

GROWTH STRUGGLE

AND FINDING A WAY FORWARD

VOLUME 32

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When you live your life intentionally,
you can accomplish the equivalent of 3 lives in 1 lifetime.

EVERYTHING I CREATE
OPERATES FROM THIS SIMPLE PHRASE

“
*when you feel inspired
you have to act*

WELCOME

This past year has been about finding peace and patience with life. There has been a lot of mental growth. As Anita and I question and become more aware of what we value and want out of life, the changes we each need to make are starting to align. The hardest part is having the diligence and patience it takes to change ones life. Getting to where we are today didn't happen over night. Changing your life won't either.

I have made a few changes to the magazine. I originally published the magazine thinking I would go by calendar year, meaning January to January. I realized that this series, and the way I am compiling each one, is really about the changes and growth I experience in a single year. So I decided to make a shift to have the volumes correlate with my age instead of the calendar year. This magazine, volume 32, covers my 32nd year through life: my struggles, successes and current mindset.

I hope you enjoy this art and find inspiration in these pages. If something resonates with you, share it. Spread the inspiration or share this copy with someone who could benefit as well. Also, feel free to send me a note and let me know how my work affected you. Sometimes as busy people, we forget there are humans on the other side of the products we buy. They may need encouragement to keep creating.

Enjoy!

MARK WARNICK

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CREATE

To create is a feeling
A state of being
Life that provides food for feeding
My family.

Design is the reason I rise
Every morning with a desire to strive
For something more than myself.

Generations past built us and now
We square our shoulders to allow
The next generation of innovator
& thought shakers to explode.

Creating new systems and wisdoms
That allow human being to thrive.
We keep going,
Always owing
A debt to the past,
Never forgetting those who died.
Until every human is at last treated with respect.

To create is a feeling

Feel it every single day!





MY JOURNEY OUT OF MORMONISM

First, I wanted to make it clear that transitioning out of Mormonism has been one of the hardest things. It’s such a mental, emotional and spiritual struggle. I want to correct the idea that faith crisis happens to those whose testimonies are, “not deep enough”. This is simply not the case with me nor is it consistent with the people I have come to meet. Most everyone I know who has left the church were, like myself, strong, active, vibrant members. I’ve spent my life being trained and condi-

tioned to think, act and speak a certain way and believe me, it is painful to leave behind so much of what you once enjoyed. Evolving is a hard process.

Evolving is a hard process. Yet through the evolution I have come to discover an even greater joy and understanding

Yet through the evolution I have come to discover an even greater joy and understanding. Everyone has their own story, their own reasons for leaving or staying. This is mine.

INDEPENDENT THINKING

My transition started years before I left. The very first experience was small, but the beginning of my independent thinking. I was never a political person but Anita’s family was interested in discussing politics and had open conversations. It was nice.



I knew many of them were Democrats. My parents were Republican and most people in the church were Republican but I didn’t know what that meant. People asked which party or side I was on and I didn’t know or care. I wanted to listen to both sides.

Anita was great. She never gave me any slant on which party I should join. She encouraged me to figure out for myself and really let me be what I wanted to be. I felt I could honestly choose either or neither and Anita would be totally on board. She just wanted me to be informed. That is one of the traits I learned quickly about her. She stays informed. I admired that. So after open investigation and hearing both parties I realized I most often agreed with the Democratic view point. The shocking thing to me was how so many people in the church could be Republican. I felt, for me, the views and morals I learned in the church correlated closer with the Democratic party. I remember even saying to my father-in-law, “Why aren’t more Mormons democrats?”. He smiled and said something to this effect, “I’ve been asking that same question for years”. This was my first experience where I began to see my views and interests were very much the minority in the Mormon community.

When I graduated college my first job was working for a large, fortune 100 company

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Ultimately, my experience there helped me begin to see the mormon church as a large corporation

RELIGION IS A CORPORATION

When I graduated college my first job was working for a large, fortune 100 company in San Antonio, Texas. They had alumni lunches, where all the people from any of the BYU schools would gather and help new hires get acquainted with other seasoned employees. I remember hearing people talk about the parallel between the church and the organization who employed us. Many seemed to like working for a company that felt like the church. It felt odd to me hearing people say things like, “I swear it feels like the founders of this company had to be Mormon.” Ultimately, my experience there helped me begin to see the Mormon church as a large corporation. (More on this in the “Why Church has become so unhealthy” section)

ENTREPRENEUR MINDSET

After two and a half years of coding features for my company’s iPhone and iPad app, I joined the Innovation team in R&D. The entrepreneur in me, which I never

knew I had, was awakened. I began to thrive in this new environment. I started reading books that began developing my new found desire to use business to create social good in the world. I identified with these founders’ stories. The first book was “Things A Little Bird Told Me” by Biz Stone, the co-founder of Twitter. His was the ten year journey to the “overnight success”. Other impactful books were, “People Over Profit”, “Start Something That Matters”, “Rework”, and “The War Of Art”. These are my classics and I frequently find myself re-reading them.

This time period was the start of a major mental shift. I have described it before as a second puberty. I found myself feeling this change and really missing the relationship I used to have with my parents, my dad especially. We used to talk all the time in high school about preparing for a mission, preparing to go to the temple and about religious talks from LDS conferences. As I started going through this change, which I couldn’t even really articulate at the time, although I knew something was changing, I was longing for my dad to help guide me through it. I kept trying to talk to him but never articulated what I wanted from him. I just kept thinking, “I need my dad”. I wanted the comfort of thinking my parents had all the answers.

DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS/CORE BELIEFS

Then, during a visit with my parents my dad sat down and wanted to talk to Anita and I. The conversation revolved around how he thought I was not serving enough in the church and he felt Anita may be inhibiting me from serving (the Mormon church is largely operated by local unpaid clergy and volunteers. My parents shared their experience of how my dad had demanding church callings outside of his 9 to 5 job, leaving my mom with a gaggle of kids to handle. That worked for them but that kind of relationship would not work for Anita and I. It was a very strange feeling. I was caught off guard. I realized my parents didn’t really know our situation at all. I know what they shared was meant to be sincere and out of love but it was their point of view, from their own experience on the outside, looking in.

We explained how it was actually Anita who had been asked by church leadership to serve in many demanding church callings. Time after time I was asked by the church leadership to be the support to her. (Which anyone who has met Anita knows she is an amazing person; it’s really no surprise she was asked to serve in so many of these callings over the years). Then my dad ended by saying, “It’s my dream for my sons to be called to serve as bishops”. On our ride home Anita and I talked about how strange the conversation was. Anita said, “We do NOT believe in the same church and if that is

“We do NOT believe in the same church and if that is what the church is, I don’t want to be a part of it”



what the church is, I don't want to be a part of it". I had to agree and we later found that our views of the church were the minority. I realized two major things that night: One, my parents didn't have all the answers; they didn't even have all the facts of our situation (this is obvious in hindsight, no one has all the answers but as a kid you think the world is more organized than it really is). We each have our own view point and even if two people go to the same church they can believe very different things. The second lesson learned was I had to stop expecting my parents to be able to fix things, or that I would be able to go back to the relationship we used to have. That was hard to realize.

TEACHING SEMINARY

We didn't know it at the time, but that experience with my parents was a huge turning point for us. A few months later I was asked to be an early morning seminary teacher and I was excited. My mom was a seminary teacher for years — That's partly why I was excited to teach, because I always thought my mom was the best teacher. She was so good at making it fun and exciting and that is hard to do with a 6am class start time. I had ten to twelve regular students ranging from freshman to senior and I wanted to take the approach of teaching seminary the way I wish someone would have taught me. I didn't want to tell students what to believe. I wanted to present the information and then encourage them to find out what felt right for them.

*The sooner you find out who you are and
what you stand for the better chance you
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I started class saying something to the effect that, in just a few short years they would be eighteen, out of school and off on their own where no one will make them go to church. You decide who you are and how/what you believe. I remember saying, "You don't have to wait until then to find out what you feel is right". I encouraged them to ask questions, challenge their thinking and talk with parents and leaders about concerns they had. The sooner you find out who you are and what you stand for the better chance you have at discovering the life you want to live and person you want to be. I also explained that through the year we would be learning together. I was not a teacher, but rather, a facilitator; meaning I would present topics and ideas, then we would each take turns teaching and learning, myself included.

I was there to open/close the meeting, and guide conversation. I was not there to tell them what to believe. I simple presented information and invited them to think logically about it, question their assumptions, and find out what they wanted to do with that information. I think this more aptly prepares youth for life after high school. The sooner you learn you are an agent, who acts for yourself, and not an object who gets acted upon, the greater chance you have at owning your life.

JOSEPH SMITH, THE ENTREPRENEUR

The topic that year was the Doctrine and Covenants, which is about the founding of the Mormon church. Again I presented information but not just information in the seminary book. The church had begun publishing, “The Joseph Smith Papers” as well as detailed answers with historic facts on major topics such as plural marriage, and translating the Book of Mormon. These writings intrigued me. There was a lot

of information that was different than the narrative I had learned growing up in the church. Also, while I was reading the Doctrine and Covenants, I found some of the revelations to be questionable (I had never really read it before). For example, I don’t recall the sections but one of them had to deal with a “revelation” that someone was commanded to purchase land

for Joseph. For the first time I remember thinking, “This feels like Joseph needs someone to buy something for him because he doesn’t have the money”. It felt odd and did not sit well with me, but I kept pushing these notions and insights to the side and not sitting on it very long. This is when I began to see Joseph more as a visionary founder of a startup (the startup being the church)more than a prophet. I started seeing so many parallels between him and all the other entrepreneurial biographies I had been reading at the time, and that is not a bad thing.

It was very satisfying to teach seminary. I was not hiding anything. We had real discussions and I presented hard subjects with much of the material being new for me as well (like finding out there was more than one “first vision” story by Joseph Smith and the stories had conflicting details).

SIDE NOTE

For those unaware of Mormonism, the “first vision” is Joseph Smith’s personal account of being called by God to be a Prophet. The importance of this account, at least as it was explained the thirty years I was in Mormonism, is that it was first hand experience of Joseph finding out God has a body of flesh and bone. This is a core belief in Mormonism, which is why it was so shocking to learn there were multiple accounts (something never talked about, or if it was it was called “anti-mormon”). It was also shocking to learn

There was a lot of information that was different than the narrative I had learned growing up in the church

the accounts changed and progressed as his view on the trinity changed and progressed.

I wasn’t even sure how I felt about the new information but, naturally, I found justifications, and made a story that worked for me. In class, we had open discussion about the multiple accounts. Again I was not there to tell them what I thought, but to present information and let them discuss it and come to their own decisions on how they wanted to deal with the new information. I would pull up the topics in class and read from lds.org, which is Mormon church approved teaching resources. Each class had good, healthy, conversation from most of the students.

MIND-SHIFTING CONVERSATION

Some time near the beginning of the second half of the year, Anita and I had a mind altering discussion. Over the previous years I had grown to dislike attending church, which I will address later. At this point I hat-

ed going to church but I still believed the church was true. One night, Anita shared how she was struggling with her feelings about the church. Then she said, something to the effect, “I’m not sure the church is true”, and “I don’t think it is a healthy place for me right now”. This was hard to hear because it shook my thinking. In Mormonism you can’t get to the highest level in heaven without a partner, so I can’t stress enough how earth shattering this was. It was never an option in my mind to leave the church or that it wasn’t true, even though I had been unhappy

with the people, culture and some of the teaching for years leading up to this. My mind was incapable of seeing or choosing anything that was outside of the church. I couldn’t even see the church had become an unhealthy place for me as well.

It may seem counterintuitive but looking back, I feel this experience was vital for me. I had to break down these preconceived notions that were deep in my mind, which I had been unable to access, in order to either find happiness staying in the church or discovering the harsh reality that the church is no longer a place for me to become my best self.

It was very scary to hear my spouse say these things, but I love and respect her so much that I was able to push my thinking aside and allow her the

My mind was incapable of seeing or choosing anything that was outside of the church. I couldn’t even see the church had become an unhealthy place for me as well





space to be herself. No judgements. No tricks. Just blind trust in your partner. This is so much harder to do than it sounds, but that is true love in my opinion. It was tremendously scary because there was no guarantee how it would end. We could change so much that we grew out of love. That was my biggest fear. I can't underscore that enough. I felt very vulnerable. Yet, I knew Anita to be an incredibly bright, intelligent person and no matter what happened, she had the best heart. I wanted her to be happy, even if that path to happiness didn't include me. It's a hard pill to swallow. I had to let go of what I wanted her to be and trust her to discover who she wanted to become. She also provided me the same support. You have to let your partner continue to grow. In a healthy relationship you learn to fall in love with who they are becoming.

This sounds great in hind-sight, but at the time it was terrifying. I now see how much respect we had for each other. Throughout the entire process, we respected each other's thinking. I honestly wanted the best for her. This wasn't the end. Years later we still are dealing with struggles from leaving Mormonism but we continue to work through them together.

RESPECTFUL DISCUSSIONS

The following months Anita and I had many discussions, listening and hearing the other person. This is where respect was most needed. We were definitely at different points in our journey but we respected the other person's path. Anita agreed to still go to church, since I was not mentally ready to stop (even though she was the one who was dragging me and the kids there). She was also fully supportive of my seminary teaching, which was very demanding on her as well. She never once complained.

SIDE NOTE

It's important to mention this wasn't the first experience giving Anita space

with Church topics. Early on in our marriage Anita had two miscarriages. During the second pregnancy she began to feel something was wrong and asked for a priesthood blessing. Anita's father, Carlos and I gave her a blessing, in which I told her she would have the baby. I had given many blessings before and felt the spirit very strong that everything would be okay. Shortly after she had the miscarriage. She then explained even when I had blessed her to have the baby, she knew in her body, the pregnancy wasn't going right and she wouldn't keep it but she pushed that aside and tried to have faith in the priesthood.

It was hard for both of us spiritually. We kept analyzing the blessing in our heads. I was asking my dad and church leader what I had done wrong. I felt the spirit just as I had many many times before in all the blessings I had performed. I remember never feeling I got a good answer and I just thought it was my fault. I felt I wasn't righteous enough. At the same time I was wrestling with what happened, Anita and I were talking and after a long tearful discussion of mutual confusion, she said, "I don't think I want to go to church for a while". Boom! It hit me like a ton of bricks. A million thoughts of confusion went through my mind, but some how I responded, "Okay, I know you will figure it out". I tried to leave her with the overall sense, "I'm here for you". I surprised myself with the response. And it was incredibly scary. I kept having mixed thoughts about it but ultimately I knew, no matter what, Anita had the best heart of anyone I had ever met. I had confidence in her and who she was as

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a human. She stopped going for a short time. It was still hard for me even though I had confidence and trust in her. She eventually came back when she was ready. That experience prepared us and gave me the confidence we could figure this out together.

Returning to the story, by the end of seminary we had agreed that once seminary was over we would give ourselves some time away from the church. We started to discover our own belief systems and how to navigate life outside of what we had known. We talked with friends about their paths and religious beliefs. I really didn't feel like I needed a replacement church but I was interested in what different people believed and how they came to find what worked for them. Anita and I independently began identifying humanist. I felt I wanted to focus on living life intentionally, which is part of what kicked off this whole magazine. Anita and I grew together. We grew as a family. We began a new family tradition of the early morning adventures I wrote about in the first issue of this magazine. I felt awakened to life and each step since has helped me continue to grow and evolve.

WHY CHURCH HAD BECOME SO UNHEALTHY

Let me explain why church had become such an unhealthy place for me. Bottom line, I realized there was no real conversation happening at church because there was never an openness to opposing ideas. Everything stayed on the surface with bland, repetitive responses. No room to truly question. No possibility that this religion isn't for everyone. It's a culture of complacent conformity. It only works when everyone does what they are told. It's a place where rules trump intuition because it's difficult to manage independent thinking. And we are right back to the parallel between the church and big business.

Ultimately it wasn't one single topic or issue that made me realize Mormonism isn't for me. It was looking at all the issues collectively. For years I would discover a piece of Mormonism that was incongruent with my belief system (or even Mormon doctrine in some cases). I would examine the issues individually, come to a justification on how it could possibly make sense and try not to focus on it; until another thing would not sit right. The funny thing to me is that I was discouraged from many people in the church as well as from the top leadership, from going "too far off in the branches" vs staying close to the base".

First, this is fear mongering and I started noticing how much religion in general (and large corporations) use fear as a key motivator. Second, the questions I had were the base. What I found is that the truth is not as pretty as the church wanted to paint it. And once I started learning about how things actually happened, I felt like I had been lied to my whole life. Worse, the church wasn't even correcting many of the inaccuracies that were exposed, even some of those exposed in the newly published "Joseph Smith Papers" released by the church. For instance, in all the videos and images produced by the church or in church material it still depicts Joseph Smith using

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*Always be kind, act with respect
and let your heart guide you*

gold plates to translate the Book of Mormon instead of the truth, that he would place a rock in a hat, put his face in the hat and words would appear on the rock, and then were dictated to a scribe. Never mind that this tactic was used in his first business to lead clients to buried treasure. (Seriously how did this not come up earlier?).

In the end, I left Mormonism because I had a disconnect with the culture and environment of the church. Everything I learned as an adult about the history and founding of the church only clarified why it had become an unhealthy place for me. It has not come without great pain, stress and lots of therapy. I suppose everyone has their own role to play in life. For me, my heart is leading me down a different path and I am happy. The greatest insight I learned at a young age was to listen to my heart over the noise of others. I learned to be true to myself. I hope the same for you.

Always be kind, act with respect and let your heart guide you.

THE DOCTRINAL DETAILS

Now, let's get to the heart of the topic. I want to enumerate in some detail the topics I came across that went against my core beliefs. I will share what I learned and how it affected me. Much of my learning came from the church's website and reference material. Another great resource that was very helpful in understanding all this was the CES Letter. Look into it if you are interested in more details on any of the topics.

Another resource that helped Anita and I through this transition was a site called "Mormon Stories". We listened to other people's journeys through the hard times after finding out about this information. It felt good to hear other humans who were strong, devout Mormon members that also struggled with this information as they lived in and transitioned out of Mormonism.

POLYGAMY

This is one that had always been an awkward topic growing up. Prior to teaching seminary, when anyone asked about polygamy or made a joke about it, I would respond, "That was stopped a long time ago" and "Anyone who does that is not Mormon". I brushed it aside. Another thing I would say is, "There was lots of tragic deaths in those times and polygamy was to help support wives whose husbands had died on the journey west". I never had depth or understanding about it.

In teaching seminary, when I came to the lesson about the start of polygamy I began to really question Joseph Smith. There was so much shocking information it was really hard to hear. So many red flags here. First off, his first marriage was to a teenager who was a servant in his house. More

over, it was hidden from Emma. I later found that most of his marriages were done without his wife’s consent or knowledge, which directly contradicts the “revelation” given by Joseph in Doctrine and Covenants. These marriages hidden from Emma happened not just once or twice but multiple times, even after the revelation to consult Emma was given.

I came to find that Joseph was married to 34 women, the youngest being 14. Really? And this is okay? I had a really hard time with that. In some of the marriages Joseph and his wives later separated even though Joseph had a “revelation” to marry these women? Something was not adding up. It’s important to note, polygamy was not even public knowledge until Brigham Young announced it in 1852, years after Joseph’s death and the church had settled in Utah. That was another shocker. It is talked about in the church as if the practice of polygamy and Joseph’s polyandrous life style, was common knowledge. Yet, when a newspaper was going to expose Joseph Smith’s polygamy lifestyle, he had a mob destroy the printing presses. An act which was partially what led him to his death. Why was he so afraid of polygamy being public that he hired a mob to destroy and vandalize other’s property?

Adding to it, I was reading the Manifesto from Wilfred Woodruff, 4th president of the church, declaring Mormons needed to stop polygamy and I realized, the Manifesto wasn’t a “revelation”. It was survival. They had no other choice. When it’s discussed in church it is always spun that polygamy had “run its course for now” or “served its purpose”. I then came to find The United States Congress deemed polygamy unconstitutional and was sending an army to force the Mormon people to stop because it was unlawful! The church leadership tried to continue it but once military was getting involved there was a “revelation” to suddenly stop it. Even now the church teaches that the revelation of polygamy is not in effect on the Earth now but will be in heaven. How can one criticize a person who engaged in polygamy today while still teaching the practice is an everlasting principle after death?

POLYANDRY

Once I heard about polyandry, that was it for me. I knew Joseph Smith had a bunch of wives but polyandry, I learned, was a woman having multiple husbands. This felt very blatantly over the line. I read about how he had married 11 wives that had living husbands and without their husbands’ consents. There are accounts of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young sending a husband on a mission and then marrying the man’s wife while he was gone. On one account, Brigham just straight up said, “She is mine now.”

There are accounts of Joseph Smith telling a woman that an angel would kill him if she would not marry him. Many of the women were given promises of eternal salvation for them and their families. Several of these girls were in their teens and were servants in the Smith house. There were even mother daughter sets.

After reading this I did not believe Polygamy was a revelation. It was hard. At the time, I still thought the church was true but I did not believe polygamy was a revelation from God. I came to believe Joseph misused his position and power for personal gain. He got tangled up in his own web which began to spin out of control. He used religion to pray on women and justify his misdeeds.

BOOK OF ABRAHAM

It was quite a shock to find out that the book of Abraham still exists! It blew my mind. They were parchments found in Egyptian tombs. A man was passing through town and showed them to Joseph and he told someone to buy them (because he didn’t have any money). However, both Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists agree, Joseph’s translation does not match what is on the scrolls. The scrolls don’t even mention Abraham and they’re not even from the same time period.

BOOK OF MORMON

As I stated before, learning how Joseph Smith actually translated the Book of Mormon was very weird. He found a smooth rock in his neighbor’s yard and first used it to find buried treasure. He would charge people and then put this smooth stone he found in the hat, place his face in the hat and then tell them the location of buried treasure. He used the same method to translate the Book of Mormon. What bothers me is they still portray the story with Joseph using the gold plates which is false. Why do they leave out this truth? For me it is another example of facts that use to be called “anti-mormon” which I found to be church history.

View of the Hebrews – I found out there was a book published several years earlier by a Pastor named Ethan Smith. The book shares every major fact that is in the Book of Mormon. A family travels from the old world, crosses the sea to the new world, America. It even has Christ visiting the Americas, referred to as “Quetzalcoatl”, the White Mexican god. Also, Oliver Cowdrey was part of Ethan Smith’s congregation prior to meeting Joseph Smith. Oliver helped Joseph Smith “translate” the Book of Mormon by serving as a scribe.

PRIESTHOOD RESTORATION

When I was reading the CES Letter mentioned previously, I had learned that the story of the priesthood being restored was actually not part of the church history until several years after the event. Even more, the story of John the Baptist and Peter, James and John appearing to Joseph Smith was not included in the original Doctrine and Covenants published in 1833 (originally titled Book of Commandments). It wasn’t added until the 1835 edition where the church backdated the events to 1829! This is a vital event and cornerstone of the church.

FIRST VISION ACCOUNTS

As earlier alluded, in my seminary studies the first piece of information I came across was the multiple accounts of the first vision. I had read them and originally came to the conclusion that he was protecting the sacredness of the experience depending on the audience he was addressing. It made sense at the time because, again, individually I could find a way to justify what I found to fit in with what I was taught. Over time, the justification couldn’t last.

When I started to look at everything collectively it started to make much more sense. I saw how Joseph’s view on the trinity changed over time and his story changed to fit with the theology of the moment. It is another case of having to rewrite the story to make sense of the overall narrative he was beginning to curate. It’s in line with how he handled the restoration of the priesthood, the Book of Mormon (and the book’s revisions to fit with his theology on the trinity), the “discovery and translation” of the book of Abraham and worst of all, polygamy and polyandry. It is a pattern that matches across each of these events. It also makes sense he would

take these steps as a founder of this corporation. He is a salesman. That being said, I believe, Joseph, as a founder of the company, wanted his enterprise to do good in the world and to outlive him.

DISCRIMINATION OF BLACKS, WOMEN AND LGBTQ

It blew my mind to hear Joseph Smith gave the priesthood authority to a few black men and many women. It was Brigham Young who put a ban on black males receiving the priesthood in 1852 (the same year polygamy was made public as well). Why was this information not taught to church members? Brigham Young lived in a time of blatant racism and he, among others, were blatantly racist. Equally confusing is the fact that the church was not then, nor has it been now, a leader in the civil rights movement. Honestly there should never had been a ban. Nevertheless the fact that it took the church over 100 years to break the ban is troubling. This “revelation” happened to coincide with the fact BYU was possibly going to loose their tax exemption and that other universities were boycotting BYU athletics. This is congruent with they way the previous “revelation” on ending polygamy came about. The policy seems to be: only change when the law forces you and then call it revelation.

I now saw a pattern of the church as I began to look at all the issues collectively. If the history doesn't fit nicely into their perfect sunshine story, just go back and retrofit everything to conform to how you want it to look

their policy changes that directly attacked the LGBTQ community I was appalled. The policy was so extreme. It required a child with gay parents to denounce their family in order to become a member. It felt so against Christ and his teachings. That is what gave me the desire not just to question but to start distancing myself from Mormonism. I no longer want to be associated with the community. By this time Anita and I were beginning to identify as Humanist and the Mormon view felt very counter to our core beliefs.

Turning back to discriminating against women; besides the way women were treated during polygamy and the after effects of polygamy, it was shocking news to hear that both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had given women the priesthood. Again, this was another situation that I felt the church lied to me about by omitting this very crucial part of the history. It was unclear to me when women stopped getting the priesthood. Brigham Young records in his journal giving three women the priesthood in October 1843. Looking at the issues collectively I could see the pattern of church leaders crafting their history to fit the church leader's current narrative.

This matches with issues I've had with the church's stance on gay marriage. I remember when the church was active in fighting against making gay marriage legal in California. I was a youth at the time and I remember it didn't feel right. Church members were always bringing up the fact that allowing gay marriage would take away our freedom of religion. They would use scare tactics like, “We won't be able to have temple marriages because ‘they’ would force us to allow same sex marriages in the temple too”. Then when they announced

TEMPLE ORDINANCES

I learned that all the temple ordinances come from the Freemasonry. It is a fraternity Joseph himself had joined weeks before he introduced the temple ceremony, which was pulled directly from their ceremonial process. This can and is justified by many but for me, I simply don't believe it. This showcases Smith's ‘founders’ mentality of being inspired by what other people are doing and forming it into your own product. He was a visionary, a futurist and a great founder. He knew how to sell a story and have it resinate with people.

JUSTIFIED FAKE DOCTRINE

The last great shock was discovering how the church bought up artifacts that were sold as authentic documents of church history, later to find out they were all a scam. The church would buy them up and hide them in the church vault. Then I read the fake salamander letter talk, where Dallin H Oaks, a top General Authority of the church, justified the meaning of a document in a sermon given to church members. The document was later proven to be a fraud, and it was not the only one. It wasn't just the fact that the church leaders were duped by the fake documents, it's the length they went to cover up and justify what was found. They were trying to control the story and I get it, but in the end, I just couldn't keep justifying this story anymore.





“*The older I get the younger every age feels*”



TIMELESS

I believe design is at its best when it can span the ages. It is my ultimate test for how well something is designed. That is what I strive for in my work. I look at an idea or concept and ask, “would this have helped people fifty years ago? How about fifty years from now?”. That was one of the reasons I was excited to take on this notion of helping people learn to live life intentionally. Nearly everyone, at one point or another, yearn to feel they have made an impact; to feel their life mattered. People felt this yearning fifty years ago and it will still be the case fifty years from now.

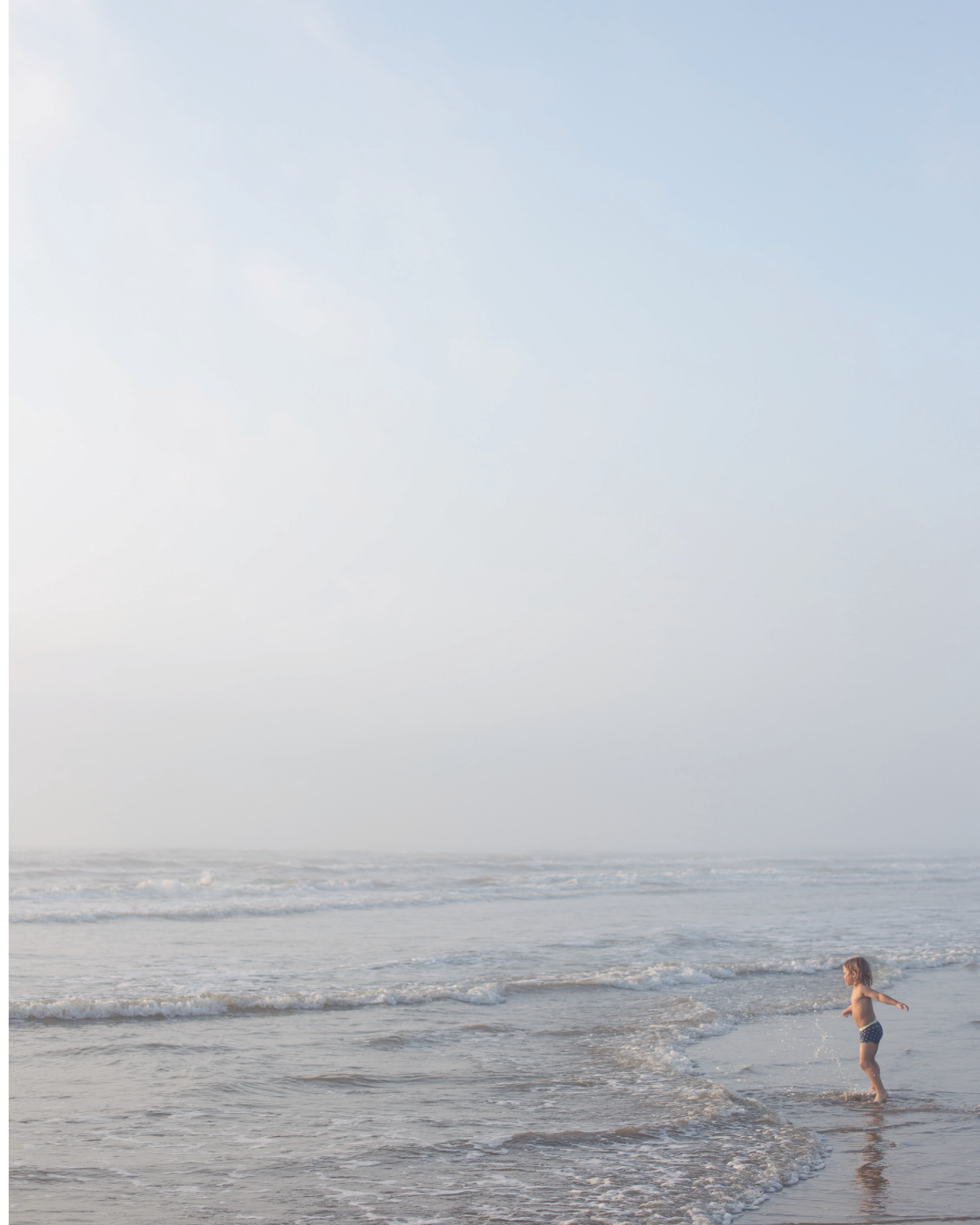
That has been my approach from the beginning; to write insights that can be helpful for years and decades after I am long gone. It is the challenge with which I am faced. Interestingly enough, only time will tell if I achieved that goal.

I’m sure part of this has been from spending the past decade in the tech industry building software and user interfaces. It has been great, but it also highlighted to me the shift in society’s expectation. Our attention span has shrunk to nearly non-existent and we seem unsatisfied with what we have; incessantly looking for the new.

If you are a maker, I invite you to take this challenge: Can what we make be past to another generation and they find it just as well designed and beneficial? Strive to make your creations outlast your lifetime.

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another generation and they find it
just as well designed and beneficial?
Strive to make your creations outlast
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“Taste is not a word you hear much and yet it is one of the most important things to refine. It is the center of your unique genius; the origin from which everything you create flows.”





LETTER TO MY CHILDREN

I am here for you

I don't have much to my name, and I can't give you everything you ever wanted, but I am here for you. I always have been. I have tried to live my life in a way that would allow me to maximize my time with you. Every birthday morning, halloween or Christmas. Even on the days when I just want to cry from frustration with my career life, but instead I answer your plea to wrestle; I am there. Every night before you go to bed, I help you brush your teeth, shower, pick out clothes for tomorrow, read books, and no bedtime routine is ever finished without Papi carrying you into bed.

Then, I am there every morning before you get up. Ready to greet you for the day and feed you breakfast. Helping you stay focused on getting ready and reminding you to make your bed. I know I'm not the best dad. I get short with you, I hurt you, I struggle and get upset when you just want to be a kid and enjoy life (somehow the best playtime always seems to happen right before bedtime...funny how that happens ;). So there are plenty of things, I'm sure, you will look back and wish I would have done to help you. I'm sorry. I truly am. But when you do look back, I hope you see I was there for you. Still am, and always will be because I love you.

There is no way to repay those who have showed us kindness but we can bring our goodness into the world and pay it forward.

*forever,
love papi*

PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE ME

PETER MCKINNON

Peter is a photographer/filmmaker known for his work on YouTube. He is one of the coolest vloggers I have come across. I love his cinematography style but it's his personality that keeps me coming back to his content. His story is very inspiring. He had a day job and just wanted to give the YouTube thing a try and was able to make it a full time gig.

JULIA NIMKE

Julia is a ridiculously gifted photographer. I came across her work during her time as an Adobe Creative Resident. Her project was to travel across Europe documenting local folklore and capturing some of the most stunning photos. Her work really inspires me.

MAX WANGER

I have been very inspired by his minimalistic compositions and use of space in his photography. His work seems to have a whimsical feel as well. He is one of the first people I followed and the longest. I have loved his work over the years.

JOHNNY & IZ HARRIS

Some of the newer people who have been inspiring me. They are a dynamic filmmaker couple. They have separate projects but I respect and enjoy their art individually and as a creative couple. They are one of those couples Anita and I came across and just felt like if we ever lived by them, I could see us being good friends with them. It's inspiring to see couples with young kids create a life full of travel and creative ventures.

