

2020 Year in Review



This year was a good reminder that most major events come unexpected and are unpredictable. It's always fun to write down some [hopes and expectations](#), but the reality often turns out to be different.

As always, the best thing we can do is to focus on our *input* (what we control), and not worry about the *output* (what we do not control).

Overall, my year was good, despite some challenges on the personal side. Let's get into it:

Milestones / Learnings in 2020

Breakup

Sometimes you have to face the brutal, ugly facts in your life, and be honest to yourself. One of those areas was my relationship. After 15+ years it was just not working anymore. We were turning in circles. Nobody wanted to pull the trigger. Thanks to Covid, there was no escape anymore, we had to face it, and I moved out in the early summer. Sometimes, going separate ways is the best long-term choice.

There seem to be distinctive patterns in my circle of friends. The time when everybody got their first job, the time when everybody got married and had kids. And now, I seem to be in an age range where more and more people are getting divorced. That's life, I guess. After not feeling too well in the summer, I am feeling great now. It feels like a new chapter, a new beginning, and I am looking forward to what comes next.

Subconscious mind

During the first 4 months of the year, I took a deep dive into the [subconscious mind](#). I have learned so much about how the brain works and how to unlock its full potential. I strongly believe that learning to use your subconscious mind is the key to solving a lot of human problems. A lot of our challenges are deeply embedded patterns. Instead of treating the symptoms, we should be treating the causes. [My summary of what I learned](#) was my #1 article this year, which I am quite proud of.

Tesla

One of my favorite obsessions this year was Tesla. I continue to be amazed by how few people truly understand the company. I don't blame them, it takes a lot of work. That's why I started [my Tesla series](#), and will likely continue to add new pieces to it. Those essays on Tesla were my #2 most read pieces this year. And thanks to the crazy bull run, Tesla was by far my #1 best performing stock this year.

Life Handbook Series

I have started working on my [Life Handbook Series](#), publishing [my first booklet on mental health](#) and [my first training program on personal finance](#). I feel very passionate about this project and want to continue to add new pieces to the puzzle. The goal is to create practical guides and teach proven strategies on how to improve one's life. All based on my own personal experience.

Creative output

In total, I have written [35 articles](#), [25 newsletters](#), appeared on 3 podcasts ([#1](#), [#2](#), [#3](#)), and launched 2 products ([#1](#), [#2](#)). I've also published a lot on [Twitter](#), including a growing number of [threads](#).

Although I am never satisfied with my output in any given month or quarter, now looking back, I am quite happy with what I produced this year.

The Best Habits I Started in 2020

I love [building new habits](#). And also [breaking them](#). Here are the best ones I started in 2020:

Tracking creative hours

This has become the #1 metric of my work life. It's the only thing I track. I want to maximize the number of creative hours, in terms of deep, creative work. It can be fuzzy, and I am very strict. I only count writing, outlining, creating products. I don't count reading and I don't count thinking. I have a simple spreadsheet. I also track how I feel on a scale of -2 to +2 and write a short 5-10 word summary of my day. In the last 241 days I have logged 1.21 creative hours per day (including weekends and holidays).

30 min workout

About 3 times per week, I do a 30 min workout outside first thing in the morning (I use the [Freeletics app](#)). I started this habit during the first lockdown, and am continuing to do it. On the other days, I do a simple warm-up at home (some squats, push-ups, or kettlebell exercises).

Autosuggestion

Applying what I learned from studying the [subconscious mind](#) is now a daily habit, especially the autosuggestions before falling to sleep and after waking up. It's a tiny habit, but has a huge impact.

For all my articles on the topic of "habits", [click here](#).

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Favorite Books in 2020

[Psycho-Cybernetics](#) by Maxwell Maltz ([audio version](#)): This is one of the most important books I have ever read. It's a great companion book to [Levels of Energy](#) and [The Good Life Handbook](#). It's a thorough study of the subconscious mind, and offers practical solutions to fundamental human problems: how to be healthier, happier, calmer, more prosperous etc.

[Self Mastery Through Conscious Autosuggestion](#) by Émile Coué: A wonderful companion to [Psycho-Cybernetics](#), explaining how the subconscious mind works and how to use it to your benefit. Many others, from Napoleon Hill to Maxwell Maltz, were influenced and inspired by Émile Coué. If you are interested in the subconscious mind, I highly recommend it.

[So Good They Can't Ignore You](#) by Cal Newport ([audio version](#)): A thought provoking manifesto on how to find work you love. Instead of blindly following your passions, it urges us to focus on our skills. I especially loved the chapters about craftsmanship and practice. If you care about your work, I can highly recommend reading it.

[The Courage to be Disliked](#) by Ichiro Kichimi and Fumitake Koga ([audio version](#)): Wonderful book, presented in an engaging dialogue format between a master and a youth. It's an introduction to the psychology of Alfred Adler. I liked the ideas of "separation of tasks" and "all problems are interpersonal relationship problems."

[The Psychology of Money](#) by Morgan Housel ([audio version](#)): Refreshing and thought provoking thoughts on money and wealth. I enjoyed it a lot.

[The Practice](#) by Seth Godin ([audio version](#)): Seth Godin is one of my favorite thinkers and he is occupying a rare spot on my personal "list of heroes / mentors". This book is another masterpiece. It's written for people who ship creative work, and offers nourishing guidance on the creative path. It was my guide when I created my [personal finance video course](#).

[Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now](#) by Jaron Lanier ([audio version](#)): Eye-opening and thought-provoking arguments against social media. The author is a Silicon Valley insider, works at Microsoft, and is considered a founder of the field of virtual reality.

[Tao Te Ching](#) by Lao-Tzu, translated by Stephen Mitchell ([audio version](#)): Timeless wisdom by Lao-Tzu on life and the nature of reality. It's one of those books that you can read or listen to many times. The energy of it is very high and it has calming and elevating properties. I especially enjoyed it when I was in bed with the flu, half awake and half dreaming, the perfect food for my soul.

[The Life You Can Save](#) by Peter Singer ([audio version](#)): Excellent and recently updated book about philanthropy. It offers a helpful guide for donors to improve their capital allocation and to maximize the effectiveness of each \$1. The book inspired me to think more deeply about my own capital allocation in this regard. The author has bought back the book rights and is now giving away the book for free, so that these ideas can spread more rapidly. You can download the ebook or audiobook by [clicking here](#).

What were your favorites? Let me know on [Twitter](#).

I used to spend significant money on Audible (which I still love and use). Then I discovered [Scribd](#): for just \$8.99/month, you access the whole library. I usually find about 70% of the books I'm looking for. If you [click here](#), you get two months for free.

Favorite Links in 2020

[1,000 True Fans](#): That's the number you need to be a sustainable creator.

[A Journey to the End of Time](#): This video takes us on a journey to the end of time, trillions of years into the future, to discover what the fate of our planet and our universe may ultimately be.

[Star Size Comparison](#): A great video to watch when you need to recalibrate your perspective.

[James Dyson on How I Built This](#): The Dyson principles of business and innovation.

[Live Like You Are Dying: 3 Mental Exercises to Enjoy Life](#): I am watching this video at least once per year, and I find it quite powerful.

[The Power of Your Mind](#): I watch this video once a year. It reminds us of the importance and power of the [subconscious mind](#).

[68 Bits of Unsolicited Advice](#): A collection of life wisdom by Kevin Kelly he compiled for his 68th birthday.

[You May Want to Marry My Husband](#): Touching story about love and death.

[My Dad, the Plasma Physicist](#): Courageous, personal and deep conversation between father and son. Probably my favorite podcast episode ever.

[The Tail End](#): A wonderful visualization of how little time we have left, especially with our loved ones. Worth re-visiting from time to time.

[Naval Ravikant on How to Get Rich](#): This giant podcast episode collects all of the interviews about Naval's [famous tweetstorm](#). Worth re-listening to from time to time.

[The Social Dilemma](#): Eye-opening and thought-provoking documentary on Netflix about the negative sides of social media.

For more links, find [my link collection here](#).

Favorite Songs in 2020

[Go Your Own Way - Fleetwood Mac](#): My separation theme song, haha.

[Disco 2000 - Pulp](#): Really love the honesty and energy of this song, although it is quite sad and desperate.

[Fix You - Coldplay](#): Discovered Coldplay this year. Great stuff.

[Dreams - Fleetwood Mac \(Cover\)](#): Beautiful song, and wonderful performance.

[79 Clinton Street - Bastian Baker](#): The theme song of my new dating life :)



Happy New Year!

For 2021, I wish you nothing but excellent health, personal fulfillment and as much wisdom as possible. May all your dreams and hopes come true, and the unavoidable disappointments teach priceless lessons. Thank you for being part of my journey and reading my stuff. I appreciate you.

Warmly,
Remo
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