



CV SPOTLIGHT

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“10 PRACTICAL WAYS TO BE LONG-TERM IN A SHORT-TERM WORLD”

DEVELOPING A CONTRA-MEDIA STRATEGY

EXPLORATION: ROUND #4

April 11, 2022

“It is hard to be long-term when I am normalizing to a day of media-induced rubbernecking...”

“Media is the business of attracting attention...”...Om Malik

PART #1: A MENTAL DIET

I see our minds in the middle of a battlefield of ubiquitous media factors highly motivated to “own” our minds. This battle for our minds defines this period. Our capacity to develop “Long-Term” capacity is severely compromised. In order to be “Long-Term in a Short-Term World”, I am nearly required to develop a personalized Contra-Media strategy.

I was talking with a friend Zak Dychtwald today.

He considers that we humans know that all the stuff bombarding our brains is a big

big problem. That part we “know”.

Zak pointed out that similarly we “know” nutrition well enough to “know” we have a problem, but in both instances – physical diet and mental diet – we have trouble counteracting the forces coming at our minds telling us it is OK not to think about it too much.

This isn't about education and logic.

Media preys on emotion, not logic.

Combatting emotional warfare with a logical response is largely useless.

Brilliant minds that are heavily motivated to lure me into eating a \$6 designer organic pop tart or mindlessly watch just one more episode of Friends.

The combatants are brilliant... and adding powerful artificial intelligence to prey on me further.

They are NOT my friends.

They are fighting one another for control of my mind.

We will want a sophisticated response.

We will want to use Easy On-Ramps.

There are great logical ideas that are, unfortunately, often way too far a stretch from where we might be NOW. (1) Live off the grid; (2) Disconnect from all social media; (3) Meditate two hours a day; (4) Write letters each day; (5) Spend electronics-free weekends.

We instead aim to offer easier lifts. If we can develop confidence in changing via “small” starts, we can get that famous flywheel effect started.

And we will want methods that include Easy Off-Ramps and Crowding In and Crowding Out. Our typical change methods.

PART #2: 10 Specific Embedded Contra-Media Abstracts

There are some abstracts that will run through the ideas below and can provide building blocks for infinite ideas you might invent for your personalized Contra-Media strategy.

#1 **REVERSING ELECTRONIC HOARDING:** In part, our Contra-Media strategy is about “cleaning up” and “throwing out” and reversing many of our electronic hoarding tendencies. There are so so many. It helps to clean up if for no other reason than we want to make room for better “media” to be able to enter our life powerfully when we find it and if we are too electronically-cluttered, we will resist adding something that might be brilliant when it arrives.

#2 **ENGAGING MY MIND: WHAT IS DIFFERENCE MAKING?** This is a muscle “Media” does not want me to develop. Media wants me to thoughtlessly eat more and more and more without questioning what in the world I am doing to myself!!!! I want to pick media as opposed to it picking me.

#3 **NOT SCRATCHING EVERY ITCH:** Part of being “Long-Term in a Short-Term

World" involves not scratching every itch. So I typically don't bring my iPhone to the dinner table so as to avoid the ability to scratch every itch! I have a LOT of questions that go through my head about all sorts of stufffff! I like to build friction into life so that it is hard for me to scratch all of these itches. Media WANTS us to scratch every itch hoping one of those will specifically involve them! The more itch scratching the better for Media. As one teacher offered: "I don't want to die bleeding to death because I scratched every itch!"

#4 **MEDIA DEVELOPING LONG-TERM MUSCLE:** I want to flip the script. Media is "just" a tool. Without a plan, it will have its way with my mind and I will become ever more short-term. If I want to be "Long-Term in a Short-Term World", I can find the immense leverage in Media to do so!

#5 **AVOID "FALLING INTO" MEDIA:** Media has trained me to default to its grip when almost any small window opens!!! I can create friction that reduces this leaning.

#6 **OVERCOMING GUILTS:** In the instance of social media, aren't I being a mean person by unplugging from a "Facebook Friend"?? Long ago we started "screening" phone calls. That was a success in not allowing some odd guilt to control us.

#7 **IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM... JOIN 'EM... BUT ON MY TERMS:** If I am going to be impacted by media perhaps I can name my own terms and conditions.

#8 **CAN'T GET TO EVERYTHING:** I find it helps to think something like "I wish I could be two places at once... or maybe a 1000 places at once!!!" It is accurate. And since I can't be in a thousand places at once, I am going to have to make some hard choices because I am just way too interested in too many things! Oh well!

#9 **REQUESTING TURN-OFF SERVICE:** Merely asking others if we might turn off media in places it has invaded. I can also scout out places where many forms of media haven't been able to (yet) penetrate.

#10 **AVOIDING MEDIA-INDUCED SOCIAL MEME PRESSURE:** There is a meme, for instance, that "book reading" is just inherently a good thing. There is a meme that it is proper to be a "loyal sports" fan no matter your misery and the degree you spread that misery. There is a meme that the NY Times can judge what is "fit to print". There is a meme that it is a citizen's responsibility to be aware of what is going on in the world if you want to be a decent person. There is a meme that filmmaking is an "important medium" and seeing things on the big screen is special. We have memes about Bucket Lists?? The promise that if I do these 100 things I will be at peace on my death bed! Huh?? Who invented that Media friendly industry? I have a hunch about who created so many of these memes. I think Media was involved in these (and many many more framings). If we shine a light on them we might decide to expunge some of them.

PART #3: 10 PRACTICAL CONTRA-MEDIA IDEAS

#1 PRO-ACTIVELY PICKING MY POP CULTURE

This idea probably falls under the "If you can't beat them... join them.. But on my terms...". I don't want to eliminate media! It truly is a miracle that we all have so much access to seemingly EVERYTHING!!!

Part #1: Perhaps pro-actively picking 2-3 specific pop culture topics I truly love and consider fully indulging in. For me, these are (1) Arsenal and (2) Ohio State Buckeyes Football. I check "Arsenal news" most every day. Ditto for the Buckeyes. By picking and sharing these pop culture obsessions I also wind up being able to attract others that share THAT specific pop culture fascination and THAT is fun. That focus is community-inducing!

Part #2: Specificity: Not everything connected with "Arsenal news" is worth my time. For instance, "Football London" is exceptionally clickbaity with zero substance. Terrible. I no longer click. Meanwhile "The Athletic" and "PainInThe Arsenal" are phenomenal. And going with my son Eamon to a bar at 8am on a Saturday morning in Washington DC to watch Arsenal beat Watford 1-0 with other nutty Arsenal fans is heaven.

Oh! When Arsenal loses (like yesterday 1-2 to Brighton) I avoid "Arsenal News" so as not to have depression invade my weekend. I am OK being a selective fair weather fan! **Whoever invented "loyalty" being a requisite for watching sports teams when it leads to sustained misery was genius and evil!** (I grew up a Cleveland Browns fan for those that get the translation to sustained misery. Can't "Media" at least make our lives better or more fun in some fashion in exchange for controlling our minds?? Request denied.)

#2 DINNER OUT

When going out to dinner: Perhaps picking restaurants that don't have televisions unless I specifically want to watch TV. If I am in a restaurant that has a TV, I often ask to be seated somewhere I can't see it. (Similarly: If I am in an airport I typically sit in a place where my eye won't catch the CNN or FOX "Breaking News" scroll bar.)

REQUESTING TURN-OFF SERVICE: I am pretty comfortable asking people to turn off video: (1) Dentists – Dentists like TV. Maybe TV makes dentists less unpopular 😊. (2) Barber – I tend to go at 7am and if Alonso has the TV on he knows to turn it off when I appear. 😊 **Perhaps weirdly but I like the peace and quiet of a dentist chair or haircut.** Seriously. I haven't (yet) found good ways to dodge video at gas pumps or on many elevators other than to close my eyes and/or crank up a tune I love on Spotify.

Crowd In: In part to avoid conversations at dinner merely recounting the pop culture moments of the day, Kelly and I started playing at least one hand of Gin Rummy when we eat out; Last year I won the annual competition but I am behind here in April 2022.

#3 LONG-TERM TOPICAL STUDY

Perhaps picking a current societal element to study for 3-4 months that I think I would find deeply interesting but doing so with a minimum 75-year timeline in mind.

Ideally, I might pick something that is present in society today and we are so used to that we have forgotten its history and subconsciously (and delusionally) think that it will always be here in this form. If we hear ourselves thinking "it will ALWAYS be like THIS" that is a great flag I am delusional and it is a place to dig in! The airplane, golf, retirement, horse racing, highways, refrigeration, bridges, movies, Ohio State Buckeyes Football... you pick it.

The more I study in long-term timelines, the more my capacity to understand, well, long-term timelines. I start to recognize the dynamic nature of most every element in society as a default. Essentially, by embracing and understanding dynamism, my long-term capacity can grow dramatically. I understand patterns that no one speaks of but were hidden as unknowns way back in the recesses of my mind. I can flip the script of my relationship with media in an effective fashion to unearth and examine them by doing projects with minimum 75-year framings.

#4 APP REMOVAL

Perhaps consider deleting 25% of your apps on your iPhone today. If you don't seem to miss any of them five days from now, consider removing another 25% of your apps. Apps are awesome until, maybe, they aren't. Part of being "Long-Term in a Short-Term World" involves injecting friction so it is hard to scratch every itch. If there are 100 apps on my phone, it might be a sign of itch scratching. Rob Rose offered long ago: "When we invented the airplane, we also invented the airplane crash." When Steve Jobs invented the App Store he induced another vector of itch scratching.

#5 PLANNED DATES FOR STREAMING/BINGING

It is so exciting to plot with Kelly that we are going to binge tonight on The Morning Show or Big Little Lies or Bridgerton etc....

I look forward to it all day!

Today I have plotted to watch the final two hours of the Master's golf tournament at a sports bar and I probably will be texting Morris Pickens (Sea Island, Georgia) and JP Rangaswami (outside London) who I KNOW will also be riveted! I am excited.

I look to avoid merely turning on the TV. I call this "Falling Into Media" and media lovvvvvvves that when we are bored or don't have a proactive plan we fall into Media as a default. I work to add friction to make it more difficult to "Fall Into Media".

#6 STUDYING A BOOK

Perhaps considering picking 1-2 books this year to study which might mean to work at study pace for no more than 3-4 pages a day.

I aim to use media as a tool for developing my "Long-Term" muscle. With that in mind, I study 5-6 books per year. There are a few books such as Robert Johnson's "Between Heaven and Earth" that I have studied 2-3 times every few years. In the process, I keep seeing more. By limiting my intake to 3-4 pages per day I am training my mind in slowing down and re-normalizing what a book might provide.

Often long forms of media help build long-term capability. For instance, movies with character development and a plot arch as opposed to 21-minute sitcoms. Books as opposed to 200-word thoughts of the day. Here I am taking a long media form (books) and making it much much longer. I am building long-term muscle.

Books more generally:

Our friend Steve Crandall once said that a key goal of his was to be one of the least well-read people on the planet because it would mean that he had found things that were even better to spend his time on typically involving humans. I love Steve's thinking. I have nothing against book reading unless, again as with other media, it devolves into a self-inflicted weapon preying on my productivity vulnerability or sense of being a good human (e.g. "I read more books in 2021 than 2020 so I am being a better person").

I don't take many book recommendations from folks because, well, I am not going to read them. The math just doesn't work. I know there is a LOT of value! It is just a math problem! I will reveal this to friends when they suggest a book, but, before I drop the topic I ask them for just ONE amazing point from a book they read!!! Greatest Hits harvesting.

I also easily reveal that I am a SLOW reader which perhaps further brings to life my math problem. This slow reader thing is akin to a "confession" in a world that prizes those who can consume more and consume more more quickly as a reflection of success/value/intelligence.

#7 FACEBOOK FRIEND REMOVAL

Perhaps consider cutting 25% of your Facebook friends today. If you don't seem to miss any of them in the next five days, consider removing another 25% next week. (or, yes, cut Facebook cold turkey other than any key groups that organize on Facebook)

I am not inherently anti-social media. It is just a tool. It can be a great great tool. A dear friend, for instance, exquisitely re-crafted his use of Facebook to a surgical life-enhancing efficacy about six years ago. Fantastic. For me, I just tossed it out fully one Saturday morning four years ago inspired by Om Malik. I am NOT required as a world citizen in 2022 to optimize all the fabulous tech tools of the world. I don't use Twitter or Instagram or TikTok or a gazillion great new tools. And I am OK if that means I am an archaic not-with-it loser. I can handle that no problem.

#8 REWARDS FOR STARING DOWN CLICKBAIT SUCCESSFULLY

Every time I stare down clickbait and win by NOT clicking I can have a peanut M+M.

If only BF Skinner were here to devise reward systems for each time I successfully avoid the clutches of Clickbait!! And Clickbait is NOT just a factor when searching on the InterWeb. It is an abstract that is injected into tactics of EVERY single media. I might have to get a much larger bag of peanut M+Ms and increase my distance running to burn calories offsetting my rewards program. Maybe I can listen to a few 1.6x sped-up podcasts while I run. 😊

#9 CALL AN OLD FRIEND

Perhaps arranging just one 30-minute phone call date with an old friend once a week. Perhaps a walk and talk.

Long phone calls are a long-form pro-active media and crowd out short-term media dribble like stock feeds which make us twitchy.

I have a friend who now calls Friday “catch up day”. He started by making space for “catching up” on reading. But then he started “catching up” with old friends. As best as I can tell, Friday is now his favorite “work” day because he spends a huge chunk of the day “catching up” with so many friends and feels so lucky that these many relationships blur the lines across all of life's elements. It is definitely work! And it is also definitely NOT work!

It is definitely HIS pro-active plan and not a reactive one induced by media.

#10 ENGAGE FULLY WITH ZERO MULTI-TASKING

Perhaps consider watching a sporting event once a month without ANY multi-tasking or alternative productivity like straightening the house or cooking meals for the week ahead or eliminating email while you watch the game. Just sitting there. Just watching. “Don't just do something. Sit there.”

Long ago, Marshall McLuhan observed that some media required full immersive attention – such as watching a movie at a theatre – while others did not – such as watching a baseball game on television or, even at the stadium. So I am picking a media that doesn't actually demand my full immersion and giving it my full immersion anyway! I found this VERY hard! A HARD on-ramp but only for a few hours. I am so used to productivity and mixing media. This idea is, again like others, in the spirit of “If you can't beat... join 'em... BUT on my terms.” It is also practicing a long-term capacity-enhancing relationship with media.

PART #4: VULNERABLE COMMUNICATION ESCAPES FROM SOCIAL PRESSURE

Media wants to induce social pressure.

Media wants me (and Kelly) to go spend money to find out what Titanic is all about. Media wants me to think I should be “with it” and know what is “going on”. Media wants me to feel embarrassed if I don't keep up with today's controversy.

Media doesn't care about my well-being or personal development so much as me getting addicted to its forms. Unless, of course, it can wiggle its way into a revenue stream about my well-being in the process.

Can I practice in a way that removes me from any of its clutches and leaves my mind free to participate truly as I might wish to?

Here are a few communications approaches...

Example: “Did you see XYZ movie???? It was so awesome!!!”

“No! I am always so behind! What did you love about it??”

Example: “What NFTs have you bought recently?”

“Well... I have never bought an NFT. I have no clue what all the buzz is about!!”

You?? Tell me about it? Something big must be going on, huh?

Example: "How much time are you spending on Fortnite?? Isn't it so incredible? Just genius. I don't think you can understand what's happening in the world without being seriously engaged in Fortnite, huh???"

"Well... I am definitely one of those who can not understand the world! I have never played Fortnite!! What makes it so compelling for you??"

Example: "Have you seen the viral video of the blah-blah-blah ??? It is so funny, isn't it!!!"

"Actually I have noooo idea what you are talking about!! Tell me about it! Can you forward a link?? I gotta catch up!!"

Example: "You Know who blah-blah celebrity is, right?"

"No idea! I am clueless on pop culture! Who are they?????"

Example: "You watching the game tonight??? It's gonna be amazing!!!"

"Probably not! I wish it wasn't so late. I need sleep! Probably is going to be an amazing game!!"

Example: "How many times have you seen Dave Matthews in concert?? Is he not THE best in concert??"

"I have never seen him in concert but, wow, everyone says the same thing!! Maybe someday!"

The list of situations can be endless!

We think that peer pressure ends in high school or such, but media companies love the fact that we take peer pressures unconsciously far far into our lives! It seems to help to notice that old twang of high school "being with it" pressure and then cut it off quickly and be intentionally not cool...

...and with zero defense or excuse at all.

Developing a repertoire of communications that helps escape societal pressure associated with media could SAVE hours of fighting to keep up with it all! All media seems to LOVE that there is societal pressure to engage. People want to be "up on things" and media uses that social pressure against us.

I like to make it my job to NOT know what is going on.

So much more ahead.

...Pip

"The only true currency in this bankrupt world is what you share with someone else when you're uncool..."...Lester Bangs

