

## NOSTALGIA & WANDERLUST

My installation considers the relationship between one's past and future. By exploring my memories, I've made connections between the inevitable situations that occurred in my life and the resulting movement and developments. I aim to understand whether these unwanted moves are the reason I want to travel, and to be in control of where I am.

Inside the sculpture are recreations of houses in which I've lived, and the apartments represented by their trees, chronologically from birth to 2016. The sculpture and book's black surfaces represent a closed energy, reflective of myself, and are shut to mimic how people do not share certain details of themselves. The peepholes break this subconscious habit by allowing the viewer to look inside.

The book's illustrations are hard-ground prints, with watercolor and colored pencils. Each page represents a place I have lived, with two memories each. Upon reaching the center, the reader is faced with the epicenter of change in my life. The pages' scale minimizes as the events depicted increase in difficulty, and progress back to the starting dimensions as situations eased and closure was reached.

We grow, change, and move throughout the millions of possible paths we could have taken to end up as the unique version of ourselves.

Maria

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This paper addresses my experience of moving and how that has developed into my desire to travel. It focuses on how remembering one's past may develop a way of thinking which could shape the future. The foundation for this paper looks at psychology, writing, as well as travel writers in order to gain an overall understanding through these different perspectives.

Does memory of situations and experiences help develop what you do in the future? What if some events were out of your control? All factors of life came together to create situations that led to what you do presently. How does remembering your past affect your future? Every so often I'm forced to reflect on my memories as they slide through my consciousness. I reflect a lot to figure out why I do the things I do, why I believe the things I do, why I am who I am. The word *nostalgia* explains the sentimental longing for the past. While it seems fitting, I don't really feel a "sentimental longing" for my past. I actually feel sad and regret when thinking about some events in my life. The memories that have the most impact are changes of place and people. The necessity of understanding my past and the events that inhabit it are of great importance to me. My sadness and regret has turned into curiosity, a string of "What ifs?" repeating itself in my mind. There are times where I am glad I have passed certain milestones in my life, and other times in which I wish I could turn back time to fix what I once didn't appreciate.

The paths I've taken to end up where I am right now, have left me restless for change, *wanderlust*. How does the desire to travel correspond to a 17 year-old? I see it the same way I see how I base a lot of my decisions on my past. Growing up, I had a lack of understanding of what is true and what isn't. My curiosity to learn has increased; I have a desire to immerse myself in new surroundings with new groups of people who are all diverse. I want to know if it's common for a person to have issues or struggles at certain points in their life. I also want to look at the topic of "wanderlust" and how that relates to me. My final point is to truly consider everything that has happened in my life and the choices I made in my past that form my life today.

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Infancy (0 to 1 ½)
2	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Early Childhood (1 ½ to 3)
3	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Play Age (3 to 5)
4	Industry vs. inferiority	Competency	School Age (5 to 12)
5	Ego identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	Adolescence (12 to 18)
6	Intimacy vs. isolation	Love	Young Adult (18 to 40)
7	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Adult hood (40 to 65)
8	Ego integrity vs. despair	Wisdom	Maturity (65+)

Erik Erikson, a psychologist, developed the theory of psychosocial development and the concept of an identity crisis. Erikson expanded upon Sigmund Freud's original five stages of development; rather than five stages, Erikson believed that each person progressed through eight stages of development.

Erikson emphasized that the environment played a major role in self-awareness, adjustment, human development, and identity. Despite the importance and elaboration on all eight stages, I focused on the fourth and fifth stages (see table above) because that age period is reflective of the years a lot of change occurred in my life.

According to the theory, if each stage is completed successfully then it ultimately results in a healthy personality. If completing a stage results in a failure, difficulty of completing later stages and an unhealthy personality (as well as a sense of self is lost). These stages, however, can be resolved successfully at a later time. Looking at the table you'll notice that stage four and five span the ages of 5-18. This is where a lot of sudden change occurred in my life.

The fourth stage is entitled “Industry (competence) vs. Inferiority,” the stage focuses on ages 5-12. At this age a large amount of learning occurs and the role model becomes very important. It is at this stage that the child’s peer group will gain greater significance and will become a major source of the child’s self esteem. If there isn’t a lot of support or neglect then the child may begin to feel inferior. Doubting their own abilities, the child may not reach their potential. The following memories describe what had occurred in my life under stage four of Erikson’s eight stages of development.

*At the age of five, I scurried to the front of the building with the off-white luminescent lights that flickered just a tad bit, a shining white star in the center of these two wavy shapes. My head tilted back as I glanced up to see this towering fortress over me, hearing the squeaking and rattling of the wheels from the carts in the distance. I stood in front of the magical doors. I stomped my foot, commanding them to open. The sliding doors opened as if hearing my command loud and clear. I ran through them with my chin lifted high and mighty, the scent of plastic tickled my nose. Once I was inside, my eye was immediately caught by the bright blue moving contraption with a broken buckle. I pointed to it, motioning to my mom that I wanted to sit there. With a swift shake of her head, I shrugged my shoulders down, hunched over and made a pout. She grabbed my hand and pulled me gently, encouraging me to start walking with her through another set of magical opening doors. I did, this time not putting up much of a fight. My mom grabbed a basket instead, I reached up and weaved my chubby fingers into the holes of the basket, smiling just a bit. As I looked up in front of me, enormous pencils and erasers were hung from the ceiling. Huge colorful shelves were pushed off into the corner, they were practically calling my name! There was a slot with lists of different school names on it, my mom and I looked for the name of the school I was going to attend in just a couple of days, Lakeland Elementary. I felt like such a big kid, practically an adult! I was starting kindergarten. However, it wasn’t going to be official until I chose my backpack, so I pulled my mom over to the rack with the colorful bags that were scattered throughout. I scanned the shelves with my eagle eyes and stopped at one with my favorite color on it. I ran over so fast that the things around me started to go in slow motion. Before anyone else could get my bag I reached for the bag on the very itty bit of my tippy toes to get a hold of the backpack that I knew was going to give me the “school ready” look. My mom caught up to me and pulled the bag down for me. I smiled up at her as she helped me get my arms through the straps. I was beaming, holding on to the blue straps as if it was my only form of hope.*

That was the type of kid that I was, excited to go back-to-school shopping. I had so much hope and excitement for what was yet to come. Once I started elementary school I had average struggles here and there that came with starting out as a first-time student, but I was a good kid though, quiet actually. My mom has told me that whenever the teachers sent back reviewed homework they would sometimes write down a frowny face and that was enough to bring me to tears. My mom recited what I used to say whenever that would happen, “Perdon mamá, no quiero agarrar caritas tristes.” So I worked hard to get “good grades” and to do things as I was told.

*At the age of ten, I remember being with the few kids I considered friends. I sat with them and gave them the sad news; I was going to be moving away. They didn't say much, some of them didn't really believe me. One day when they saw that I was still there they accused me of being a liar, confused to why I was still going to school at Lakeland if I said I was leaving. I had failed to mention that I wasn't going to be going there during my fifth grade year, but was going to remain until the last day of my fourth grade year. Anger boiled within me, turning my face a crimson red. I went home that day, wishing that I could leave sooner. At home things weren't going smooth either. Tension filled the air, making my shoulders feel extremely heavy. I played with the pile of toys that I had, discouragement, loneliness and sadness being the only companions I had. A sigh escaped me, taking any motivation I once had and leaving me limp. My short arms reached over to grab my favorite stuffed toy, a purple cow with a bell inside its tummy. The friend was given to me on my first birthday, so I've kept him throughout the years. I hugged him close as I curled up into a ball, my ears perked up to a sound in the distance. I could hear the faint shuffling of feet from a distance, a sound I knew too well. Both my parents were home. I didn't move, knowing that if I did I would only be asked to go back to the room, since they were having a "grown up conversation." Every single time, the image of my parents pale faces began to singe my memories of them. With the repetitiveness of the yelling and the uncomfortable smiles, it slowly created a scar in my heart.*

I grew up an only child; I didn't have anyone to share this experience with. I considered this normal and it wasn't until a few years later when I realized that the situation was never normal. Parents yelling at each other, ignoring each other, slamming doors, and tight smiles. I didn't know what to do. I believed I was the one doing something wrong, but I thought it wouldn't matter if I said anything. As a quiet person I didn't voice how I felt. In my mind, I thought that if I stayed quiet then maybe I would be one less problem for my parents. When I was transferred to my new school, how I felt began to reveal itself.

*At the age of eleven, I was enrolled into Southridge Elementary. I no longer lived in the house with the brown and tan brick walls. The one with the green bush on the left side of the door that my mom would cut the leaves down every spring to make them into rectangle that aligned the bottom part of the window of my parents bedroom. Three rose bushes on the right because my mom loved roses and insisted she have a space for them, so my dad had to cut down the other bush and placed cement to make a walkway to stand on while tending to the roses. The house with the backyard that transformed into a wild jungle that I would explore in and run around with the wild beasts known as Éscooby, Muñeca, Niño and Merengue. The place that I would stay in on a snowy day to watch Tom and Jerry in the living room while my parents laid down next to me. Blankets and pillows surrounding all of us, a toasty fireplace lit with wood from the backyard. The fire popping at times while my four Boston terriers slept at our feet.*

*With the last box packed and my dad nowhere in sight, I looked around one last time inside this place I called home. The last memory of this place played through my mind: My mom had shook me awake, my eyes felt heavy and my*

*surroundings felt wobbly and weird as I tried to get up. I could barely see the things in front of me, but despite that I was compelled to walk. As I did I made my way to the window of my parents bedroom because I had insisted the night before to stay in there for the night. My vision began to focus and there they were, my dogs were in the back of my dad's black pickup truck. Shock had fully awoken me, turning to my mom I yelled at her to tell me where my dad was taking them. She looked down at me, not saying a single word. Tears rolled down my cheeks like a never ending waterfall, my throat tightened as I tried lifting my feet to run out the door. Instead I collapsed down onto my knees and wept, snot coming out of my nose. I shivered, coming back to the present. I carried the last box and made my way into my mom's car.*

That was the last time I was in the house I grew up in, after that I was with my mom living in some apartments on the other side of town. The apartment was small, but as a single mom who worked as a cleaning lady it was the best she could provide. I wasn't okay with anything that was happening, but who would listen to an eleven year-old? I stayed quiet again and stitched on a fake smile, numbing how I really felt. I continued working hard in school because I was always told that my education was the most important thing I could achieve. I worked hard and stayed quiet. It took me a while to make friends, but I finally did. At home it was a mixture of emotions. I started drawing and tried doing anything that would distract my mind. This lasted for a couple of weeks until my mom started spending time with her friends from work; there she met someone new. Soon after I had met the person my dad had left my mom and I for. With both people coming into my life near the same time, anger and sadness filled me more than anything. This added to the weight I already felt, but I didn't do anything about it. Every time I tried bringing it up to my mom I would see a rare smile on her face; this was enough to stop me from voicing my feelings because I didn't want to upset her.

Weeks turned into months; at my new school I made a total of three friends. They lived near me, Deja lived in the same apartment complex as I did. Nancy lived a few houses down from behind the fence that separates the apartment buildings from the houses in the different neighborhoods. Charlotte's mom owned a hair styling boutique in the plaza next to the apartments that I was staying in. I found myself gravitating towards Nancy, throughout the week I would walk home with her and then if allowed I would stay at her house for a while. I was always finding ways to spend as little time in the apartments, that place will never be considered a home to me. My life was consistent for a while, the worst finally mellowing down. There's one distinct memory that I have that occurred before my life took on another sharp turn.

*As I unlocked the door of the apartment that my mom and I were living in, the door was stopped before I could open it enough to squeeze through. I huffed and stepped back, examining why that was. Unsure, I yelled out trying to get my mom's attention. I received no response so I pouted and braced myself, this door was going down. I took a few steps back and then grabbed onto the doorknob with full force. I pushed as hard as I could, I could hear things falling as I made progress with the door. It was until the sound of glass shattering that got my mom's attention. She ran out the room flustered and confused to why I was breaking things. I looked up at her in disbelief, quickly shifting over to defend myself if I were to be accused of anything else. My attention slowly moved from her face down to the pile of boxes. I looked around the apartment to see that a lot*

*of the decorations had been packed away. "Que esta pasando ma?" I asked her, still very confused. She took a few minutes before finally showing a sign that she had indeed heard what I had asked. As if the awkward pause never occurred, she proceeded to ask me if I wanted to see my dad.*

*I could hear my heart shatter just like the object that I had broken just moments before. I felt a mix of skepticism and doubt. The last time I had seen him was with his new girlfriend, I was with a person I couldn't recall as the dad I had grown up with. I shrugged my shoulders and proceeded to walking towards the dining table so I could finish the homework I had for the night. My mom stayed quiet for a second before opening her mouth to say something more. "Pregunto a ver te.. Va estar en la casa hoy." Confusion fogged my mind; I didn't want to think about this right now. However, my mom was waiting for an answer. I simply nodded. A few minutes afterwards I found myself walking down the sidewalk and towards my mom's car. As I looked around it felt like my entire body was moving at the speed of a slug, all while my mind and heart were out to compete to see who was the fastest. I actually wasn't sure what to feel, it was a mixture of different things. A war was going on within me. Before I knew it my mom was pulling up to the side of the sidewalk, parking. I looked up to see a shiny new burgundy truck; it struck me that it belonged to my dad. I got out and walked to the front of the house, not saying a single word. My mom was by my side; through the door I could make out a dark figure sitting at the foot of the stairs.*

*The painful weight I had forced myself to carry felt lighter somehow. My legs were melting into the cement, every step I took I fought for. The figure stepped into the light. I looked up, the man who was beside me from the moment I took my first step to the moment I thought I would never see him again was standing directly in front of me. Nothing else mattered anymore; my dad and I were the only two people standing in front of the house. Tears welled up in my eyes. Sobs escaped my every breath as I forced myself to move. My dad quickly followed. We ran into each other's arms, his size dominating my short physique. Nothing mattered anymore, at that very moment I knew I had found my dad.*

After that moment everything else came into place. My parents had decided to stay together for my own sake, they assured me that I was never the problem. However, those words could not have healed the damage that was done. My family and I packed the few things we had and moved north, pushing the border that was considered Texas. Both my parents wanted to start fresh, they had lost the house we had lived in for about five years due to bankruptcy. Since they had split up my dad's siblings and parents were merciless, they hated my mom and blamed her for everything that had happened. My parents didn't care about them, at the time the thing that they had in common was their love for me. Pushing everything else aside, we moved to a very small town in the middle of nowhere, Friona, Texas. I had to leave Southridge halfway through the school year in order to move there. We didn't stay very long in Friona, but the time that we were there I showed success in my education and art. I was wandering in a vast desert; I couldn't feel a sense of direction.

*My mom received a phone call from her mother. I was in the living room with my dad's new companion, an African Grey parrot named Panchita. We got her just before moving to Friona. She was ruffling her feathers, turning into a ball*

*of fluff. I looked down at the two cockatiels that my mom and I cared for while living in the apartment in Lewisville. Their feathers created a rosy cheek effect, giving them a quirky look. I smiled just a bit, looking around at the house my dad had managed to get for us. We were renting out the small house, but it was definitely nicer than the apartment that we arrived in when we first found this lonesome town. I could hear my mom's voice getting quieter and quieter, her responses turning into broken murmurs. When the phone call ended, all I could hear was the sound of a phone dropping. I widened my eyes and made my way towards where she was. I could see tears rolling along side her plump cheeks. She sat down, her face taking on a new shade of paleness. I pulled up a chair and sat next to her, worried about what she had spoken about on the phone just moments before. I waited patiently as her hiccups settled; her nose and eyes were red and stained from her crystal tears. Once she finally looked up, her voice cracked as she said: "Tu abuelita tiene cáncer del pecho."*

It was official; my grandma had developed breast cancer and was currently fighting it. My mom's siblings weren't making much of an effort to assist my grandma, since my family and I disliked the town we were in we packed everything we had and moved to Napa, California. I transferred out of the school I was in and prepared myself to transition halfway through the school year into a new school in my new town.

In total, I changed schools about five times throughout all of that and lived in four different homes. I had to adapt to new social groups, which wasn't easy considering how reserved and quiet I was. I was simultaneously trying to comprehend everything that was going on at home and trying to understand why I kept having to move. I couldn't find a healthy way to cope with the stress I was feeling when trying to understand the situation between my parents and losing the place I remember growing up in. I was sensitive, unsure of myself, of my appearance, of who I could potentially call my friends. I focused on my academics and saw interest in my artwork while everything else seemed to lack. This is why this age period is important as part of the research of my essential question.

I also focused on the fifth stage, which was "Identity vs. Role confusion" ages 12 to 18 years, the transition from childhood to adulthood. This stage focuses more on the transition and change of puberty as well as the role that a person has in life and understanding their identity. Considering how I'm still in this age group, it is worthwhile to talk about. When moving to Napa, that's when things began to settle down a bit more regarding the physical movement of location. However, despite no longer having to change schools, I moved in with my grandparents. That's a total of six people living in a small space, plus the addition of my relatives who were living upstairs, a total of about seven people. Previously I only lived with my parents, a total of three people in one living space. The change was evidently large; I was starting middle school as well, which could arguably be the most awkward time in a person's growth and development. My sister was also born around this time; I was 13 years older than her so it was difficult processing the idea of being an older sibling. As something that we could all relate to, middle school and the start of high school are times of experimentation and awkwardness. Perhaps even a bit of rebellion here and there depending on your situation. I was experimenting with figuring out my interests, as well as friendships. I was also doing a lot more reflecting than I ever had before, this was an attempt at trying to understand myself and why I felt sad, angry, and emotional. Whether it was a "natural" change or whether realizing that what happened to me was indeed difficult to cope with; I saw value in this perspective to furthering the understanding of

my overall essential question, “How does remembering your past affect your future?” I continued to a second psychological source.

Philip Zimbardo is a contemporary social psychologist best known for his Stanford Prison Study. A large amount of Zimbardo’s research focuses on how and why people are transformed in certain situations so that they behave in unexpected ways. Zimbardo has also researched shyness, motivation, and human perspectives on time. The research about human’s perspective on time relates to my question, “How does remembering your past affect your future?”

Zimbardo believes that our lives are shaped by our perspective of time and that a series of paradoxes influence both personal and cultural behavior:

- Paradox 1. People are typically unaware of the powerful effect time has on their feelings, thoughts, and actions.
- Paradox 2. A person’s attitudes toward time can be beneficial, unless any one attitude persists over others.
- Paradox 3. A person’s time perspective is shaped by personal experience, though these attitudes also form a collective, cultural perspective that shapes a nation.

As Zimbardo believes in these different time paradoxes, they can be categorized into five different groups:

- Present-Oriented Person
- Present-Hedonistic Person
- Present-Fatalistic Person
- Future-Oriented Person
- Past-Oriented Person

With different explanations for each category, my focus turns to “Past-Oriented Person.” To summarize, a Past-Oriented person recalls situations that may not or may have worked in the past. A lot of future decisions are based on the past because what was learned from the past creates a subconscious understanding of what worked and what didn’t. A thought that came up when processing this information was, “By referencing my past in order to decide what will happen in the present and future, is that benefiting me?”

I want to focus on the present. In my life, I have spent countless hours thinking about the moment my life changed. It is clear to me that movement has been a constant factor in my life. I was born in Zamora Michoacán, Mexico. My mom took care of me in Huitzo Michoacán while my dad worked in the United States. My mom had me when she was twenty years old and she was taking care of me by herself. She sent countless letters to my dad asking him to help her cross the border so they could be together. My dad was twenty-one years old when I was born, working alongside his brother in a restaurant located in Lewisville, Texas. He was hesitant to take the risk, but in the end it’s what was done. I emigrated with the help of a family relative from my dad’s side. I was six months old when I crossed; I was traveling safely while my mom crossed with *El Coyote*. A slang term used to describe someone who smuggles people across the Mexican border over to the United States. My family moved to Gunnison, Colorado. We stayed there until we all had our papers and could be referred to as permanent residents. After that, Texas was the state that countless change occurred in my life. Losing the house I grew up in because of bankruptcy; my parent’s disloyalty to one another; my grandmother getting diagnosed

with breast cancer. What they all have in common is that they are things that were inevitable. I was too young to have a say in what was decided, even when I tried speaking up nothing could be done to prevent what was happening.

I feel terrible about my past because I felt as though I had to remain silent about the movement that was decided for me. I don't want to continue living that way. I want to see movement as something that is empowering and an opportunity to grow and to learn rather than something that is restricting. This is where wanderlust comes into play; *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, written by Rebecca Solnit, begins by literally describing how a person begins to walk: "Where does it start? Muscles tense. One leg a pillar, holding the body upright between the earth and sky. The other a pendulum, swinging from behind. Heel touches down. The whole weight of the body rolls forward onto the ball of the foot. The big toe pushes off, and the delicately balanced weight of the body shifts again. The legs reverse position. It starts with a step and then another step and then another that add up like taps on a drum to a rhythm, the rhythm of walking. The most obvious and the most obscure thing in the world, this walking that wanders so readily into religion, philosophy, landscape, urban policy, anatomy, allegory, and heartbreak." It's a simple action that is learned as early as the age of two and is celebrated when achieved. I agree with what Solnit has stated when referring to walking as a subject that has been analyzed throughout centuries and countless generations.

I want to travel because of the benefits that you gain. Being taken out of a place you know and are familiar with and brought to an entirely new place with a different culture really forces you out of your comfort zone. In the past, I consider the act of moving locations as a very negative situation. It was my first experience having to lose friendships I've developed over a long period of time. The reasons behind moving weren't always positive; it was overall difficult for me to comprehend. Even a couple years after finally settling down I still think about my past and how, because of it, I have become the person I am now. I don't regret anything; in fact I am thankful because my family and I got through obstacles to be happy and united.

I want to move and travel to immerse myself in different things that will continue pushing me out of my comfort zone. I understand now that changing the way you do things can actually have positive impact. I want to do this on my terms, for myself. Reading *Wanderlust*, brings up a very good point about walking and how that unites us as intellectual beings: "Walking, ideally, is a state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned... Walking allows us to be in our bodies and in the world without being made busy by them. It leaves us free to think without being wholly lost in our thoughts." This concept helps me consider the reasons behind the way I feel. To test Solnit's theory, I went to my backyard and admired my surroundings of the area I now currently live in.

*I took in a very deep breath, the air tickling my nostrils as I inhaled and exhaled. I could feel my chest stretch upwards as I stored the air, quickly inflating afterwards as if it were a balloon. I could hear my mom talking with my sister in the background. Aware of their presence, I swiftly moved through the kitchen and slid through the door that led to the garage. The door that leads to the backyard was slightly cracked open, rays of sunshine peeked through. Their glow emitting a welcoming radiance. The sides of my mouth curved upwards, I took my time walking towards the door. I lowered my hand to grab the doorknob as if I were about to shake its hand. With a quick pull, the door opened. A thousand suns greeted me; I squinted my eyes, instinctively raising my arm to shield me from the intensity of the light. The heat embraced me tightly, just the way a friend would*

*after not seeing them for months. I groaned a bit as my eyes adjusted. Once they did I looked up and slowly cracked open the lids of my eyes. Life radiated throughout the yard. Ever since we moved into the new house, my parents had been wanting to make a garden. They achieved so much in the time we've been here.*

*My feet led the way as I walked down the path I've walked on a thousand times before. The dull cement curving through the field of grass, separating the land. Long grass laid gently on top of the cement, different insects circulated around the community of plants. I sat down in the spot I always sit in, the center of the land. I watched, taking in everything I could. What was invisible began to appear, like the colony of ants that are simply an inch away from where I was sitting. I noticed how the leaves of different plants moved differently every time the wind snook up behind them and gently caressed them as it passed. My ears acknowledged the faint sounds of the mellow cars driving down the highway. I leaned back, my arms providing support to keep me from falling over. I counted the trees.. one.. two.. three.. All ranging from a pear tree, apple tree, peach tree. So many things to look at. I came out when the sun was bright and the sky was as unknown as the depths of the ocean floor. A solid blue that softened up over the course of a couple of hours. A beautiful gradient, a mix of pastel blues, lavenders, magentas, and pinks. I felt nothing, yet I felt so much. I felt a community, a gentle energy that was welcoming. I did not feel fear or worry. Everything felt content as I let my mind wander into my surroundings.*

Just as I took in everything in my backyard, I want to experience that simplicity everywhere I go. It's part of experiencing a new place and it's something I want to practice doing. Solnit gave me much to start with, but in order to fully understand I went deeper into researching and found two travel writers that are all about immersing yourself in change.

Two travel writers are now an inspiration to me because of their own journey and the way they approach their situations. Colin Wright has achieved an almost overwhelming amount of things. To summarize, he is a travel writer who travels to different places; his destination is chosen through the votes of his bloggers. Of course he does way more than just that, but I want to focus on the wanderlust aspect of what he does. On his blog, he posted "That Seems Interesting." noting: "We all have metrics for personal success. These are metrics we develop internally over time, and in most cases they're predicated on what our society values: money, happiness, family, accomplishment, etc. One of my prime metrics, gleaned from my parents and other influences I've been exposed to over the years, revolves around treating people well and leaving places and individuals better than I found them. Another of mine, which I find to be quite common in people who are drawn to entrepreneurship, is the desire to create valuable things." Wright describes how his metrics have developed throughout his life, the influences of the factors around him which he mentions in the text, right after he begins to elaborate on why he chose to travel. Wright travels because he wants to try new things, to immerse himself with knowledge and be faced with a lifestyle that isn't as predictable as the one he had before.

By remembering my past, I can develop my own metrics. Based on constantly leaving bonds I have created with people in the past as well as constantly ending up disappointed by the actions of some people, I believe in being independent for yourself, because in the end you're the one person you know will stay by you. A metric formed through admiration for my parents would be that hard work is the way you'll get what you desire; without the effort no one else will

do it for you. A metric that is based on a characteristic that I've always possessed is that I never want to lose sight of what I'm passionate about. I also never want to stop caring because the day I stop caring is the day I fear I'll lose myself. You think back to what you were unhappy or happy with, how you are now and how you want to be in the future, correct? I believe that this is based upon how you approach your own situation. Wright ends this post by writing, "The things we do are often only as good as the things we hope to accomplish by doing them. Make sure the metrics you're using to measure your actions are well-aligned with your priorities, beliefs, and ambitions." This way of thinking led to me to a new approach, better explained by another well-known travel writer, Pico Iyer.

Iyer has delivered many TED talks, the topics ranging from *Where is home?*, *The art of stillness* and *The beauty of what we'll never know*. From *Where is home*, Iyer notes: "It is only by stopping movement, that you can see where to go and it's only by stepping out of your life and the world that you can see what you most deeply care about and find a home. Movement is a fantastic privilege and it allows us to do so much that our grandparents could never dream of doing, but movement ultimately only has a meaning if you have a home to go back to and home in the end is of course not just a place where you sleep, it's the place where you stand."

To elaborate on this idea, Iyer is saying that you need to take the initiative of understanding what you value in your life. I believe that as human beings, we live very busy lives with many different distractions. We seem to value anything else besides ourselves and we begin to lose sense of what is truly important to us and what is not. It's important to step out of the bubble that we made for ourselves and to analyze and find the hidden heart of what everything we do roots out of. By stopping yourself and taking the time to see, we begin to understand the who, why, and what that our lives revolve around. This is where we see what a home is to us; whether it is found in a community that we participate in daily, in the passion that we love deeply, or the change that may have occurred in our lives. Iyer then describes how movement is a privilege, but it only has meaning if we have a home to go back to. It is good to travel and to immerse ourselves in new and challenging things. However, is it truly beneficial to us to gain all of these experiences, but have nothing to go back to?

Iyer says that home is the place where you stand. Thus, going back to this idea that home is created by ourselves. It is something within us that is created from what we know and what we learn. I have found in my life that I do sometimes find it difficult to understand what my home actually is. I have become a part of different communities all ranging from the city that I was born in, the family I grew up with, to my passion for art or different groups of people that I associate with. I understand that the situations that made my family move were inevitable, but that doesn't take away from the fact that they are my family. It is who I grew up with and who I learned from. It is my starting point and from there I have grown and learned so much. My parents and my baby sister are what drive me to improve myself, to continue working hard because I want to do well and live a life they could be proud of. I want to move in order to educate myself about different people and to expand the way I think about life, I want to move for myself.

In *The art of stillness*, Iyer states "One of the first things you learn when you travel is that nowhere is magical unless you can bring the right eyes to it.. It's not our experience that makes our lives, it's what we do with it. So much of our life takes place inside our heads and memory or imagination or interpretation or speculation, that if I really want to change my life I might best begin by changing my mind." "What was it about my past that started this new foreseen need?" Take a moment and think back on your life and find a moment where something new started for

you. That's kind of how I approached the information. My answer to this is simply the fact that I moved without wanting to. I was young and my parents, as any adult needs to do at times, "knew best." They were right, some of the changes required change and, for a long time, I saw that change as negative. I want to take my experience and use it as an opportunity of empowerment, a boost of confidence that lets me know that I will be okay because I have experienced change before.

In *The beauty of what we'll never know*, Iyer reflects, "The lights go out and it is then when you are lost or uneasy or carried out of yourself that you find out who you really are." Iyer explains much more, but overall talks about pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. We live in a world that almost prefers to stay within what is comfortable. I've been challenged consistently throughout my life. I want to push my own boundaries again by doing something I've never done before. That is traveling. This ties back to the entire idea of remembering the past. Remember what you used to like, dislike, what you were afraid of, what changes happened in your life. How do those experiences make up who you are as an individual now? How do they form your thinking and decide what you'll do in the future.

And we all have a past. We grow and change and move throughout the millions of possible paths we could have taken to end up being the unique version of ourselves. I sought out an answer to my own story. I found a possible resolution to my question: What's relatable about my story is that I spent time remembering. I know that everyone is different, but we all grew up a certain way, we all developed changes and challenges in our lives. It is normal to have certain feelings and form influences, especially if you're at a growing stage. Some things are more impactful than others; not everything is just positive or negative. There's history in everything; I found that purpose drives what we do. My purpose is to continue growing and learning new ways to not only understand myself, but to also begin to value what I once could not. Will you decide to take charge and change life for the better, or will you allow it to take over?

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