

State of the David 2019

David Lorentzen

September 2019

Oh hey family, friends, fans, and future self! I didn't see you all there.

Highlights of the last year include:

Music: Beyonce & Jay Z @ Soldier Field, Carlos Santana & Al Green @ New Orleans Jazz Fest

Influential course at Kellogg

Hosted a dinner for several of my mentors in December

Volunteered with the Young Leaders Fund to secure a grant for United for Better Living, a nonprofit in West Garfield Park

Served as best man for my best friend Erik

Threw a big party at 63rd St Beach

Traveled to Mexico City, Kauai, London, Martha's Vineyard

Theme of this year: building myself by recognizing and responding to my privilege.

In my opinion, the appropriate response to privilege is to use it. It should be leveraged with the intention of sharing.

Previously a mix of guilt and concern with making my own path had kept me from doing so, but I now consider it irresponsible to not play the cards I've been dealt.

Three specific privileges in consideration: Closeness of my family, Ability to lead a healthy lifestyle, and Capacity to take risk

I only recently realized how unusual my family's cohesion is. My sisters, my parents, my nieces are all based in Chicago and provide a deep well of insight, support, and fun. This realization helped me reconcile staying in Chicago as opposed to working in New York, because I am able to fully leverage and contribute to this rare support system. This is something I knew unconsciously, but only recently made explicit, which is good because narratives have power. Now not all aspects of my family are good. In particular, our family culture is unhealthy with respect to caffeine and alcohol, which I've extrapolated.

This brings me to the second major privilege, which is the ability to live clean. Health is wealth so I've been cleaning up my act, working out eight hours a week, monitoring my blood pressure, and seeing a therapist. My relationship with alcohol in particular is a challenge. My ambivalence is captured well by the famous if-by-whiskey speech, which I recommend looking up if you're not familiar. A low point of last year was drunkenly buying this designer woman's

jacket, insisting it be tailored to a men's blazer, and thereby rendering it ineligible for return. It doesn't fit. This rock bottom moment led to a mostly sober October, which was such a good experience that I also observed sober January. So on the one hand, drinking runs counter to my physical and mental health goals. On the other hand, it's a powerful social lubricant, its fun and as Abraham Lincoln said: "those with no vices, have few virtues."

Finally, I've been thinking about risk-taking. A wise person once said "You have to risk it to get the biscuit," and of course the relationship between risk and reward is well understood within finance. I currently have incredible capacity to take risk because I'm young enough to try again, I don't have any dependents (not even a dog), and I have a safety net in my family. Again, this capacity for risk is a privilege that should be utilized. Of course financially I'm in all high risk assets, but I've been extending this by also taking personal risk.

This year I left my job as a trader to work for my family's investment company. This is a significant risk because I'm taking a paycut, entering a new line of work, and putting a different kind of pressure on familial relationships. As I step out of the trading industry I am haunted by my post-college decision to pursue trading rather than banking, which would more directly serve me in this new role. Reconciling this is an open question.

And being single also feels like a risk. I can feel lonely and am sometimes concerned that I'll lose my hair and then never meet anybody and die alone. In these moments I have to celebrate that fear because, "If you're not a little scared, you haven't taken enough risk" and I also remind myself that I have the opportunity to fall in love again.

So the State of the David is unleashed and unlocked and a little unmoored. This is an exciting time for me, as I am entering a new job in the new year and working only part time until then so I can develop long standing interests of mine like Spanish, piano, and travel. In the next year I will continue to aggressively play the cards I've been dealt with the goal of improving myself and my community. In summary, my mental energy is free from what had become a toxic relationship, so between bouts of romantic loneliness I've contemplated privilege and risk-taking and taken leaps towards a better version of myself.