottoman Empire had no territory in Europe or Africa). The status of Christians in the Muslim world was like that of Jews in Europe. They were educated because they needed to be literate in order to keep their faith and in a world of illiteracy became the scholars and were influential despite their persecution. 2/3s of a native Middle Eastern ethnic, religious, and linguistic group called the Assyrians/Nestorians were massacred in the early 20th century as were 1/3 of the Armenian people (another native Christian civilization near the Middle East) by local muslims.

### **4.2 What Christians Shouldn't Do**

For Christians wanting to know if a subject or area of study or practice is compatible with Scripture, there are several concepts that should hold true fairly independently of time and place. First of all you can safely assume that anything you feel might be wrong or illegal is off limits.

Some others signs that should send up red flags is anything done in secret, anything you wouldn't mind acknowledging in public or in writing, or anything that would make any group you associate with think less of you. Any sexual activity outside sex between a married man and woman is not Scriptural.

Anything that involves being irresponsible or greedy in regards to money or resources is not compatible with Christianity. Saying negative things about other people except when necessary to protect someone is wrong. Almost anything online that is online, especially the things that are free are highly subject, until proven otherwise.

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Deceiving or misleading people in any way, or rushing someone into a big decision, or lying about your qualifications are all obviously forbidden. Keeping two different records of money or other reporting methods is obviously wrong as well. You should always follow through with your commitments to God, family, country, and everyone else.

Be kind, gentle, and patient and be especially careful and compassionate with animals. Don't talk about things that are someone else's personal business in public, don't spread rumors about other people, and encourage people and stay positive. When you make criticisms, be constructive and try to be consistent in your judgements.

Be a team player and volunteer to help make the world better and improve your own mood by changing your perspective. Pray for help in maturing in wisdom and decision making and commit yourself to a life of learning and self improvement. Put everything into your work, stay employed and be loyal to your boss. Do your best in anything you do, especially things directly involving God.

Read the Bible, attend church services, pray, and continue choosing to follow God everyday. Make glorifying God your biggest goal in life along with complete submission to God, inner peace, and doing all you can to eliminate unnecessary suffering. Be careful what and who you read, watch, and listen to. Focus on those things that are good and positive and don't hurt yourself or others.

Reach out to others by serving as a role model both formal and informal as well as find a role model for yourself. When you make major life decisions, do prayer but don't rush. Think about how everything that you do effects others. Stay physically and mentally healthy so you can live longer so you can help more people and animals.

Anything that you do habitually, that you are not proud of, is something you should stop immediately. Anything that is addictive should be avoided as well. Seek outside help when you run into physical, mental, and spiritual problems. Putting more money, time, and effort into some physical object than you do for God and those suffering is a form of idolatry.

Anything similar to these activities should be considered off limits as well. Finally, anything you are unsure about, ask several people you respect if it is a good idea. If that is not an option or they have no opinion on the matter, I would recommend not doing it.

Above all, follow Christ's example and the Bible. Remember that spiritually it matters most what your intention was, but physically even being hurt by someone you love hurts as much as being maliciously hurt by a stranger. In other words, do good not evil and follow your conscience. God made these guidelines to help us have happier lives, not to control us. Continue to be creative and unique, just be a good person as well.

### **4.3 Christians, Critical Thinking, and Evangelism**

Many times Christians are confronted with anti-Christian rhetoric in their daily lives. So many arguments against Christians are now cliches but Christians fail to recognize these things as being just elaborate excuses to not deal with the responsibility to be moral, have respect for spiritual things, and obey God.

First of all, you should never feel the need to justify or explain yourself and your beliefs. If you feel lead or feel for whatever other reason to state your beliefs in public or private, feel totally free to do so. You never have to accept anyone else's worldview or assumptions about life. Feel free to challenge anyone else's statements about religion or morality.

Realize though that everything we do spiritually significant has a cost. The person may be alienated by that or you may lose your job because of it. This is not fair or right but it might happen as a result of your statements.

This isn't much different then being fired because you are in poor health or getting older. For anyone who really believes in diversity, this is a completely contradictory position to get rid of someone because of religious beliefs. The kind of person who would respond that way would not be someone I would want to be friends with nor are they open to changing their beliefs.

The goal here is not to convince anyone of anything but just to encourage you to think critically about everything. Christians thinking critically about the Bible and God can actually lead to spiritual and emotional growth and the Bible actually encourages a lot of creativity, in areas it is not very clear about or doesn't cover directly. Thinking critically does not require you to ever argue with anyone about anything. It does sometimes challenge beliefs but most of the time it will merely reenforce them.

I gave up trying to change anyone's mind on anything about 20 years ago after my experiencing living where I do now and going to public schools, community college, public university, and enlisted in the Army. Most people change their minds due to two factors: repetition and life experiences. Some of my most enduring and shaping life experiences besides my own intuition were the military and my mental illness.

First thing to remember about witnessing to a person is to realize that God brings people to Himself. We may be used by God to help a person realize this, but are seldom the only one God calls or serves in that role. You really don't want someone who is so easily convinced about religion to be your focus of evangelism, because they will be convinced by the next religious person they meet to change to that religion.

Do not change doctrine to make evangelism easier, but you should make Christian doctrine penetrate as deeply as possible into the current local culture and sub cultures. Most things outside

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the basic character and attributes of God in the Old Testament were done that way solely because they were culturally relevant practices. Sacrificing animals was done because it cost money, worked as an important metaphor, and communicated obedience and repentance to God.

Spiritually it was only their obedience to God's command that we believe in Him alone that connected from the faith of the Israelites through Jesus Christ to allow us to reconcile with God the Father. The Holy Spirit now serves as what scripture describes as God writing the law of the Old Testament on our hearts. We are saved by making the conscious choice to believe in obedience to God's command to do so.

The most important thing we can do when we don't know what to do or need something from God is to pray. God will likely grant it if you are clear and resolved about it and you pray for something you genuinely need that is in keeping with Scripture. If you lack faith, scripture says you should pray for it.

Use this in evangelism too - offer to pray for others and pray to God to learn how to help bring this person to Christ. Remember just like in counseling the first step is to begin a relationship with the person you are trying to help and the best thing you can do for them is to listen to them and genuinely show you care about them unconditionally.

You won't have an answer to every question they might ask and don't need one either. You are changing their mind by being a good example by being honest, caring about them beyond just their salvation, and making moral choices in your own life. The point isn't to win a debate, but rather by just caring about the other person and showing them God cares about them by your example.

Remember faith is believing when you cannot explain everything and people do many things on faith. When you sign a contract, do you always read everything in great detail? Before you take a job, do you do a background check on the company and every other employee? Do you record everything everyone says to you on the phone? Do you know everything about someone before you date them?

You probably should do all these things. This is the hardest part of evangelism today. There have been way to many people trying to scam others by convincing them of things. Do not try to change someone's mind. That sounds to many like a scam. Instead, care for them and pray for them. Communicate to them by what you do not by what you say.

Do not speak in cliches and do not sound like someone selling you a car. They are not someone to sell things to. They are a lost and hurt member of the family you are helping bring home. Make your methods match your beliefs.

#### **4.4 Christ and Literature**

What does I mean to be a Christian and a thinker, a writer, or another creative? How and where do you innovate in theology or symbolism? To some it might be comforting to put Jesus into a simple and literal expression that challenges neither the Christian nor the unbeliever.

Unfortunately, just like for the Pharisees and the people of Israel as a whole, Jesus Christ, although very specifically described in prophecy, was not at all, what was considered appropriate by the establishment. Many Christians in the US would call a contemporary Christ living today a hippy and not let him in the country. What would Jesus think of how little His "followers" are willing to risk for Him today?

Christians today are really afraid of the spiritual world, but at the same time don't make time to pray and read the Bible. If you are worried about the fate of our society and slippery slope making Christianity less acceptable to younger people, start with your own mind and then fix the problems in the Church. If in this kind of fantasy, you can only see literally and you have little imagination then yes it might be disturbing for you, but you will have a very limited ability to turn others to Christ as well.

A lot of the ideas of these knee jerk reactionary interpretations of Christian doctrine are not bad or theologically incorrect. They just fail to inspire most people to whom their life and their relationship with God are not so simple and easy to explain to begin with. Think about how God has written the Bible in a literary way and did not even talk about salvation and Christ or even have the any of the Bible written down for maybe most of history.

God does not shy away from difficult to resolve philosophical issues. He seems to both defy our attempts at putting Him in a box. The weirder things get in our scientific discoveries and social movements, we continue to find in the Bible that the less understood verses leave hints to a much larger and complex reality than we can imagine. The Bible goes even farther into the fantastic and unbelievable, for those with a simplistic understanding of God.

There is a place for everyone in Christianity and it is healthy to have these kind of debates. Christianity can be both correct theologically but still not the same for everyone in how they express it. For some people, the fantastic nature of some aspect of theology scares them and rightly so for some with certain experiences and temperaments. We have to accept though that no matter how we try to understand the Bible, much of it like prophecy is not meant to be understood even symbolically by us or even angels.

God is not afraid of opening a can of worms. Consider how God will have to deal with each person individually, who has never heard the Gospel, or has been alive before Christ was born into the world. There are a few things that are unchallengeable and the Bible is very clear about those. But remember, we do not worship theology but a living God and our theology is only

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there to make sure people don't get too crazy with the basics.

When we look to have entertainment or fantasy that is family friendly and promotes the Gospel and really effective at both we have to accept that there are more ways to express faith than through quoting Scripture or giving sermons. There is a time and a place for everything good. If God wanted us to experience Him in the same way for everyone, then the Bible would be nothing more than a list of rules.

We are called to worship God with all our mind, heart, and soul and that includes our emotions and imagination. Be careful of what you condemn, and look at what the Bible really says and doesn't say and be willing to get uncomfortable with some expressions of it, if it brings others to faith in Christ. The most effective way to evangelize is to be real with unbelievers and reach out to them in a way they can understand. If something makes you feel as if it is bothering your spirit, you will know and be upfront with unbelievers with this as well.

Some fantasies we see today might be scary literally, like any fairy tale should in the same way. But fantasy has traditionally been a way to explain morality symbolically throughout many different cultures and historical periods. If you can separate fantasy from reality and be able to accept that although the vehicle (the mythology) for the message is not perfect, the message is the most important and only vital part.

The reason why it is so important and so Biblical to put the Bible and theology of God into our current culture is this formed the basis for how God revealed and related to Israel and the prophets throughout the Old Testament. The problem with being too narrow in our understanding of God is that we may miss His return or His voice in our lives, if we cannot let God be more than what we can fully understand and explain.

## 5 Politics

### 5.1 *You Are Not Doing It Right*

In America today, we have more freedom than almost any other time in history, even though these were reduced tremendously after 9/11. Today, there seems to be two groups in society: one that wants to not follow any rules and the other one which does not want freedom for any of us. The source of the problem is that we have the freedom to choose our religion, but most people use this freedom to avoid religious based morality, we have freedom of speech but most people use that to say mean things to others or spread rumors that aren't true, and we have freedom from assuming we our guilty before that is proved in a court of law, but many use this to get away with crimes.

The problem is not that we have too much freedom, but that we make bad choices in the ways we

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use that freedom. We should use our freedom of religion to make us better people, our freedom of speech to encourage others and speak out for what is wrong, and our legal protections to keep the government from becoming too powerful and corrupt.

The ways in which people use their freedom suggest that most people don't really want it. Many people try to be different in order to fit in. Many are so lonely that they will compromise anything to be accepted. Many will do immoral things to get negative attention. Others will get discouraged, do nothing, and give up on making society better. And then there are those that use their freedom maliciously like scammers, bullies, and stalkers.

Many people have developed addictions to their bad behavior, because we have too much power, with the Internet. Almost everything we do online is highly addictive. Not just the usual porn, games, gambling, chatting, stealing songs and videos, and social networking. Some people are even addicted to taking pictures of themselves or their food or even just getting information or looking for funny things. There is nothing wrong with having free time and doing things fun and relaxing, just as long as that is not all you do or gets to the point where it interferes with your life and others around you.

Instead of arguing about how much freedom we should have, maybe we should focus on what we do with that freedom. Many people think that limiting our freedoms is the answer, but a more powerful business or government is not a good idea. Instead, we must find a way to encourage better behavior. There are two ways to effectively change someone's mind: through repetition and through major life changes and experiences.

Instead of giving tax breaks based on how much we give to others, why not give tax breaks based on community service and attitude. Instead of electing someone based on what they know, maybe we should focus instead on who they are. Instead of Hollywood encouraging people to live dangerously or give up on life to inspire people to do what they can to better themselves. Instead of raising money for a charity, why don't people pledge to change something in their life. Instead of imprisoning people for committing crimes, why don't we make them do penance or service, to prove they have changed.

Instead of us just reacting, in an extreme way, in response to a perceived threat, lets instead form a public forum of intellectuals and teachers to do proactive research, to solve problems, before they become crisis. Instead of spending huge amounts of money on the military or even healthcare, we should prioritize spending based on how far our money will go, depending on what areas of the government we invest it in. Instead of changing the entire direction of our country every 8 years, maybe we should not try to put in laws and policies that will just be removed, when the other political party is elected, especially with foreign policy.

Our country needs to pick a direction and stick with it over time, and look longer term in the future to set priorities. This is exasperated by our outsourcing government to big business. The

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government is criticized for being bureaucratic and wasteful, but many business leaders destroy their companies when they become corporations or only succeed by dumb luck.

And why is it that when people hear about fraud in the government, they seem to think their are huge percentages of our budget being wasted and their response is to cut out the entire social service to fix it. If they are looking to find a part of the government that is very wasteful and corrupt, that number one agency is the military. But we never cut the military, because people seem to think the military ceases to exist or be useful, if it is not fighting wars constantly. Maybe if those who vote for wars are required to serve in the military in that war, we will have fewer wars.

We need to see ourselves as not just ourselves but ourselves bound to a society as part of our basic personal psychology, so instead of being selfish, we realize that what we do affects other people around us and the other way around too. We cannot separate our existence from those who live beside us. This is a fundamental shift in thinking we need to adopt, to solve many of our worst problems. We are in it together for the long haul, whether we like it or not.

### ***5.2 Christianity and Conservatism or Why I am Not a Conservative***

The connection between Conservatism and Christianity is the response against a growingly anti-Christian academia and anti-Christian Hollywood. I personally don't equate conservatism with Christianity which many conservatives would agree like many libertarians. I agree with many socially conservative ideas in areas like sexual ethics. I also mostly agree with evangelical Christians on most major theology, depending on how narrow you define what are the fundamentals of the faith.

I guess I see Christianity as fundamentally incompatible with wealth and power. I don't believe it is possible to have a society honestly accept and be at peace with Christian values or a biblical worldview. I believe that any honest Christian will always find themselves in a spiritual struggle against society. I don't believe in unbelievers being forced to follow Christian laws, because I believe we can only resist evil with divine intervention.

I don't believe in violent struggle against society, under any circumstances, as it distracts against the fundamentally spiritual realities and because that is not the way Christ showed us to live. I do however believe in following all laws, because Christ has commanded it and it is obviously part of the ten commandments and related religious laws. This is consistent with most world religions' laws.

I also believe that taking care of the environment is not negotiable or debatable, because it is God's creation. I believe that animals are more important than people, because they exhibit more evidence that they are following God, than any people do. I do not believe the ends justify the

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means or that the needs of the many trump the needs of the few.

I believe that there are people, who legitimately cannot work either due to the market or due to disability and I believe that conservative politics is fundamentally incompatible with that. I do believe in reform and reducing fraud, although I think reform could actually cost more money. I believe that corporations should pay the same tax rates as individuals as they benefit more than private citizens from government services. I also think that any campaign contributions from any corporations are basically legal bribes.

I believe the founding fathers had little interest in Christianity, as many were what we now would call atheists. I don't know if I could justify participating in the American Revolution and I don't see America as anything fundamentally different ideologically than most other empires throughout history. I don't see how someone can argue Christianity has anything in common with capitalism.

I really am opposed to any kind of arrogance and I don't appreciate our country telling countries that have cultures going back thousands of years that we know better than them how to run their society. I believe that our great strengths in America are our low population density, natural resources, and distance from our enemies. Basically America inherited its strength from how well the native peoples of North America took care of the land, before we wiped out the remainder, that didn't die of diseases we introduced.

I believe that our country has exercised the same soft power that it accuses Russia and China of throughout the cold war and it is ok for other countries to be leaders in their respective parts of the world. We don't have to be the only empire or the best to be a worthwhile and moral force in the world (by our example of morality, not by intervention). When the few redeeming things about America in limits they would not cross like torture became legalized after 9/11, I would not have joined the military if I was graduating high school after that period.

I believe that our government is being transformed into corporate rule over the last few decades and will continue to do so. I believe the greatest threats to everyone in the world are computer hacking and global warming. I believe that terrorism is being emphasized way out of proportion to its threat to the loss of lives and is going to destroy us, by bankrupting us spending money fighting wars and increasing our buying of military weapons to stop it.

Ultimately, I have little faith in any politics, liberal or conservative. I see the world and our ability to affect change as primarily in the realm of the spiritual world.

### **5.3 Business Ideas**

Care about your customer and choose an area you know about things other people don't

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1. Most successful products or services of the last 30 years were designed and marketed to make something easier for the consumer
2. There are likely no new products or services people need or want anymore
3. Privacy and security are the key ways to differentiate your product now - no one does it but every consumer wants it
4. Multifunctional products or services have a big advantage over single function ones in convenience and overall cost
5. Try to cannibalize other people's products or services
6. Do not rely on just one product or services and expect some of your products to become irrelevant fast
7. Go into an industry that has little competition
8. Find a product or service that is a new spin on an old idea
9. Find a product or service that is not easy for someone else to reproduce
10. Find the most expensive product or service in that area
11. Find a way to make money and do not change it (business model)
12. Target market should be people who are spending a lot on that particular item
13. Your brand is the most important thing - without it you can only compete on price or features and will have very thin margins
14. You need to not hire too many people and control expenses
15. You must do well in every key business area and can fail if you are bad in even one
16. Invest money into the company and advertise
17. Make a website that has at least your company email and phone number, address, hours of operation, map to store and update it right away when any of those changes and always respond to phone calls and emails promptly
18. The key to the cost of stores is location or more precisely foot traffic
19. Sell your company to a bigger one if you can get a good price

# 6 Schizophrenia

## 6.1 *Experiencing Schizophrenia*

In our society, like in movies, when something crazy happens our first thought is that we are an under cover agent or the world is ending, not that we are mentally ill. We are not taught in school to doubt ourselves. When we did research papers in school we chose our topics and our thesis at the same time.

When we have political or religious differences, each person think the other person is wrong and they are right. No one is taught to think maybe I am wrong. We see our conflicts and problems as external which is probably why Christians are often so afraid of spiritual warfare but still pray a lot.

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We operate on the level that being irrational is being stupid or an insult. We see truth in reason and facts and discount feelings or beliefs as less important. We say someone is not just evil, they are crazy. When someone disagrees with us or wants to make us feel bad they call us crazy. We never consider that we might be the problem or the crazy one.

We also assume crazy is an all or nothing thing. If someone mentally ill was irrational about everything, then how could they end up orchestrating such involved responses to their perceived threats? There are degrees of crazy. There are many very different kinds of Schizophrenia.

Many people with Schizophrenia do not hear voices (hallucinations) or have paranoia ( a specific kind of delusion). Not everyone acts on their voices and voices are not always bad. Most people with Schizophrenia do not see hallucinations.

Many religious people think that Schizophrenia is the same thing as being possessed of the devil or that being insane means that you can't understand faith or make spiritual decisions. Just like intelligence not being made greater or less because of Schizophrenia, spiritual and psychological things are as different from each other as physical and psychological things are.

A person with Schizophrenia has a very hard time controlling their brain and so would make a very poor new age practitioner. Most people with Schizophrenia have paranoia that is religious and are often obsessive compulsive about it. So a person with Schizophrenia may think they are a shaman or a witch, but hopefully they don't actually pursue that area of study.

Dark knight of the soul and long periods of depression are different things as well. You could easily experience both independently of each other or at the same time. But Schizophrenia is not caused by sin nor is it the result of poor living. Having Schizophrenia does not lower your likelihood to have cancer or not be able to walk.

Having Schizophrenia does not make you more violent because you are afraid and so avoid conflict whenever possible. If a person with Schizophrenia gets stressed out too much they just stop showing up. People with Schizophrenia often direct their paranoia towards the medicine so that they think you are poisoning them or trying to control their thoughts.

Paranoia is basically really bad fear of something irrational happening. Remember that to a person with Schizophrenia, these appear totally real although on medicine half our brain is telling us this is doesn't make sense. Then the other aspect of our brain keeps saying that this is crazy but in this case this is what is really happening to you now.

Paranoia is a delusion where you believe a sentient being is coming after you. Paranoia is very real for the person experiencing it because if your brain thinks things and the rational part of your brain that is taught to control your fight or flight response gets destroyed when you have

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Schizophrenia. On this level of the brain, the brain is you. There is no way to get under or over this part of the brain. You cannot treat Schizophrenia by reasoning with the person in counseling.

Paranoia comes in waves where it is a problem for a period of time maybe days, weeks, or months. Typically it is one of several things with variations. Often times there is a trigger seeing something on TV or the Internet. Paranoia is always worse at night. Paranoia's often involve religious themes and are almost always bad things.

### **6.2 IDLE (Isolation, Depression, and Lack of Energy)**

Schizophrenia can often appear the same to Bipolar Disorder to people who know nothing about mental illness or when you do not see a person for more than a few minutes at one time, but they are actually very different. Schizophrenia is much harder to deal with and much harder to treat than Bipolar Disorder, because Bipolar Disorder is a mood disorder, whereas Schizophrenia is a thought disorder.

Mood disorders are simpler to understand and can be treated easier with medication than thought disorders. With Bipolar Disorder, your mood goes to extremes, but with Schizophrenia, your senses and thoughts are much more intense. Everything has meaning to someone with Schizophrenia.

Getting an accurate diagnosis from a doctor who is qualified to diagnose is the essential first step in treating any mental illness. The wrong medicine can have either no effect, bad side effects, or make things worse. You should not do any drugs, even pot as they exasperate both the mental illness symptoms and make it harder to diagnose. Only a psychiatrist with a doctorate in both medicine and psychology who specializes in mental illness is qualified to diagnose you.

Many people take a long time to get the right diagnosis or often never do. The hardest part for the person with the mental illness to do is to keep taking the medicine as they often either feel they don't need it when they are manic or with Schizophrenia transfer their paranoia to the medicine. The even harder part is accepting you need help and believing you are the source of the problem and not the world around you. Schizophrenia gets worse over time, if you wait to get on your psychiatric medicine, as you have each psychotic episode.

To get state aid, you first need to have a stable address and someone to fill out all the forms for you. Do this as soon as possible. It will likely take years to get into a program. When you apply for SSI, they will almost undoubtedly turn you down the first time, so you need to get a lawyer, before they will even consider giving you disability compensation. Get on all the free version of stuff, get into section 8 housing, get Obamacare and basically pay for nothing as you will make almost nothing in state assistance.

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Schizophrenia amplifies your thoughts and senses, because you constantly have adrenaline running through your system and the body is constantly in a fight or flight response mode. You are always terrified of and often depressed about something as well. People with Schizophrenia are no more likely to be violent than anyone else and are usually the victims of crimes rather than the perpetrators. Schizophrenia makes people feel afraid, not powerful. Adrenaline feels very different over a longer timeframe than most people experience.

Many people associate Schizophrenia with genius, but the disease does not affect intelligence either way and people with Schizophrenia vary widely in intelligence levels. Have you heard about all those people who were great artists or leaders who were mentally ill? Almost all of them suffered from Bipolar Disorder. You cannot have both at the same time. You can have a less severe form of Schizophrenia called Schizoaffective Disorder with either depression or mania (but not both).

There are two major groups of symptoms in Schizophrenia, which are called positive symptoms and negative symptoms. The positive symptoms are things that you have in addition to a normal person like paranoia, hallucinations, and delusions. The negative symptoms are things a person with Schizophrenia is lacking that an average person has like isolation, depression, and a lack of energy.

Most forms of Schizophrenia do not include audio hallucinations (hearing voices) or paranoia (a specific type of delusion where you believe people are coming after you). All types of Schizophrenia have types of short term memory loss, inappropriate facial expressions, and delusions. Schizophrenia has similar symptoms to those people who have brain damage and it like a much more intense version of an anxiety disorder.

The primary treatment for Schizophrenia is an anti-psychotic medication that is related to the older type of sedatives given to people during surgery. You also must always keep your stress level under control, and live a low stress lifestyle, as high stress will undo the effect of the medicine. Counseling, religion, and many other types of treatments may be helpful in addition to the medicine.

There are no alternative medicine treatments that can substitute for the modern medicine. The real break through in Schizophrenia medicines were in the 1990s. This medicine treatment goes back to about the 1950s.

Before this modern medicine, people with Schizophrenia were usually committed to an institution. Counseling people to accept that their delusions are not real is ineffective. The brain itself is what is damaged chemically and there is no way of getting between the brain and the person as the person is the brain. It is like trying to perform brain surgery on yourself or teach yourself to write when you cannot yet speak.

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The medication did not make me any less extreme in my beliefs or change my views on religion or morality and does not make me less creative or more easily controlled by others. I have more control, more happiness, and find it easier to create things since I got on my medicine. It is more painful to not be on the medicine.

I have a combination of both being terrified about something but at the same time knowing it is unlikely to happen. I believe something to be true and nonsense at the same time. This is how the medicine interacts with my paranoia and other delusions. I feel like I have adrenaline running through me as well as feel that I am being pushed down at the same time. I also feel like I am slowly waking up more and more.

The medicines are supposed to just target the brain, but almost always slow the entire body down causing constant tiredness, weight gain, and heart disease/high blood pressure/diabetes. Many of the newer medicines developed after 1990 are not effective with many patients, so that they have to take older drugs, which have even more extreme side effects.

I have Paranoid Schizophrenia and suffer from paranoia and depression mostly and I hear voices sometimes. The most disabling aspects of Schizophrenia and hardest to treat are the social ones. I have gradually re-learned how to fit in with normal people better over many years. Although Paranoid Schizophrenia is the hardest to deal with form of Schizophrenia, it is often more successful in its treatment, because the medicine is more effective with treating the positive symptoms.

Lack of energy, isolation and depression can feed off each other to form a cycle that lasts forever. You are tired because you are taking a sedative, so you do not get out and interact with other people, and then you get depressed, because you become more and more isolated. Ironically, the one thing I wish I could do more than anything else is work a job, even if it was just minimum wage.

Anything that requires me to go to regular meetings or get something done by a certain time stresses me out (which usually triggers paranoia). I have volunteered a number of times, but few organizations will give you the opportunity to do something you find personally fulfilling for them. I have tried to go to school but get stressed out and start getting paranoid.

Computer work has been one of the most successful thing to do, because I can do it at any time and do not have to commit to anything. Even deciding beforehand where I am getting food later that day or my what my next project on the computer will be is stressful to me. I even have a hard time getting on time to movie theaters showings.

One of the things I enjoy in interacting with other people is explaining things to them about academic or technical topics. I find the mentally ill to be the easiest group to work with that needs extra help, because they are actually more sane and less obnoxious than the elderly, the

homeless, or young people. I used to be annoyed by what I use to call bus people, but now I think other people see me that way.

### **6.3 Who is Speaking?**

God designed the Bible for anyone to understand even to young children and people totally out of their mind. The Bible has a very simple message at its core but it does not give easy answers for difficult problems. Although God is constantly intervening to help us out, He never promised to do so. We brought evil into the world, not God, and we make things complicated and unclear, not God.

As a person who sometimes hears voices even under low stress, I experience a wide range of auditory hallucinations from simple sounds to positive voices, impressions of being communicated to by God or generic voices, sometimes I hear voices that make me afraid, but I can usually tell that someone is not actually talking to me. This is one of the symptoms of a certain kind of Schizophrenia called Paranoid Schizophrenia and also occurs in people without mental illness especially when experiencing high stress situations like solitary confinement or even just not sleeping for 3 days straight.

One of the concerns psychiatrists have about voices is that you will follow whatever you say. Since the voices are often very religious and are often the voice of God or the devil, psychiatrists are deeply suspicious of religious belief in the mentally ill. They think you might mix up the delusional voice that you think is God with the actual God.

To determine whether the voice is God or not, you should be able to safely ignore it because it would be unlikely for a God to communicate to you in that manner because it would be easy to mix up. If God we're really talking to you, He would continue to give you more and more obvious signs to the point that you would have to go out of your way and comment obvious sins to choose the wrong path. Just remember to follow the Ten Commandments and live your life as close to Christ's as possible. These are also the same thing as your conscience.

One of the very frustrating aspects of the state of Psychology and Religion today is that people tend to believe in the Bible or modern psychology, but rarely both and even more rarely have adequate training in both areas. Since many people with Schizophrenia are actually very religious, separating out what is a religious experience and what is a psychological experience or something is caused by religious or psychological reasons could be very helpful.

Many people mix up dark night of the soul, mystical experience, religious rituals, struggles with addictions, existential crisis, news related crisis, depression, psychosis, obsessive compulsive behavior, and other experiences like these because religious and psychological therapies are rarely combined. Diagnosis is critical in these areas of affliction as much as it is for physical

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ailments. How can you find the solution to anything without knowing its cause?

You can do so with prayer, but I believe that God wants us to have the common sense, maturity, and self responsibility to go beyond this. God can and likely will help you solve any problems in your life, but this is not an excuse to give up and just expect God to solve all your problems Himself. The same is true with sin: just because we are saved no matter what we do, this is not an excuse to continue doing evil.

Many people do not realize this but the Bible is the source of both modern psychology and existentialism. Psychology and theology are both branches of philosophy. Just as God has 3 revealed aspects, we also have three aspects of our existence as well. We are just as much spiritual as we are emotional people.

The ironic thing is that although there are many connections between spiritual and mental disorders in mental illness, Schizophrenia is primarily treated by medicine as people cannot be talked out of their delusions because the part of the brain that handles this in normal people is destroyed or doesn't work properly in people who have Schizophrenia. Even though this most important part of the brain does not work properly in these people, it does not inhibit the ability to make religious decisions or to practice a religion.

So people with Schizophrenia have all the same odds and potential to have as many other emotional as well as spiritual and physical problems as anyone else. But Schizophrenia does not give you any more problems in the spiritual realm than others without the illness. There are other physical and emotional problems that are either symptoms of the medicine to treat the disease or the disease itself which include depression, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, lack of motivation, loneliness, constant tiredness, poverty, and often homelessness or hospitalization.

### **6.4 Do Not Engage in Battle!**

#### **6.4.1 Introduction**

Many people see a mental problem in their lives and constantly fight it and come up losing every time. There are 2 basic techniques for resisting thoughts and living with psychological issues. These can apply to anything from mental illness to addiction to obsessive compulsive behavior and depression. If your battle is with yourself then this is for you.

These two techniques are accepting your situation and the things you cannot change about it and distracting yourself from the symptoms, when they are particularly distressing or flaring up. Never take on any fight that you can avoid like someone else's and let God fight the ones within you. Surrender to God rather than fighting the devil. Do something proactive rather than merely resisting.

### **6.4.2 Acceptance**

The first technique is to accept that whether or not your symptoms are good or bad or you deserve them or it is unfair they are just a constant and a reality in your life and are not going away anytime soon. As they say, you cannot break the tree that bends. This means that sometimes resisting something inevitable or something you have no choice over is not effective. What you cannot change are other people and your past.

When I was in the military, I survived well because I knew how to and was willing to do whatever I was told immediately without question and always give at least 150%. No one ever tried to break me because I did everything asked of me.

One of the problems with my just accepting this reality at the time was that I never changed who I was and so was out of place culturally which made some aspects of the military very difficult. I was willing to cooperate fully and give my all, but I was never going to change how I thought.

Stress caused by fighting your issues can cause a huge range of health problems and I had this occur in my life for about 3 years. After Basic Training, I got pink eye which I realized was related to a sensitivity to chemicals that I developed during my first few months in the Army. I thought I would have this for life.

When I went to the eye doctor, I was often in much more pain. After I was on my first anti-psychotic medication for about a week, I no longer needed to take any more eye drops. I still avoid toxic chemicals like cleaners wherever I can, but am fine with just a over the counter allergy pill. So I finally realized that my stress was causing my allergic/ chemical sensitivities.

### **6.4.3 Distractions**

You can only think about so many things at once and so to push something out of your mind, you must add enough other stimulus or thinking to offset what you want to get rid of. Distraction is an important element in warfare. When someone tries to rescue someone, they create a diversion so as to split up the enemy because one part of the enemy forces have to stay guard and the other has to investigate what just happened.

This technique was used several times throughout history, some deliberate and some not. One of the most famous battles in history is when the French (Normans) invaded England and at the same time the Vikings led their last major invasion of England. This required the English to split up their army and so they lost the country to the French. That is officially where the current British royal family history starts.

You never want take on anything strong like yourself in battle. When Apple started the series of products that gradually made Microsoft the company less and less relevant, it first publicly stated that Microsoft did not need to lose in order for Apple to win. Apple then created a parallel

computer market for an entirely different market segment - consumers.

Most products Apple created are not workalikes to substitute for Microsoft, Adobe, or other commercial software like you often find in the open source world. OpenOffice.org/Libre Office is a direct competitor to Microsoft Office, whereas Apple iWork suite is really an entirely different product. But I bet a lot more people use Apple iWork suite than use OpenOffice.org/Libre Office.

#### **6.4.4 Conclusion**

So in avoiding taking the common approach of using your will to fight the battle alone, focus on what you can do and avoid worrying about what you can't. Keep resisting but be smarter about it and let others help you. Use every available tool and technique. This is not a single battle that you must fight and move on. It is a long war where sometimes just surviving is winning.

Think of how leaders instruct people in emergency situations to not panic and they end up doing what they were told not to, because they didn't know what to do. When someone says "Do not panic", people panic because they don't know how to not do so.

Tell yourself what to do, not what not to do. Don't not panic. Do something slowly that calms you down. Do not try to stop thinking about your symptoms. Distract yourself doing something you love.

Do not use all your energy to fight these difficult situations directly as they are too big for you alone and you need to save your energy for future difficulties. Deny your demons battle.

Feed your good thought and starve your bad ones. Fighting only feeds the bad thoughts because they are actually fighting for your attention. They will settle for even negative attention.

### **6.5 Sound, Sleep, and Mental Issues**

Getting a good sleep is one of the best things you can do for your overall health. It is even more important than lowering stress, exercise, or even prescribed medicines. Sleep is often disrupted due to mental illnesses, where you can sleep too little or too much, due to depression and have irregular and less restful sleep due to Schizophrenia due to the medicine and/or the illness. Not getting enough sleep alone can also be the direct cause of mental health issues.

Sound is very tied to sleep. We use sound to wake us up, help us go to sleep, and help keep us a sleep. Most people also enjoy music for recreation. We can use this same technique to help distract us from symptoms from mental illness that keep us awake.

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First of all, we have to see sleep as not a shutting off of the mind and that it is connected to the other parts of the day. Getting exercise and allowing enough time to sleep require planning ahead. One of the biggest things that keeps us awake is stress which is often the result of our circumstances and what happens during our day.

We need to keep our minds focused on positive and good things throughout the day. If we see negative images like in the news or on social media, we need to put in enough positive images in our minds to offset these. It is even better to be aware of what triggers your stress and then avoid that task as much as possible.

Music is a great way to help us relax or distract us from symptoms. For symptoms during sleeping, getting to sleep, or getting back to sleep we can use a variety of sounds such as from music. Different genres work for different people and in different situations. Consider music beyond just your personal taste in music.

For distracting yourself from heavy symptoms occurring right then like paranoia or voices, try a much more intense and complex music. Other aspects of music that are better for distracting you include increasing the volume, watching the music video or reading the lyrics at the same time, or listening through headphones. Sometimes you may prefer hard rock, hip hop, or alternative music for when you need heavy distractions.

For trying to get to sleep, try using classical music, Latin music, nature sounds, easy listening, or music from your childhood or your favorite movie. You can still increase the impact by adding more stimulus like having the TV on in the background or turn on a light. You can also vary the music genre and artist or use artists with more emotionally powerful songs or songs with lyrics to add a little more stimulation.

Religion and music go together from the very beginning of time. Music creation or consumption can in itself be a kind of worship. There are a wide variety of genres in Christian music, in particular.

Besides listening to sermons in audio or video and the Bible read aloud as in an audiobook, you also have church worship songs like hymns and modern worship music, Christian songs in other languages and from other time periods and regions, gospel music, and almost every other genre from gothic to hip hop to contemporary. Some might include nature sounds and some classical music like Bach and Handel to be religious music as well.

It is also important to find the paranoia or depressive topics that bothers you personally and what triggers this. It would be good for almost anyone to avoid the news and social media, but science fiction or military based shows can be troubling to even those without mental issues.

Sitcoms, animated movies, romantic comedies, and religious broadcasts can be some of the most

## 20 Years: Before and After

positive video genres out there. Other surprisingly negative shows can be found on the family channel called free form and animal channel. Kids like horror movies and animal activists keep showing abused animals.

The overall idea here is find what works for you. There are many things in life without a clear list of do's and don'ts. This is one of those areas. Lowering stress and sleeping well though should be goals for all of us.

### **6.6 Ben H. check mark**

20 years later  
The art of failure

#### **6.6.1 Background**

##### **6.1.1 Current Occupation**

Disabled Veteran  
Government assistance  
Lived independently for over 15 years

##### **6.1.2 Motivation**

Failure is the key to success  
Failure is always an option  
The ten thousand mile journey begins with one trip

##### **6.1.3 Education**

Doctorate I bought online  
3 years of college with no degree  
Read a lot of books  
Prepared for disaster survival  
20 years to finish personal website

#### **6.1.4 Work Experience**

Military one year enlistment  
Discharged for being mentally ill  
Retired as Private First Class  
Boy Scout Summer Camp Counselor  
Phone surveys  
Security at football games

#### **6.1.5 Multicultural Experience**

Created my own philosophy  
Based on eastern and western philosophies  
Created a Micro-nation  
Oversee and advice stuffed toy conflicts

#### **6.1.6 Travel Experience**

Military Base in Hawaii (Oahu) for six months  
Basic Training in South Carolina  
Day trip to Tijuana, Mexico

### **6.6.2 Skills**

#### **6.2.1 Published Work**

Self Published all books  
Print on Demand Technology

#### **6.2.2 Concise writing**

Only 60 books in 20 years

**6.2.3 Clear focus**

Almost all non-fiction topics

**6.2.4 Consistent progress**

One month to five years to complete a book

**6.2.5 Completely original works**

1/2 of many books length is quoted from scripture

**6.2.6 Opportunity for monetization**

People don't read anymore

**6.2.7 Marketing strategy**

Biggest weakness

**6.2.8 Future Prospects and Goals**

Staying out of the hospital  
Keep taking my medicine  
Survive global warming  
Go north as weather changes  
Not panicking during disasters  
Live low stress life  
Avoid becoming famous

**6.2.9 References**

My stuffed toys  
The voices in my head

## **6.7 To Be Young Again**

When you are young  
You run many miles  
When you get older  
You are happy to walk

When I was young  
I wanted to be famous  
I wanted to be rich  
I wanted to live in a big city  
I wanted to live far away

The more interesting parts of the world  
Are like the more interesting parts of life  
At first we seek beauty and pleasure  
But later all we can see is trash and danger

If I could return to my youth  
I would make some different decisions  
But I would never devote 20 years  
To a single project

I would have never joined the military  
I could not imagine what career I would have  
I would be much more cautious  
And I would trust people much less

I would seek for a way to pay the bills  
I would not be so hard on myself  
Or have such ridiculously ambitious goals  
I would have not been afraid of failure  
I would be happier with less money  
I would not expect so much of myself  
I would not feel I needed to solve others problems

I would be happy to sleep in a warm bed at night  
And accept that much of life is repetitive  
At the end of the day  
Working an honest job would be more than enough

## 20 Years: Before and After

I would be more concerned with my own well being  
I would be happy to merely keep the faith

I would not desire to travel  
Or get depressed by the news  
I would accept that I cannot change  
Other people and their business  
I would be happy to read  
And watch the occasional movie  
If I had enough money  
To build up some good amount in savings  
I would accept that I did my best  
To prepare for the future  
I would work much harder each day  
But be much happier

Of course if I still became mentally ill  
I would need to happy with much less  
It is true that Schizophrenia is about fear  
And the natural response is to withdraw  
No one in government really understands or cares  
No one is even aware of how we live  
Few of us can advocate for ourselves  
Few of us can even read a whole book  
Being mentally ill  
Is a full time job in and of itself

But honest work  
Is what we desire to do the most  
So many people despise those on government assistance  
And women say they want a man with a job  
Being an (old fashioned) man I desire to work  
And provide for myself  
But sometimes we need to accept where we are  
Sometimes merely surviving is winning

## 7 Encouraging Words 2

Best Veteran's and Birthday Cards  
for the last 15 years

## 20 Years: Before and After

by Leo, Melissa, and Rebecca Huot

### **7.1 Veteran's Day**

#### **7.1.1 2007**

We are so proud of the service you gave to our country. I don't know why you had to pay such a high price. You have accepted the sacrifice asked of you with such courage and tenacity that I am challenged to reach higher in my life too. I suppose there is a reason why God does not answer all these questions we have and why. When I feel so overwhelmed I think of your faithfulness each day and that nothing, nothing can separate us from the love of God. The love that created us, sustains us and will receive us home for eternity. Praise God. You are our hero. All our love, Dad and Mom.

#### **7.1.2 2009**

We are so proud of your willingness to serve your country. You are a fine son and wonderful man - generous, kind, loving, intelligent, with a great sense of humor. You inspire and encourage me many days. The Lord will answer our prayers in the right time and help us to rest in His peace as we wait together. I am very thankful I have you to share with - it makes it easier. All our Love, Mom and Dad

#### **7.1.3 2011**

You gave so very much to serve our country and have never complained or been angry! We are also proud of how you have grown into a loving and caring son and citizen and man. We know you have and continue to have to work hard to overcome all the limitations your illness gives you. God continues to give you grace. We also are so blessed by how you grow in your faith. You have been such an inspiration and example to help me. Enjoy the day. We love you with all our hearts. Mom and Dad

#### **7.1.4 2012**

Thanks so much for being willing to serve to protect our freedom and wonderful way of life where we can make our decisions and live as we choose. Most important of all, we can worship

## 20 Years: Before and After

as we decide. Love you honey, Mom and Dad

### **7.1.5 2015**

Thank you honey, for your sacrifice so we might be free. You handle your disability with such acceptance and grace. You gave up so much and continue to suffer so much yet you never complain. I know there is much we don't understand. We love you dearly and are very proud of you and all you have accomplished. I hope this is a good day for you. All our love, Mom

Hi Ben,

This is the day we celebrate you and your sacrifice. We are proud of you! Love, Dad.

### **7.1.6 2016**

We are very proud of you for serving our country. The sacrifice asked of you was very dear, but your response has been truly amazing. Through God's blessing and your constant hard work you are doing wonderfully. I respect the man you have become: loyal, honest, kind, generous and loving. A mother couldn't ask for more. Love, Mom and Dad

### **7.1.7 2017**

Recognizing and celebrating you! Thank you for your service.

We are so proud of you and all you have accomplished on the computer and the website, as well as dealing with and conquering limitations of your illness

We love you, Dad and Mom

### **7.1.8 Undated**

We love you so much! We are very proud of the man you have grown into. You are thoughtful, intelligent, caring, have a great sense of humor and are a very patient teacher. Your mind knows no ends. I love discussing history with you. You gave so much but have worked very hard to relearn and come back to be as independent as possible. I know how hard you have to work at this and your progress is truly amazing. Without the Lord this wouldn't have been possible. I know the Lord watches out for you in a special way. All our love honey, Mom and Dad

## **7.2 Birthdays**

### **7.2.1 2004**

Dear Ben, Happy 26th!

I treasure your friendship each day.

Love,

Rebecca

### **7.2.2 2005**

I know we have told you many times how proud we are of you. I want you to know. We don't say this merely in passing. You are truly an amazing individual. You have accepted the very difficult life given to you and handled it with strength and humor - not allowing it to overwhelm you every single day getting up to face the many challenges and pushing yourself to achieve the goals you set. We love you so much and feel very privileged that you include us so much in your life. May your 27th birthday be as special as you are.

Ben, you are a remarkable young man. You have many fine qualities! All our Love, Mom and Dad

### **7.2.3 2006**

You are a wonderful son - loving, caring, generous and full of humor. Thanks for sharing your life with us and enriching us both. God has blessed us deeply with the gift of you as our son. We want you to know you fill our hearts with love and pride.

Happy 28th

All our love, Mom and Dad

### **7.2.4 2007**

## 20 Years: Before and After

Dear Ben -

I enjoy our relationship so much! I am honored to be related to you and I always enjoy the wonderful and stimulating conversations that we have.

Enjoy the last year of your 20s!

Rebecca

### **7.2.5 2008**

Happy 30th birthday to a wonderful son. We are so proud of the man you have become. You are kind and generous, hardworking, caring, tenacious and growing in wisdom and godliness.

All our love, Mom and Dad

Dear Ben, Happy 32nd!

I hope these books help you with your humor and writing pursuits.

Much love,

Rebecca

### **7.2.6 2010**

And you are above the ordinary. You have continued to grow and mature so much this year. Your perseverance in spite of your limitations is an inspiration and motivator to me. This next year is going to be an adventure for you in your new apartment close to so many new opportunities. You have so much to offer to others - you are kind, honest, have a great sense of humor, you are caring, thoughtful and I feel so blessed to have you as my son. You are so sweet and supportive of me. Many days your call gets me up and going. You've already accomplished so much - living independently learning about and managing your illness plus all your research and the many books you have written. The future lies before you and I look forward to your enjoyment of it. We are so proud of you and love you dearly.

Wishing you blessings, peace of God which passes all understanding, and the closeness of God in your life. We celebrate you!

## 20 Years: Before and After

All or love, Mom and Dad

### **7.2.7 2011**

Dear Ben - Happy Birthday!

I'm so glad we have a good relationship.  
Love you so much,

Rebecca

### **7.2.8 2011**

How wonderful to have your birthday land on Easter. To celebrate you and the Lord's resurrection on the same day! You are such a joy - a gift from Our Lord to us. Never forget what a special man you are. We love you dearly. Mom and Dad

### **7.2.9 2013**

35 years

Wishing you a relaxing and enjoyable birthday. We are proud of you and your many accomplishments and contributions.

Love you so much my best friend.

Love, Dad and Mom

### **7.2.10 2014**

Happy 36!

Hi Ben - We want you to wish you a very happy birthday. We are both very proud of the young man you are and your many accomplishments.

Have a happy, happy day. I hope the Hurd Herd throws you a surprise party!

## 20 Years: Before and After

All our love, Dad and Mom

### **7.2.11      2017**

Dear Ben,

I feel so blessed to have my son be one of my best friends. I can talk to you about anything. You're a good listener with good advice and insight. You have a wonderful sense of humor that I delight in. You are definitely one of my spiritual mentors and have given me very helpful insights into living my faith. It is a joy to celebrate your 39th Birthday! It was just you and me on that first day when you were born. I remember it well. You have grown into a godly, loving, generous, thoughtful and highly educated man. We could be prouder of you honey.

Love, Mom

Dear Ben - We celebrate you, your accomplishments, the person you are and what the Lord has done in your life.

Love always, Dad

### **7.2.12      Undated**

I think back on the day you were born. I remember it very well. You cried so much your first 4 months I always thought it was because you were taken before you were ready to be born. After that, you were happy and cheerful. You loved to play with blankets and rolled all over the place. You didn't do much crawling, just rolling and then you walked! The Lord has given me such a wonderful gift in you as my son. You are truly my best friend and it means the world to me. I love you honey. Thanks for loving me. Love, Mom and Dad

## **8 Early Poetry**

### **8.1 *Clarity in Conviction (Summer 1998)***

I am a rock crushed and beaten to dust  
I am a clay jar wet with rot, pried and pulled to disfigurement  
I am rushed by in shrieking winds of light  
I am filled with void and darkness  
I stand at the edge of human thought and reason, quivering uncontrollably  
I am surrounded on each side

## 20 Years: Before and After

To the right, pain  
And to the left, despair  
Behind me, fear  
And death alone stands before me  
All was biting flames and smothering fog  
Dancing and laughing sadistically  
Drowning in this red hot furnace  
I was bound and gagged with pure terror and relentless pain  
Nothing existed but pain and terror  
But for a single ray of light immortal  
After eternity passed five times  
I passed through the iron doors of night impenetrable  
Still choking and burning on the rot and char within  
Pain and not pain were all that existed  
I am part of nothing  
And nothing is part of me  
Having rejected everything  
And everything having rejected me  
I am a man, a soldier  
And nothing more  
And madness did but all consume me  
If not for many a labor of love  
So once fully alone and silent still  
I did let the sun shine in and heal the rot and char  
Within the daily fears and petty tribulations that did haunt me  
And in the midst of the multitudes busy  
Did He, in the humble summer day breeze,  
Find I to be wanting and unworthy  
So in the cool of the day  
With the entire continuum of time and space shuddering  
Did my Savior present Himself  
As the only worthy sacrifice  
Obedient to even death, He did defeat  
That which did seek to torment me most eternally  
As God raised Jesus from the dead  
From there I venture as a simple pilgrim, asking for directions as I go  
Finding in the Word He had left me  
A map to discern the directions to be trusted from that which should not be  
At times outrunning my companions  
And at other times standing almost completely still  
I find clarity in the conviction of this truth  
That God raised Jesus from the dead  
And so I go ever on  
As he walks humbly by my side  
The living flame imperishable walking  
To the pace of a mortal man  
My companion, my Lord, as my real Father  
He who created me is not yet finished  
He turns the circle of life, the potter's wheel  
To mold my empty and disfigured thoughts into the pure and noble thoughts of  
His Son  
Making me into the likeness of the real Son of Man

## 20 Years: Before and After

From the inside out  
I am baptized in His Grace, so  
That He can make me a new creation  
Making me again with fresh clay and water  
And filling the emptiness with His love and His peace  
And now my eyes are more fully opened  
And I now see the unending power and goodness of Christ within me and the  
truth of His Word all around me  
I am no longer male or female, white or black, young or old,  
But bought at the highest price and no longer my own  
I now call myself after my master, Christian  
He that I may serve and in so doing be free from my most eternal enemy,  
myself  
And as the road goes ever on and on,  
And I stumble along the way, from time to time  
And as I return to the foot of the cross each day  
And learn again why I cannot master myself  
And I realize each time more and more  
How amazing was that grace that saved a wretch like me

### **8.2 The Who (Fall 1998)**

Walking Wandering Pacing  
moving fast enough  
going no where  
or anywhere  
just somewhere  
through a thin copper wire  
over shifting subterranean plates  
with hot rubber rolling  
while pebbles gradually grind boulders  
across sheets of sagging wood  
forgetting the ringing, scratching, and chattering  
ignoring the shuffling, rustling, and creaking  
I a moving along  
asking answers  
and finding discovery  
the silence  
intensifies  
The universe hums with vibrating bodies  
Folds and lifts of fabric roll  
abruptly and gracefully  
Bending priority and expression to definite lengths  
Forms of fire alight in the midst  
of this song  
Dancing and rejoicing with reverence and awe  
A presence beside me  
of that I am now aware  
focuses His entire attention on me  
As He gently rolls my world  
in the palm of his hand  
The wires, plates, wheels, pavement and carpet

## 20 Years: Before and After

fade like the thumb of a painter  
smudging the backdrop of His scape  
to give depth and variety to His creation  
Out of the emptiness comes life  
For the empty cup holds more  
than the full one  
Out of the silence comes clarity and meaning  
For the silence says more than  
a thousand words  
And I understand that it is not  
the road I travel on that matters  
but Who it is that makes a way  
when I fail me  
For the what is transparent, but the Who is a matter of life and death

### **8.3 *Mind's Eye (Fall 1998)***

Eyes wide  
Head Level  
Two figures  
Standing close  
Bodies bent forward  
Arms waving  
A ball hovering between  
Without form or substance  
I reach for the ball  
My hand is torn  
I kneel where I was standing  
I close my eyes  
A heart beats  
Not my own  
Waters below  
Rising and falling  
Waters above  
Fade into nothing  
I rest my head  
On the gust of the wind  
Rolling and tumbling  
I sit perfectly still

### **8.4 *Twelve Men and a Man (Fall 1998)***

The smell of fresh salty air  
Crisp and cool the breeze takes Form  
From the sea to a cottage  
Small footprints grow with the steps  
An old grey Man raps on the door  
Men with the hearts of children  
Bang pans and drop dishes on the floor  
Twelve men follow this Man up a lonely hill  
The old Man descends into the pit

## 20 Years: Before and After

The whip burns His flesh  
An old white Man walks in an old forest  
Two men with broken hearts pass by  
A herd of trees awake and rejoice  
A cloud of fire takes form  
The men wander in the ashes  
Eleven men watch the sea  
A Form loses shape in the midst  
Twelve men talk of strange things  
The sky weeps  
Twelve forms are lost in the sea mist  
The old Man rolls the world in the palm of His hand  
Several cottages are cradled in His left

### **8.5 None. Not Even One. (Fall 2000)**

Romans 3:10

None was good enough  
No one made the team this Year

There will be no team this year  
Just like every year

How do we run the race before us?  
How do we compete for the prize?

We can't even follow the rules we know of  
Then how can we learn the game?

We were unable to meet the cut  
We are without excuse

We are all alike  
The good ones and the bad

The professionals and amateurs alike  
We fail together

When we play  
We become aware of our inability to compete

When we are bad  
It makes the coach seem better

But is that a reason  
To lose?

Should the professionals teach the amateurs?  
Should the blind lead the blind?

## 20 Years: Before and After

The title only means something  
When you are really better

But none was good enough  
Not even one

# 9 Gothic Short Poems (Spring 2000)

## 9.1 *I want to listen to my thoughts*

I want to listen to my thoughts  
I want to knock all the piles of bills off my desk  
I want to save just the one paper written on in pencil  
I want to stop tossing and turning in bed  
Long enough to turn a light on and jot down thoughts  
I want to rush home from a long day of errands  
Before I lose the structure of my thoughts  
I want to lean back on the chair in the study  
And turn my back to the world a while  
I want to let the background noise fade  
So I can hear myself in a crowded store

I want to dream again  
I want to run in the rain again  
I want to take pictures again  
I want to spend time in Middle Earth  
I want to leap down imaginary waterfalls  
I want to lose myself in thought  
I want to pause too long before answering

## 9.2 *What more for my life?*

What more for my life?  
Days of adventure and strife.  
Is it a life?  
If there is no strife  
Is there adventure?  
If there is no strife  
How long can I wait?  
How long can I try?  
I wait for the rain  
To wash away my sorrow  
A few months gone by  
Starts to heal my wounds  
Can I risk the pain?  
To feel love again

### **9.3 Unemployed**

Living it up  
Living unemployed  
The wind blows in from the street  
The curtains flow in the wind  
The papers fly across the desk  
And descend into the trash  
I dance in the living room  
I sing in the bathroom  
I ride the sail of a book  
And spend time in Middle Earth  
Reality bites back  
I eat out of a tin can  
He stands over me invisible  
Maybe I can work for Him

### **9.4 Alone**

Sitting alone next to the window  
Too old to go out and play  
who will come in and see me?  
in this secret darkness  
how long will the cloud hover overhead  
how long will I keep from grinning  
gloom that doesn't leave  
silence that isn't peaceful  
home alone from the others  
miles away from talking what am I to do  
But sit up and listen to the silence hours race by  
I creep around the dark side of the house

### **9.5 Dream**

Sitting without purpose  
Daydreaming in the morning  
Mind wanders to Middle Earth  
Feet dangle below  
Can the morning last forever  
In this butterfly dream  
Dreams are one form of existence  
A life without death  
Can I live a day with my feet dangling  
Can I sleep tonight  
Without being redeemed by God  
God finishes the day with a dream  
As He finishes life with death

## **9.6 Death and Sleep**

I want to feel good about my life  
I did tonight  
Is it wrong to feel good for taking a nap  
The days are long  
The hours pass by slowly  
It is so silent  
When the others lie down to sleep  
What will get me through the night?  
What will get me through the afternoon?  
I look up verses I search for answers  
Death will come slowly  
It will be long before  
I lie down to sleep  
Even if its quick  
I can dream right now

## **9.7 Night Sounds**

How long do I need to stay awake at night?  
How long will I hear a tapping at the door?  
Blood flows silently at night  
Sound doesn't travel in space  
What will I do?  
When they hover over me  
Will it hurt less If I'm asleep  
How will I fight unseen visitors?  
What is the face of darkness?  
What will light bring to me?  
Does it matter that the moon is out?  
I will call to the One The One that stays out all night  
I will sleep silently  
Then I can hear patting feet at the door

## **9.8 Green Rock**

Everyone wants to have an adventure  
No one wants to be in danger  
I rode through the tunnel  
I cried out to God  
I chose to see the ocean  
From many directions  
A smooth green rock  
Fits comfortably in my hand  
How long will it be green?  
well, for now it's green  
Do I die and go to heaven?  
Or come back as a dog?  
I called out to God  
I know who I believe

### **9.9 *My Dog***

How can she be a dog?  
How can I be human?  
If I have hope beyond death  
What is her fate?  
Two legs talks  
Four legs listens  
Pushes the door with her nose  
I with my hand  
Together we race  
She always wins  
Will we be able to run through death?  
As we run through life  
Her chin resting on a blanket  
My head resting on a pillow  
We lay down to sleep

### **9.10 *Three Flames***

Three flames hovering beside us  
capes flapping in the wind  
shuffling their feet  
clapping their hands  
jumping up and swooping down  
somersaulting in mid air  
kneeling down before the King  
wings folded down  
they bear the throne up  
heads down and arms outstretched

### **9.11 *Historical Fact***

There was a flash of light  
Light and water bloomed  
in the garden of darkness  
We came into being  
But we turned around  
to gaze at the thorns  
You turned us back around  
You flung open the doors of night  
You held the iron flakes back  
You were racked and strung out for us  
The Magic Sun rose again and so did you  
In the cool of the morning  
you now dance with us

### **9.12 *A Woman at Night***

I gaze up from my bed  
I hear a woman's voice whispering

## 20 Years: Before and After

I see a tall thin grey woman  
She stands with wings folded and eyes downcast  
Her black hair hangs down her back  
She whispers my name  
I arise and take her hand  
She lowers me out the window and onto the ground  
We dance slowly in the wet grass  
She wraps her wings around me  
I press my lips against her neck  
She holds my head close

### **9.13      *The Lamp***

I reach for the lamp  
Light floods the room  
Darkness quickly spreads over the perimeter  
I gaze at the silhouette of the lampshade on the wall  
I close the blinds with a snap  
No one can hear  
I sing sweet nothings  
into the ear of the shadow  
I feel something creep up behind me  
The light flickers off  
I struggle back to sleep

### **9.14      *Ready***

The night creeps into the room  
I stand with sword in hand  
I shiver all over  
I am not ready to meet the night  
I lay down I cast the sword aside  
I wrap myself in the night  
I wrestle to the sounds of voices outside  
I wrap my arms around the night  
And pull it close  
Now I am ready to turn on the light

### **9.15      *The Light***

I stand up and pull the blinds up  
I jump back  
Assaulted by the intensity of the light  
I cry out  
Finding myself not in a dream  
How can I face another day?  
Ghosts whisper into my ears  
I pace the hallways all day  
The light is too strong  
The others are too happy  
My life is now so serious  
I have to take things slow

## 20 Years: Before and After

Will I be ill forever?  
Will this shadow that weighs me down ever leave?  
I must fight for concentration  
My memory grows dim  
How will I fight another day?

### **9.16      *The Cat***

I waste away the day on the couch  
The light burns my eyes  
The cat sneaks around beside the couch  
I am being watched  
Little eyelids open silently  
The little beast looks around menacingly  
The cat follows my every turn  
How will I elude the watchful eye?  
A bum like myself We wander during the day  
Our time is the night  
Each day I fall asleep later  
The night has become my friend  
The cat and I chase each other at night

### **9.17      *The Wind***

The wind dances with the sun  
The tree waves in the middle  
Reaching for the sun  
And battling the raging wind  
The wind calms down I gasp for air  
How can I breathe without the wind?  
The wind outruns the dog  
And shield me from the sun  
It wakes me gently in the morning  
And lulls me to sleep at night

### **9.18      *Standing Back***

I huddle up in the calm of isolation  
I wrap around me the serenity of indifference  
I face the day without purpose  
I wander without direction  
The days last forever  
The seasons never turn  
If I could live the day in a dream  
I could be well again  
Now I stand back watching life without me  
Watching my future stopped short  
Unfinished business Errands unrun

## 10 Love Poetry (2001-2003)

### 10.1 *Indonesian Lessons*

The wooden siding may be greyed and rotten  
And the aluminum roof rusted through  
But the valley is still wide and green  
And the fields are covered in years of mud  
I need no rituals for the harvest  
Nor do I need to offer sacrifices to the local dieties  
Because I have a covenant with God  
Based on grace and unconditional love  
I baptize my cows in the river  
And dedicate my home to our God  
The God who came down to earth  
So no cow needed to die anymore  
Our country would be better  
If our leadership applied Christian values to their lives  
They would give up their offices  
And donate time to help those they hurt  
Everyone is conceived as a son or daughter of God  
But everyone rejects their Father  
But when they return they are welcomed back  
As blood children of God  
Some people see technology as an end unto itself  
A distraction that brings pleasure  
And a tool that reduces cost  
A circular argument  
Save on technology to buy more technology  
I see no need for flashing banner ads  
And buggy vaporware  
Who will we serve - the rich or the poor?  
We buy into a myth  
That we buy what we want  
The truth is - we follow the ads  
And are a slave to our debts  
Will technology ever save us?  
Will we be able to stop the flood of ads  
With an electronic piece of gum?  
Will we be able to refinance our house again?  
The Internet is not merely a security threat  
But an opportunity for a reorganization of control  
Where a middle class Palestinian can be a major distributor for their hobby  
tomorrow  
And you can actually read news that isn't censored by homeland security

### 10.2 *Both Animals: One Herd*

As I wash your body  
You clean my soul

## 20 Years: Before and After

The roughness smoothed away  
The scathed heart given a salve  
Seeking humanity  
You are already more real than I am  
Respecting the wisdom of animals  
Maybe I am growing  
Two friends with hooves and horns  
Another slower and awkward  
The lead cow trails the herd  
The shepard is consoled by his flock  
The paths are uneven on the journey  
Two legs is supported by four legs  
I am their caretaker  
But they provide that which only exists in dreams  
I take one step forward  
And the possibilities multiply  
With each new step  
There is new meaning  
New reason to embrace my herd  
As I am accepted as a member  
Patches of white and black are all I see  
When I overlook my friends in the herd  
The days are darker than ink  
When I do not converse with them  
Their Creator is my Creator  
No idea is conceived without Him  
No bond is formed  
Nor are friends parted from one another  
Without His moving  
Neither man nor cow  
Is a family without his blessing  
First loved by the Creator  
Both created cannot help but love  
Living apart is anguish  
Man and cow can never live too close

### **10.3      *Nothing to Gain***

Why do I struggle each day  
To do more and more  
I yearn to lose myself  
In passion for others  
I do not want to stop  
And think of my insignificance  
I want to create and grow  
Because I am not satisfied  
At where I am now  
The more I create  
The more I whittle away  
At my emptiness  
The more I am  
The more confidence I have

## 20 Years: Before and After

I do not want to learn slowly  
Because mistakes can be so painful  
I struggle so  
The more people ask me what I do  
Am I an artist?  
Does my drive prove that?  
I want more reach  
I want more people to experience  
What I record  
Some people strengthen their mind or body  
Other diligently make the world run  
But I follow another path  
I am hungry for more creation  
Our machines become smaller each year  
More names are added to the world's language  
But so much more could be done  
To provoke a sigh or a grin  
Something that will last  
A whole year without being outdated  
Stretching our minds  
To see an inch in front of our faces  
Maybe I am just near sighted  
But there is so much joy  
That comes from one day of rain  
Or the wind carrying leaves along the sidewalk  
We can find whole new worlds  
On our way back from the supermarket

### **10.4 Warm Inside**

Mist hangs over the city  
And the signals are fuzzy  
I can't remember much what happened last night  
But I was awakened by two phone calls  
Someone was calling for my mother  
And there was a family emergency  
I stayed up to write a poem about it  
I never seem to be as restful  
After I write a poem at night  
But I like to keep a record of my thoughts  
All is quiet except the occasional angry driver  
The workmen are out in orange  
People are angry on the road  
Someone won't stop to let me cross  
And almost hit me  
Unfortunately, no police around  
Two ducks were out today  
Traveling up the slew  
They bent their necks  
To feast on mildew  
It is hard to tell if there were only two  
The trash mimics duck silhouettes

## 20 Years: Before and After

I sit in restful solitude  
Enjoying the companionship of my (stuffed toy) cows  
They don't talk very much  
And are fascinated by my typing  
Which appears on a big (for them) screen  
Today is a day like any other  
But I turned my little heater on  
And there are streams of warm air  
Rising throughout the room  
When I get hit by one I relax a little more  
Heat brings me joy in the winter  
And it is definitely the middle of winter  
I enjoy the winter  
As it is a time to look forward to spring  
It is a time to be productive  
When nature doesn't call  
I mean when it's not warm  
I should settle down now  
Under my cow spot "camouflage" pattern  
And let my little heater  
Keep rotating heat throughout the apartment  
Diligently without effort

# 11 Retirement Poetry (2004-2006)

## 11.1 *Something to Crow About*

On my way to the bus  
For my morning medication  
I am tired from my Uncle's visit  
And loud neighbors over the 4<sup>th</sup>  
Heat exhaustion yesterday  
And a bad cough and headache  
But today seems ok so far  
And the light doesn't blind me today  
Crossing the parking lot to the bus stop  
Crows dive down from the trees  
Several near misses because I ducked  
And I realize they are at it again  
Trying to avoid the trees  
I walk directly out in the cars' way  
But they continue after me  
They fly ahead to the next tree  
And wait for me to come by  
So they can launch another kamikazee attack  
Dark as a stealth bomber  
They attack with precision  
Like a leaf floating in the wind  
They strike without effort  
With no predators

## 20 Years: Before and After

They fly without fear  
Should I tell animal controlled  
Or the bus station manager  
I will never go shopping  
In that center again  
If only I had a shotgun  
And better aim  
No mental disease  
And more lenient laws  
I like animals  
But not when they attack me

### **11.2      *Fire Qi***

A morning greeting  
A cool dining room  
A table set the night before  
People drift in slowly  
The piano plays  
Without a pianist  
The cart begins its rounds  
Familiar choices  
And good eats  
I chew away  
A lively discussion  
Of a time far removed  
With each day  
The embers grow  
And the water evaporates  
My old self comes back  
Though sleeping often  
And hearing faint odd thoughts  
I learn new names  
And faces become familiar  
My mind settles  
As does my apartment  
Everything in its place  
And I smile more often