

Diary 2012

2nd January 2012 – 5/6 days down at the Prom – really nice. Lots of things for the kids to do. Boogie Boarding, riding the inflatable boat up and down the tidal flows in the river, Frank came down and did some fishing, even a movie in the outdoor cinema.

Nice campsite overlooked by Mt Oberon – maybe not quite as nice as the last few years where we had a larger more protected site, but fantastic anyway. Had the trailer this time so were able to throw in more stuff and not be so space poor!

Hopefully will become a bit of a tradition – constant in our lives.

Ange and I had a bit of an argument yesterday over the neighbours kid, Ruben, coming over to play and staying for lunch. Ange seems to take the conservative withdraw road a lot in anticipation of things going wrong.

She didn't want Ruben to stay for lunch on the basis that it was going to set a precedent - he already comes over unannounced for hours at a time. I think this is great – good for our kids and good for him. The beginnings of how a neighbourhood should feel. Ange wants to back away from it ignoring or happy to sacrifice all of the benefits.

They, Peta and Dale, at into Falun Dafa (or Gong). I actually like the idea of the religion or philosophy. Meditation and slow moving exercise (part of a 'qigong' movement or boon in philosophies), and a high emphasis on morality. Funny the morality I think I could take or leave.



I am a strong believer in doing the right thing, it is just that the right thing is so often different. Imposing a set of predetermined morals is not necessarily the right way to go. It also takes a lot of the randomness and fun out of life – says he who is in as about straight laced a family and social environment as you can get!

The slow moving exercises have actually worked for me – one of the few practical things that I can sense the benefits of. Particularly after the accident and in rehab/recovery. If I can feel the benefits during recovery it has to be having a good effect on the body.

It somehow puts you in sync with what is going on around you – in a big picture almost spiritual sense. As close to feeling and going with the Taoist flow that I have experienced (apart maybe from that night in Hong Kong when the feeling of humanity and heartbeat was palpable around me, amazing. That was a little different however – new place and lots of emotions – always likely you are going to start feeling emotions like that.

The stuff in rehab was an ongoing thing and just came along naturally. The other practice I could feel the practical benefits from was the practice in Philosophy. Centring and awareness.

ppm – Reading Steve Jobs biography at the moment. Mixed sort of guy but very focused and confident, and good foresight not to mention right place in right time.

Inspired by the 60's / 70's. The drugs and experimentation, the idealism. I would have liked to have lived my life during that time (wars etc excluded of course...).

Probably should be stronger in my current life to make a bit of that happen – too involved in what other people think and in doing the right thing by others – not a bad thing to be involved in I must admit. I chose an Indian elephant for the front cover no doubt because of a strong urge to revisit those times and that feeling of mind.

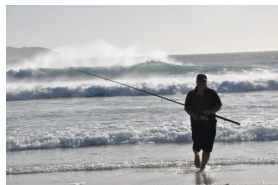
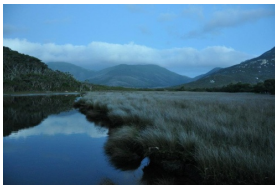
I shouldn't be so quick to write of the idealism of what I have always held close, as a mid-life transition. If it is then I should go through it and not deprive myself, can't be healthy just letting the whole thing pass over...

What I hold close is a desire to do some proper thinking as to why we are here. It must be some sort of duty? Figure out in small steps something about the collective unconsciousness and the collective experience, and what it means or relates to.

It is not about a single experience, or religion or philosophy, it has more to do with the full spectrum – of everything, and of balance in terms of living within it but not necessarily in terms of what it is, or should be.

It has to be an exploration, a Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy bigger picture thing going on. And where does it get to I wonder? Not in particular justice or anything like that.

On a personal level, it must be about understanding it – in whatever way shape or form makes sense to you. To enjoy yourself along the way, to create enjoyment and positive outcomes.



2011 Wilsons Prom Trip – 26th-31st December – sunny, windy, wild, no rain, fantastic.

meaning of life:

1. be happy

2. help others be happy

Not a bad start in the absence of anything better. I have a feeling that if you follow this, things will turn out ok...

3rd January 2012 – Did I mention we had a new family member in Bronson join us! An 8 month old cross – they tell us between a staghound and a Staffie but who knows. He is tan with a whit underbelly patch, very good natured and very much a pup – still chewing, still playful.



Kids absolutely love him. Stella just comes out ‘he’s a great dog’ from time to time, and Ewie spends a lot of time with him just grinning and scratching and patting him, observing. Freya is all smiles and does her best to put on a serious voice in trying to control etc.

Will be especially good for Ewan who needs someone who can take the full brunt of his attention from time to time...!

“Form follows emotion”

Hartmut Esslinge
(German industrial designer who worked for Apple).

Like this a lot – brings a bit of levity and life and humanism to form follows function and equally valid. From Steve Jobs biography...



Couldn't resist this one – taken at the playground near Appletree Drive – Freya pretending she was in an aeroplane...



Or this one – from late last year at the aquarium in the city. That and the Polly Woodside – great day :).

4th January 2012 – Reflecting on the Apple – Steve Jobs environment and strategy. High powered, blue chip, Quality and hard, hard work – excitement and inspiration. Impressive and I am inspired, but thinking about how that relates to Arup and me.

Would be a mistake I think to jump into it boots and all and try to emulate this stuff. It is a different time and different place. Apple and Jobs were a bit 80's self-centred despite the 60's hippie edge, and we are not riding the front wave of the personal computer revolution.

We do however need to be idealists and aim high. We need to challenge ways of doing things and we need to be clever about our relationships etc with clients. I recall Peter Bowtell challenging from time to time with if you want it hard enough, you will work the weekends to deliver it – you know what, there are other things that I want more – time with kids, and myself etc.

This just means we need to reformulate a little. What I love and believe passionately about Jobs is the wanting to change the world – or more do the right thing – the idealism born out of the India travels, the 60's, and the LSD trips. He was brutally honest with what he wanted, and lived his life to that end. I need to do the same.

Have to clarify what is important and then energeise all of that and make it the best it can possibly be.

What is important?

- Family – kids, education, sport, extended family, successful careers and lives for them.
- Travel because I love it and it contributes to me on the inside.
- Work – doing good work and being involved in good architecture – which I am not at the moment. Working with Lyons is not great in terms of being involved – doing something new.
- Me – not so much finding purpose, but getting into the journey of looking for it a bit. Talking and coming up with life strategies, life the universe and everything models.

Out of this?:

10th January 2012 – Still thinking...

Yesterday was the first day back – long day finishing with a teleconference at about 9:00-9:30pm. Draining!

Testing my resolve to be positive this month, but reinforcing the fact that it needs to be done. I notice that even Jobs went up and down with the confidence stakes.

Part of it is pace – as I learned last year but struggled to get into sync with. Need pace to keep your thinking (and processing, listening), powers at an acceptable level.

Wearing my watch back on my right hand to remind myself to pause and to be positive and happy. Planning the day in outlook and allocating time is a good way to start on this.

12th January 2012 – I hate to say it but I don't think I have enough original (or maybe just different), vision to be a CEO or to make mind blowing changes to an organisation or industry.

Mind you not many people in those positions really seem to either by the sounds of it. Peter Bailey has his ecological age 2050 which is good, although lacking a bit of traction – it is difficult to be the company or even a large portion of it on something like that. It is also not the way Arup works – Arup is far more socialistic.

When Jobs was ousted from Apple the people left behind ground it into the ground with lack of vision and passion.

What do I want around that in any case I wonder? Be CEO of my own life is what the self help books would tell me no doubt.

More thinking required, more strategy, goals, sources of passion identified...

'If you're not busy being born, your busy Dying...'

Bob Dylan

16th January 2012 –

"I think we consider too much the good luck of the early bird
and not enough the bad luck of the early worm."

Unknown source

Realised this morning I haven't been putting in the variations on SSH. Shit – really poor form – frustrated with myself, and struggling to understand what is going on...

Things seemed easier in Singapore somehow. I was less distracted by other stuff – office leader stuff, I also had more people around me supporting me!

Head down and get them done today Brendon!

Great weekend – cleaned up the kids club and made room for Ange to study which fulfilled a bit of the need to make the house work in me. Spoke to the neighbours re the landscaping and sent off request for trees removal permit. Visited Old Melbourne Gaol which was very good. Had forgotten what a great story Ned Kelly was. Will have to dig out my old book and have more of a read.



"Such is Life"...

18th January 2012 – Just finished mid life transition in 'Seasons of a Mans Life' which is exactly where I am at! Move into Middle adulthood come 45 +/- 2 years.

I am surprised it is so accurate. I always imagined myself on a separate track to everyone else – observing and making decisions differently, independently to everyone else. Apparently not. Same shit different lives it would seem.

So what is my middle adulthood structure going to be. The last week walking home I have been thinking about an old dream, or ideal. The why are we here. Lying in bed at night in Appletree Drive trying to get my head around how the universe is physically, how can space just go on and on and on.

The thoughts around religion and everything else. Like Jobs I think a bit of mind expansion experimentation through drugs and other things is not a bad thing. We have to be pushing the boundaries of our inner space as well.

So maybe there is a quiet resurrection of the old dream. Merely giving up in acquiescence to a moderate form of myself now doesn't seem to hold much attraction?

The logistics of money might mean I have to be there in one way shape or form but I need another path, something I can believe in and be interested in. Fair to say I was always interested in Structural engineering however never held it as a holy grail – how can anyone do that with a chosen occupation that is a lot about making ends meet? – I probably believes in architecture to some degree as it is enduring in form and society.

The structure of the universe and human mind and our place here however – that is something worthwhile. Even if it is just to understand a little – progress a line of thought that will never end with me or perhaps others but will go on, improving our condition here. The path to Star Trek?

So maybe this is a part time course in astronomy, or psychology, or physics?



I am not 100% certain why an understanding of space time and universe is important – I just feel it is. Perhaps a primeval need for physical orientation?

19th January 2012 – Ange just sms'd to say Lady is on the computer and has some spare tokens. She is buying everything in sight. Ange and Ewan told her to stop buying snowflakes and she replied so what I am rich... Hmm.

Bronson is going well although needs training – follows other dogs off into the distance with us chasing him. He found a dead pigeon this morning and was throwing it up and down and rolling in it, and when I went to grab him shied away – more ducked actually – knows exactly what he is doing and just doesn't care – as you should expect from a puppy I guess.



He spent the night inside again last night (in the hallway with all of the doors closed), after late night barking at possums running over the roof! Feel like we have another baby in the house – tired around the edges...

Ange is not in love with him she tells me...

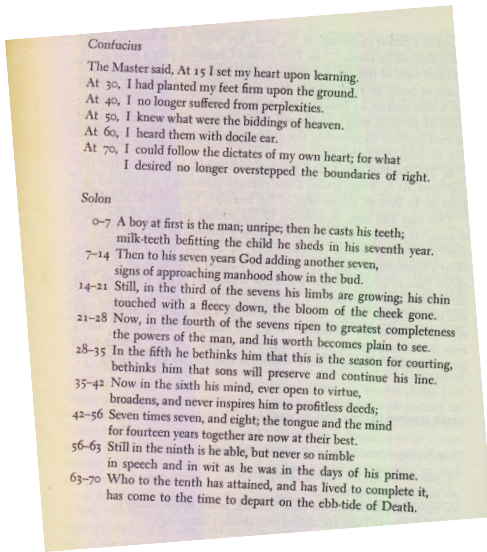
20th January 2012 – Reading the conclusions of Seasons of a /mans life at the moment – he (Levinson), draws comparisons with other historical philosophers who have put their thoughts on similar things down.

My mind lit up when I read this. Love the fact that people have been thinking about this and put down their thoughts. Through history, people have contemplated and come up with similar type thoughts.

THREE VERSIONS OF "THE AGES OF MAN"

"The Sayings of the Fathers" (from the Talmud)

- 5 years is the age for reading (Scripture);
- 10 for Misnah (the laws);
- 13 for the Commandments (Bar Mitzvah, moral responsibility);
- 15 for Gemara (Talmudic discussions; abstract reasoning);
- 18 for Hupa (wedding canopy);
- 20 for seeking a livelihood (pursuing an occupation);
- 30 for attaining full strength ("Koah");
- 40 for understanding;
- 50 for giving counsel;
- 60 for becoming an elder (wisdom, old age);
- 70 for white hair;
- 80 for Gevurah (new, special strength of age);
- 90 for being bent under the weight of the years;
- 100 for being as if already dead and passed away from the world.



I am not sure what I like best about this, the historical significance, the fact that it is all there pulled together in comparison/support of his thoughts, the interest in the phases, or the human condition. Quite a bit is the anthology angle I think, made more romantic through man considering his condition through the ages. Fantastic.

He then goes on to talk about linking it to evolution and theories on this. Biologist G.P.Bidder in particular whom I had not heard of before, and his theory on the process of bodily decline (senescence - present in all land vertebrates - and other forms of life for that matter.

Bidders opinion is that senescence arises from the need to reach a standard body size which is optimal for survival:

“Adequate efficiency could be obtained only by the evolution of some mechanism to stop natural growth so soon as a specific size is reached. This mechanism may be called the regulator...”

I have suggested that senescence is the result of the continued action of the regulator after growth is stopped. The regulator does efficiently all that concerns the welfare of the species. Man is within 2 cm of the same height between 18 and 60; he gently rises 2cm between 20 and 27, and still more gently loses 1 cm by 40 or thereabouts.

If primitive man at 18 begat a son, the species had no more need of him by 37, when his son could hunt for food for the grandchildren. Therefore the dwindling of cartilage, muscle and nerve cell, which we call senescence did not affect the survival of the species; the checking of growth had secured that by ensuring a perfect physique between 20 and 40.

Effects of continued negative growth after 37 were of indifference to the race; probably no man ever reached 60 years old until language attained such importance in the equipment of the species that long experience became valuable in a man who could neither fight nor hunt.

This negative growth is not the manifestation of a weakness inherent in protoplasm or characteristic of nucleated cells; it is the unimportant by product of a regulating mechanism necessary to the survival of swiftly moving land animals, a mechanism evolved by selection and survival as have been evolved in the mammalian limbs, and with similar perfection”

G.P. Bidder
Biologist (1932)

Beautiful little piece of work/thinking.. Strangely something does not sit right with me on it? Why does life ebb and pass? What is to stop a person from being at their peak forever more if they wanted.

If there was a regulator, why not a deregulator popping up somewhere to allow us to live forever?

Why reproduce at all in a hurry if you can last it out. Perhaps the boredom factor. Man has no real reason for living too long

I feel it is more likely to have something to do with work/life balance etc and being able to deal with all of that.

Tired now, going to bed...

28th January 2012 – Saw the new Muppet movie with the kids last weekend. Who doesn't love the Muppets. Immediately attracted to Amy Adams – you can sense the energy behind her. Perhaps because she is a dancer by trade and there is a strange mismatch between that and her soft looks. An undercurrent of strength and purpose in there that is attractive.

Feeling like I need some love in my life at the moment also – a bit of that beauty of the moment, of being with someone. Ange is very distracted by study at the moment. It is a bit of a mid-life thing as well I am sure!



Sick of work and the hardness all the time. There is nothing I would like more than to drop out of that somehow and become that introspective traveller, the observer without the pressures to act and to drive and to push.

It is all of the other things that work gives/provides however – money to do things etc. ...and in no small part everyone else driving and pushing for me to take these roles (people at work and at home). I enjoy a lot of it but it means a lot less to me than to others in general.

Reading “Autobiography of a Yogi” at the moment, on recommendation by Steve Jobs who read and re-read it at times. Really enjoying it also – taking it all with a healthy scepticism although would not discount a lot of it either. Find it very interesting to read written from his perspective, real... or fabricated.

And a lot of good stuff in there for a naturally introspective heart, and even more so one going through the self analysis of mid life at the moment. It is a bit of a tumultuous time... and I do need to keep my cool somewhat. It would be very easy to give up Arup and work and money – that would have some serious consequences and leave a lot of things left undone, unfinished.

Another five or so years should see us stabilise financially – not that we are not now, but will make things a lot more comfortable. Property prices will have risen, Ange will be working and we will have bought a holiday house if we are to get one, kids in secondary school.

Am down at Loch Sport as we speak. Ange stayed in Melbourne studying. Kids all aufer excited to be down here and having a fantastic time. They get on really well with the cousins. Stella and Jacob, and surprisingly now Harry

and Ewan. Ewan used to feel threatened by Harry. Another cousin his age with which he had to compete. This time around they have connected a bit more. They spent a large portion of yesterday wandering around the grounds of the house just chatting and talking on who knows what seven year old things.

Lovely to see – will be very good for Ewan who needs some solidity in terms of external friendships. Things have changed a bit from when we were kids. We had friends our own age up and down Appletree drive. Where we live now there is a much wider spread of peoples ages. A few young kids but also old people, people without kids etc etc. Cam and Beck are the same.

Appletree was a new area with lots of young families moving into it. Maybe that stuff exists around the new estates – Carolyn Springs etc, and maybe there were people like us back then as well – in more established suburbs that didn't have that network of kids – old people have existed for quite some time after all.

Or maybe Melbourne was a lot younger then and the split was larger, I don't know. Letting kids roam free isn't what it used to be it seems anyway. We used to spend huge amounts of time unsupervised over the back. I am not sure anywhere is like that these days because of the higher profile of crime around kids.

Anyhow, life is ok at the moment – the move back to Melbourne was the right thing to do, feel like we are getting on with our lives and creating things – experiences etc that are real and will contribute to both us and the kids as a base for later on somehow. Singapore was fantastic but suspended animation in a lot of respects.

A big bank of fog has just blown in while I have been sitting here (at the bench over looking Lake Victoria – tea tree all around me - beautiful). Went looking for houses yesterday – really like the idea of a large 320k place overlooking right on the beach (Victoria Pde) – small road between i and trbe beach actually but easy access.

Have been talking about going halves or thirds with Beck and Cam. Really hope it pans out. Chance to own something right on the beach per se... Feels better than spending same on a place that is a few blocks back but slightly closer to Melbourne. I would prefer to drive the extra couple of hours for that.

Sitting watching the changing temperature patterns from the comfort of the second storey, summer nights with the balcony, or cold winter days with the heater on and no one about. Kids dragging inflatable rafts or kayaks or sail boats across the yard and to the water.

Would be great.

"I have long exercised an honest introspection, the exquisitely painful approach to wisdom. Self-scrutiny, relentless observance of ones thoughts, is a stark and shattering experience. It pulverises the stoutest ego. But true self analysis mathematically operates to produce true seers. The way of 'self expression,' individual acknowledgments, results in egotists sure of the right to their private interpretations of God and the universe"

The Perfume Saint,
Paramhansa Yogananda (The
Autobiography of a Yogi)

That's me somewhat – sure of my own private interpretation of God and the universe. I am not sure that this is all wrong I say – wary of my bias in living in the West and possibly needing to justify my run of the mill family life, God must be a lot about what is inside of you (I notice I am using the term God in a way that I would never had years ago – God is a higher order, be it nature, or something external, or an internal kernel core of self, abn energy of some sort or kind that is real and ale to be interacted with at some level, sub-conscious or otherwise (I know reading this back some time in the future I will grimace!).

Any how God must be a lot about what is inside of ourselves. I don't think there is a being or a force anywhere guiding us however I would be more than prepared to accept there is an inner something that is there. Something that interacts with inner something's in others, in nature and the universe, something that draws upon pools of energy and ways of being that are as old on an evolutionary scale. Our psyches must have grown up and formed with strong preconceptions and influences.

"Known to the simplest savage – that peace of God..." (Keats?)

Had a short interlude there where Freya who woke up to find me gone, came out and asked me to make her breakfast. Heading back to the house she nonchalantly asked if I could stop Mo (Cams older dog), from chewing on the rabbit. I get half way back And there is Mo chewing the hind legs off of a rabbit!

The thing was still twitching in its cheeks, its hind paws hung limp with the bones of its legs protruding from the skin. Whilst trying to give Frey her breakfast and keep her from too much close interaction with the poor rabbit, I ended up bashing its head in with a brick to make sure it was dead and then unceremoniously dumped it in the bin in plastic bag. A fact that was not lost on Freya who managed to come out at the wrong time. To witness the bagging not the bricking I hope!

The rubbish gets buried under the ground so it is a way for a nice little burial...

What is the significance of that in a world in which there are potentially no accidents I wonder? Something along the lines of keep it real sunshine, rich tapestries and all that crap...

7th February 2012 – aam – There is a lot going on... I am pulled every which way at work, tyrannical thoughts and concerns all around – in so many ways I am not cut out for it – I am not hard or sharp enough really.

And at home have the slowly progressing renovations still happening, working through landscaping, painting quotes, the saga of the cupboard doors! Ange is under a lot of pressure at uni with her studies, the kids are never ending – beautiful but I struggle to get the time and more importantly peace of mind to connect with them as much as I would like/they need.

...and in-between all of that is me and the continuing mid life transition thinking going on. I spent Saturday night listening to the Doors while reading Baba Ram Dass ("Be Here Now"). Fantastic and got into it but realised a lot of ego around the whole thing – wanting to be or to accomplish this relaxed at ease and in control detachment to the world. Wanting to be the cool and hip part of all of that. As soon as there are labels, you know it is not right...

...and in-between the in-betweens is Bronson, whom I must say I am enjoying. Being out walking him in the park, the trees and paths and skies and wind and weathers. Starting to bond with him, apart from the moments where he doesn't want to come back – playtime is high on the agenda during a walk.



9th February 2012 – aam - Kids seem really happy at the moment – Stella is back sleeping in the same bed as Freya for the moment (Ewan on the bottom bunk). Dropped in on them a couple of times over the past few nights – the picture of serene. Expressionless calm faces out to the world. Sleeping is when they are at their most loveliest, most innocent and measured.



am – Read in the Economist on the bus this morning that scientists (led by Svante Paabo of the Max Plank institute for evolutionary anthropology in Leipzig), have been analysing the human genome and the active parts of our DNA governing bits of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (abstract thinking), and the lateral cerebellar cortex (manual thinking).

They found that the human brain activity in forming and changing? links through things called synapses lasted longer in humans. In essence the human brain was plastic up to 5 years after birth and others (chimps and monkeys), only about one year.

More evidence for show me the boy of seven and I will show you the man, and the Japanese concept of water babies (people are not people until the age of seven).

I wonder what plasticity went on in our kids up to the age of 5. Stell had the move to Singapore, single child focus and all of that. Ewan had Eva helping look after him for a while and growing up in Singapore, Freya also but with more influence from Ange, Ewic and Stell.

In any case at the end of 5 years – Stella perhaps balanced, Ewic frustrated and quick to anger and unreasonableness, Freya just joyful all the time...

Dont feel any regrets for any of them, who knows what goes into making people and psyches, and even more so how they then relate to the real world to succeed or struggle, or fail...

10 February 2012 – Walked Bronson last night with Stella, what would you do if someone gave you a million dollars Dad?

I'm not sure actually. Stella's list revolved around numerous Little Pet Shop sets and dog things for Bronny – all your std.s – gold plated food bowls and leads etc.

My list was less well formed in terms of detail – pay off the house (which is effectively already paid off! – perhaps another investment one, or holiday place). And probably stop work for a bit although I would need some time to figure out how long a million would last me!

Likely ramp up investments and do a few more things that are less money focused through work and other things. Travel and do a liv=brary with Room to Read and things like that – with the kids...

A million dollars is not as much as it used to be!

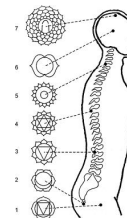
11th February 2012 – Had a mini meltdown again today over the state of the house – whenever I go to do something, find swimming goggles, or taekwondo clothes etc, I spend most of my time cleaning up all the crap that has been left around. Things stuffed into spaces they shouldn't be in, all over the place, missing, covered in food or who knows what...

I think I get worn down and tired. I don't sleep well because of work and it gradually bit by bit, lost hour by lost hour of sleep catches up with me. That's what I think happened today – I need 18 hours confined to a quiet bed dozing and sleeping to get back on track, withdrawn from the world...

It's funny, I feel so connected to the world and yet I can't make it work as well as I want to. Feel like I know reality and perspective where many don't, and yet I feel at odds with everyone. And everyone else seems to be doing it so easy – so confident and successful and unfazed by things.

I can only think it must be me not being as connected as I think and feel I am.

Some meditation is what I need. Calming influence time with the absolute.



15 February 2012 – Landscaping in full swing, trying to organise building permits, blocks, conc. Reo etc for the retaining walls Mick will do for us. Doors on cupboards due tomorrow, kids all back at school now, dog sitting Caddie with Brinson who is now down for puppy school, and Ange trying to do her last assignment at school – all happening!

21st February 2012 – My God – just read of another little boy thrown off a bridge before his father then threw himself over. Upsets me reading these things, I don't know how to reconcile within me.

I used to burn incense in Sg – in the absence of this I will just sit for a quiet minute and put my thoughts out to their souls. I can't believe something like this is anything but a sad tragedy, the father suffering terribly also.

Moments like this I hope that life does just end. Carrying something like through to another consciousness would be terrible.

It cant be innate of right minded - has to be a result of an incredibly sad and unfortunate sickness surely... :(

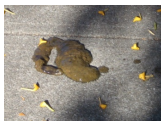
28th February 2012 – Happy Birthday Frey :). She is absolutely gorgeous as usual – in mind and body, what a lovely little spirit.

Saw a photo of a refugee girl in Somalia in the paper today. That empty feeling in the pit of my stomach again. How I feel for these kids. What future awaits them in the world? I can't help but compare even though it is not a real perspective.

1st March 2012 – Just had a Green Chemicals mtg cancelled which means I get a surprise free hour and a half. I am spending it writing in my diary and doing not important things – last few weeks has been hectic, and have been putting in effort, getting stuff out and with hopefully a level of success...! Need a bit of rest and composure.

So this morning was dog poo morning. Big white mix of solid followed by whipped cream and juice from Bronson on the back balcony as a wake up gesture. Caddy in the first leg of the park connector meaning I had to carry it for all the way to the bin in the park – whilst balancing leads and dog treats... and finally one that had been out over night in the rain on the front balcony – white again and such a smooth through consistency I was at first convinced one of the kids had been playing with clay from the garden – even a whiff wasn't convincing at first but was after 30 secs or so as the odours made their way out.

Dry reaching all over... And yes these are the valuable things I thought it worthwhile spending time out from work reporting on!



7th March 2012 – Bit of a mix up in Singapore with my Net-trust card which meant I had to appear in person to renew! Over night flight one in the morning from Melbourne, arrive at 6:00am in Sg, the day here, and out again at 9:15pm to arrive tomorrow at 8:00am.

Don't mind it I must admit – all a bit of a novelty and challenge to see how I will cope. Started off very ethereal and well – actually dozed most of the flight on the way over and felt ok when I landed – spent the morning around Arab Street having slow breakfast and sketching for a while.

Started to go downhill a bit at work – left the high ground to follow a few instincts, getting attached to things I shouldn't have. All too easy to get back into the whole Singapore thing – none of the fundamentals have changed really since I've been gone. I won't make the same mistake again – perhaps this was a test I have failed, but learned from I think.

Right action, Right thought, Right life. Perhaps I should start fasting to see what happens – Ghandi and a whole world of Muslims can't all be wrong!

Will be good to get home and see everyone, the kids and Ange, Bronny and the back yard!

8th March 2012 – The legacy of Singapore is a full blown cold, nose literally a dripping tap, headaches tired etc. My body physically reacting to the weakness of the spirit.

For a start, I am going to do the exercise from philosophy, twice a day. Get connected and try to give myself some strength, some avenue for a better place, become a bit transcendental perhaps. Above the arguments and deadlines and fee pressure, the politics and needs for attention.

13th March 2012 – Fantastic weekend down at the Prom – Labour Day weekend. Arriving down there Friday felt like coming home. Avenue 34 just behind the beach. Movies at night, the kids on their bikes, body boards (surfing), walking, the shops for toys and the paper, milk etc, everyone in the same compartment to sleep side by side, a few chances to spend time with the kids and be supportive, stolen smiles etc. – really nice.

Ange surprised me today. Driving back from Mum and Dads and Bronson was tearing up the floor of the back of the car. She asked me not to hit him when I got out. Nothing could have honestly been further from my mind! Is this this the sort of person I am I thought!? ...and I realised yes. I have trouble controlling tempers etc. With Ewan, with other situations in the past...

This need to control, to be able to fix a situation and have it go my way – not always good when I am tired and prone to outbursts.

I was genuinely shocked, and hopefully this is a good sign. I feel like I am turning a corner. With the back yard and with Loch Sport, some big things being lifted from my plate. Some big things to feel happier about. Happy in a 'I'm ok with this' type of way and bugged what anybody else feels type of way.

I have to reverse the perceptions – and the underlying source. I need to be the over understanding one – the one who can take it all on board with some strength. Be more that person I can be and know I am inside all through rather than letting it lapse in times of being pushed to the limit (which happens!).

Google advises the following:

- 1) Identify the cause of the stress
- 2) Choose your response
- 3) Take action
- 4) Make a Plan
- 5) Take one step at a time
- 6) Shake it off
- 7) Be realistic



That is the key – to step back, pause, observe it happening...

Philosophy would tell me the same thing. "What would a wise man or woman do in this situation"...

Practicing the exercise these past few days whilst sick, I have noticed it opens up the window to observe the sickness rather than be totally locked in it. I wouldn't say necessarily that I got better quicker but it was a little window out, a brief departure from it.

I must continue.

The animals were great at the Prom.

A mother wombat with her baby that we saw twice on consecutive nights. A blacky brown Kangaroo, a little bush mouse (or swamp rat or something!) – not quite the hard pointy rat-like appearance of your average city rat and so I am counting it as a local marsupial even though it may not have been – said mouse was unfortunately pecked to death by a magpie a the day after we saw it foraging one night around our camp table :(... Kookaburra, a hundred little centipedes the kids were naming and playing with, and finally a baby scorpion found by Stella and pointed a out to a disbelieving (until I dislodged it from a corner of the tent) Dad,

I do feel an inner calm and contentment I have not felt quite like this before. An inner music in my head telling me things will be ok, to float on and accept the things that are going on. Long may it continue please.

14 March 2012 – Came home this afternoon – feeling crap, head blocked and getting the shits with work. Bad energy all around and not happy with how things are going. Hard not to be thinking of Loch Sport – we were successful in getting 14 Victoria Pde for \$297,500 (advertised initially at \$320k).



Not a bad price I reckon – right on the beach if not as great as the place we normally stay at down there. Lots of back and forth on thinking whether it is the right thing to be doing. Ended up deciding that there is limited downside. Split evenly with Beck and Mick means we are only up for 160k approx.. after costs etc. I reckon can be improved a fair bit with minimal renovation – new glass doors down the front at ground level to convert one of the existing

garages into livable area. Also hard to go past the view from the deck – fantastic!

Will be good for the kids I hope – both Beck and Mick's and ours – to be around each other, have a point of consistency and a chance to get involved in water sports if they are up for it.



Hopefully the scene of some happy times to come... Relaxed times?

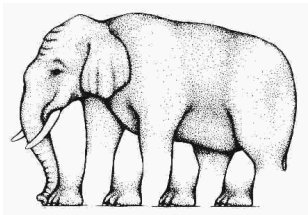
15th March 2012 – The spend keeps on keeping on! Capital expenditure left:

- Anger's ring 7k
- Carpentry to eaves 3k
- Painting external 8k
- Slate to back balcony 4k
- Rest of landscaping 10k
- Shackleton trip 15k

Total 37k! Will see us eating into 19 Millicent (i.e. debt against it). Total debt should be 900k on 38A, 180k on Loch Sport and shares, and maybe 50k on Millicent prior to turning around when Ange starts work and we lose uni and Freya child care fees next year.

Still manageable but am not enjoying work at all. Going through all the throes of what I should be doing still etc. I get the feeling that what I should be doing is settling down and earning money to stabilise finances. If all goes wrong, the answer is to sell 38 Abbotsford – that would leave us with say 75 +20 shortfall on 38A, and the other loans to total debt $95+180+50 = 325k$ debt – 300 if we get rid of shares – 21k interest per year or 2k per month.

All better than this give tax return we should be getting this year and property prices hopefully will increase as will wages – lets see what happens.



The above image came up under quandary. I like it as the elephant is the vague goal sitting there underlying everything (thinking Quarry in lieu of quandary!)...

21st March 2012 – Good presentation yesterday on Knowledge Hub for RMIT. Our fee is significantly higher – will see what happens. Made a couple of errors in the presentation and handouts that has been causing me to lose sleep overnight – not so easy to be detached as logical as it all is!

“People are often unreasonable, illogical and self centered; Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motive; be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies, Succeed anyway. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building, someone may destroy overnight; Build anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway. The good you do today people may forget tomorrow; Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have, and it may not be

enough; Give the world the best you’ve got anyway. You see, in the final analysis, it is all between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta
In The Final Analysis

I like this a lot although after all these years am still uncomfortable with the use of God. I choose to interpret it as my higher authority, my consciousness, my duty, the good of human kind of which I am a part, or even the Way of the Tao.

It should also not be about just accepting whatever may come. I am somehow convinced – mainly through practice of good and the resulting good I have seen come of it (karma if you like but even shorter time frames than this) – that doing the right thing, is actually the right thing to do.

22nd March 2012 – Good nights sleep last night – reckon was in bed by 9:00pm, slept the whole way through apart from getting up for an hours email around 2:00pm – forgot to put phone by bed so slept through to 6:50... nine hours sleep.

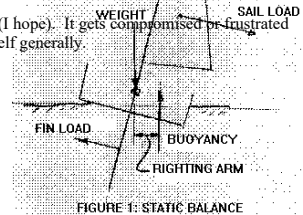
Feeling normal I must admit – bit of a cold still, not great but normal which is good. Dinner with Moshe was cancelled tonight so hopefully might be able to do the same.

I had a dream where I was flicking through my diary and some really nice images that I had drawn. I was think how much better these seemed than the grey ink ones I am doing now. Waking up this morning I realised that these were not mine but imagined (or seen somewhere else)... and thinking about it again – actually they could be mine! They could be the sketches I did in the writing paper pad during the year of living dangerously.

What does this say about my life and mental state... I am not sure what I have and haven’t done – how does day to day affect me in that case, what gets retained and what just disappears.

What this emphasises is the importance of character – which governs the long terms and not so much the short (which is subject to the whim of circumstances)...

I think my character is pretty ok (I hope). It gets compromised or frustrated from time to time but it rights itself generally.



6th April 2012 – Good Friday – down at Lochy in the new house. Came down last night, tired, dark roads full of tail lights and head lights, country towns passing in the night. McDonalds and kids. Stella commented on eating MAca's in car as even better than watching TV whilst eating at the table – standards being set in young minds :)

Beautiful mornings at the moment – here and at home. Have been walking Bronny to a mist filled Koonung Creek park watching him disappear into ot chasing his ball. Cool and quiet and atmospheric. Real and a nice way to start the day/morning.

Lake Victoria was the same this morning – totally covered in mist in all directions – quiet and blanked out from the world for a time. Cool air coming through the doors where they were open, the atmosphere out on the deck quiet and asleep within the world around it.

Down on the beach a little later in the morning and the sun started to make its way through – really beautiful – Parting corridors in the mist, yellowy reflections in the water strange shades of grey all around making, very other worldly.

Last weekend had some pretty serious goings on. Took half a day off on the Friday and went sailing in the Pif (Property industry foundation), charity sailing day.

Great day out, and picked up by Ange at the marina afterwards to go straight down to Loch sport. A weekend of house renovations – cleaning stripping, painting. Got a stack done as Beck & Mick, Cam & Heather were there also and we were all kid free!

Got back Sunday night to a note in the door from my cab driver on the Friday. I had left my phone in the pharmacist (dropping in for sea sickness tablets on the way to the Marina), and had asked him to go back to look for to look for it and drop it in our meter ox if he found it (he seemed a really nice guys – middle age Italian descent Aussie with a couple of kids).

Anyway turned out he hadn't found it – no record at the chemist. Got into work Monday morning and cancelled the phone with Telstra etc. ..and then Rachael received a call Monday afternoon at around 5:00pm from CTM, Arups travel agent wanting to confirm job numbers for the flights I had booked over the weekend!

AS22,000 of flights had been booked and taken – completed by the time I had returned on the Sunday night! Two adults and a child from London to San Francisco business class via Toronto. And another single return trip to Delhi from Manchester!

What was even worse was the date on the return trip from Delhi was the 12th April. I had mistakenly put on out of office for the 13th April. Racing thoughts through my mind of international and local thieves thinking I (we)

were away from the house until the 13th April! Also wondering what the hell else might be in that phone that they could get access to! I had been sending our password file back and forth that basically unlocks everything in our lives – from bank accounts through to itune memberships.

On the strength of that unlikely, but absolutely catastrophic if it ever came off, prospect, I spent from 5 in the afternoon on Monday through to two or three in the night changing passwords on all of our accounts! Around 260 lines of important and not so important details –and finished about 80% of them – the most important.

The next day – Tuesday, I went out and bought an alarm for the house, and spent that night installing the visible bits. The non visible bits require wiring which means removal of roof panels – not to mention the main control panel missing a circuit board which meant I had to go back the next day and swap!

Wednesday night was more of the same but with a lot of cleaning –school holidays and the kids had toys strewn from one corner of the house to another. Quite happy with how I have held it all together in that respect – endless mess drives me crazy. I generally put up with it until I cant stand it anymore and then go through a release which involves yelling at something or someone!

Then Thursday home from work early and down here (Lochy), for Easter. Arrived late and didn't get to bed until around one or two. Up early this morning and then back to bed at nine for a three hour nap, fantastic.

So what will the next week up to the 13th bring I wonder – just have to work through I guess bit by bit.

9th April 2012 – ppm – Fantastic Easter down at Loch Sport in the new house. Kids loved it – being with cousins – right on the water, swimming, out in the boat, really good. Few renos but only a day or so. Will need another weekend before we can rent out properly.

Still a lot going on. Feared that the house might have been knocked off over Easter but wasn't to be thankfully. Unpacking at home and Bronny got out onto the road again – bloody dog – difficult to keep him in and zero road sense.

Anyway this time he got hit by a car. Never heard a squeal or anything, just the crumpling of plastic. The car wasn't going too fast thankfully, and stopped briefly before taking off as I came out of the garage.

At fist thought he was fine but he ended up having a bloody scratch by his paw, and grazed all under his back leg by his crotch. I think he will be ok. He has been licking the sores but not in any pain it would seem – walking ok and all of that. Just need to keep a close eye on him.

Immediately prior to that I found the gift pen Jason Tan had given me when I left Singapore behind some of the garage shelves. I am hoping that that means my luck is changing – fingers are crossed.

Ange was telling me tonight she feels everything is a bit full on – a bit too indulgent all of this spending etc. I agree with her actually. We just need to get a few things out of the way so that we have a solid base from which to work. The back yard is a biggy and one that is an investment in the kids – hoping it will be like a new room and encourage them/us to spend time outside.

Still need to

- Fix Anges ring
- Get painting done
- Do bluestone to rear balcony

...and that will be it for a while. Time to settle down and consolidate live more simply for a bit. Having said that, the Shackleton thing looks like happening early next year – that would be 10-15k!

Getting Ange working part time if we can manage it will be a big thing as well. Provide some steadying influence and fulfilment – not to mention a bit of extra income.

The world is
SPINNING
WAY TOO FAST

11th April 2012 –

“Art consists of limitation. The most beautiful part of every picture is the frame.”

Gilbert K.
Chesterton

“Good men need no orders”, he said. “they will find out easily enough what legislation is in general necessary”.

“they will,” I agreed, “if god enables them to preserve the laws we have already described.”

“Otherwise,” he said, “they will spend their whole time making and correcting detailed regulations of the sort you’ve described, always expecting to achieve perfection.”

“You mean,” said I, “that they will lead lives like invalids who lack the restraint who lack the restraint to give up a vicious way of life?”

“Exactly”

“And a very attractive life they lead! For all their cures and medicines have no effect – except to make their ailments worse and more complicated – yet they live in hope that every new medicine they are recommended will restore them to health.”

Plato - The Republic.

Plato has in his perfect society (The Republic), a lot of similarities to Hinduism. A profession for a person and that is what they should do. Merit lies within following the profession and nothing more, nothing less. In fact a similar caste system also in warriors that govern etc.

Worth noting as different studies have come up with the same solution. Even though it all sounds implausible to me. People are far too complex and life too unpredictable to be constrained by such rigid rules? Any system of governance I think should recognise the innate worth and potential capabilities of the individual outside of any prescribed framework.

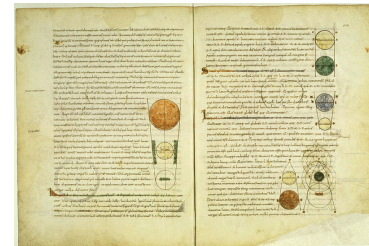
12th April 2012 – Plato and other philosophers refer to three component parts of the mind.

Plato refers to three motives or impulses:

- **The faculty that calculates and reasons**
- Desire or appetite in the sense of bare physical and instinctive craving
- A third less defined motive that covers self interest – pugnacity, indignation, enterprise, ambition etc.

In the Timeaus (one of Platos dialogues – the one following The Republic), reason is located in the head, spirit in the breast, and appetite in the belly.

Butler found three motives of moral action. Conscience, a rational faculty capable of judgement and having authority, particular passions like hunger and thirst, and self love (or the self regard mentioned above).



Reading briefly in Wikipedia, Timeaus ^{Medieval translation of Tímeaus} covers theorys on the elements and all sorts of things although it also sounds very God theary like with the eternal universe being given form out of chaos through the actions (or thoughts?), of a god 'Demurge'.

Not too trustful of anything written around religion in open forums like Wiki as too many bloody Christians around with unseeing bias...

16th April 2012 -



Came across the image above and memories of the accident immediately sprang to mind. In particular a series of dreams around the Mediterranean. There was stuff around cooking – fantastic restaurants on island ridgelines with panoramic views to sky and sea.

The image above was around looking for treasure, and a cave that was only accessible during low tide. Frustrating as intense memories and feel like I lived it but I cannot get to the finer detail.

Could have been television shows that were on with people watching me in ICU...? Could be lives past, could be anything but I feel like they have been ingrained in me. I feel almost a little cheated, someone has been in and around my mindspace playing with things, leaving footprints that I now have to deal with.

Big weekend renovating on the weekend. Painted first round of the external walls, put capping on the block work, ran wires for the alarm, started clearing the bamboo.

Other fantastic facts I stumbled across:

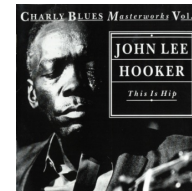
A few astronomy facts I stumbled across on the weekend

- When you look at the Andromeda galaxy (which is 2.3 million light years away), the light you are seeing took 2.3 million years to reach you. Thus you are seeing the galaxy as it was 2.3 million years ago.

- The Earth is not a sphere! It actually is an oblate spheroid, it is squashed slightly at the poles and bulges out at the equator due to its rotation.
- When Galileo viewed Saturn for the first time through a telescope, he described the planet as having "ears". It was not until 1655 that Christian Huygens suggested the crazy theory that they might be an enormous set of rings around the planet.
- If you could put Saturn in an enormous bathtub, it would float. The planet is less dense than water.
- A teaspoon-full of Neutron star would weigh about 112 million tonnes.
- Jupiter is heavier than all the other planets put together.
- Even on the clearest night, the human eye can only see about 3,000 stars. There are an estimated 100,000,000,000 in our galaxy alone!
- Its estimated that the number of stars in the universe is greater than the number of grains of sand on all the beaches in the world! On a clear night, we can see the equivalent of a handful of sand.
- If the sun were the size of a dot on an ordinary-sized letter 'I', then the nearest star would be 10 miles away.
- Half-a-billionth of the energy released by the sun reaches the Earth
- If you could travel at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second) it would take 100,000 years to cross our galaxy!
- On the equator you are about 3% lighter than at the poles, due to the [centrifugal*](#) force of the Earth spinning.
- The atmosphere on Earth is proportionately thinner than the skin on an apple.
- If a piece of the sun the size of a pinhead were to be placed on Earth, you could not safely stand within 90 miles of it!
- Jupiter acts as a huge vacuum cleaner, attracting and absorbing comets and meteors. Some estimates say that without Jupiters gravitational influence the number of massive projectiles hitting Earth would be 10,000 times greater.
- Astronomers believe that space is not a complete vacuum- there are three atoms per cubic metre.

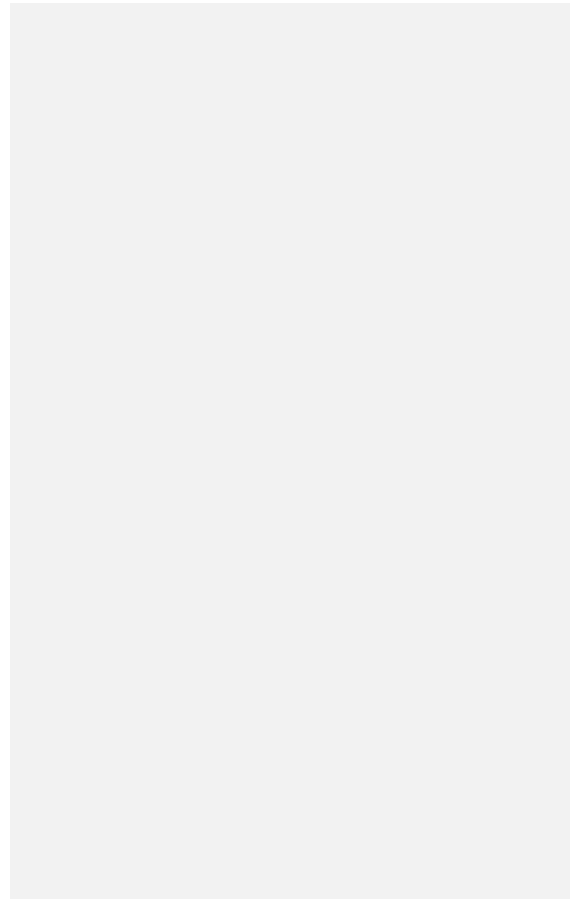
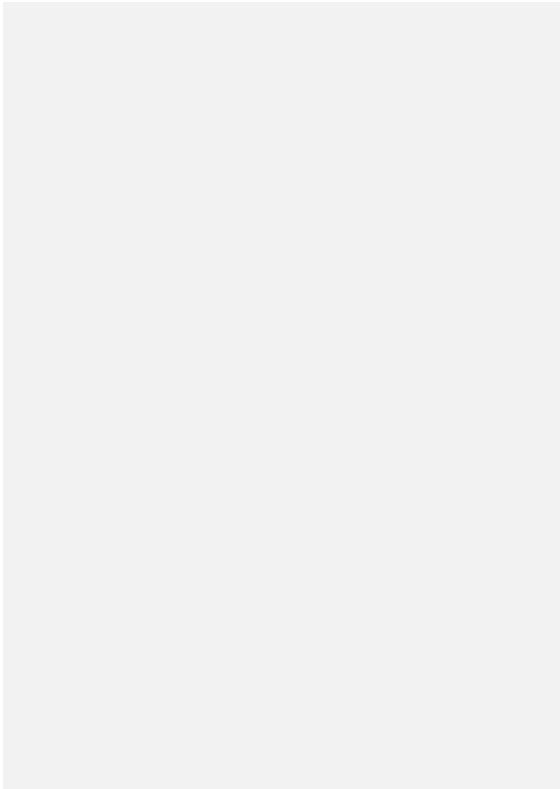
20th April 2012 – Friday night John Lee Hooker, This is Hip... Scotch in hand blinds up to a dark street, Bronny locked away with Ange studying to avoid the barking at lights and possums.

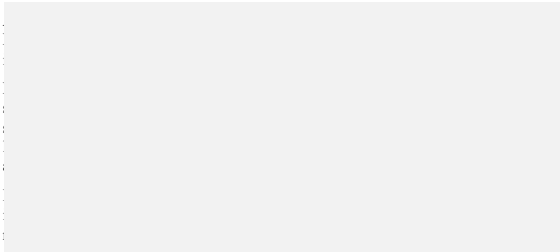
This is Hip little babe, messed around and fell in love... Settles me this sort of thing. There is this to live for out there in the world. Work becomes so uni-dimensional all encompassing, it is stifling at times, anally gripping in its hold on you, Music carves away those preconceptions, brings life into your field of vision, diversity and reality, real things from the heart exposing everything else for what it is – shallow and short term.



I must get into music more. It is levelling and real and brings focus to where it should be – even though I may not be there just yet.

How does that go again – ‘Oh please let me not be so trite in my life...’. Failing?





On the face of it the world is full of holier than thou people who fall in regard to one. Politicians, clergymen, people in positions of trust, and the fall is far more spectacular than your average normal peoples simple fantasies.

Is this in some way down to peoples denying what is natural? Is it in some way because society is forcing them into unnatural stances on what is acceptable thought and behaviour in their lives?

Should the fact that it is not a natural state stop us from aiming for it?

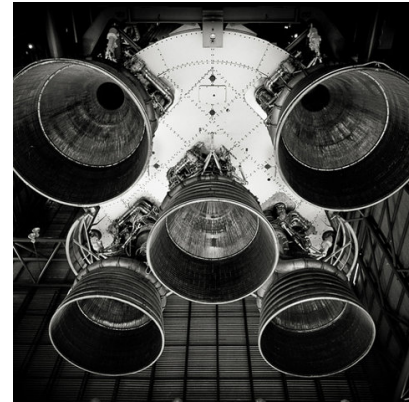


The above image reminds me of an array of scary monster heads I imagined to myself when I was young. It is amongst the earliest memories – perhaps when I was five to seven years old?

It was bedtime and I recall wondering about being scared at of sleep or the dark and things like that - and how that worked. I dreamt up this array of scary monster faces – mainly greens on a black background in my mind. Promptly scared myself, and couldn't get to sleep! I remember wandering out to mum and dad who spent a bit of time with me – old couches and cream carpet, to settle me down and get me back to bed.

This was from tumblr – a blog site I have just discovered that seems to have a creative visual leaning.

Below, another random image I like. I can sense the anticipation, the tension of the moment waiting to unfold.



Makes me want to put it on a wall somewhere...

“Creativity is almost a mortal sickness. It’s not easy to be happy and creative: With creativity comes great anxiety, great effort, great desire for love. To be creative, you have to be curious, generous, to want to try to understand. You also have to want to be loved.”

Phillipe Starck.

I am not sure that I am creative by nature – probably not actually however I have experienced it, and the above is very true I feel.

24th April 2012 – Rainy day today. Nice drizzly walk to the bus, steamed up windows on the way in and homely feeling about spaces – very nice. A chance for a change of pace and mindset for a bit. Well suited to getting things done.

Socrates reminded me this morning about Justice following right actions, right thoughts – or more particularly injustice following incorrect thoughts or actions. Hmm. No such thing as coincidence.

27th April 2012 – In Socrates days the Greek athletes always exercised naked. It was not always the case. “We... remind the critics... that it was not so long ago that the Greeks thought – as most of the barbarians still think – that it was shocking and ridiculous for men to be seen naked. When the Cretans, and later the Spartans, first began to take exercise naked... experience showed them that it was better to strip than to wrap themselves up, what reason has proved best, lost its absurdity to the eye”.

What a great thing, a strength of society that explores and changes like this. I struggle to think of a modern day equivalent.

Have come to the conclusion overnight I think that I likely wont do the Shackleton trip. Rather than disappointment or anything it is actually sitting pretty comfortably with me.

I would prefer to spend 7 weeks of my long service leave and \$16k of our money on an equivalent experience with the kids and Ange. When put in that context, the disappointment of not doing it fades into insignificance.

I think it may also be a bit of a watershed moment – then end of a phase of life in finding myself. Perhaps the end of the last phase (season), and the beginning of the beginning of the next...

30th April 2012 – Happy Birthday young Bean. Eleven years old – starting to come of age and the presents we bought her start to reflect this. A fishing rod, a survival kit completer with pocket knife and fire starter flint, a microphone for use at the computer or stereo, and a diamond encrusted skull necklace.

All reflect Stella in some way shape or form. Bit of a tomboy, reasonably independent, still a girl growing up.

I have left them all for the week to attend an Arup leadership course in the UK – Henley just outside of London. I don't like going away. All the thoughts around potentially not coming back or vice versa – all a bit silly as life is far more complex than that.

By that I mean full of twists and turns and disasters and successes, it is just that the physical separation articulates it a bit more and makes you think about it.

Ange shared with me one of her little idiosyncrasies. When I had my accident she didn't want to wash the sheets as she could still smell me on them (not sure if this is a good thing to start with!). These days whenever I go away on a trip she makes a point of washing the sheets the night before I leave. Presumably so she doesn't have to go through that again in the case that something does happen.

The accident is still there it seems in subtle ways. I know I feel it from time to time. A lot of it is recalling the memories around the recovery. No different to the memories around our year off travelling except that the are a bit more out there of course.

But it is with fondness still that I remember these. It was an incredible period in my life. Starting again from scratch, of the ICU and the nurses and the dreams, of the machines and the hospital and wards, visits from family.

Of the trachy's and tubes and rehab, of slow progression. Drugs and tests and exercises and gradually making ground. Of being well enough to make my way outside to shoestrung fries and sweet chilli sauce at Richmond Hill Larder. Being out of the whole work thing, of Park Street and Ange and baby Stell.

And then of Flying out to Singapore, a matter of weeks after the last operation to get the rod out of my leg. Accomplishment and success. Of becoming stronger somehow, maybe not in real time terms but knowing all of that is there behind me (us). Knowing it is there and a part of my psyche.

It gave me a lot of perspective I think also. The mornings crying in bed and just wanting the life and identity I left behind back, were a bit of a forced detachment from work (and that ego).

A lot of that will have crept back, but I like to think that there is enough of a kernel of detachment to give me a stepping stone onto whoever it is I wish to become once work wanes.

1st May 2012 – Thought I would be clever and scan an article from the economist I tore out before flying (now on way to London). Result was the furry crappy image below – I didn't even bother with the text...



"This engraving, of a flying fish, almost changed the course of history. It is one of a set from John Ray's and Francis Willughby's book "Historia Piscium", published in 1686 by the Royal Society and recently put on line by them for the edification of scholars everywhere. The society, which today proudly describes itself as the world's oldest scientific academy (it was founded in 1660), was almost bankrupted by the expense of the high-quality illustrations in what was regarded at the time as a leading natural history text, but which unfortunately failed to sell as well as its publishers had hoped. As a result no money was left over for another publication, "Principia Mathematica" by Isaac Newton. That the most important volume in the history of physics, which described the laws of motion and of gravity, saw the light of day the next year was, in the end, down to the deep pockets of Edmund Halley, of comet fame. Halley was the son of a wealthy soapmaker and he stumped up much of the cost himself.

Perhaps a bit sensationalist but I love the engraving (albeit unlike any flying fish I have ever seen...), and I love the fact that there are societies like the Royal Society around – discussing science and research etc. In similar ways there would be art societies, medical research the list would be endless.

It has a real 'advancement of the human race and human condition' feel to it. We all need to be living our lives this way to some extent. Taking the time to learn, to advance and to progress.

Arriving into Singapore yesterday was beautiful. My room - Plaza Park Royal on Beach Road – wasn't ready till eleven and I arrived around six in the darkness.

I went for a stroll around the streets and over the beach road overpass. Dead silence in the middle of the city. Darkness and yellow light filling the space under the canopy of rain trees, pervasive like a mist. Some exotic sounding bird was calling at regular intervals accentuating the quiet, and with the warm humidity, the place felt very homely and inviting – loving it.

Quite a few times during the day memories came back and a bit of a feeling of homesickness.

Enjoying that rare pleasure, a daytime long distance flight to collect thoughts, get a bit of work done etc, generally take it a bit easier than normal. I am still constantly amazed at peoples indifference to the whole flying thing. What an incredible thing to be accelerated to huge speeds and then lifted into the air the ground below gradually receding to reveal views we never get to see in normal day to day drudgery. Ever expanding, this big picture bird's eye view of the world, and up past trees and buildings and then clouds and birds and ships and coastlines and countries and unfolding horizons with God knows what adventures ahead waiting.

It's the type of thing you could tell someone about a couple of hundred years ago and they would be astounded in wonder at the very thought of it. And yet here people look to one side, read magazines or generally switch off

My head is full of thoughts all the time, observations and interactions, I can never recall them all suffice to say that I like them, I like seeing, and processing, and understanding, and observing.

I am generally pretty happy. It's a funny thing, you need the interaction with people and the world to be able to navigate and come to that point. Yet at the same time it is most compromised when I come into contact with others.

Expectations, pressures, judgements, they all cause you to second guess, to potentially doubt yourself and feel like there is something not right with where you are at or what you are doing.

You have to work hard at reinforcing yourself, developing a level of self confidence that is able to stand up for itself. It becomes a constant uneasy balance between being strong and sure enough of yourself to not let those thoughts get to you whilst at the same time maintain a sense of humility and vulnerability to enable you to be a proper human being.

Arup Leader Course

ROLE MODEL OUR VALUES

PASS ON WHAT YOU KNOW

LEAVE ARUP BETTER THAN WHEN YOU FOUND IT

Quality of work
Total Architecture
Humane Organisation
Straight and Honourable dealings
Social Usefulness
Reasonable prosperity of members

Satisfied members
Satisfied Clients
Good reputation and influence

A membership of quality
Efficient Organisation
Solvency
Unity and enthusiasm.

Quality and not necessarily growth.

We should justify the trust of our clients in giving them the first priority in the work we do for them

Pour pursuit of quality should be in itself useful.

Prosperity is an essential pre-requisite for the fulfilment of our aims.

We must be efficient individually in all of our sub-divisions

Our aims are what binds us together (akin to following the stars that represent our goals). People aims are a part of this

Recruiting, managing and keeping people involves being people.

Like behaviour breeds like behaviour

Excellence in people

You cannot equate excellence with mediocrity, you cannot pretend they are the same. There should be quality in front of the law and as far as possible equality of opportunity.

The fact that you are good at something is something you should be grateful for, it is not something to be conceited about. It doesn't make you a better human being.

What we should aim at, naturally, is to put each man onto the work he can do, and fortunately there is nearly always something he can do well.

Ove Arup

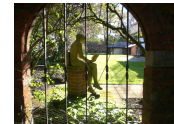
The route to London flies over Northern India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Amazing sitting up here in a lounge chair version of Google earth watching the landscape pass under you while you try to match it up with the flight info on the entertainment system. Mountain ranges, deserts and fields giving way to each other, snow capped peaks and remote valleys. You can pick the towns and the villages and signs of human activity.

I feel a little like a demi-god – the world conquerable from up here – nothing is impossible. Assisted by watching 'The Iron Lady', the story of Margaret Thatcher.



Airmchair eyes into bandits lairs, deserts, mountains, valleys, lives and life unknown. What disconnect between Western suburban disinterest and ignorance, and the real of the browns and whites, and roads and tracks and isolating distances below.

28th April / 2nd May 2012 – Henley business school. What a stunningly beautiful place – particularly this time of year. It has been wet so the fields have puddles creeping around their edges, the Thames here which is long and straight bounded buy the business school grounds on one side and by farmland on the other is fast flowing and full.



The sheer Englishness of everything really strikes you. Lawns trimmed to stone pathways, bulbs in patches around the place, the odd garden work heap in a corner with a barrow and garden fork. It is straight out of The Secret Garden. A slower pace of life and time-space somehow, that allows for all of this to be.

There were rabbits nibbling on the grass outside of the Thames house where our rooms are the first night I arrived, a pheasant stalking around the grounds between some dormitory buildings the next morning when I went for a walk. Geese and cows in fields adjacent the main driveway, carpets of bluebells just down the road, the odd hawk or kestrel wrapped up as part of it all hunting for whatever it is they hunt for.

The river is beautiful also, the upper reaches I guess of the Thames, a boat house in the school and a the buildings of a small village a few hundred meters down stream, Henley further upstream out of sight on the other side.

I signed up for the rowing but unfortunately due to the fast flowing nature of the river and the precariousness of steering an eight person skiff with a rudder the size of half a playing card meant we were not allowed out on the water.

Instead however we did some indoor rowing which was fantastic – a bit of competition and learning of technique etc. I did ok considering my bum was falling off the seat for most of the way – 48.3secs for 250m. Others slightly younger did 44sec times.

The club is the top rowing club in Britain or the world as they would have it – the Henley regatta being the pinnacle of the sport in many ways. It was great talking with the coaches and the under 23 GB squad who were helping take us.



About rowing and the lifestyle, the club and how they stay on top – the ethics and honour and tradition around the sport and the regatta in particular.

All surrounded by the coolness of early English spring. The continuity of history here is almost palpable. Perhaps it is the childhood education of a UK based system 17,000 km away stirring back up. Wherever it comes from, it is to be experienced and taken on board in some way shape or form..

5th May 2012 – aam - A night in London before I return. I had forgotten about London. Or maybe the time in Singapore had faded the memories – in an active sort of way, blurring for me what a big city with a local population is.

I am feeling a bit awash I must admit. Disenfranchised with my life, noting the my emphasis. London is a big busy city. We spent the last few days in Henley, removed from life it seems – it is almost the epitome of Englishness. Countryside, the Thames, rowing at Henley, the business school, all very middle to upper class.

London is the masses. It is the English equivalent of Bombay or Bangkok. People everywhere, the working classes and the middle classes making lives, carrying on, busy bustling. The upper class are behind closed doors somewhere, I am not sure where and don't know if I care so much – I have never believed that real life is lived by the privileged.

It is that mass of the people on the streets that is slightly confronting to me. You need to see it as a disinterested visitor. Workers, tourists, youth, the elderly, up to date people coping, people locked in time- as though from an old on the buses episode – looking like they still shared bath water at home at night. Business suits, pub goers, shop keepers wanting to do deals, the mentally ill, cross dressers, lonely people, quiet people loud people. Drinkers abstainates, it is fury of different people.

And that is what is scary. All of these people identities, these imposed things coming from circumstances and pressures and birth rights and ability or lack of it. All of these things so all worldly important to the individuals, seen in the context of whole of life. They are so transitory, so random and unimportant in the scheme of things.

This is a snapshot in time and will change, things will keep coming and going and continue to change and all of these people forming a part of it will pass. Where is the meaning, the purpose?

Is it down to the individuals experience? What one makes of oneself and what one accomplishes is pretty meaningless in the context of the bigger picture. There will always be people better and people worse, and people who will stand in to fill your gap should you not be there in the first place even. Personal accomplishment is just that personal and affects the individual but society doesn't really give a damn at the end of the day.

Is it about transcending this whole picture. I would like to think so but admit to myself that even this seems small in comparison to the whole. Flea A achieves nirvana, passes from the wheel of life to some larger being in cosmic unity. So the fuck what. What does it mean to the bigger picture – not much is what it means. The whole just keeps on going. Revolving, turning translating in the general direction of increasing time.

If the universe is a closed system then it does seem a bit random! If it is connected somehow to something else, then it is just larger (by definition).

In this case the meaning must lie with the individual – as much as there can be any meaning at all. I feel that the universe is an episode from big bang to eventual contraction. It could even be oscillating in that form, none of which gives it any meaning. I can't believe it is a figment of our own imagination or creation, and if it is, it doesn't really change anything. The perception is reality in this case.

In the absence of any other real meaning or purpose, something smaller must be settled for. The meaning to the individual. Once you accept this, things get very small indeed. If you discount the universal scale, you discount everything else on the way down until you get to kernel of the individual. Society, cities, families, everything else is just the stage on which the individual gets played out. Interactive however in meaning, largely detached.

There are all of the other kernels there in that same stage and perhaps the way you interact with them has some small affect in yourself but at the end of the day thing you draw a free body diagram around in order to assess things is very small. It is your thoughts and you psyche and your being.

And as Mother Theresa quoted in The Final Analysis, it is not about you and the outside world, it is never between you and them, at the end of the day it is all between you and God whatever that God may be. Perhaps God is our own happiness. All seems an incredibly internally focused incestuous arrangement. An anti climax almost, a sad little inward system of internal feedback mirrors etc looking ever inwards on itself. A random result of a chance of nature that resulted in consciousness.

Do I really think that last bit. Perhaps I do. Will it change what I do or how I conduct myself and my personal battle to find meaning. It won't. It won't because there the only alternative at the moment that I can see is insanity or ceasing to be.

There you go – that was a little diatribe of thoughts splashed down there as a first foil. I am not deep enough nor have the perspective or analytical power to come up with more than that myself at this stage.

That is I think why I like philosophy. There are much smarter people and groups of people than myself who have asked these (this), question and spent time thinking on it. I need to take on from where they have gotten to.



Lunchtime - Sitting in upstairs of the bunch of grapes, Brompton Rd. Knightsbridge, waiting for fish, mushy peas and an English ale :).

Saw Allison Norrish who has been through a bit since I last saw her... Breast cancer and a host of other problems. No organs left in her she doesn't need to live in her words. I am always impressed by her intellect and sharpness – and reality. She told me the doctors have been up and down on her life expectancy. She is doing a bit better now, settled down into as close a state to normality as she could hope for and has a 90% chance of living for ten years...

Beautiful drive and energy – I have no doubt she will be around longer than that. People like Alison are made of things normal human beings and doctors don't understand or appreciate I reckon.

I must stay in touch.

Out on about walking London. Oxford St, Hyde Park and the Serpentine Pavillion (which is under construction unfortunately – JV between Herzog and DeMueron, and Ai Wah Wei (cant guarantee spelling!), The Science museum, Natural History museum, and just then the Victoria and Albert museum (design).

Nice to breeze through lightly, I have seen enough museums in my time to do me this life and a few more me thinkst. Good museums although a littler predictable I must admit. In particular the Natural History museum was a bit of a disappointment.

The Natural History museum in London should be a pinnacle of history. Stiff collared white shirts, dodos, cassowary skeletons, and arrays of animals brought home from the early days of the British empire. It should have glass cases of butterflies and other insects, busts of Charles Darwin around every second corner. You should be able to feel the history and the formality, the stiff upper lipness of the early explorer scientists.

What was good was the Victoria and Albert museum. It had great art in it but more so a gathering of people into dressing up in ballroom and Japanese edge fashions. All gathered there through a facebook organised group outing. That is what London should be like – people being different, out there exploring and being individual.

The Serpentine was great also. Contemporary art and installations. Probably the most interesting was the contents of hand bags from four women from capital cities in different places. London, New York, Paris and I cant recall the fourth. Fascination and voyeurism into someone's life. The good, bad, interesting and indifferent.

"The Earth seems to have been turned inside out. Its
entrails are strewn about...

The coal which has been drawn from below ground is
blazing on the surface...

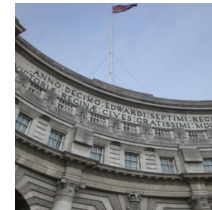
By day and by night the country is glowing with fire"

James Nasmyth, engineer, 1830.
(posted in the Science Museum
London).

pm – Heathrow T3 waiting for the plane. Spent my last dollars on a couple of dishes at a revolving sushi train restaurant – and a bottomless cup of green tea – which may have pushed me over the limit budget wise, will have to wait and see.

The walk back was great – long and feeling tired now but worthwhile. Buckingham Palace and the beeaters, the mall and the museums there along the way, National Gallery in Trafalgar square – really good, saw a few van Goph's – sunflowers but the impressive one was a farmyard scene with yellows of hay and blues of the swirling sky that leapt off of the canvas at you – beautiful. Henry Rossaue, Suprised was also really good, a suprised tiger in a tropical jungle landscape, lightning flashing in the sky above – the simplicity of the style and articulation of the teeth and expression bring a family room quality to the whole thing. It is a weird sort of alluring quality compared with the dark wet of the reality that would be. Must look up the image when back on the internet. Then up through Leicester Square, Picadilly Circus and back down Oxford St to some souvenir shopping, including Hamleys along the way.

Kids are getting London buses and a snow dome each. Tried the London fashion thing for Stella and couldnt really find anything that would have gone down well. Should have spent more time probably but she did ok out of her birthday and didnt want to start differentiating between them all – will only end in tears...



9th May 2012 – Some Googling on Agile design...



The Agile approach recognizes the need for collaboration, faster design solutions, feedback and change for producing business value in our ever faster and more networked society. Thus, for learning professionals to keep pace with the rest of the organization, Agile Design could easily be adapted to fit the needs of the learning and training community by providing an ethos for the design of learning:

Agile design is a development of lightweight design – a response to the original heavyweight design methods in software development characterised by regime, hierarchy and heavy regulation. Agile design values:

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
Working software over comprehensive documentation
Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
Responding to change over following a plan



Transactional analysis : Freedom from historical maladaptations embedded in the childhood script is required in order to become free of inappropriate, inauthentic and displaced emotions which are not a fair and honest reflection of here-and-now life (such as echoes of childhood suffering, pity-me and other mind games, compulsive behavior and repetitive dysfunctional life patterns). The aim of change under TA is to move toward autonomy (freedom from childhood script), spontaneity, intimacy, problem solving as opposed to avoidance or passivity, cure as an ideal rather than merely making progress and learning new choices.

Some core models and concepts are part of TA as follows:--

The Ego-State (or Parent-Adult-Child, PAC) model

At any given time, a person experiences and manifests their personality through a mixture of behaviours, thoughts and feelings. Typically, according to TA, there are three ego-states that people consistently use:

Parent ("exteropsyché"): a state in which people behave, feel, and think in response to an unconscious mimicking of how their parents (or other parental figures) acted, or how they interpreted their parent's actions. For example, a person may shout at someone out of frustration because they learned from an influential figure in childhood the lesson that this seemed to be a way of relating that worked.

Adult ("neopsyché"): a state of the ego which is most like a computer processing information and making predictions absent of major emotions that could affect its operation. Learning to strengthen the Adult is a goal of TA. While a person is in the Adult ego state, he/she is directed towards an objective appraisal of reality.

Child ("archaeopsyché"): a state in which people behave, feel and think similarly to how they did in childhood. For example, a person who receives a poor evaluation at work may respond by looking at the floor, and crying or pouting, as they used to when scolded as a child. Conversely, a person who receives a good evaluation may respond with a broad smile and a joyful gesture of thanks. The Child is the source of emotions, creation, recreation, spontaneity and intimacy.

Ego states can become contaminated, for example, when a person mistakes Parental rules and slogans, for here-and-now Adult reality, and when beliefs are taken as facts. Or when a person "knows" that everyone is laughing at them because "they always laughed". This would be an example of a childhood contamination, insofar as here-and-now reality is being overlaid with memories of previous historic incidents in childhood.

Transactions and Strokes

Transactions are the flow of communication, and more specifically the unspoken psychological flow of communication that runs in parallel. Transactions occur simultaneously at both explicit and psychological levels. Example: sweet caring voice with sarcastic intent. To read the real communication requires both surface and non-verbal reading.

Strokes are the recognition, attention or responsiveness that one person gives another. Strokes can be positive (nicknamed "warm fuzzies"[7]) or negative ("cold pricklies"). A key idea is that people hunger for recognition, and that lacking positive strokes, will seek whatever kind they can, even if it is recognition of a negative kind. We test out as children what strategies and behaviours seem to get us strokes, of whatever kind we can get.

People often create pressure in (or experience pressure from) others to communicate in a way that matches their style, so that a boss who talks to his staff as a controlling parent will often engender self-abasement or other childlike responses.

Life positions

In TA theory, "Life Position" refers to the general feeling about life (specifically, the unconscious feeling, as opposed to a conscious philosophical position) that colours every dyadic (i.e. person-to-person) transaction. Initially four such Life Positions were proposed:

"I'm Not OK, You're OK" (I-U+)

"I'm Not OK, You're Not OK" (I-U-)

"I'm OK, You're Not OK" (I+U-)

"I'm OK, You're OK" (I+U+)

Life (or Childhood) script

Script is a life plan, directed to a reward

Script is decisional and responsive; i.e., decided upon in childhood in response to perceptions of the world and as a means of living with and making sense of the world. It is not just thrust upon a person by external forces.

Script is reinforced by parents (or other influential figures and experiences).

Script is for the most part outside awareness.

Script is how we navigate and what we look for, the rest of reality is redefined (distorted) to match our filters.

Each culture, country and people in the world has a Mythos, that is, a legend explaining its origins, core beliefs and purpose. According to TA, so do individual people. A person begins writing his/her own life story (script) at a young age, as he/she tries to make sense of the world and his place within it. Although it is revised throughout life, the core story is selected and decided upon typically by age 7. As adults it passes out of awareness. A life script might be "to be hurt many times, and suffer and make others feel bad when I die", and could result in a person indeed setting himself up for this, by adopting behaviours in childhood that produce exactly this effect. Though Berne identified several dozen common scripts, there are a practically infinite number of them. Though often largely destructive, scripts could as easily be mostly positive or beneficial

Pretty interesting – perhaps I should read I'm Ok, you're OK...? And there is that age seven thing again.

13th May 2012- Feeling pretty down on politicians at the moment. Pinged that there is no relevant meaningful choice to be made. That and the corruption and fraud – pissy stuff like rorting of expenses etc.

I normally don't believe people can be that petty and misguided when I ask myself the question but it seems they can be. How poor is that, that people really think that stuff is going to make them happier, that they are so weak, so pathetic that they follow that life.

I feel sorry for them however I unfortunately feel sorry for all of us as well as we have to bear the pissants – both in a supporting (financially), and as the so called leaders of society sort of way. There is something wrong with our system of governance that behaviours like this happen. I understand in some ways as the honest approaches don't work, dwindle and get run over. There is however a failing of natural justice isn't there – I am not used to that and it shakes the base of what I believe in.

Am I selfish for just being content to live as I am without shaking things up – being a person of change and achievement? Perhaps – perhaps not, don't really care too much. It is what I like and what I feel is the right – for me anyway.

Maybe another time?

14 May 2012 - aam – Time to get serious with the kids homework! Realkised watching a 60mins segment on discipline yesterday that the kids need some. The lessons they learn now will stay with them for life.

So to any head start they get from being ahead at Maths or English. I really want them all to go to university and to have a good chance at a good job...

RULES H of the House

Follow the Rules

Show Respect (Use kind words)

Make good choices

Try your Best

- 1) No internet before dressed and ready for school
- 2) One set of homework or practice to be done after school before any internet or TV
Stella – English, Maths, Reading, guitar or piano practice.
Ewan – English(spelling), Maths, Reading,
Freya – Drawing or reading.
Pocket money if achieved every night = \$0.50c per night(\$2:00 per week if done Mon-Thur). No pocket money if fighting etc...
- 3) Additional efforts
Stella – Chores – putting away a basket of clothes or cleaning room.
Ewan – Exercise (trampoline etc), or cleaning room.
Freya – Exercise (trampoline etc), or cleaning room..
Additional pocket money for each night additional activity achieved = \$0.25c per night (extra \$1:00 per week maximum)
- 4) Note : Pocket money gets paid if school concert or something similar prevents from doing...

15th May 2012 - One of the things going for working in Singapore is that you know in the back of your mind that it is not going to be forever. This helps you face each day putting in more effort than you think you can, knowing that it is a temporary push, that it won't last forever.

Life back in Melbourne is a little less short term. There must be benefits around this?!

15th May 2012 – Bit of a low point at the moment with work. I am trying to get some buy in and interaction between some of the senior leaders and struggling. There are some heart felt personal issues between individuals that are obstructing, and also a lack of care/understanding about the feeling of an overall 'one' office.

I am probably not handling well (obviously given it is not working). I am also finding it hard listening to all the voices who have opinions. Peter Bowtell the most as his opinions are strong, and I have always respected him so much. He can be quite emotionally biased I feel at times and a little unstable – unstable is too far – inconsistent? Heat of the moment, off the cuffish!

I need to keep reminding myself that I can only do what I can do and I have to ignore the voices in my ear to a large extent – also need to manage those however.

Points taken away in the last 48 hours:

- Monday meetings are not value-less. It is a way of getting all together to feel like an office, to disseminate information etc. Not a forum to strategise or discuss heavy issues. Need to reassess attendance.
- Need to deal with bad behaviours at individual levels not in group situations. Group forums (even small group forums like the practice :leader get together), are too public with positions to be protected.
- Need to be positive in all that I do personally – need to enjoy and have fun as this is what people see and pick up from me as a leader
- Need a simple vision – up to three points that I can roll out and communicate to convey a sense of purpose and direction. Read leadership to the office. What might this (these) be?
 - o Arup values
 - o Humane organisation
 - o Success and energy

The values need to include commercial performance but not be dominated by it. Arup is not the public service, we (me and others I hope), joined because we want to be the best. That involves working hard, achieving, succeeding and reaping the rewards and benefits.

28th May 2012 – aam -



They say, 'The darkest hour is just before the dawn.' When we think about the turning of Earth and the rising of the Sun, we can understand this. But why does that principle tend to apply in every way? Because we don't put things right until they have started to go really wrong. We ignore small problems until they become bigger problems. We don't give up bad habits until we can see clear evidence that they are doing us harm. Something that has become unsatisfactory is about to get a lot better.

Certainly feeling like the darkest hour at the moment. I feel like everything I know re office leadership is in question. In actual fact it is just the Monday meeting – how I communicate with leaders. More the point that Peter Bowtell has questioned them which makes me think there are real issues...

Actually Peter rarely attends – maybe they're doing something else going on there... Difficult to tell if he is looking out for me, knows the real situation etc. - or not. Have to believe him however – how can I not believe the best in people when that is what I am asking others to do.

I will start with reducing to twice a month – first and last Monday of the month...

Following points were taken from someone leaving Arup – maybe for a LTA overseas? Jonathan Low I think his name was. I liked them, not the least because he took the time to write and then put himself out there on Home Page!

- 1) **Being honest with yourself** and others is very important and can change your life. No one can add value to you unless you find the courage to tell them what it is you really need. And on a more sobering note...people and society can convincingly lie to you and a lot of the times you can't do much about that. But if you lie to yourself...who can you trust?
- 2) **Asking for what you want.** Most people find it hard to say "no" so if you ask for what you want you got a real good chance of getting it. This can do a wealth of good for your team members if for example, you ask the client for an extension to a deliverable deadline. This small act of gutsiness could mean that your staff members have more time to spend with their family and loved ones on a weekend rather than in front of a computer screen at work.
- 3) **Share what you have to say...** because either way, silence or no silence, people are going to judge you harshly anyway. So at least enjoy the satisfaction that comes with letting them know who you truly are and what you think!
- 4) **Indirect feedback smells** worse than fresh fertilizer. It's treating people like babies and giving the subliminal message of "You can't handle the truth".
- 5) **Billability is an illusion.** Intellectual time spent on a project happens whether you are sitting at your desk or not. And vice versa, the events surrounding your work life get in the way of project work whether you are sitting at your desk or not. Therefore, billability is a thermostat that we as collective individuals set and it varies immensely time to time. What's important is you have enough work to match this ambiguous level.

6) **"But" in response** to what someone says triggers their mental defense mechanisms like you wouldn't believe! What is more effective is using replacement words like "And I'd like to add..." or "And have you ever wondered...". If the words coming from your mouth sound like an "addition" in lieu of a "disagreement" you're more likely to move on to weird and wonderful things.

6.5) **Humility** earns brownie points with clients. I remember having a rocky start with a SOH client, and under the guidance of Marianne Foley called the client directly to address the frustrations she was experiencing, and apologising for having unknowingly caused them. One of my colleagues who works next to the client told me "She has a deep respect for you and you should stay in touch with her even after you leave Arup" "sniff".

7) **Honouring good values** sees you through complex and difficult times. We talk about simple elegant solutions and values are definitely it. The rest is just "stuff".

8) **Everyone at Arup plays a significant part**, but not everyone at Arup believes they do...yet =)

9) **Economic downturns** are only bad for organisations that deliver crap. Economic downturns offer new challenges and problems to solve, and guess what? They need people to offer solutions to them and that's where Arup kicks-b. Ta dah!

10) **The people who will kick backside** for an eternity are those who are good coaches/trainers and developers of staff. Learning and development has always been in demand because newcomers want to learn, and experienced people want to pass things on (aka experience a form of legacy).

10.5) **Business development** is about getting out of your ego and into your clients'.

11) **You lose Graduate potential energy** if you don't ride on their wave of enthusiasm and passion within the first month of them joining by delivering on promises.

12) **If you find yourself too busy to care for other people**, then something is very wrong. On the contrary, I've seen many people who would help colleagues regardless of how busy they are...even if it is helping someone arrange furniture in a meeting room before they start their day.

13) **People who invite open opinions** normally get more than what they ask for and for that matter...can handle. So if you're inviting provocative thought expect nothing short of a refreshing slap.

14) **Process** is like the post that supports a baby tree growing. Beyond a certain point, they need to be removed so the tree can just naturally do its thing. Well, that's what Confucius told me anyway...

15) **The IPPS are your friend**...just not yet! But once they are you'll be shocked at how much you can learn from the relationship.

16) **Intuition** is grossly undervalued and spoken little of within a very male dominant industry. But we do know, deep down inside, it is of immeasurable value!

17) **If you don't find courage** in your own heart...there is literally nothing anybody can do to help you.

17.5) **You can't teach courage** to someone, you got to inspire it in them.

18) **It is more important to know how you want to feel** than it is to know what you want to do.

19) **Uncle Ove and his posse were geni** and till this day, inspire the new wave of organisations who believe work and play should be one and the same.

20) **Whoever invented work has clearly never experienced surfing**. I'm serious....

...and the following was a stmlbeupon link I really liked – on influencing people.



People are going to do what they want to do, and it's not a simple matter of saying a few magic words to convince them that your needs should be their priority. It's extremely important to remember this, as it's not only unethical to manipulate someone into doing what you want, but it's often going to be a waste of your time. All of that said, we often fail to get what we want because we succumb to common pitfalls of communication. If you want to convince someone to do something for you or change their mind on an issue that's important to you, presenting it in the right way can make a big difference. There's never a guarantee, and there's no magic method, but there are a few things you can do to better your chances.

Structure Your Request in the Optimal Order

When we want something, we have a tendency to butter up the person who can give it to us. As creative thinker [Simon Sinek points out](#), this just makes everything you say seem disingenuous. Consider this: you send someone the following message:

Hi [INSERT NAME HERE],

Haven't seen you in years. I hope you're doing well. Congratulations on all you've been doing. It's really amazing! We should grab coffee sometime. If you could do me a favor, I'm in an online contest where I can win a big prize and I was wondering if you'd vote for me. Hope you're well, talk to you soon.

Thanks!

[ME]

All the pleasantries fall short because they're preempting a request, so it sounds like you're saying all of that stuff because you want something and not because you mean it. Here's the same letter in the opposite order:

Hi [INSERT NAME HERE],

I'm hoping you could vote for me in an online contest where I can win a big prize for my work. I haven't seen you in years. I hope you're doing well. Congratulations on all you've been doing. It's really amazing! We should grab coffee sometime.

Thanks!

[ME]

Suddenly the pleasantries feel more genuine because you asked for what you wanted, then got to the buttery stuff. It feels real because it isn't colored by something else you want. If you're trying to convince someone to do something for you, just ask. Get to the other stuff afterwards and everything you say will be more effective.



Require as Little Decision Making as Possible

People—all of us—are [bad at making decisions](#). Choosing is generally a pretty stressful thing, and that stress hardly stems from the choice we make, but rather the act of making that choice. The longer we deliberate and the harder we think, [the more we deplete our willpower](#). And [because willpower is a finite resource](#), we get stressed more and more easily as it's depleted. This is a problem for everyone, and not a problem you want to exacerbate when making a request. If you need help from somebody, don't ask them to make a complex decision. You want to make that decision as simple as possible.

Let's say, for example, you want a friend to [help you move to a new home](#). Simply making the request is the best option. Tell them when the move is, how much help you're going to need, and leave it at that. You want to avoid things like suggesting different moving dates and picking the one that best suits their schedule. That gives them a more difficult decision to make, they'll think about their choice a little more, and it'll stress them out just a little bit more. While additional decision making isn't always going to earn you a "no," it doesn't help. Pile on too many choices—even if they're well-intentioned and meant to help the person you're asking—and you'll hurt your chances of getting the result you want.

Ask for What You Want Right After Lunch

According to a [2010 study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences \(PDF\)](#), our glucose levels play a large role in the kinds of decisions we make. As a result, making a request of someone while they're hungry isn't a great idea as you increase their likelihood of saying no. David McRaney, author of the human psychology blog (and book) [You Are Not So Smart](#), explains: *They found that right after breakfast and lunch, your chances of getting paroled were at their highest. On average, the judges granted parole to around 60 percent of prisoners right after the judge had eaten a meal. The rate of approval crept down after that. Right before a meal, the judges granted parole to about 20 percent of those appearing before them. The less glucose in judges' bodies, the less willing they were to make the active choice of setting a person free and accepting the consequences and the more likely they were to go with the passive choice to put the fate of the prisoner off until a future date.*



It's kind of frightening what a difference food can make. If you want something from someone, ask after lunch. They'll be more awake than they will be after dinner, and they won't be deprived of the glucose that will help them come a little closer to that "yes" you're looking for.



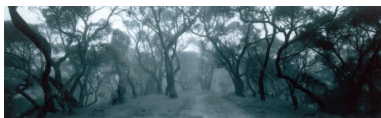
Don't Talk So Much

Less can be more in many situations, and it's especially true when you want something. You may feel like you need to explain your position again and again, but the more you talk the likelier you are to supply information that doesn't matter. The problem is, the information that needs to be heard might not be the first thing out of your mouth. By the time you get to the point, you may have lost your listener. [Forbes offers up](#) some simple advice:

When you say something complex, and people aren't getting it, it's not going to help, generally, to say additional complex stuff. Before you start talking, take a minute to think about how to communicate the essence of your message in a simple way.

Figure out what you want, then figure out how to ask for it in a few sentences. Most requests are simple, but we have a tendency to encumber them with additional talk that isn't necessary. The point of this tip is another argument for what most of the tips in this post are saying: keep it short and to the point

02 June 2012 –



Misty morning yesterday morning and felt like I never really woke up for the day. There were a few people away on training adding to the public holiday feel around the office. I spent the day ambling through stuff to be honest not really hitting the important things I needed to be hitting.

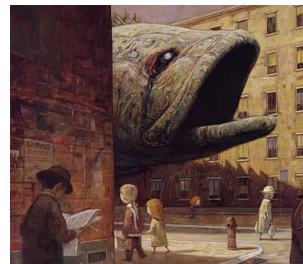
Until late in the afternoon when changes came in oin Green Chemical Futures frustrating everyone, and Peter Bowtell talked to me about the boards intention to tackle helping the office win work head on .

I am feeling a little tired of the go get em attitudes of the board. Cant help but feel they are a bit random. Aimed at action rather than a coordinated, measured, this is what we need to do this is the direction and lets work slowly and surely to go there.

I am overloaded at the moment! Will have to think of a strategy to get through it. I think it will have to involve drawing back from a lot of project work other than to keep an eye on finances. Enlisting help on nsome of these projects.

Hmmm....

3rd June 2012 –



Cam across this last night reading to the kids. Fantastic imagery – the dark trout hanging over the little girl through the streets (Shaun Tan).

And the below immediately reminded me of people scaling Ayers rock. It is actually landscape (Iro Ore landscape by Fred Williams. Fantastic colours and composition however.

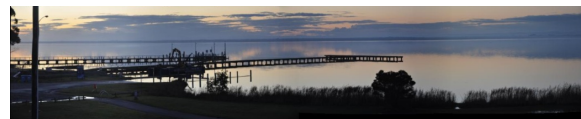
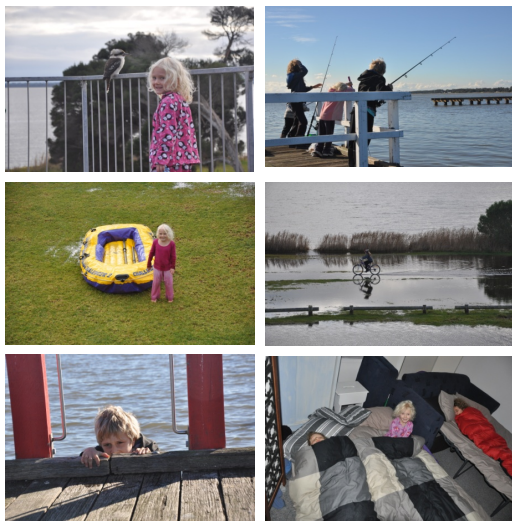
Embarrassingly I noticed it in on the front of an over 50's magazine at the check out in Coles after the weekly shop... Really liked though and took a look at a bit of his other work – all pretty good (few choice bits in the back of this).



11 June 2012 – Weekend (Quenns Birthday). Great weekend down at Lochy, beginning of winter, flooding everywhere but beautiful clear sunny days and no wind to speak of. Almost perfect – a bit chilly of course but fine.

Few accomplishments – Hot water unit fixed with minimal expense(well a vist from a plumber but could have been a lot worse), more importantly, it looks like the big brushtail possum that has been living in the garage has been evecited and this time unable to find a way back in. Bloody thing was pissing and pooing all over the place – rancid wee-y euclayptus smell – over powering.

Stil working on plaster etc but seems to be happening now which is good. A lot of time spent looking out the window to the lake. Changing light, birdlife etc., that view is the heart and soul of th eplace, you feel invited into to it, to dhare for a short period the workings of the lake and all who sail in her.



14th June 2012 – Started reading Mans Search for Meaning, Viktor E Frankl. It is about his theories on psychology and needing meaning in life to live. His theories were further developed and filled out during time in Auschwitz. Incredible to read about and there is a lot in there.

He speaks of externalising things. As an example, marching in incredible pain in the bitter cold and thinking about lecturing on the subject and how it affected his psyche at a later time in a university lecture theatre. This allowed him to disassociate himself with the experience which made it all the more bearable – removed from the immediate pain to be an observer.

I have noticed this also on many occasions – becoming an observer is one thing I am able to do semi-regularly. I worry that it is a bit of a band aid. I think there is something to be said for this but also for living in the moment of the pain and resolutely making your way through it. Perhaps an element of both...

16th – 18th June 2012 – I still seem to be going through the throes of wrangling with where and who I am in life. It is not good. I am up and down and prone to over reaction. I get angrier than I should at the kids, small things sometimes set me off, and at other times I am balanced and productive and reasonable.

I seem to have to keep learning to pace myself ...unregulated is what I am it would seem

I have deep desires to be living travelling the world, just drifting and observing, what is. Go back to our year off travelling but maybe alone and a bit more adventurous, put myself out there to the whim of whats happening in the world a bit. Sounds a little strange perhaps but I can feel that part coming from some repressed sexual desire for adventure.

Dealing with the framework of work is hard also. I am trapped somewhat by the need to earn money and look after the family. I as I am sure everyone else does as well want that out there experience where you magically make a lot of money, don't have to apply yourself every minute of every day – get some degree of freedom and elbow room in life.

It does sound like I am feeling constrained doesn't it. A lot of the mood stuff likely will be coming from that, that feeling of constraint. Sadly a large part of me likes that constraint – that limitation to boundaries – provides a safe refuge within which to withdraw...

A few random images and thoughts from tumblr. These are from random sites followed through image and blog links from “Retazos d red” – pieces of network in English...



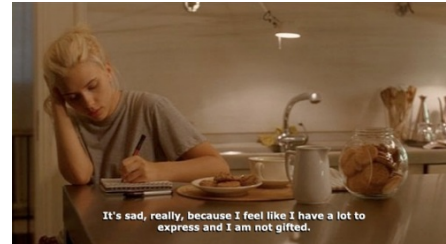
16th, 3:51

Frankly, I was horrified by life, at what a man had to do simply in order to eat, sleep, and keep himself clothed. So I stayed in bed and drank. When you drank the world was still out there, but for the moment it didn't have you by the throat.

Actually the attraction of short term drink, or drugs doesn't really appeal to me. Feels like it would be an empty and short lived experience with reality coming back harder and more hopeless than before, exacerbated by the lost time and opportunities to change during that 'out'.

I am wanting a longer burn experience that has something to show for it at the end. Some record or experience that makes me grow.

Maybe I want/should be getting into art. Take a dive and start producing stuff. For consideration over the next few years. Difficult with the kids – this time of life seems to be about producing and providing a home environment for them to grow up in and for us to live in.



It's sad, really, because I feel like I have a lot to express and I am not gifted.

Is this Scarlet Johansson? I don't think so but she seems to be following me around at the moment – movies, one of the girls behind the deli counter at Coles looks exactly like her – down to the demure way she holds her head and smiles, showing up on web pages...



National Geographic 1970

What a great image - I wonder where this is. Unfortunately I bet it isn't there any more - a place like this is at the mercy of the elements and sooner or later they will rise up and get you. Rising sea levels, tsunamis, or just plain tourism...

Time for bed - that is the other part about a restless state of mind - many 3 and 4 o'clock sessions in the middle of the night unable to sleep. Waking to do email or to surf and write in the diary such as this. Sadly more often than not it is email, trying to keep up with what is going down at work, fulfil this obligation I feel.

19th June 2012 - Taking a couple of weeks off this school holidays with Ange and the kids - really need a break.

21st June 2012 - Have relaxed a little these last few days - or maybe just eased off a little is a better way of putting it. Some of this is due to Victor Frankl - the importance of living life with some dignity and aplomb. I have slowed down a bit and am taking things a little at my own pace - taking a moment here and there to observe and appreciate, experience (which I love).

This has also involved buying a new Chinese poetry book from Hill of Content - the process of buying a book at a good bookshop is therapy in itself, but Eastern poetry is life enhancing. Short succinct poems reflecting life.

Was followed by a coffee at a new cafe Rachael recommended in Crossley lane (opposite to Pellegrini's). What a great place - Von Haus. Small room with a central table and a few smaller tables around the place - single door entry off of a Melbourne lane with a funny old outside toilet, a 40's or 50's (anything before 60's gets a bit vague for me), feel to it. Antique mirror tiles on the splashback in the kitchen, fancy eclectic coffee mugs and saucers, not necessarily matching although only having the one coffee couldn't say for sure! And above all else without asking a simple glass of water with the coffee when it comes - appealing to my inner heart.

And nice cards - landscape art from Eugene Von Guerard



Von Haus 1A
Crossley Street,
Melbourne
VONHAUS.COM.AU

21st June 2012 - Good day today. Have a cold and so went to bed early last night - luckily. Realised I had a Monash GCF mtg I had not prepared for and a breakfast. Got into work about 6:00am (less than 15min trip in at that time of the morning in a taxi!

Printed out what I needed to and straight onto a good breakfast around smart cities. Great panel format with exch table emailing through a question that was then discussed. Peter Bowtell chaired, Andrew Wisdom one of the speakers so high Arup visibility.

Managed to then wing my way through the GCF meeting covering for John Bahoric. Good meeting with Peter Cook on variations after the meeting. Got back in time for a quick but relaxed lunch. Then onto an activity based working feedback session which was positive.

Then home in an Arup car to see Stella's student led conference - very proud although she marked herself down on coming up with ideas and maths - don't think this is the case but will have to do some reinforcing with her. Perhaps get her to come up with a new idea a day?

Back into work and onto an Arup/RMIT organised event around prototyping. Another good panel discussion - and good exposure for Arup - really interesting discussion and learned a lot.

Late bus home and to bed (on the bus as I write this). Choosing to write instead of check email as in a good mood and don't want to spoil it! It is a bummer this email and hard work getting in the way of an otherwise quite enjoyable life! :)...

26th June 2012 – Bit of Wang Wei on the bus this morning...

In spring trees shrouding the palace windows,
a spring oriole sings down light into song.

It sets out to startle the world, stops short,
flutters here, there.. Return impossible far,

it hides deep among dew drenched leaves,
darts into blossoms and out, never settled.

We wander life, no way back. Even a simple
Birdcall starts us dreaming of home again.

Hearing and Oriole at the Palace
Wang Wei (701-761)



A nice little comment on growing old that I can relate to. Me thinkst perhaps not so subtle if I get the meaning...

And the following just beautiful with the imagery it conveys. Adventure, explorations, solace...

Provision-fragrance beyond knowing,
I travel miles into cloud hidden peaks,

Follow deserted trails past ancient trees.
A bell sounded, lost in mountain depths.

Cragged rock swallows creeks murmur,
Sunlight's colour cold amongst pines. Here

On lakeshores, water empty, dusk spare,
Ch'an stillness masters poison dragons.

Visiting Provision-Fragrance Monastery
Wang Wei (701-761)



2nd July 2012 – Started reading 'The Mind of God' by Paul Davies. Preface does not bode well. He mentions a lot on science and coming from that platform and then gets into the feeling that the deeper I go I cannot believe the complexity is not without some orchestration – some higher meaning or something like that.

I cannot believe this is the case, or more accurately I cannot believe that we as human beings are in a position to make the judgement or call on it. This is for a couple of reasons.

- i) We will always think things are complicated. Early believers in divine science believed on the basis of the complexity of the eye I seem to recall reading. Incredibly complex, and scientific, however understandable through evolution, it is just coming to grips with it. Moving into a new realm of the understood, or even just observed. Computers are incredibly complex also and showing one to someone from even a hundred years ago would generate these sorts of feelings and beliefs.
- ii) I think things are the way they are because of a small number of immutable laws. Complex things arise out of these laws for a whole lot of reasons and a lot of the time it is because of combinations of the simple leading to other things. When you extend all of these from each other, and study the end product, it appears incredibly complex and orchestrated as you are looking back on the path. Cantilevers of complexity built upon other cantilevers of complexity. And if the universal constant hadn't been exactly such and such a number it would never have happened – i.e. proof of some higher orchestration. Well in fact it is the other way around. It is that way because the constant is that value. If it had been slightly different, it would have been a different end product – different but likely no less complex or amazing.
- iii) AMny of the things we stumble upon strike a strong chord as they are innate in our development as human beings. The awe that a sunset or a beautiful view, or the feeling of rain on the skin and the freshness of outdoor air, all of these things strike resonant chords as they are core throughout our evolutionary journey. The attraction of the outdoors and simplicity of nature, is to a large degree a relating to the past in ourselves. If it is the touch of God, then it is the God of ourselves, of the Homo Sapien – not some external force.

So what is behind it all at the start – of matter it is probably energy or some form of it coming into being – of space/time, some similar however more difficult thing to comprehend. Of life – I am not sure. Perhaps these two are linked in some – some zero sum gain that balances itself out – space and time, life and consciousness?

We will see I guess.

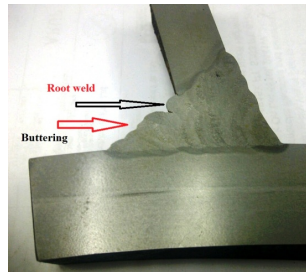
3rd July 2012 – Great night's sleep last night and also had a couple of hours yesterday afternoon – catching up on that side of things...

I have been worried about the weld quality on SSH. It is not up to what we have assumed in our modelling I think. About a week and a half ago I made the decision in consultation with others that we did not have a problem as:

- The stress is less on the inside of the weld where the poor profiling is.
- There is a lot of redundancy in the trusses and we are doing visual inspections (also if the crack develops even from the inside, we will see it fairly quickly in the process on the outside because of the nature of the circular profile.
- The level of fatigue we are designing to is very conservative.

I am thinking that today I need to do more. I will call Mike and get him to be harder on the weld quality – we have asked for macros of the smaller root gap which was proposed to improve the quality of the weld.

I will call Harendran to emphasise that they need to do something – get Prof Marshall involved if necessary to give advice on how to improve the quality of the weld.



lunch – Spoke with Harendran. The reduction in root gap improved things dramatically. He is also following up with a couple of people in Singapore re advice on how to further improve / provide opinion wrt codes etc. People who have some experience of the Oil and Gas industry.

This is good. I was reticent about getting our UK guys involved as they are likely to be rigid and dismissive of the practical side of things. Talking to people with Oil and Gas experience is that right thing to do.

In particular he is going to get Chiew Sing Ping (from NUS), involved who is a good guy and knows a bit about these things.

4th July 2012 – Winter is fantastic at Lochsport. Seems to be a little weather blind spot here. Perhaps it is because it is on a thin peninsula of land. You get the weather out at sea as you are between the lake and the ocean?

Anyway, the winds are quieter you get blue skies with cloud coming in and out, but mostly blue.

I love sitting up on the deck and watching the mountains across the lake. The views look out to Alpine national park – it is difficult knowing which mountains exactly and difficult to know how far you are seeing but it is like looking into a small 3daiorama. You can see the depth and the weather systems, rains, clouds, blues and greens of valleys.

We went for a walk to the beach yesterday. All the inland laes that are dry during the summer are full of water and wildlife. Black Swans and other water birds making the most of the marshes.

A new pier is being built at the moment just outside of our place in the lake. It is nice having the builders there working slowly away, must be cold. Last night they stayed on a small launch and you could see their light on the water.

12 July 2012 – Have had a great couple of days without kids. Went for a long ride with Ange, saw a movie – worked on the garden. Slipping into retirement I must admit. Basically, I just don't want to work...

I am up now (4:00am), as I am dreaming about work and things going wrong. I have too many things on my plate – I need to pull back t some level.

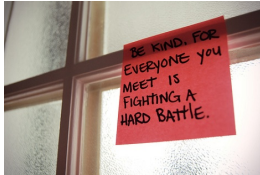
- Fusionopolis 4 – concerned re changes others are making on my behalf – too hard to go through from afar without proper discussion.
- Fusionopolis 2a – concerned re original HCL design I have had to take responsibility for – only just getting under way way now...
- SSOW – strangely one of the ones I am least concerned about – Dai doing a good job.
- RMIT Knowledge hub – concerned re finances
- Monash GCF – concerned re finances
- SSH – concerned re construction quality / finances.
- Office Leader – concerned re new office lease, job Christine is doing, group interaction, C&M/BD which is in a mess.

Lots of things to be concerned about. ...and on top of all of that there is all the family stuff. Seems to be going a lot better of late but I want to be spending time with them rather than on all of the work stuff I am worried about.

Everyone is a genius.

But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.

Albert Einstein.



Couple of quotes from a tumblr website of inspirational images. Like :).

14th July 2012 – Really enjoying ‘The Mind of God’ at the moment. Not so much for the religious side of things, which I still find disturbing, particularly in a mind that can write a book like that – one that obviously has a very good grip on science and astrophysics. It demonstrates to me how deeply pervading the idea of religion, deism worse, is through mankind – through society. That intelligent human beings need to battle this within themselves is a sign of sickness and weakness, and will be overrun by opinion, and is scary to me. How far can this influence go?

The content in terms of science and physics is great however and what I was looking for – which reminds me I must re-read a brief history of time!

As luck would have it this morning I stumbled across an article about Brian Schmidt, joint winner of the 2011 Nobel prize, who through measurement found the universe to be expanding at an accelerating rate – contrary to previous assumptions of a slowing universe pulled together by the forces of gravity. They now talk about dark matter (with a mysterious repelling force), which is approx 75% of the universe, dark energy which is 20%, the remaining 5% being all that we know and see – the shining stars etc...

Incredible to me, and lots of questions spring to mind. Is it the galaxies expanding away from each other or the galaxies themselves expanding also. I can't believe galaxies are expanding given the whirlpool shape of many of them suggesting inner movement with centripetal forces?

Is it some sort of strange relationship with distance where once things are far enough apart, gravity does not asymptote to zero but flips through zero to become repulsive rather than attracting? Would seem to have some sense in

that it may enable an equating of energy rather than a mahic attracting gravity arising out of a Higgs Boson?

There would be some complex relationship of the size of the universe, and time etc that would enable everything to balance out to zero...

No mathematical or any other scientific justification for it but that it seems pure and simple. I am getting more interested in this and would love to follow up at some stage in my life, perhaps when unshackled from life...

15th July 2012 – Have been thinking about this accelerating, expanding universe. There is something that does not quite sit right about a repulsion force? It could just be me and a fixation to big bang which it feels like I have grown up with but a universe that is expanding, presumably towards a dark cold nothing interspersed with island stars and galaxies just does not seem right – or comfortable at least.

I was think what could cause this, if what we believe now is an explosion where all starts are red shifted, that would correspond to stars closer to the origin expanding more slowly than those at the outer reaches, and all of them ever so slightly decelerating with time due to gravity and friction. So what is the opposite of this picture – stars at the extremities expanding at an ever increasing rate rather than decreasing?

It cant be the exact opposite as the direction of expansion would also be reversed into a contraction which is not the case.

If you look at a star that is in the extremities, you must be seeing the big bang model and perhaps something else surging it forward. If the stars themselves are not accelerating, then it must be the space in which they lie. This hit me as a bit of an epiphany (like I must admit the first time I realised you could tell the direction a person was looking though the direction their eyeballs were pointing rather than their head – lol). Could be misguided but feels right – the actual space is expanding as well, and perhaps at an ever increasing rate.

We could be observing the creation of a mega universe, a chain reaction of ever increasing space.

Would like to understand the theorems etc of relativity etc that would help me put some science to this – what is nice is playing around with these thoughts myself be them right or wrong. It is a little like a sudko but with the biggest questions we have around us...

Keep in view – will be interesting to see where Mind of God takes me.

pm – I might be stupid or perhaps have a simplistic shallow level of thought but I cant help but feel there are lots of things that get well over analysed. Paul Davies is devoting time to discussing the laws of physics etc. Are they laws, or do they come from some cosmic author – people look for signs of the creator in the physical manifestation of the universe and how it works – Platos Demiurge...

This just seems like bullshit to me. Basic properties of matter are driven by simple things like molecular forces and things like that. Momentum, velocity, acceleration, gravity etc, they all arise from some incredibly basic building blocks and their physical properties. An electron volt is a certain number and that dictates a lot of things.

So what if a particular property (charge or similar), had to be exactly that to end up with things behaving the way that we see them behave. This is touching on the ridiculous. If it was slightly different then we would just be observing something slightly different!?! They are that way because this is what they are... Am I being a fool here?

16th July 2012 – Ange was talking with Freya this morning about four plus four equalling eight. Freya asked rather insightfully what would have happened if they had not invented eight? :).

Made me think again about Mind of God in slight annoyance – these things are just names, descriptions of concepts superimposed by our minds, our consciousness and logical thought. The question of whether they exist as actual entities is really neither here nor there – superfluous to the bigger arguments.

The other revelation from today's read was that the universe is expanding at an even rate. This is staggering but also suspicious I think. If they have only just figured out that the universe is not expanding at a declining rate (indicative of slowing due to gravity), do they really know enough to say that it is expanding evenly all over!

Paul Davies mentions possibilities like a slowing to even expansion due to friction which I can't believe. Maybe the differences are too small to measure but given the speeds, I doubt it and there must be a point at the centre where velocities are small!?! Again maybe I am showing my naivety?

Would seem to me to question even the big bang concept. I cant help but feel there are other explanations involving the production of more space, and an expanding fishbowl – although perhaps not a great analogy as has fixed boundaries which don't really meld with a space-time ideas I suspect (not knowing for sure).

Or a hybrid of both. Read on...

pm – Kids driving me crazy – constant mess, screaming from Ewan, laughing, giggling, stupid sounds, not listening. There are times I could take them or leave them!



17th July 2012 – Up early this morning thinking through 38 Abbotsford Street. To sell or to keep. Really comes down to what we think the property market is going to be doing.

If we take the stance that longer term, it will be a good investment (which I believe), then the question becomes a smaller one of do we sell and re-buy in the short term – in what looks like being a quiet market.

The case for keeping:

We really like the position

It may be difficult to get back in at short notice

Difficult to pick how long this will last and could find ourselves locked out if prices rise.

Selling a lot of effort and risk.

The case for selling

Market is not going to grow for next two to three years likely

House is crap – needs reno and will never be great (refer below).

Would be able to build up tax losses for future use if we make a profit elsewhere on shares or property (19M).

Longterm rebuilding required

Eventually we will have to knock down and rebuild as the house is crap. However if we sell and re-buy, we will likely have full on reno or similar rebuild costs anyway as we would be buying back into market at same cost. Conclusion, no net gain by selling.

\$\$\$

Costs to keep = 3 x \$20k + \$20k reno = \$80k.

Cost to sell and re-buy (3%+7%=10%) = say 10% x \$800k = \$80k

Conclusion : Keep Abbotsford Street. Do some light reno's over next few years to keep it liveable but no more.

Finding it hard to get back into work. I want to be spending time with family and with myself. Going to back off a bit and not take so much on, on the Structures front.

More important at this time that I make the most of office leader I think even though it is the more uncomfortable of the two choices in terms of what I like doing, and what I am good at!

pm – Re-read visiting Provision Fragrance Mountain today at lunch time. You really need time and a few reads to appreciate these things – beautiful. Pulling out the strong resonants it looks something like the following:

...beyond knowing.
 ... miles into cloud hidden peaks,
 ...deserted trails past ancient trees.
 ...a bell sounding, lost in mountain depths.
 ...cragged rock swallowing creeks murmur,
 Ch'an stillness mastering poison dragons.

Visiting Provision-Fragrance Monastery
 Wang Wei (701-761)



Doing a bit better at work I guess in that I am taking at my own pace. It is and will catch up with me however I fear. I need some of that stillness, composure, togetherness, quiet energy. I need to help me think and talk and be.

18th July 2012 – Wang Wei the Chinese poet questions the value of confusing things by asking is it, is it not. The inference I am supposing it that it just is, let it be without a label.

A beautiful sentiment and something I like a lot. Is this practical in the pressures of western society – or any society for that matter these days. Labels do a lot of damage I am sure but they assist in rationalising and ordering and simplifying life.

Not always fair or reasonable, or nice but necessary to get things done, and in no small part for mental health? A leaning this way however will help, and one day when some of the pressures have relieved themselves I will be able to live more like this.

Gazing Out from the Upper Terrace, Farewell to Li.

In farewell on the terrace, we gaze
 Across boundless plains and rivers.

It is dusk. Birds in flight returning,
 Travellers setting out – it never ends

Wang Wei.

I could relate to this vision, the realisation of the never ending circles, turning in and around and on each other ever more. I feel this is true of much of life and we are just caught up in the tracks, drifting and spinning living experiences that have been lived before but different as they are ours. I am not sure whether this is comforting or depressing? Probably just is... :).

pm – Difficult conversations with Christine today re salary. Wasn't able to talk to her before it was handed out which was not great but was in the last hours before heading off on leave... I feel a bit betrayed as Andrew Wisdom gave her great pay rises during the good times, arguing her contribution to the

business. Peter Bowtell then had trouble with her for two years give or take, and did nothing about it other than to leave it for me whilst complaining bitterly about her and her and the job she is doing,

I don't think she does a great job, but I think she does a reasonable one. Yes I wonder about her having Nicole as second in charge, and here reduced hours, and her lax attitude around them – all stuff that pisses me off. She has also missed a few things I have needed her to do = getting out an office lease brief, responding to the leaders on cost control of office support...

So I gave her a salary rise of 2% which is below the 3% average but brings here just under Sandra Tucker in Brisbane from whose bum the sun shines apparently. This is reasonable I think.

Today was about explaining that but did not go down well – not a winnable argument and we had to agree to disagree. I tried to be as honest as possible so at least she knew where she stood. I think she will get over it, I just need to give her some context of where she stands for future reviews – which she requested and is fair (i.e. is she going to be continued to be dragged back forever more or is she at a commensurate level now?).

I think she appreciated the honesty and difficult discussion at the end even though she did not agree with it.

Needless to say the lack of enthusiasm for work is continuing and things like this aren't helping.

19th July 2012

Stumbled across this painting when looking for images re Wang Wei. Really grabbed me. At first because of the nakedness amongst all of the Wang Wei related images – generally old Chinese poets or mystically imagined Chinese



landscapes... but then also for the proportion and beauty of the bodies, and finally realising it was a painting for the beauty of the technique and brush strokes etc. Incredible on a whole lot of different fronts really.

It is by Xu Wentao 徐文涛, a Chinese artist who uses the human body as a medium to articulate ethical issues. I would really like to be an artist I think – I should start now with sketching and photography etc.

I think it is one of the higher callings in the world. It is towards the upper echelons of what makes us people and a species above all others. It deals with human psyche, cause and effect, nature and almost everything around us. It is dynamic and intriguing.

I am not sure if I have what it takes – it would take quite a bit of getting out of and rising above where I am. Constraints of family and of engineering. Or perhaps they just become a part of it?

What saddens me is that I would love dearly to be a proper artist. Xu Wentao to me is free to explore any boundaries or world he wants to as he/(she?) has mastered the physical technique. That is no longer a limitation and if he goes abstract it is through choice.

Too many people these days take the easy way out and express themselves without this talent, not through choice of technique but through restriction of ability. This is also another thing I like about Salvador Dali. He had fantastic technique and was not limited or biased in any direction because of limitations in this respect.

Unfortunately technique like this takes years of practice and tuition I imagine – aspects out of my reach I fear until I am lot older. Sketching not so however and I should start with this...

20th July 2012 –

At Cloud Valley with Huang-fu Yueh

In Our idleness, cinnamon blossoms fall.
In quiet night, spring mountains stand empty.

Moonrise startles mountain birds:
Here and there, cries in a spring gorge.

1 Bird-Cry Creek (First in series)
Wang Wei

Overwhelmed by things to do, dragged down by little motivation and dreary yapping people heavy on opinions however light on solutions and help. My energy levels get sapped and drained...

The city is a nice place to be, to observe and to get lost in, it is not a nice place to be a functioning part of however...

24th July 2012 – Still reading 'Mind of God' by Paul Davies. I don't often have strong opinions about things but there are quite a number of things in

this book that I find myself taking issue with. Mostly around the philosophical arguments on mathematics. These guys are obviously smart and so maybe it is the way Paul Davies is telling it that I have issues with but it does seem to come across as over analysis in a big way.

Mathematics to me is simply a language and methodology of dealing with properties inherent in nature and the universe around us. To bring it to its most basic level, the figure One is a representation on a singular. The fact that one plus one equals two is just another representation of real things (to singulars making two things).

The fact that addition and subtraction, and multiplication, division etc. are operations that work are simply representative of reality. The fact that they are related and applicable to a whole host of things other than just One plus One = Two is indicative of reality, logic. Is this language an entity on its own? Sure in terms of it being a language to describe logic and reality. Is it a separate entity itself – no more than English or any other language is an entity?

Logic and mathematics is in built as it simply describes the way things are. The fact that One plus One = Two is not a God written script behind the universe. One plus One is never going to equal Three in a parallel universe where rules no longer apply.

And this extends through in increasing complexity. The fact that equations have more than one solution and some of them are imaginary numbers or negatives that don't make sense it just a property of logic extended past the original solution, not an indication of Maths having a separate life of its own.

The concept of the computing power of the universe being restricted as the universe is only so big (the size of the speed of light travelling from the big bang seems totally flawed to me. Things are what they are in reality and if our computing power is limited it just means that we cannot know in infinite detail.

The fact that maths and physics laws do not apply at plank time $10E-43$ is due to other reasons if it is in fact the case? I doubt somehow that it is – there must be some logic to things at any stage. Logic is just cause and effect is it not?

The conclusion that the universe seems attuned to just the right level of complexity that we can understand falls down for me on a few fronts. The biggest is that of course it is attuned as that is all our minds will let us see – hence it is all we can.

...and who says that we understand things. There is likely far more complexity out there and we are incapable at the moment of seeing it. Perhaps with time we will be able to decipher more and more.

It seems really naive that what we are seeing happens to be attuned to what we are capable of seeing! It is like a man with orange tinted glasses being amazed at the fact that the universe appears to be orange. Just think, it is exactly the colour that I am equipped to see – how strange a coincidence is that he thinks – evidence of some higher power perhaps!

27th July 2012 – Dinner last night with the three practice leaders. Rock Pool a nice expensive meat restaurant in Southbank. Very nice but had dropped into Pellegrini's yesterday for a spaghetti Napolitana (they do the definitive Napolitana – so much flavour in the tomato sauce, beautiful). Was a short lunch of indulgence after buying a couple of books, but my stomach is not used to all that food and feeling pretty bloated now!

It is being driven home to me at the moment how unforgiving people are. Last night was a bit of a bitch session on a lot of fronts. It is difficult not to get drawn into that and I did my best with mixed success.

I don't enjoy that side of things – dealing with the poor behaviours, and it seems most people have them...

28th July 2012 – Arrived at work yesterday to see all of the 'uncovered' exhibits (the art show that the diversity committee was putting on. Absolutely fantastic. Really diverse mediums and artwork with some great thought having gone into each and every one. Paintings, a movie, a song, installation art, interactive IT, sketch books, weaving, poetry. Really uplifted me and I enjoyed thoroughly.

It drove home the depth in people and society, perhaps because of the shallowness, or better, narrowness I feel in my life at the moment. Between work, and the kids, there is not much else. It is not always because I don't try or do things but things like art and thinking and observation and appreciation, all need time. They all need a frame of mind and space in which to exist. You cannot simply switch stuff off and on, you need to live it and feel it, let it stew and turn and evolve in subconscious realms to finally come into your mind in a real state.



One day there will be time...

29th July 2012 – Article in the Sunday magazines today re hedonism. What does it say that my form of hedonism is to spend time doing nothing – withdrawing and reading or writing, or less than that nothing at all!

30th July 2012 – John Bahoric saps strength and energy. He prompted me to add in a line to my thoughts on the ideal religion or life philosophy and what it might look like!

Took the kids to the NGV at Federation Square yesterday afternoon. Underwhelmed of course. They did however enjoy in order of preference, the hot chocolates at work, running into the fountain in the park opposite work, the kids corner at the NGV, the tram ride down to fed Sq, the unfulfilled hope that they would get to buy something in a shop!

I had forgotten that the Fred Williams exhibition was on and dropped in to have a look. Disappointing I must admit. In larger scale the paintings don't have the time invested in them I thought they might have had in looking at the reproductions. Colours sometimes nice, in particular the desert peas, and some of the sea/sky series he did but overall they lost their impact on unfortunately.



Taking another look at the images from the web, it is strange. They sit so nicely in a web format on their own.

1st August 2012 – Inspected Abbotsford Street yesterday. Cracking all over the place! Floors up and down, there has been a lot of movement. Basically clean but we would find it hard living there – leaky energy and heat wise.

Needed to remind myself again why we are keeping. Fantastic location, the view down the street to the spire in the Convent, the Yarra and parkland, cycle track etc. – would love to live there.

I think we will talk to the tenants but it will take a bit of renovation to make it livable. Patching of cracks and re-plastering ceiling in bathroom and walls of

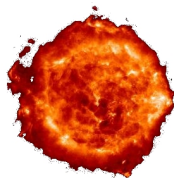
dining room. It will be up to them to see if they want to live through or to move out and let us renovate.

Paul Davies is annoying me in 'The Mind of God'!. I should have expected it but he is making a case for some form of a god. Strange really as it is nowhere near the deist God of traditional religions so can't help but feel he will be left stuck in the middle.

I sense that he has gone into astro-physics to try and explore the whole God thing himself, raised in a society in which it forms such a large part, he has gone down this route to try and get some form of resolution. I can recall similar thoughts when trying to reconcile how so many different and equally energetic and zealous religions can exist in the world.

That was what a lot of my travel was about, exploring the world a bit to get a feel for what makes it work.

So somewhere back there in his mind is this need to justify some form of large parentish/creator figure, and he is coming to a justification that sees him not needing to abandon it altogether. It is a funny feeling – building the case for some form of a God in the wastelands of having disproved or convinced himself otherwise of the faulty views of religion. ...and all of this in the light of the erroneous track religion has trodden. It feels like he is just shifting what is already an obviously flawed concept.



5th August 2012 – Finished 'The Mind of God'. All in all a good book but annoyingly dominated by this theme of needing to prove there is something intelligent or by design out there. The whole thing, the need for this third party or element, greater than the world as we know it or understand it at least mystifies me.

Paul Davies speaks (or maybe speaks of others – I am not sure), as needing something like this as it would all be so lonely without it, so meaningless. I can think of nothing further than the truth. What we are is incredible, it is deep, and beautiful and incomprehensible in its own right. We need to

continue to explore, to evolve even, that thing. What greater cause, what more important, interesting thing?

He ends on a note saying that there must be some significance to the universe developing self awareness (through our consciousness).

Why I would ask, it seems naive to me that this necessarily has to follow?

Consciousness is the one thing however! How did that come about, and what does it mean. If we are only now deducing and discovering we think God particles in the field of physics that allow gravity, how far behind are we on the spiritual side of things.

There is something there I feel. The way people somehow recognise when you are looking at them even when out of sight. The near death experiences bringing back stories of after lives etc. I believe there is a force, a way, in the universe and I believe that consciousness and human thought is an incredibly powerful thing that we haven't begun to understand.

I reckon we may get to the end of physics and only then start to realise there is a whole new, much harder challenge about

And in the meantime, here we are at the start, medieval by comparison with what is to come, no choice but to live for the day.

7th August 2012 -

Wheel Rim River

Wind buffets and blows Autumn rain.
Water cascading thin across rocks,

waves lash at each other. An egret
startles up, white, then settles back.

Golden Rain Rapids (13th in series)
Wang Wei



I can see this with so much clarity, almost feel the patchy Autumn rain. Like a memory I have from where I don't know.

9th August 2012 -

Beauty like Wisdom, loves the lonely worshipper.

The Yong King (from The Happy Prince and other stories)
Oscar Wilde

On a flight to Tokyo to look at a wheel MHI have introduced us into in Osaka. The last few days have been a rush of activity with capability statements for a possible IR project in Kazakstan, the office update (which seemed to go well), and finally Osaka (preparing for this trip). As well as everything else going on!

Feeling a feeling of usefulness and accomplishment that I haven't felt for quite some time at work. Have had some motivation to check email late at night etc..

10th August 2012 - A couple of days in Tokyo and managed to convince the client to give us a feasibility study for A\$90k. Tight but a good leg in for what could be a large job if it were to come off.

Last night it wasn't looking so hot with MHIMS dampening things down a bit. Enough to justify the trip in any case, particularly important as people question whether these things are junkets or not!

Have really enjoyed the last couple of days in Tokyo. Fantastic Japanese food, Blade Runner thoughts through the streets of Shibuya, Japanese television (a parody either of itself or of western society I am not sure which), a Nippon focused Olympics telecast, volleyball, taekwondo and female wrestling!?! Shigeru and the Spartan Arup Tokyo office, goats at cafes, early morning walk and sketch of the streets around the hotel (over a McMuffin and hash browns!). Almost forgot the drink at the top floor of the hotel bar last night with Ryota who looked after us, bit of a 'Lost in Translation' moment – fantastic. The METS hotel (complete with lift lobby that opens straight onto the railway platform (std slightly too small Japanese hotel rooms)... All the standards.

Have enjoyed being with Joe. He is a reasonable guy despite being a bit above himself I feel (or maybe it is above us), in any case a good guy generally.



12th August 2012 –

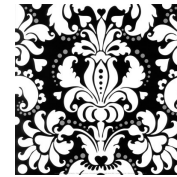
“For the future let those who come to play with me have no hearts.”

The Birthday of the Infanta
Oscar Wilde (from 'The Happy Prince and Other Stories')

Just finished reading 'The Happy Prince and Other Stories'. Really good. Patchy a little however in both terms of stories and writing. And not really a practical writing either (it is a book of fairy tales after all!).

However when he gets going, it really is beautiful both in style and content. The Infanta from which the above is taken is incredibly strong. The story of a dwarf found in the forest and presented to the spoiled princess of the Spanish Court. The Happy Prince about a sparrow who stays to help a statue giving his gilding and rubies back to the city amending for having lived above the pain and sorrow going on when he was alive.

The Fisherman and his Soul, and The Star Child. More remarkable for the intense flowery imaginative writing than anything else. Beautiful.



Apparently there is only a 0.5% difference in the genes between different people. Mind you they also said that this relates to 4 to the power of 16 in terms of numbers of differences - this is less than 5 Billion which is way too few – someone has got something not right... There is also random variations etc that occur when cells reproduce etc.

Having said that, we are remarkably similar to yeast apparently which is another eukaryote – a type of organism...).

15th August 2012 – Very stretched at the moment – back to 3 in the morning email sessions etc...

Managed a haircut today between meetings however which I really enjoyed – yes it has become as dire as all that! What I really enjoyed was the tram trip back from a session at ARM architects. Watching the people on the streets.

Incredible characters and stereotypes. An older lady straight out of on the buses in England. Beige/pinky trench coat, horn rim glasses and hair curled in curlers. Strong hunched back and pasty white complexion. I wonder what life is like for people like this although I can imagine. Lots of tea with relatives, scones and lonely meals at kitchen tables...

Old Greek man. Dark complexion, big man, again, hunched over and stooping along the pavement up by the European. Relaxed look about him head struggling a little to peer upwards to the people around him.

Incredible really, I feel for these people and hope they are OK.

The other thing I noticed today in a presentation showing a slide of demographics was the cliff like drop off after the 45-64 age group (me). And a similar cliff in the same graph estimated in 2040, 30 years time.

That means they are expecting these people to die, not for the whole curve to shift along the timeline to the right. That means I am statistically likely to kick the bucket sometime in the next 20 odd years.

I always used to have a sense of pride around being accepting of my death. That was when I was young and single. I have too much to live for now in Ange and the kids...

17th August 2012 – I have been getting some chest pains recently which isn't very good! Last night was a function at work and talking to people in a networking situation. Light stuff but stuff I don't particularly enjoy and could feel some small needling pain in my chest. Slightly on LHS, just left of sternum but muscular. I would say in my heart if I knew that was where my heart was...

Last week on the trip to Tokyo I had miscellaneous pains also. The worst of it was while on the plane on the way back. When I say worst of it it was not long lived at all. It was like an electric zap to the side of my cheek. A stray current that was over as soon as it started. A small taser like shock at a point that dissipated pretty quickly in a small inch or so line up my cheek.

After that it felt like there were small degrees of uncomfortableness from time to time, again down my left side but more distributed and random. It is easy to imagine you are feeling these things – writing about it I noticed a small itch/pain on the bridge of my left foot.

Anyway, am getting a checkup next Wednesday afternoon. Just my local doctor but will be a start.

I almost wondered if I had had a mini-micro stroke. The fact it was down one side (albeit contained to my cheek lol!, and a little electrical shock in nature).



pm :

**At Fathom Change Manastery, visiting Monk
Overcast-Arising's Mountain Courtyard**

Holding a bamboo staff gnarled and knotted,
You wait for us where Tiger Creek begins,

Then urge us on. Listening to the mountain
Echo, we follow a stream up to your home,

Wildflowers blooming everywhere exquisite.
A valley bird calls once. All desolate mystery,

Night comes. We sit in empty forest silence,
And the pine wind seems like autumn itself.

Wang Wei

A valley bird calls once. Like :) I can feel this moment.

In the Mountains, for my Brothers

In mountain forests, I've lost myself completely;
Identity's nothing but the role we play in public.

Why bother to study sage HsiK'ang's laziness
Or work to perfect Yuan Hseins noble poverty.

When stream waters my neighbour to the east
And mountain shadow lavish at my north gate?

Appearance emerges from chance conditions,
And our true nature's empty, kindred to nothing.

So how do you know an ancient recluse master?
Not by the old-timer's form he somehow took on.

Wang Wei

Appearance emerges from chance conditions and our true nature's empty,
kindred to nothing.

**Farewell to Shen Tzu-fu, Who's Returning
East of the Yangtze**

Beneath willows at the river crossing, travellers are rare.
Fishermen paddle shoreline shallows at the edge of sight.

My thoughts, they're all there for you: spring colours
Along the river, bidding you farewell all the way home.

Wang Wei

This last one I like for its simplicity and poetical sentiment. Cliche perhaps but the message of spring colours up and down the stream bidding farewell.



19th August 2012 - Images like this Ange would look at as a little perverted... I feel a bit ashamed at putting up therefore but there you go.

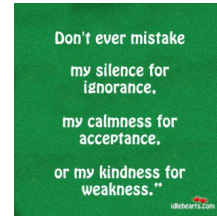
I see it a bit differently. I see it a humorous, a nice little comment on society. A naked lady spread-eagled in the back of an industrial dump truck amongst traffic.

A comment on societies fixation with sex. The concealing of the body from public life. Denial, unhealthy, yet full of schoolboy, schoolgirl? Intrigue.

The fact the blue convertible is undertaking an overtaking manoeuvre, an indication of general life actively going on, not just a mindless flow of traffic, a bit of movement and shifting here and there, a human element of life without knowing about the girl next door.

Pretty much how life is. All these things going on between us. Denied, ignored, put in boxes on the side of reality.

Or maybe that is just us, the middle class suburbanites, living by norms as chains and binding straps of our own making. What led us to this path of mediocrity?... of missing the reality around us. Of leaving behind our base feelings, identities?



Up late listening to music on the radio and watching music videos on Rage. Liking, loving it. I really admire people who can make things like this. I admire their lifestyle, the fact that they reach into peoples hearts and move them, the fact that at times they guide generations...

20th August 2012 – If anything I think I am probably an anti-conspiracist. Rather than looking for patterns in things and ascribing them to higher orders or conscious planning, I truly believe most things in life are largely down to no planning and dependant on luck.

Absolutely I see patterns and there is generally good reason for them. Reasons bedded in nature or even in human nature. Reasons why things are the way they are.

I think however that most things come about through chance, or more accurately through opportunities that arise out of chance, or coincidence. The main reason I think this is seeing how things operate in terms of management. Most management is borne from what one happens to be thinking at any particular time. What is in the papers, what other managers are thinking – accepted practice or practice in line with accepted norms and feelings of the day.

Initiatives get put in place largely (not always, but largely), as something happens by chance to create the opportunity. Mostly, someone says something, or a particular person comes along, or becomes available, hey presto, let's use them here or there and make something happen.

The nice thing about all of this is that it is easy to play to. You just have to get yourself out there midstream with the opportunities drifting pass you. To pick or to be picked up so things will happen.

There is a bit of Darwinian mutation theory in there as well. Things change slightly out of pure chance and become significant events because they are different. Good or bad, but more likely good as the human element naturally seeks these out and takes hold of them while the bad are passed over, left by the wayside.

22nd August 2012 – This morning was the first time in a long time it has felt dry in the park walking Bronson. Monday was the first time I have noticed the grass parrots out in the mornings, chirping, hidden clinging in the leafy gum tree canopy; and they were out again this morning. Spring is here it seems :).



23rd August 2012 – Big week this week. Late finishes and early starts, tough issues to deal with – Christine Andrews, trying to cope with Blgs and Office Leader stuff at same time. All a bit crazy.

I get a bit pissed with people who are unforgiving or just plain anal/and rude. I am trying my best to cope with both of these roles and it is fucking difficult. I am winning and supervising work for buildings and covering things like the CJA issues and office lease stuff at the same time.

The Christine thing is really hard. I like her and think she does a job. She does over manage and make a meal of things, not to mention taking the piss from time to time in my book. She is paid well for what she does and it is telling that she is still with us. I know from emails she has sent me that she has been looking for work elsewhere and she hasn't managed to find somewhere that will give her the flexibility and salary that we give her.

She still works from home on Tuesdays. I feel at times I am unfair in being frustrated with the problems this sometimes causes but fuck it – I have to make sacrifices to make sure I am around and available. It is a part of the commitment.

Anyway, she hasn't convinced me that she is value for money, that she is committed, or that her time is fully occupied. I have come to the conclusion that it would be better for her and for us if she were to leave. It sounds like this might be the way forward – a redundancy. I just have to be careful to make sure I don't get lumped with her role – it would be the thing that tips the scales, that kills me!

Idea for some photography. Photos looking vertically up building facades. Noticed this looking up whilst waiting for the bus. Really interesting, particularly old Edwardian and Victorian facades. Need a wide angle lens and a bit of cropping....

And just to top off a week of burning the candle, tomorrow have to be on site at 7am ready to take out the kitchen for Loch Sport. Need to sleep well tonight!

27th August 2012 – Good weekend dismantling a kitchen from one of Becks new kitchen contracts, and lugging it down to Lochy for installation at some time. I like doing a bit of work, and spending time down there. The kids get on really well with their cousins, I like spending time around Mick, and not to mention the views and Lake Victoria. Has ended up being a really good decision, Ange is really happy with it also :).

Next weekend is Mt Stirling which should be great also... Although it is Fathers day! Admittedly I had had a few relaxing Japanese scotches (not bad – like the vanilla undertones although prefer a bit more of an edge to a good scotch), before going to bed, but while I was drifting off I heard this soft voice calling daddy.

Sounded like Ange calling under her breath but it was a definitive 'daddy, daddy, daddy...'. Spooked me quite a bit. It was likely Ange just snoring a bit and it coming out to sound like 'daddy' however it seemed so clear, and a little wraith like as well at the same time.

I started to get all supernatural in thought thinking it could have been some unconscious telepathy or something similar! I went and checked on the kids all of whom were ok – in different poses of our of control raging sleep! Ewie is always the funniest, twisted in his bedclothes normally, a small frown on his face vaguely aware of something but not there at the same time. Freaya is usually bunched up off to one side of the doona head against the railing sound asleep. She has been forced that way through sleeping with Stell for so long. Stella is all arms and legs and elbows and knees subconsciously owning the space. Stell herself crawls up onto her squeaky loft bed (when not with Freya which seems to be the pattern now but only just recently), surrounded by soft toys and doona's and books and god knows what other crap, her bed almost an extension of her messy floor! And up there he lies, bedding down pit like, till next morning when we have to coax her by degrees back in to the real world, out of sleep. Grumbling's and snuffling's and a slow acceptance of the reality awaiting her, but only on her terms mind you of course!

28th August 2012 – New PA in Bridgette has just started (Rachael has left to return to Margaret River near Perth, with Andrew to try to find work that is less demanding time wised as a chef! Andrew worked for one of the top restaurants here but it was 8-12 most days and longer even on Saturday nights! A couple of days off but needed to recover I imagine.

From there, then, this common city, we take our mind, our reason, our law – from where else? Just as the earthy part of me has been derived from the earth, the watery from the next element, the air of my breath from some other source, the hot and fiery from its own origin (for nothing comes from nothing, nor returns to nothing) – so the mind also has its source.

Marcus Aurelius, Meditations

Pondering on the nature of mind, in that it comes from a common whole. We all have a mind in common, and this creates a community, a common thing we share from which comes much in common.

30th August 2012 - The seven habits of highly effective people according to Mr Covey are apparently as follows.

- Be proactive
- Begin with the end in mind
- Put first things first
- Think win-win
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood
- Synergise
- learn to work with others to the benefit of all parties
- Sharpen the saw: keep yourself physically, mentally and spiritually refreshed through such things as exercise, reading, and good works.
- an eighth habit was added later : find your voice and inspire others to find theirs.

31st August 2012 - Peter Duggan retired today (to look after Mary – who had a stroke recently). Work is difficult at the moment. We are taking on work (in structures), at fees lower really than I am confident we can do the work for. We are relying on variations or people being lean in the hours they book.

Most of the industry is the same I feel. We should be doing what was on the cards in Singapore, being smaller but of higher value. Not a great strategy either – it worked in Singapore as people took some flight to quality and then we were lucky enough to get some really large jobs, and busier and so forth.

I am bored thinking about it, bored explaining it. Times are tough, futures uncertain suffice to say.

Going skiing tomorrow morning and cannot wait. Get out into the bush, snow, camping, full moon, refuge hut, few drinks and bit of reflection on life. Will be awesome.

Will also be interesting to see how my body holds up. Knees have been feeling frail, noticing it more and more leading up to the skiing! Also had a couple of out of breath episodes today. A little reminiscent of the panic attacks in breathing 'I used to get in Singapore at one time. Was also perspiring as lot today – as had a Monash Deans lunch. I put it down to the stress.

I wonder how long I need to work before we can realistically retire? I wonder....

8th September 2012 – Mt Stirling last weekend which was great. Made it up to the summit (last year the upper trails were closed due to the danger of falling trees.

Hard weekend and we are all older than we were – slower, less dexterous at this skiing thing although I suspect we had some pretty average equipment! Next time we will rent on the mountain where the quality is better so others told us...

Was a great thing to do although not sure if I totally relaxed to tell you the truth. I feel like I need a week of that stuff to get into a rhythm and to truly tune out and get in sync with nature.





Worked late on Thursday night and slept poorly. Woke after a number of dream sequences. All quite involved and all ending in a state of failure. What does that mean I wonder. I don't think it is a harbinger of impending doom, more that I feel a lot of things are not in my control, that they will go where they go...

Things are going ok on the winning work front – largely thanks to Neil and Adrian at Lyons. Thank god for old contacts! It is the doing the work and making money out of it that is the concern at the moment.

On that front I am not sure where things are going to end up in a few years time. I can see it coming to a head – books with red ink all around. Me being asked to leave the office leader role to concentrate on the structures business.

I am not sure if that is going to help actually. It is a combination of the market conditions and what levels we need to be at to win work (which is not quite as low as our competitors believe it or not), and our ability to do it for that money.

Just got to keep on going the best we can I guess. Joe is doing a good job of leading in that direction of wanting to win work to keep the group busy and efficient. Him and Frank vet all of the fees we put in so it will be a joint come down if there are issues. One of the things I must do is create a smaller more senior commercial review group to mobilise a bit of support and to spread things around a bit.

Hmmmm... stressful I find it.

18th September 2012 – I had a really vivid dream the other night. It felt like a dream inside of a dream. A dream that you wake up from only to find that you are in another dream.

The really vivid part was of being seated in some sort of open vehicle. Bus or boat or something like that. Anyway for some reason a girl came and sat next to me and put her head on my shoulder. It was incredible peaceful and natural. I remember looking down at her hair. Shortish hair, a sort of mousy very light brown (almost greyish), with a beautiful sheen to it. I can remember seeing the grain of the individual hairs and thinking how nice it was. I could smell the scent of the shampoo it was that close and that real.

I have a feeling that at that time I woke up disappointed to find I was only imagining things. I was in Singapore and got back to the task of what I was going to be doing that week. Ange and the kids were away.

I recalled a few places to go, to get chores done like washing etc, having dinner so on. That scene was from a dream I had had before – which is why it felt strange. It felt as though I was returning to a known quantity.

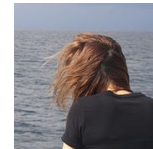
I then remembered that I wanted to go and get a relaxing massage somewhere. Just relax and chill and half fall asleep. At that moment I remembered I had a trip to Singapore planned and this wasn't it! That must have been me waking to the reality.

All of it had that nice tired afterglow. A warm feeling of being now able to relax somewhat. I remember then thinking why did I let that girl go. I should have at least gotten her number so I could chase things up at another time.

I am feeling a longing for love, in particular that getting to know you part of a relationship and all of that is likely what is underneath all of these things. Ange and I get on well enough although she often shrinks into herself in times of pressure (which is now). When I reach out, I don't feel like I get much in return. It is hard, our relationship is in a bit of a different place...

It is strange, but I can't help but feel there was something more than just the simple dream essence to last night. The presence seemed so real, crystal clear not only in terms of happening but presence and other things just outside of my reach in being able to explain.

Perhaps it was just that I wanted it so much, that I have been actively trying to repress that side of things to get on with life day to day... I like to think it was a visit of some type. I am just not sure what this looks like to use an expression



19th September 2012 -

I'm an innocent victim, I'm just like you
We end up in home units with a brick wall view
I can't believe the perfect families on my colour TV
If I don't make it to the top it'll never bother me

And I don't wanna be the one ...

I'm an innocent bystander caught in the path
Waiting out the back while the corporate attack
Assaults the senses with relentless scenes of passion and
delight
I cut up all the options and went running for my life

I wonder what effect all of the songs we listened to growing up had on us. A lot of midnight oil really hits the mark when it comes across my playlist today.

I think (hope) it is more about who I am. I went to a function last night which was a lot about networking. Some of the characters were very stereotypical. Funny and sad and scary and pitiful and intimidating all at the same time!

I can't help but feel corporate world, (the working world but corporate in particular), has created this whole parallel universe of business networking. It has taken a life of its own and become a place for these people to live out their lives, more fundamentally to create their business personas and self worth.

It is a horribly not real world, so removed from the beauty and purity and vibrance of the real world as to be abominably sad. ...and yet there it is drawing you in, like a club of the rich kids you need to be a part of to get on.

Where am I? Somewhere on the periphery, trying to keep a foot in each but getting strange glances from others in each as a result.

20th September 2012 -

"The rope could not be recovered. We had flung down the adze from the top of the fall and also the logbook and the cooker wrapped in one of our blouses. That was all, except our wet clothes, that we brought out of the Antarctic, which we had entered a year and a half before with wellfound ship, full equipment, and high hopes. That was all of the tangible things; but in memories we were rich. We had pierced the veneer of outside things. We had "suffered, starved, and triumphed, grovelled down yet grasped at glory, grown bigger in the bigness of the whole". We had seen God in his splendours, heard the text that Nature renders. We had reached the naked soul of man.

Sir Ernest Shackleton, CVO
From 'South', the story of the Endurance.

The above passage was after their arrival at the whaling station in South Georgia. Fantastic.

22nd September 2012 – Day out yesterday with a sore back that is not getting better quickly – hope it is just muscular and I haven't done anything serious. I don't think I have. Went and saw Geordie (Osteopath) who thinks it is a sparin of a muscle in and around the spine, and also there was no event – it just came on slowly as soreness....

We used to have an economist at UBS Phillips & Drew in London who retired in the mid-1980s. He stood up for his last morning meeting and told the assembled advisers that he had asked his wife the night before what he could possibly tell us today that would be his legacy, that we would remember him by for the rest of our lives.

"You're an economist, darling," his wife had told him. "You've been giving them useless statistics for 50 years, give them one they can use."

So he did. He told us that he had spent the night opening every Excel spreadsheet he had ever had, taken every number in every spreadsheet he had ever had, put them in one spreadsheet and averaged them.

The result was that he had worked out the "the average statistic in the financial space over 50 years". With much satisfaction, he declared it to us: "It is 9 per cent!"

The average interest rate is "nine", he said. The average return on investment is "nine", he said. The average growth in house prices is "nine", he said and although it seems irrelevant, armed with this piece of information a broker could now answer almost any question ever asked.

"What's the return on capital employed of the Brazilian subsidiary of ICI?" for instance. Well, there's a very good chance it's "nine", he said.

Tremendous stuff for an industry that survives on confident guesswork.

Weekend Age – Marcus Padley

I like stuff like this as it takes the piss out of over serious businessmen – and it touches on the truth which there is a lot of bullshit out there.

The article goes on to say they used this quite a bit in providing general advice on products etc., but that the real problem is that it is not true. The point he goes on to make is to say that the average return from the share market is actually around 5.7%. And if you break that down, the return over the last 30 years where there was a uge debt boom that was 11.7%. The 30 years previous to that it was 2.7% (less than inflation).

His final point is that you cannot rely on history. Was the debt boom a one off thing, never to happen again.

I think he is probably right but I don't think we will return to the old 2.7% days. The world has learnt to survive on competition and making money. There is a whole industry out there whose full time job it is to find ways of making these returns.

If they cannot find valid sustainable ways of making the returns, they will invent some system to make them in the short term – regulation or not, these guys will find ways around as human nature is now conditioned to think this is possible and normal – and more importantly, people will be making the short term gains!

At the moment things are still in a bit of a mess and so there is a lot of uncertainty. China is sorting out where it is going to land at, Europe is sorting

out whether it will stay in tact or not, and the States is gingerly trying to get back on a growth track.

Until all of these things get sorted out, I am picking the economy and market is going to be a bit of a roller coaster. I am waiting at the moment for the next dip.

When in 2 or 3 or 5 years time however these things sort themselves out, there will be growth aplenty – and maybe some time after that, crashes where the glass houses built for the short term fall.

25th September 2012 -

... realise boundless calm in clear rivers
And quiet assurance in empty forests.

Here green moss on rocks grows pure
And delicate grass beneath pines soft.

...and knowing you're one among things,
You know how trifling it is to be human.

Facing you, I come upon myself again:
Not the least thought worth passing on.

Wang Wei
(from "In Jest, For Chang Yin)

I can relate to the descriptions of calmness of mind in nature. Concisely put...

In the Mountains

Bramble stream, white rocks jutting out.
Heaven cold, red leaves scarce. No rain.

Up here where the mountain road ends,
Sky stains robes empty kingfisher-blue

Wang Wei

I can so see this scene, cold hillside, small stream, the odd red leaf left from Autumn. Clear ringing blue skies and naked branches of trees. Then you pass to the feeling, cold earth icy waters...

30th September 2012 – Down at Loch Sport for Grand Final weekend (Swans narrowly beat the Hawks!), with Beck & Mick, and Mum & Dad. Love it down here. The kids get on really well – therapy you couldn't pay to find somewhere. The view across the lake to the mountains is one of my favourite views, instantly relaxing.

Had Arup Melbourne's 40th B'day party on Friday night. I had been stressing a bit about the whole thing but it went really well. I am not a bad public speaker but I agonise about it, both before and afterwards. Silly really but there you go, cant seem to not.

...just had a quick break to change Ewie's clothes, he had woken up and wet the bed again. Also saw a pod of dolphins pass by! Absolutely beautiful, about 50m off shore gently making their way down toward Seacombe.

As Ewan pointed out they must be good luck ☺

I have been worrying about work and the next two weeks will be difficult to balance. I am travelling to Singapore for the WAF on Monday and Japan the week after for the wheel in Osaka. I love the travelling and feel very lucky to be able to do it but it will mean I will have trouble servicing the other work I have on!

Things on my mind to be sorted on Monday – or even tonight if I can make a start:

West End – advice we gave Lyons was too heroic on Friday morning and we are going to have to pair this back a bit. Not quite sure how, perhaps I need to sketch some of the systems tonight to get my head around the possibilities.

Osaka – concerned about this level 3 earthquake loads – might need to resort back to a compression wheel as the steel weights get exponentially worse as the prestress required gets larger. The other solution is to go to a trapezoidal truss to allow cables to slack in the EQ condition.

Then there is finding time to prepare for the board paper presentation on the 11th – literally as I walk back into the office! I will be back next Monday and will try to get everyone together to dry run it at that stage.

2nd October 2012 – I realised at some stage over the past few days, that the colour of the hair of the girl I was finding so hard to describe was actually more or less mine!

Healthier and longer and clean and brushed but essentially mine. An ash blonde colour. Bit od grey through it but enough to just give it a slivery look to it.

A bit of a strange thing that realisation. Perhaps because I found it strange in the first place that I couldn't place a description on it, and then because it was my hair colour which drags it all back to Freudian psychology in some way, and internal loop closing in my mind.

6th October 2012 – On my way back after having attended WAF (World Architectural Festival), in Singapore. Was very good. Singapore looks

fantastic and I got to see a lot of the people in the industry that I haven't seen in a long time.

Also did a bit of work on the Sports Hub, and checked in with a few staff. There was a bit of a slow realisation of who I was whilst in Singapore. I actually knew a lot of architects there. And well as people would come up to me to talk etc.

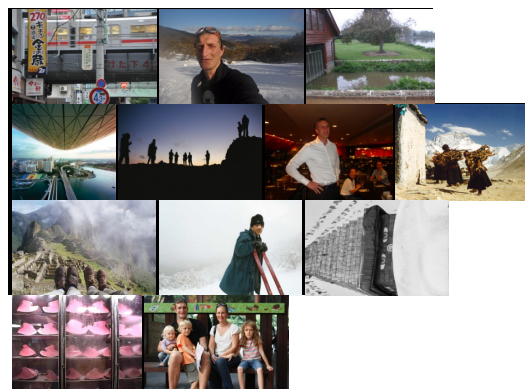
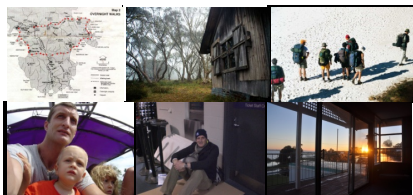
I also had a lot of feedback around the changes in Arup since I left. People actually miss my leadership style. Some to the point where it was a factor in their having left.

I also stayed at MBS which was great although underappreciated due to lack of time. But it is a fantastic job structurally. Then there is the Flyer etc. ...and I had a lot to do with all of that.

I was actually a known, notable personality in the industry. I had a positive effect on the people at Arup and on Singapore itself. I created and led a strong group of engineers, better than others. I actually did a good job, better than others. Brendon the person who people doubted and who struggled and second guessed himself and agonised over stuff and who was criticised from time to time and could always in his own mind have done better. He did good.

I need to take that knowledge and use it as a base. The nice thing is that it is a completed episode. No one can take that away from me. I should give myself the luxury of a bit of time in making decisions. I know this won't happen as it is about getting things done. There are as big a challenges in Melbourne and I need to doing my best there also.

...and I am. I am actually winning a good deal of work and I am doing the Office Leader role reasonably well also I think. It is hard – I feel like I am working tow three quarter jobs.



A quick collage on one photo from each of the folders on my work laptop.

When I look at these I remember Indi. It takes me back to Goa, in particular, and making the trip from Baga beach where we were staying to the old Spanish port. Hot day and an old timber building, bare boarded, no glass in the windows overlooking the entrance of the harbour for the boats. Seem to remember it was the old governors lodgings (or something), and had was now a gallery housing all these paintings from the time. I couldn't be sure but I think a number were painted on boards...

I can feel the heat and the light breeze, the blues of the ocean and of the skies. India in the background, just out of sight the smells of curries and rainforest palms, and backpacker trails. The feeling of expectation of things to come, adventure.

I love that feeling of things to come, the beginnings of the rest of your life not knowing where it will go but feeling good about the prospects.

7th October 2012 – Good weekend between trips. Got the watering system for the ferns under the back balcony done ☺. Caught up on sleep, Saw young Mason McNiven with the kids, birthday party for Freya at Wombat Bend Park – bit of time playing with the kids on the flying foxes.

Walked the dog with Freya. I told her how good she was getting at throwing the ball with the yellow plastic ball thrower. Meaning business and continuing to concentrate she explained she has been practicing and getting

“gooderer ang gooderer and gooderer”. “Better and better and better” I corrected her to which she shot back in a flash, yes but gooderer is much more betterer”.

She is so gorgeous. All the kids are great at the moment – really enjoying them. Bringing them up doesn’t seem nearly as long as I thought it might. It is all racing away very quickly. I will be very sad to see these days gone when they get into the teens.

9th October 2012 – Planes are terrible things really. Dry air conditioned atmospheres with a continuous roar of tornado proportions past the fuselage outside – or is that just the a/c?

I must get myself some noise cancelling headphones – or ask for some for Christmas...

So many times I will look at stuff during the day and think, i must write about that when I am back at my diary. And poof away it goes. I was made to observe and ponder life... in a totally non-productive type of way. Made to explore my inner whim and to think about things, again not to any end, just think and ponder and be.

What use is that that you may well ask. I am not sure other than to say it feels right?

Pm – I feel a little like I am living the somewhere between ‘lost in translation’ and ‘On the Road’. I am here in the METs hotel, which opens directly off of the Shibuya station ‘New South Exit’. Straight out of the station gates at level three, across the pink granite flooring and to the automatic glass doors indicating Hotel METs.

I have just had a great dinner out with Shigeru and Ryota from Arup Tokyo, plus one other Arup Tokyo guy I don’t quite know – Tobuckyo-san?, and Dai, and a couple of the Mitsubishi guys – Yamada-san who is a good guy. Kei’s old boss from the days where we almost took him on in and exchange, apart from the bit where the GFC hit! ...and another of whose name I am unsure.

Great little place in Shibuya that Shigeru knows. Not that there are any shortage of little out of the way sushi bars around but this one looks out over an old canal which flows in the season, or whenever there is a big downpour apparently, to a landscape of nestled towers of resi and commercial each with its own particular brand of cool Japanese writing in some shape or another be it advertising or graffiti or otherwise.

The train line runs directly overhead resulting in a dull background rumble every 5 or 10 minutes. Brilliant. This is the Japan of Japan, Dai mentioned to me he misses dinners like this where people just go out to enjoy some food and alcohol. It was kind of implied that people only ever take it to the edge of too much to drink.

So lots of back and forward mixed English dinnertime conversation and here I am back in my hotel room, sitting in bed with a Japanese game show full of cutesy giggling and faces full of mocked surprise



13th October 2012 – Shitty day at work today. Realised that the solution we have on GCF is a crap solution. It is a deep beam precast solution that at first made some sense architecturally. They have now covered up the ceilings which removes that and the solution is not really appropriate.

We are too late in the programme to go with another unfortunately. It is looking like being difficult to build and expensive/complex. Shit! Not very happy with John Bahoric who has not been communicative on the job. He hasn’t had the reviews done on the way through and I have felt excluded in many respects.

Having said that, at the end of the day I was there and knew about this also, so am unable to blame others. Really disappointed in myself. I just have too much on at the moment:

- Office Leader Stuff
 - Restructure of Office Support
 - Office accommodation (new premises)
 - General OL stuff – C&M, MSC, events (40th b’ day, client event, xmas party, oves)...
- Green Chemical Futures
- Knowledge Hub
- West End Adelaide
- Osaka Wheel
- SSOW
- SSH
- Kelana Jeya
- Sg Projects (MBS Canopy, F2a, F4)
- Kazakstan IR (just starting off)

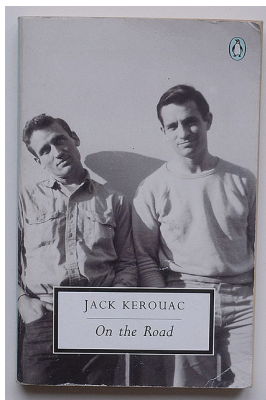
Too much to be across realistically with any real meaning contracts or technical wise... And Bridgette is just new as PA – need to spend time training her also!

16th October 2012 – Reading (re-reading) *One the Road* by Jack Kerouac at the moment. Great book. I am in a rush to get through it. I have found myself drawn into the whole Dean Moriarty thing. Ups and downs and energised crazy escapes to drive across America.

The scene where Sal finds Dean again after a while with their group of friends and Dean has fallen on hard times – ended up with an infection in his hand sprouting from an instance where he had hit Marylou and then had a string of bad luck really struck me. I am not 100% sure why but I felt like I could relate somehow. How it only takes a few strokes of bad luck to go from free and easy to being totally up against it, on a downwards spiral each event compounding things and taking you further down.

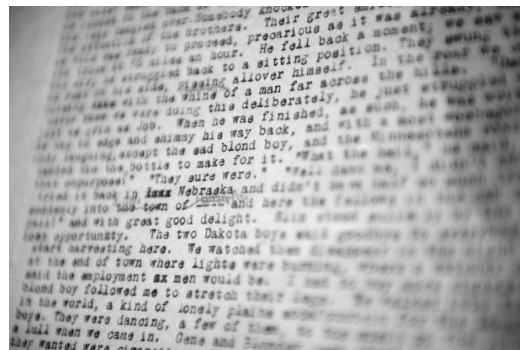
I can so see this happening to me. At the moment I am riding high on a lot of things relying on luck and the good will of others. I don't think I am pretending, that is just the way things are – you need to rely on and leverage others, they need that too, so you can all be bigger and better than what anyone individual an accomplish. I benefit from all of this as I have for a number of years through Singapore and beyond, but I do feel exposed and like it could all come crashing down at any moment!

So I am rushing through Jack Kerouac to see where I end up in a lot of respects...



Jack Kerouac apparently wrote the script on one continuous 36m long scroll – taped together bits of paper I imagine, but it was the authenticity of creating something in a particular way. The same article mentions Henry Miller who intentionally stayed in poverty to preserve artistic integrity.

I like those thoughts and one day would like to explore the same. Freeze up bank accounts etc. and hit the road and travel to see what comes of it;



Pretty cool...

pm – Went to something at Borondara Park Primary School tonight on positive parenting. Really good. Simple but good. It was a young guy speaking on positive parenting with kids. Related a few of his experiences in India, about coming across really happy people despite their circumstances...

Was great as I could really relate to what he saw. I was convinced in the back of my mind that I would want to do was to stay there and help. It was after a few months of seeing these people and how happy they were. Not pathetic but happy and getting by in spite of things, that I realised I was probably in more need of help than they.

What a sad reflection on life come to think about it.

What was impressive about this guy (Hugh), was that he stayed on and did some teaching in a remote Ladakh school. Anyway Hugh then relates this to work by a psychologist on positive thinking who researched and found that 99.6% of psychology is about fixing things that are wrong, 0.4% relates to working with things that are right or working well.

Some of the things they suggest around parenting (equally applicable to anyone actually), are:

- 1) **Gratitude** – write down three things each day you are grateful for (rewires your brain for positive scanning – looking for the things to be grateful for).
- 2) **Positivity** - record the best thing that happens each day (allows the brain to relive that experience).
- 3) **Exercise** – 20 minutes a day (exercise teaches the brain that activity and behaviour matter).
- 4) **Meditation in music** – Meditation helps the brain get over all of the ADHD you create by trying to do multiple things at once.
- 5) **Random acts of kindness each day** – makes us feel good about ourselves.

Pretty good and would like to more of – I must get back into meditation (and pausing).

The other thing I noticed sitting in the library room we were in was a list of the different methods of learning which was really interesting as well.

existential,	Big picture ideas/issues
Interpersonal,	Interaction with others
Intrapersonal,	Interaction within yourself
Naturalist,	Inspired by nature
Bodily/kinaesthetic,	Through bodily movement
Visual/spatial,	Visual learning
Mathematical/logical,	Logic and process
Verbal/linguistic,	Oral
Music/rythmic.	Through music.

LEARN

17th October 2012 – Quite down today – which is funny given the topic of last night – need this more than I know probably!

Three things to be grateful for: 1) Ange who is providing a lot of support at the moment whilst under pressure herself, 2) the kids who I love so much, seeing them sleeping at night fills me with joy, 3) Lyons and the fact they have given me work coming back into Melbourne making my justification a lot easier.

One thing that is going well : Office lease which we just got through the board to great support.

Things on my mind however (I know I shouldn't be doing this in light of the above, but what do I do ignore them?)...

- Am I giving the office the leadership that it needs right now?
- Am I giving the projects the attention they need right now?

I can honestly say that I have brought in my fair share of work to buildings:

- Green Chemical Futures (along with JB), 400k
- Osaka Wheel, 210k +3M possibly
- West End 1,170k
- SSH, 2,000k (but at 300k loss – however kept a lot of people busy during a very tough time for workload)
- RMIT Knowledge Hub (with JB), 700k?
- HanHong (30k)
- Better Places (10k before it was stopped).

I need to dedicate some time to connecting with people and spreading positive news. – Say an hour per day.

18th October 2012 – Finished Jack Keroac – great book. Back into Marcus Aurelius, Meditations.

The substance of the whole is passive and malleable, and the reason directing this substance has no cause in itself to do wrong, as there is no wrong in it : nothing it creates is wrongly made, nothing harmed by it. All things have their beginning and their end in accordance with it.

Marcus Aurelius
Meditations

Simple and striking obvious. Funny how when you state these things they lead you to other thoughts. So if this is the case which it obviously is, then everything comes from human nature. All of the good and the bad that we see, the beautiful and the ugly, the saddening and the inspiring or uplifting all come from us.

We are a part of the whole obviously. You then get led to an argument that has a two outcomes. Either everything about us is also passive and non-good or non-bad (taking a big picture view), or we have grown out of the whole somehow.

The feelings we have about right and wrong, our senses of outrage or agreeableness come from the relativities between us (not so much from any divinity in the universal make up).

I am of the opinion it starts with the first, there is nothing inherently good or bad about us when viewed at a large scale, we arrived may prosper, or may not, and are likely to ultimately pass into oblivion (along with the dinosaurs and whatever else before us). I also think however we have the potential to break from the whole, or more accurately I guess transcend it. Alter time and matter to a point where we can change the base.

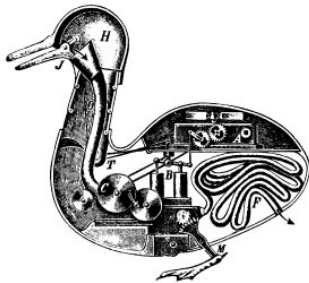
Back to that old Asimov (I think it was), story on figuring out how to reverse entropy. At that point we will likely utter "let there be light" and will have become the divinity that we constantly seek now.

24th October 2012 – Client event tonight. Nerves abound, I don't like these sorts of things. I am not a natural Office Leader type person. I wonder who is?

It is not only not enjoying, I am not naturally outgoing or gregarious. It is a lot the not enjoying however – more and more I really only want to do things I am happy doing!

Days like today I tend to get a but languine as I would call it. I searched for it in the dictionary but all I got back was lingue! Sanguine is there but it is a bit too cheerful. Languine in my definition means measured, a bit tired and reserved/slow, but with increased observation, and pondering/consideration of the things around.

The walk in this morning was very much observation of all the people walking in the streets. All with their own little stress lines and concerns overlaid on their expressions. Lots of automatums moving about win their own worlds amongst the bigger machine.



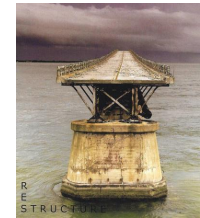
29th October 2012 – Monday morning and already dog tired. Busy weekend with basketball, work on the house, Cams birthday, fixing the house, gymnastics...

Coaching Ewan's basketball team and the poor kids haven't scored a goal yet! 44-0, 10-0, 16-0! Must spend some time with them tonight dribbling and shooting! Spend a bit of time in match play as well I think to get them used to making plays and shooting goals!

31st October 2012 – Office Support restructure today that saw Christine Andrews being made redundant. Hard- although harder for her than me I admit. Made easier through the fact that I am convinced it is the right thing to do.

What fall out I wonder. Personally I don't think any but we will see. Vanessa thinks there will likely be something come out of it.

It is a chance to re-invent the group moving forward. Cast off the preconceptions and baggage of the previous structure to provide something that is more in line with the businesses moving forward.



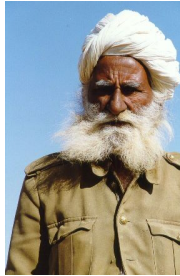
4th November 2012 –

I had an inheritance from my father
It was the moon and the sun
And though I roam all over the world,
The spending of it is never done.

From "For Whom the Bell Tolls"
Ernest Hemingway

I know lines like the above are cliché and I will look back on them one day thinking how trite I was, how naïve. I like them still. The moon and the sun remind me of travelling, it is likely as I miss that.

Thar Desert, Rajasthan, India...
February, 1996



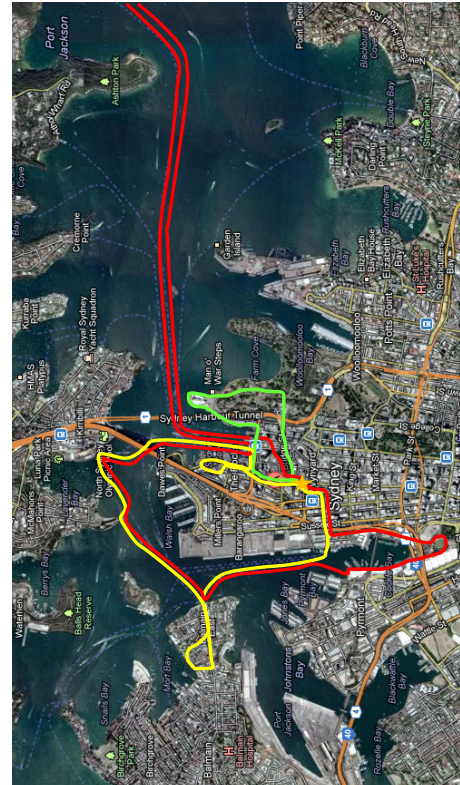
...One of the nice things about travelling for any length of time is becoming aware of the cycles around you. Knowing what time the sun rises and sets, whether the moon is waxing or waning, and living through the different seasons.

The heat of the day and the cool of the night, the rain and the wind, they are all to be experienced in an enlightening reality around you. At home they can disappear, hidden by what you imagine to be more important things, things that entangle and restrict your mind...



Extract from Diary
writings (Sunda).

5th November 2012 – Big days out in Sydney. Been good, kids a bit tired and ratty but overall very good. Day One : Opera House and Circular Quay, Botanical Gardens. Day Two : Markets at the rocks, Luna Park, Time & Justine's (Balmain), home via Darling Harbour. Day Three : Darling Quarter, Darling Harbour and the ships museum (destroyers, submarines, the Endeavour), Circular Quay again and Manly for lunch and the beach.



And in-between, swims at the pool, and nights watching Modern Family and the lights of the city. The hotel is in Bond Street – fantastic location nestled amongst the tall buildings of the city.

6th November 2012 – After all these years I am still a hot head it seems! I rise to anger extremely quickly particularly on the road. What is it? It is two things I think. I am uptight. There is a lot of suppressed anger about me, through work, and through kids. Through unresolved injustice in the world and the way things should be.

And that is the second, the feeling of right and wrong. I have a strong sense of wanting to protect my corner, the corner of the just – even when at times it is not...

Read that paragraph before last – how embarrassing I think to myself. The way things should be. Here I am living in a developed country with three kids all growing up in privileged lives, a natty house and life, nature strips for Christ's sake (good name for a book some – maybe a biography that).

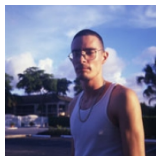
...and here I am talking about the way things should be. When will all this change?

...and I remind myself of India. Of arriving to abject poverty and the half kindled feeling I will want to stay to change things and to make a difference. Only to find they are basically happier than I am, than most in the developed world.

Life is all relative. I am reading for whom the bell tolls at the moment and am only just now starting to get living for that sort of thing. Of being cold headed which is basically us in the West.

Of life and culture that is respectful in itself I am a product of the circumstances of my birth. ...and that is fine in itself and appropriate and right. In fact to do something else, to stray too far would be a disservice to my duty... My little piece in the big is a part of it all. As long as I am true to myself and do the best I can, in line with what I feel is right.

Jim Steyne's the support, instigation of even of the taking of Melbourne Football club in 2009 was not the right thing to do. You betrayed your duty in life, you were not true to truth and no good can come of it...



Josh Bearman grew up in California with his dad, stepmom, and brother. But they're not his whole family. His mom and half-brother David live in Florida. Josh had never spent much time with the two of them until recently. One day he got a phone call: his mother was in the hospital, near death, and David was on his way to jail. They had no money and couldn't take care of themselves. So Josh flew to Florida and tried to take over. (30 minutes) [Addition](#) - [Alcohol](#) - [Crime](#) - [Family](#)

What is my duty I wonder. To be me of course, to be true, even with all the self doubt, second thoughts, failings and flaws, trying at least

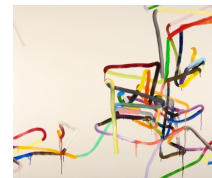
Say a part of 56 up tonight. Fantastic. Normal people, normal lives. Telling about life, about life in England in the 60's, about people – not so much the individuals in the film as one subject puts it but of people in general if that makes sense. It is impossible to represent someone in all their entirety in such a small grab once every 7 years. Yes, representing the idea of people, I can understand that.

ppm – Don't know why, but just looked up some images on stoning on the web. My God. I think it was to remind me of just how bad the human condition can go.

That these sorts of things still happen in the world today is incomprehensible to me. Actually it is not but it is incredible to me. How far away from each other we are as humans living in the same time on the same planet. ...and how horrible the consequences.

And of course these are just the indicators. This stuff is happening all around the world in many different forms, in a million shades of grey.

What are you to do with that knowledge? Pray for the world. Pray for people. I really don't know. Meditate for peace should be my small start.



The above makes me feel a bit better about things somehow. A tear representing the grief of course. Single, simple, representative of the millions

shed and the millions felt. A strange modern representation of a tar. A frozen shape somehow hi-tech, suggesting some way of dealing with this in the future. Perhaps in a way we know nothing about, but a way that does not deny the suffering or the past but somehow deals with it, crystallises it and solves it somehow – the fall out anyway. Provides some hope... And then the colours, reminding me of the complexity and randomness of life and the different parts to it, not on a personal scale but a global one. Again simple, representing more than at first glance. Simple perhaps as the acts can be dumb and not produced from any intelligible thought? Finger paintings in colours oozed deep from the different recesses of human life about the place. Good and.. bad.

7th November 2012 – Back at work after a four day extended cup weekend – feeling tired-er than ever. Life is a flashing whirring series of images these days. Images in which I obligated to immerse myself, throw myself into the current and swim, swim, swim across the current to get safely to the other side.

That cannot be right!? It should be ok for a while or a stage even but to keep on keeping on in that vane? ...cannot be the natural way of things, not for a healthy mental state in any case. What changes then, and when?

Meditation Brendon (that keeps getting put off).

08th November 2012 – Ebbs and flows of mood. Been up the last couple of nights in the middle of the night doing an hour or two of email (after early nights). I am tired at the moment however and am not bouncing back like normal. The end of the year and I need a bit of a break – been a tough year as well and have embarked on a few structural changes to the way office support works. Few but significant – making Christine Andrews redundant was the largest.

I am convinced it is the right thing to do – for us definitely and I hope also for her.

Anyway, seems like long hard work, stretched across a lot and relying on others to deliver in many places. I don't feel as confident of that in Melbourne as I did in Singapore (I think I have mentioned before).

The result is much more mental energy expended. I am also uncomfortable with what people think – I never really get any proper feedback. A lot of grumbling but cannot keep all of the people happy all of the time. Just doing my best at the moment and hoping people understand and give me the benefit of any doubt from time to time.

I think I am doing a good job, and one that is appropriate (not full time Office Leader). I think I am bring value to the business and cutting costs to be more efficient (appropriate again), gradually changing and refining things where required, bringing the office together at a senior level in any case.

I am also fulfilling in the most part my structural role – bringing in work and looking after work etc although that is tenuous a lot of the time.

If I am not doing things, it is getting out and being visible amongst the staff, of looking after the senior level relationships I should have as office leader in the industry. Things are not smooth internally and I feel I need to get that part of the equation solved and running first.

So the moods rise and fall regularly drawn by how tired I am, byt how things are going at home, by isolated wins and losses. Overall however I am not enjoying it. It is a drag – hard work with people, and little appreciation it feels. I think Chris thinks I am doing a good job but am unsure. Peter Bowtell tells me I am but I need more...

The down days consist of me going through motions, wanting to retire homr to bed to sleep and block things out – distract myself with the little bits and pieces of the rest of my life small though they are.

I am getting looked after ok financially I think. Hopefully the strategy of keeping 38 Abbotsford Street will be a good one and pay dividends eventually. Costing a bit of money to maintain at the moment – and should be costing more but never get the time to work on it!



8th November – 31st December 2012 – Managed to stuff the hard drive in my laptop after slamming the lid down too hard – in an episode with Ewan over going to sailing lessons on holidays! Serves me right – idiot – need to be able to control my emotions...

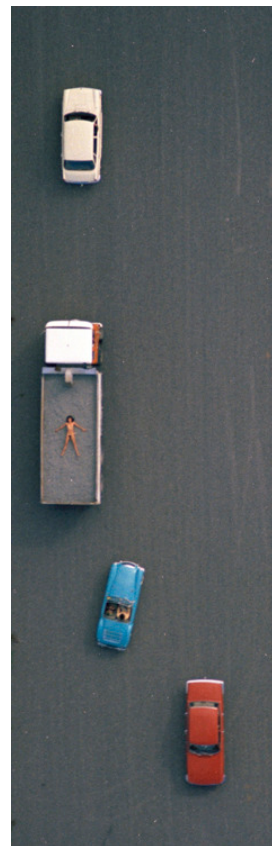
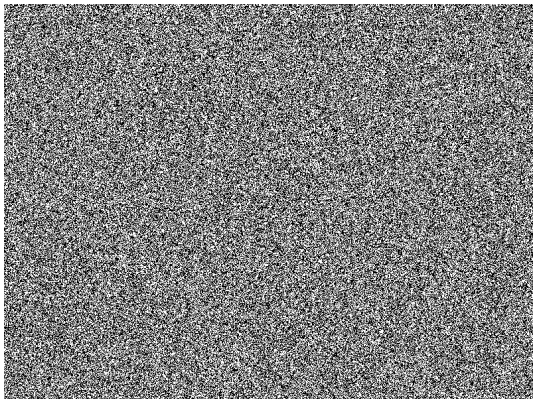
As a result I lost all of the entries for the months of November/December basically. Funny, I am really pissed off. I had found some great images and written some good stuff from memory – I feel (perhaps a little unhealth-ily), that a short section of my life has been denied me, cut away so that I cannot look at it.

I need to consider what the crutch of a diary means to me I guess – how does it affect me?

Lots of thinking about Stephen Hawking after re-reading 'A Brief History of Time'. Some of it I realised today in being silly mind you so perhaps just as

well. Some great images of hand sketches of elephants etc that were mind blowing.

In any case, that short segment is now a bit of a blur. Pick it up and get on with things Brendon. I feel like I am up against it at the moment. Things going wrong. A lot of it is to do with John Bahoric and dealing with his paranoia and inability to communicate. What a fucking mess. It is one of the few times however I am confident I am in the right. He has some serious issues – sad as those around him he seems to hate/fear the most are those who want to support him.



Randomn Tumblr image – I like the humour and the closeness to the currents of sexual fantasy unspoken, denied in society...

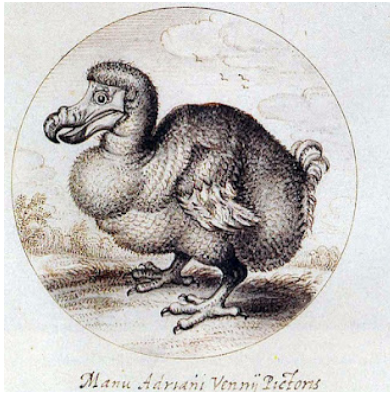


The Happy Prince (& other stories)
Oscar Wilde

This engraving? speaks to me of society, of beauty and pain, culture, life, animals and human plight. Middle ages, citadels and court life. A place to visit during a read on a lazy winter Sunday.



Charles Robinson
1870-1937



Van de Venne 1626

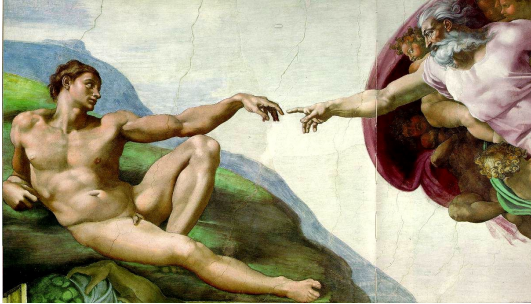


Xu Wentao 徐文涛

Xu Wentao's work is based on the human body as a medium to articulate ethical issues - values and taboos such as freedom of opinion, the cloning technology and homosexuality. The manifestation of changes is a key theme for the artist. Changes are essential to today's culture, economy and science. Xu Wentao questions and criticizes certain developments of contemporary social and human issues.

This series consists of two elements: people's bodies and water. The images of bodies are full of ambiguous sexual components of tension and desire. This description of sex and desire provokes the ethical order of a civilized society.

Furthermore the artist wants to express another conflict: in Xu Wentao's work the optical refraction is a symbol for unexpected changes caused by the cloning technology. The cloning technology with its uncertainty and ambiguous relations has caused a big discussion about Chinese ethics.



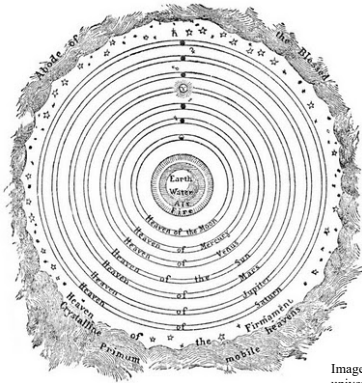
The Creation of Adam, Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo.



The Ancient of Days (1794), William Blake (1757-1827). Relief etching. *Europe: A Prophecy*. PMA:J99.1956. Blake's illustration of Proverbs 8:22-27 represents "the first emanation of the true but hidden and nameless God."



Image from tumblr – how close and under appreciated are views of the clouds like this.



Images on clockwork universe....



Eugene Von Guerard,
introduced by Von
Haus cards as after
coffee, Crossley St
20th June 21012 – very
civilised yet life wise
also.....



National
Geographic
1970



Shaun Tan, The Red Tree
illustration.



Fred Williams 1927-1982:
Iron ore landscape 1981 Oil
on canvas 152x182.4cm,
NGV.



Fred Williams, *Australia*
1927–82, *lived in England*
1951–56 *Yan Yean* 1972-73,
oil on canvas, 207.5 x 104.5
cm, Queensland Art Gallery,
Brisbane, ©Estate of Fred
Williams



Fred Williams, *Australia*
1927–82, *lived in England*
1951–56, *Beachscape with
bathers, Queenscliff IV* 1971,
gouache on paper, 59.2 x
79.2 cm, National Gallery of
Australia, Canberra, ©Estate
of Fred Williams



Fred Williams, *Australia 1927–82, lived in England 1951–56, Springbrook, Queensland II 1971*, gouache, watercolour, synthetic polymer paint on paper, 5.6 x 77.4 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. ©Estate of Fred Williams

Birds from around Koonung Creek....

1) Tawny Frogmouth Owl (18.02.11). Coming home from work just after dusk. The first swooped not more than 2-3m from my head on the edge of the reserve, the other was perched on one of the houses on the way back through the park connector. Silent, not concerned about me at all, swivelling their heads approx 90 degrees every ten seconds or so...



2) Rainbow Lorikeets (18.02.11), about 7:30am on the way to work in one of the park connector gum trees. After following a strange bat like screeching sound I spotted a couple of these hanging sideways on a branch looking at each other in conversation. Pretty certain they were lorikeets and not Rosellas – smaller than Rosellas and less yellows, more greens...



3) Marsh Ducks (as Ewie called them) – actually **Dusky Moorhens**. Around 11:30 at the pond in Koonung Creek reserve. One pond for dogs, the other fenced off and reeded up for ducks. Tried catching their attention (out in the middle away from the paths/bridges, with some bread but no luck. Lots of tiny fish got a bit of a feeding instead... One (presume male) was black with a red beak (white highlights), the partner more normal brown/grey/white...



4) Magpies – lots of these guys about the place. Today - 20.02.22 - on a late afternoon walk through the neighbourhood to get some fish and chips, a couple swooped down in a low trajectory up a street we were walking along. Big bodied birds it always strikes me. Very well fed perhaps.



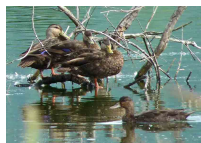
Noticed a group of three a couple of time this afternoon (23.2.11), a mother teaching a couple of chicks how to get worms etc – rearing season.

5) The Pigeons have been with us since we arrived. Calmly sitting on the back fence an blended integral part of the backyard scenery. This is the closest I could find – will have top pay more attention next time. Thought they had a few speckles about their neck, and also a small tuft of crest...

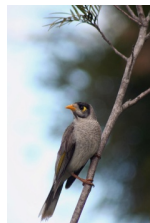


Photo needs updating – they were more grey on grey than this (perhaps doves?)

6) Traditional common ducks. 21.02.11 - Brown black, white, grey, a couple of ducks swimming around in their morning wake up foraging in the pond just behind the Bulleen Rd/Eastern Freeway bus stop. Wood Ducks I used to think but they are actually **Shovelers**.



7) 20.02.11 – outside of the reading corner window clinging onto the stems of some large red flowers (gladioli?), next door. Beaking around the flower for I know no what – have never seen them acting like that before...
Noisy Mynas – They were also flying up and down the skirts of the park connector on the way to work the next morning. Probably the populous bird here – along with the Lorikeets.



I first saw them when I didn't know the difference between noisy and common Mynas. Having seen common Mynas around now he may well have been one of them.

8) White pigeons (or Doves?) - 21.02.11 – a pair of these pecking through the grass close to a tee of the golf course just by the freeway off ramp at Bulleen Road (on the way home around 7:00pm.



9) Not certain what these are called – we used to call them Willy Wagtails, but I have heard them referred to as magpies as well (they are a lot smaller than the Aussie bush variety that I refer to as magpies). Again by the off ramp above traffic on the lights (seems to be a bird spotting mecca!) – 21.02.11 - 7:00pm (**Magpie Larks** apparently – birdsaustralia.com.au)



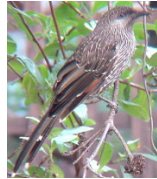
10) On the free way ramps again – 22.2.11 – on the way to work around 7:30. Black common crow quite majestic flying up onto the top of one of the lights distinctly above all the other birds (Mynas etc), with a definite air of owning the place. Unperturbed and unhurried, a position of importance/respect in the scheme of birds. (**Australian Raven** according to the web :).



11) Crested Pigeons – on the way home from work, waddling along the nature strips, eyeing me trying to decide whether to flee or stay...



12) This was either a 'little' or 'red' wattlebird – 27.02.11 around 4 in the afternoon on a wet summers day, sitting on the hills hoist in the back yard. I think more likely a red as it was quite large – slightly larger than the common Mynas. Seem to remember more of these around when we were here eight years back. Nice to find out they are honey eaters.



Saw him again tonight after getting home from work – no red around the face but yellowish bits to the tips of his tail feathers – **Little Wattlebird** I am pretty sure.

13) Swooping down in the freeway median reserve on the way home tonight (27.02.11), was a beautiful sulphur crested cockatoo. Common as muck unfortunately but like the lorikeets, incredibly beautiful. Used to see gangs of these around the place – nearer to rivers in Richmond and glen Waverley. Hopefully more to come :)..



14) Saw four slimmer looking black birds this morning (6.3.11, around 11:30), on a walk with the kids. High up in the tree tops, white feathers in their tails – not sure what they were – quite elegant and fluid. Couldnt find an image but closer to a Currawong than the ravens etc... **White Winged Chough** is closest I could find although supposedly all black with white patches on wings – I recall the odd white feather in the tail and wings.



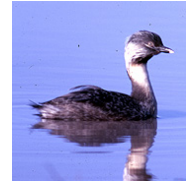
Saw again on the weekend (26.06.11), eating presumably soft rotting wood from top of the truncated tree out the front of the house.

15) Also on the walk this morning, lots of swallows flying low over the grass

(cut last week). Lovely birds. Always reminds me of Greece and our holiday around Paleokastarista (or something of that ilk!). **Welcome Swallows** I think they are, blacky blues.



16) Koonung Creek watching the ducks this morning there was a little one I hadn't seen before. Thought it might have been a baby duckling until it started to dive. Beautiful little thing up and down quite regularly... **Hoary Headed Grebe** I think it is, although more brown/light browns in colour than balcks, greys and whites. Was small so perhaps a fledgling?



17) 08.03.2011 Saw a grey bodied black headed bird with touches of white on a telegraph wire, on the walk to the bus this morning. Similar size to a Mynah but with a bigger beak. Pretty certain it was a **Butcher Bird** – mainly from the shape and proportions of the beak. Seen quite a few since.

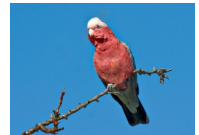


18) **Common Mynah**. I first thought I saw these guys sucking nectar or something out of gladioli in the neighbours garden outside of the reading corner window. Saw a whole tribe of them this morning however perched all over a big tree in the back yard of the house just on the other side of the park connector to us (15 Millicent?)



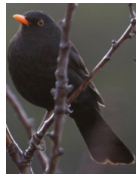
19) 5.6.2011 - **Pink & Grey Galah**.

Three of these guys arrived in the back yard this morning to break open the seed pods from the Liquid Ambers in the back yard. Like Galahs – friendly happy birds. Ewie came to have a look from our bedroom window whwere we could just see the one. Ange and Stella were outside where you could see all three. Nice.



20) 26.6.2011 – Common Blackbird.

Poking around in the front garden in the leaf litter etc from memory – seem to recall these birds from growing up as quite common – almost so common they avoid being noticed, or registered anyway...



21) 20.8.11 – Masked Lapwing.

Sitting in the front room yesterday morning, a silhouette of large wing span dropped into view (from the roof above), and elegantly swooped down to the nature strip to start browsing and pecking in the grass. A masked Lapwing – beautiful bird partly due to its size and grace – would have been 35-40 cm tall?



22) 13.9.11 – White Faced Heron. This guy was in Koonung Creek reserve down foraging around some boggy mud before a dog came in to chase away. Beautiful because of his size and the grace that comes with it. I have seen them in a group before on the other side of the freeway driving past in a car, this is the first one I have seen this side. Quite difficult to identify – Ibis, Egret, Heron... In the end went for White faced Heron as was only colour match.



If this wasn't the one saw a couple of weeks ago, I came across one today, startled him foraging in the grass off to the side of the bike track as I road past (24th Sept).

23) 14.10.2011 Cormorant.

I am classing this as seen in the park even though it was on a ride home from work (direct connection that doesn't involve getting in a car!). One sitting nicely drying his wings on a rowing ramp/beachy thing, and then others at Dight's falls on the way past. Dight's falls was great for birds, herons, cormorants and memorably a group of ducks floating down the rapids just under the falls, looking like they were on a pleasure ride, checking out the scenery and going on as they were carried along... 18.2.12 also saw at dog pond along with similar cormorant with white belly and yellow beak – refer below



24) 14.10.2011 Common Seagull. Again on the ride to/from work at Dights falls.



25) Various – Green (Grass?) Parrots – Australian Ringneck. See these little guys around a lot – forget to put them in, not sure if they are a less colourful version of the rainbow lorikeet? They are usually feeding on grass somewhere – will have to take more notice of the colours etc next time through the park...



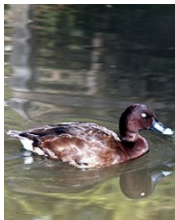
26) 18.10.2012 Pied Cormorant Saw walking Bronson at the dog pond. Hate to say but Bronny was swimming chasing ducks – without a hope of ever getting near one. There was a group of around a dozen ducks, a lot in one place, a black cormorant and this fellow sitting calmly on a rock watching all the goings on. I want to say he was a pied cormorant but they are supposed to have gray beaks – this had a bright yellow beak...



27) 14.07.12 Restless Flycatcher Saw a pair of birds I haven't seen before in the park connector today. I like pairs of bird – they are either partners or siblings, but mean the population is healthy and hopefully growing. Any way these birds have a beak and profile a lot like a butcher bird, only a little larger and sleeker? The colouring was beautiful also. An electric black/blue over the back and wings and top of head – the underside from eyes down a white or grey colour.



28) December 2012 – Harhead Duck - It took Freya to point this one out. We were over walking Bronny – Freya comes when others won't at times - and were looking at the new ducklings (6 or 7 of them), and Freya noticed the white/pale blue mark on the beak.



The year of living dangerously...

April forced meditation for half an hour each day. *Learned that is not as easy as I had thought. That it is relaxing, but just as good in fact more engaging somehow (in a non-engaging sort of way), is to just spend some time being quiet but cognisant of the environment around you. Small movements of the neck or something just to help you connect to the moment and be present in the now. Also good were slow deliberate movements of routine. Folding up a shirt or pants after wearing for a day and placing neatly away. A little Confucian? Japanese also. Will try spending more time taking breaks to connect with the present. Think I am quite good at that in any case?*

May getting up at 4:30 (two hours earlier) each day (and going to bed two hours earlier (with the kids). *Not as life changing as expected. Realised it is more what you do with the time. Staying away from television is a big plus. Going to bed with the kids is good too. Being quiet in the house an issue also!*

June Cook a meal from a cook book (dinner party suitable) once a week. *Unexpectedly enjoyable, taking the time to do the shopping and then an hour or two by myself in the kitchen – mind you it is when the results are good – yet to see how I feel when something does not go quite so well..*

1. **Romanian Stew** – 4.6.11- basically a colourful vegetable stew. *Not a lot of wow factor, but pretty solid as a stew and pretty solid as foods go (I don't like the word hearty – kids detective books overused it for me in my childhood). Good for winter – nice with toasted buns and butter – needs a very small amount of rice on one side as a cleanser.*
2. **Thai Beancakes and Asparagus** – 11-6.11 – *Couldnt find navy beans so used Cannellini beans instead. Mix was very good but had a lot of trouble frying the actual fritters for some reason. Started out with too much oil, but then second time round (the advantage of cooking for 4, still had issues – thought might have been the beans or the fact that pan was too hot, or not hot enough – maybe try a bit cooler next time with less oil to help cook through? Asparagus was really nice – and easy – cover in olive oil and bake for 7 minutes – just right, much easier than steaming or boiling.*

3. **Corn Fritters** – 13.6.11 – stuck for dinner so did some quick corn fritters – one of my favourites. Only had creamed corn unfortunately that didn't do them any favours – again difficulty frying – found a lower heat for longer was better as cooked right through without burning...
4. **Red Lentil & Wine Lasagne** – 17.6.11- Not bad – wanted something a bit different in taste, liked the red wine angle. Ended up just a tiny hint of too dry and the wine flavour was quite strong – used a Pinot Noir which while light is quite distinctive. Next time I might go a bit heavier on the chopped tomatoes and tomatoe puree, ease up on the wine just a little, or use a shiraz or something a little less recognizable. Pretty good all up though.
I am enjoying the process and the bread rolls and table set etc...
5. **Indian Potato and Pea Curry** – 24.6.11 – Really nice. Thin sauce but tasty. Potatoes etc cooked nicely rather than being like a traditional Indian curry where everything becomes a bit more homogeneous – not that that isn't nice, just different.
6. **Mediterranean Chickpea and rice** – 2.7.11 – Described as an unusual dish, it probably is. Nice, however a bit more of a side dish than a full on main. Not a lot of sauce through it but with a bit of butter (which was optional), came together nicely.

What was really nice, as for the week before, was that Ewan and Freya and I all had a hot chocolate while I picked out the recipe, and then did the vege shopping down at Greythorn shopping centre while Ange took Siella to an eye appointment. Nice being a part of local community and nice getting everything slotted into other things rather than a big Doncaster shopping Town Coles trip.

Post note – October and still doing it which is great. Fallen into a bit if a routine of shopping and cooking on a Saturday – like. Ange's Moroccan recipe book is now the favourite...

July No alcohol at all (dry July)

Actually signed up to Dry July on-line. There is now Feb-fast, Dry July and Sober October – sign of an over thinking, over saturated metro sexual society?

Did a worksafe 15min health check the other day at work. Blood pressure a little high, bad cholesterol ok, good cholesterol a shade low, waist measurement a shade high (no accounting for different body shapes!?). Exercise on the minimum, but probably drink just a little too much based on more than 3 times a week, more than 2 drinks per session. The more important thing was to give your system a break to clean itself out the nurse was saying – so Dry July will be a good thing.

7th July – not sure feeling any better but realise how often I reach for a drink just to relax Gin & Tonic to cook with, scotch late at night, just to be with my thoughts and to relax... slightly dangerous..

31st July – don't think it has done me any good physically? Felt good at swimming yesterday – will start again and see how I feel... Nice to know I can do it if I need to. Was quiet good being in control the whole time – not having too many at work functions and getting tired, slurring words etc. Did miss it cooking and a scotch to relax over at night or doing work (at night also).

August Write a poem a day

Finding this difficult – nice when I manage but difficult to make the time amongst all the priorities (like work and sleep!)... and difficult in terms of poetic inspiration. Makes me realise I must weave things into my life that are good. A little too introspective perhaps Brendon?

September No television at all

Not proving that drastic must admit. Good however – highlights were the plane trip to San Francisco which actually felt liberating – not having to feel like I had to get a movie in. Strange how it takes me deciding not to do it as an experiment – I was incapable of recognising it as a burden before.

Conclusion : Television is not that big a thing in my life. Happy to take or leave as it goes.

Post month note – now watching far less – in fact little at all.

October No dairy based food (milk cheese etc) for a month

2 days in – too early to tell but have found a good margerine substitute and milky soy for coffee – between Mocona decaf and soy – back to being enjoyable...!

Day 7 and no real change – Ange thinks she has lost weight, could be the bread and other wheat she has given up, or just learning to use the scales!

Despite finding a now acceptable coffee alternative (decaf with normal milk was just not cutting it), very little difference. Again though something I hadn't picked was being forced to eat different dishes rather than fall into the rut of the same pasta dish I just couldn't go past at lunch ...and finding out that I really enjoyed the variety!

Will force myself to eat different things more often from here on in.

Getting to end now (few days left), am really missing diary: chocolate, cream, milk, butte, cheese... No real physical effects I am noticing – not even weight loss which I had expected a bit. Am feeling the loss though – life is a better place with dairy foods. Might keep up the soy decaf coffees and even breakfast instead of milk as gives more variety to diet which has got to be good, but am adding all the rest back in pretty damn quick!

November Sketch a sketch a day

December *Slight extension of sketch a sketch a day. Admittedly Nov/Dec have been a bit of a break from things. Have continued to sketch a bit and want to/will continue.*

What is the lesson – sometimes life gets in the way of life.

January Not say no (as opposed to saying yes all the time). *Subtle difference – about trying to be positive in all things.*

February Spend 10 mins of dedicated time each day with Stella, Ewan and Freya.

March

What makes a good religion/Life Philosophy?

- It would avoid idolisation. A good philosophy should reside in the person not in an external God.
- It would preach detachment – taken from Buddhism I can relate to this being a source of pain and emotive thinking clouding reality.
- It would retain energy. Life is about the living, action and participation. Calmness and inner peace are good and they would form a part of it, but so is excitement and ambition and activeness, as long as pure and unselfish.
- It would recognise nature and a larger all encompassing force at work. Others seem to sense this and I feel I have also. I don't know what it is but there is something there, some connectedness, some larger Way. Borrowing from Taoism and the Jedi.
- It would preach peace. It would take from Christianity in terms of doing unto others as you would have unto yourself.
- It would not preach pain and loss as necessarily a bad thing. It would preach ways of dealing with them, of understanding them.
- It would recognise balance and the necessity of opposites. Good bad, calm, energetic etc. The need for one with the other. It would teach on how to manage these.
- It would encourage free thinking and humour, reflection and self reflection, and randomness.
- It would be about doing the right thing, not necessarily adopting a predetermined set of morals or right and wrong. Drinking, eating meat etc are sometimes the right thing to do. The right thing to do needs to be appropriate and the underlying reasons real. This might introduce some inconsistency and even unfairness – what is right for one person might not be for another but that is a part of life in some respects?
- It would encourage practical confirmation of its ideals, and even adjustment of the ideals in the face of reality.

- The founding base of all of its teachings would be truth, and honesty, and reality.
- It would place a strong emphasis on being in the present moment, but it would recognise that the past and the future reach into the present through a continuum of cause and effect.
- It would have a cool symbol and maybe not take things too seriously.
- It would allow for change. Externally and internally. It maybe would maintain the same processes for ending up at a state – meditation and self analysis, consideration of others and the earth around us but it would end up in different forms, that change and are appropriate to age, circumstance.
- Positive energy both on the active (instigation, energy and application), and passive fronts (understanding, facilitation. Forgiveness).

To Do

- See film “Emperor and the Assassin” (the story of Chinas first emperor)
- Study structure of hive bees
- Mao’s Biography
- Sailing – Power Boat course, Skippers license
- Take kids to orchestra
- Search good photo art and order on line
- ~~Landscape back garden~~
- ~~Paint outside of house~~
- Mandarin lessons for kids Balwyn High
- ~~Organise Sydney weekend away.~~
- Piano teacher for kids
- ~~Activity for Ewan?~~
- ~~Read ‘Biography of a yogi’~~
- ~~Read ‘Be here now’ – Baba Ram Dess~~
- ~~Install Cupboards (Freya’s room and Study)~~
- ~~Buy Japanese/Chinese poetry books~~
- Start taking breaks for the moment regularly
- ~~Finish back yard and rear deck~~
- Re-read A Brief History of Time.
- Do 7 up exercise on myself and Ange...

Books Read

Date	Exercise	Other
End November -	The Republic Plato	
End November -	The Heart Garden	
5 th December 2011 -	The Seasons of a Mans Life Daniel J. Levinson	Second go at reading this. The first was an impatient and confused try around 10-15 years ago. This time I was able to latch onto the mid life transition with a little more success. A scary book for me to read – all this talk of fixed periods of transition and stages etc... I am a big believer in not adhering to or being accepting of these things. Perhaps just now however this kind of suits me. Time to settle down for the kids, and for Ange, get her through her studies, and get a bit of stability financially (or at least clarity over where things are heading) Recommended (in fact given), by Peter Bowtell. I must remember to thank him.
31 st December 2011 – 15 th January 2012	Steve Jobs Walter Isaacson	Steve Jobs biography. Surprisingly straight laced as far as biographies go I must admit. Was expecting something a bit more out of the ordinary, like Steve Jobs himself. An easy read, and good insight into who he was. Child of the 60s grown up in the 80's. Bit of a hard shit in a lot of respects with personality disorders – no capability for empathy and things like that. Accomplished a lot – took a lot away from the book – good things I would like to emulate and bad things to avoid. The bad admittedly is mostly around the ferocious achiever attitudes of the 80's. I hope we can move on from a lot of that. I think it isn't just confined to the 80's, it is much a part or product of of young (male?), adulthood also I think, so will always be there, just tempered perhaps, or in a different form better – directed towards saving the world and looking after people?
15 th January 2012 -	Autobiography of a Yogi Paramhansa Yogananda	Steve Jobs read (and re-read) this. It is one of the texts credited with bringing Eastern religion to the West. Would have formed a part of the hippy dippy Californian movement – what a great time. Enjoying and trying to take with an open but sceptical mind. Ended up being very good. I am not sure how to take it in terms of reality – materialising and dematerialising gurus etc and even gets into alternative astral plane planets and so on. Perhaps, perhaps not – more likely the latter – a lot of drugs and a license perhaps involved but some really nice core stuff at the middle of it all. I think everyone has to find their own pace and place with that sort of thing. And balance with it – something I am

		struggling with at the moment - being pulled in too many directions, only one of them being the simple path I feel is real, maybe after kids... or not! I have a feeling Steve Jobs re-read it in search for facts around the afterlife if there is one.
Early Jan 2012	The Republic Plato	
May 2012	The Hound of the Baskervilles Conan Doyle	Great detective read. What I especially like is the view into English gentry. The people of society and the references to peasants. The mystery and dread around the mire and the moor. Funny reading it now you can detect a few join lines where Conan Doyle has explained things to cover the odd hole in the story...
June 2012	The Pigeon	Great little book. Slightly disturbing and could imagine it tipping someone over the edge in terms of their sanity. Nice to read an obvious translation from the French (I think).
June 2012	One Hundred Great Books in Haiku David Bader	I like things like this – small snippets to read with some art about them. Written with a bit of a sense of humour which was good at times, misleading at others. Reminds me of Japanese poetry – I should get back into that...
June -2012	Mans Search for Meaning Victor E Frankl	A book on logotherapy which is a strain of psychology based on the premise that man needs meaning in his life. The first half is about his experiences in Auschwitz which was incredibly gripping in itself. The second goes into logotherapy which sounds like his brainchild. Some good stuff in there and well worth reading – will have contributed to or reinforced anyway a lot of my intuitive beliefs.
June 2012	Tales of the unexpected Roald Dahl	Very quick read. Was surprised to see Roald Dahls name on the book – having seen it in my kids books. Was also surprised at the stories – I had seen the movie when a lot younger – or was it a television show. Reasonable however felt could have been better. Left most tales hanging with an insinuated end only. Quite good as leaves you with some doubt and thinking to do.
July 2012	The Mind of God Paul Davies	Good book – learned a few things about astrophysics and logical philosophy. Felt Paul Davies was obsessed with looking for meaning in things tough. Looking for intelligent design or some greater meaning. I really think if there is a greater meaning, fantastic, however from what we have seen, extrapolating what is likely to be real, the amazing incomprehensible stuff of today will be the comprehensible of tomorrow.
August 2012	The Happy Prince (& other stories) Oscar Wilde	A book of fairy tales which I must admit is not what I was expecting when I bought it. Enjoyable however and fills a few gaps in that knowledge – references to stories I never quite knew previously.

		It really comes across as having been written in good society, in the times of drawn carriages, large women's dresses and gentlemen among the peasants. You can sense Oscar Wilde's sensitivity and appreciation of beauty. Some of the later stories really took me. The depth of the imagination and descriptive writing. Beautiful. Baroque almost in style.
South	Ernest Shackleton	Fantastic record of the plight of the Endurance and her crew during Shackleton's ill fated expedition to Antarctica. A lot of scientific and rather dry descriptions of floating ice floes etc What an amazing story and well written. Now have a lot of respect for Shackleton as a leader. There are a few ever so subtle hints of the true nature of leadership in that day. The dumping over the side of the youngest crew member so he could be first to set foot on Elephant island, and go down in history. The poor guy was non-too pleased and just sat there in the swell from memory – very close to or ended up with frost bite. It is also a wonder How Shackleton seemed to keep going, the strongest of all of the crew, I wonder if leadership in that day involved extra rations etc to keep the senior people fit and well in the interests of the greater group. Not that I necessarily disagree with this approach, just that it is a bit unusual by today's standards.
Meditations	Marcus Aurelis	
On the Road	Jack Kerouac	Brilliant as ever. Classic book. Inspiring and a little scary at the same time. Does my life have anywhere near that freedom, will it ever?
Be Here now	Baba Ram Dass	Cool. Young up and coming 60's psychologist realises all he is doing is a lot of pretending and ends up in India after experimenting with psychedelics. Love this concept and some fantastic experiences and writing. Really 60's with a lot of it obviously coming from converted pamphlets produced in the time – MAD type illustrations, hippies and the whole beat/free love generation ☺.
	Jim Stynes	Biography. Very good – sobering insight into cancer and the slow demise and fight against a debilitating and unforgiving disease. Interesting insights into Melbourne Football Club, and lots of in-between the lines stuff re Jim and his attitude to life – is it all as it seems. Revelations re tanking of Melbourne in the 2009 season might suggest perhaps not...
For Whom the bell tolls	Ernest Hemingway	

