

I Will Do What In The Future

This blog post was translated by Mistral

I have been working in society for over 6 years since leaving school in 2014. With so many personal experiences and significant changes in the world, I wonder what I will do next in this current situation. I share my thoughts here and look forward to exchanging ideas with my friends.

This world has people in every field. Each person experiences differently and chooses differently. Life also has many unexpected events that make our experiences unique. As for success, people say it's about choices rather than effort. I realize that these few sentences convey a lot. Each sentence could be a lengthy article. Life, they say, is simple, yet complex.

Some say, life is simply being born, going to school, working, raising a family, retiring, and enjoying retirement, sending off parents, and bidding farewell to children. In a nutshell, it summarizes a long life. I formerly wondered what kind of lives others lived, what their experiences were, and what kind of people they were. Later, I learned to observe and think, and I discovered that everyone is essentially the same as me. This world is made up of countless me's. Because in entrepreneurship, I made many friends. I shared my work and entrepreneurship story with them all the way. The reason I gained their understanding and trust was because of my thoughts, and many times they had already thought of it themselves. My joys, sorrows, and various experiences were also theirs.

When chatting with friends, we sometimes talked about emotional experiences and family stories. Although some stories broadened my perspective, most of us were similar. We were all experiencing the same world, the same society.

The stories that happened in my family also happened in many other families. The stories that happened between me and my partner also happened between many couples. The stories that happened to me also happened to many people.

I have explained many times why I started reading various books and watching documentaries continuously from the beginning of 19, feeling bored and uninterested in the world. Looking back, it was because of these experiences that I began to feel the world was dull and monotonous. When I did many things, I found that things were all the same. When I met many people, I found that people were all the same. When I went to many places, I found that every corner of the world was plain and ordinary.

In 2020, the epidemic occurred, disrupting everyone's rhythm and plans. Almost everyone suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder—simply put, everyone was not good. Based on my reading and thinking in 19, during the epidemic days, I wrote articles criticizing the government and complained that the Chinese economy, which was already high-priced and difficult, became even worse. This year, I played basketball

to lose weight, wrote articles, made videos, got married, introduced projects to friends, and helped friends with some things. I have also been thinking about what to do in the future. I have fallen into a sense of confusion, a mid-life confusion. This world is like this, this company is like this, this life is like this, this life is like this. As we grow older, we cannot avoid experiencing the deaths of family members or friends. With age, these life-altering events will become more frequent. These major life disruptions will give each person a jolt, making them ponder the meaning of their own life, the purpose of their existence.

Feynman said, if you keep searching for the meaning of life, you will never be able to live in the present. No one can figure out what the meaning of life is, and that's not important. What's important is finding something you love to do and doing it.

With the advancement of internet information, we learn about various ways of living, many kinds of lives, many kinds of choices. This makes it even harder for us to make choices. Should we follow the path of most people, or blaze our own trail? Should we be different from everyone else, or the same? We always have to earn money to support ourselves or our families, and our choices seem limited.

After going through the experience of losing money as a startup investor and working hard to earn it back, I seemed to have more courage to choose my own path. However, I found that each path was much the same. This is life, no matter how much we struggle, it remains life. This is the earth, no matter how we indulge, we are still on the earth.

After reading some historical books such as "Wanli Fifteen Years" and "Chinese History," I learned that during the Ming Dynasty, corruption was rampant, and the air was thick with decay. Figures like Prime Minister Zheng Cheng, Scholar Zhang Jing, Official He Rui, General Qi Jing, and Philosopher Li Zhi all tried to change things, but all failed. Ancient dynastic rule had reached its end. Although there was still the Qing Dynasty to come, the events of 1587 had already foreshadowed the end. The times are something we cannot change. I read more books and learned more, pondered a lot, but was still quite perplexed. Regardless of what we do or how we live, it seems our lives are shaped by our environment. We can never truly be unique individuals, we are always products of our environment. My parents' lives unfolded this way, my life unfolded this way, closely related to the larger environment, to reform and opening up, to China's development.

Without reform and opening up, my parents would not have come to work in the Huangpu district, would not have spent twenty years here. Without the development of internet technology, I would not have gone to university in Beijing and dropped out to start my own business.

These twenty years, my parents and I have experienced many things. But my grandfather's life seemed to change little, he lived his entire life in the countryside. The tree in front of our house stood still for his entire life.

This is life, this is our story. In the end, I discovered, I, my grandfather, that tree, we have experienced

similar things. No matter how far I roamed, I was always on Earth, they were too. I traveled the world, I discovered the world was like my childhood village. I met many people, I discovered people were like my extended family.

A friend asked me recently what I' ve been doing, what I plan to do in the future. I gave many versions of answers. One day, I thought of an answer, which is, I probably just want to find something to do, and be able to support a family. I have read many articles by Paul Graham, the startup mentor in Silicon Valley, believing in the path to wealth through entrepreneurship. Life is short, I don' t want to be weighed down by basic survival issues. We should strive to entrepreneur for a few years and then achieve financial freedom, after which anything goes, to enjoy life.

This viewpoint is reasonable, the articles were captivating, and I didn' t want to be brainwashed, so I went into entrepreneurship and experimented for a few years, learning some things, but I found that this path was not as easy as I thought.

This year, I heard another story about financial freedom, the story of a fisherman and a merchant. The fisherman fished during the day, spent some time cleaning his catch, went home to cook for his family, spent time with them, and then played his flute until late at night. The merchant came to offer him a way to catch all the fish he would need in a lifetime, store it, and then he could spend his days with his family and play his flute every night. The fisherman replied, "I' m already living that way."

This story I came across on Douyin International, and it has stayed with me. There are many differences between their simple material life and our modern world. Can money be stable and consistent in our modern world as the fisherman assumed he could catch fish? They lived a simple life, can we emulate them in modern society? How should we live in modern society like them?

There is no exception, and such a simple way of living exists in modern society. In Thailand, there is a man named Jon Jandai. Jandai and his family have a farm in Thailand, living a simple life, mostly self-sufficient in food and shelter, and educating their children at home. They spend about two to three hours a day on farming and household chores, and the rest of the time is free. His TED talk was very popular and gave a big shock to modern society. He raised a question, why is life so complicated when it can be so simple. I have talked about this at length, and there are many factors to consider: personal struggle, historical processes, the current world and environment, and the influence of surrounding friends. I am truly uncertain about what I will do in the future, and I have been pondering this for a few years without coming to a clear understanding. I even have some nostalgia for the past, when goals were simple and sufficient. During school days, I did my homework and took exams; during work, I improved skills; during entrepreneurship, I made products and attracted users; during financial difficulties, I worked hard to earn back the money. But now, I have paid off my investors and have not wronged anyone, yet I am still unsure of my goals.

I have thought seriously about going back to the countryside to learn farming and livestock raising, trying

out another kind of life. After all, humans have lived this way for thousands of years. I want to experience the life of our ancestors, and it's not a waste to come into this world once. However, I realized that even in the countryside, I would still be confused and have plenty of time to kill, needing to find something to do.

My wife finds it difficult to go back to the countryside with me. The future of our children's upbringing and education is also a concern. The city, it seems, is where I cannot escape. Farming and livestock raising have so many learning resources available in today's age, so it should be possible to learn. However, farming the land, growing vegetables, raising pigs and chickens for our own consumption, should not be too difficult. This could be a backup plan for me.

I'll just live in the city for now. I don't have to start a business, finding a job is still easy, I'll just do that.

After realizing that health is the most important thing in life, and after realizing that financial freedom is not easy, I also came up with a unique life formula for myself. I am currently 25 years old, let's assume I live to 35. Once I am healthy at 35, let's assume I live to 45. And so on. I have seriously thought about what I would do if I only had ten years left in my life. If I am more cautious, I should seriously consider what I would do if I only had five years left. These are realistic and objective considerations. I have been changing my thoughts every year, I admit I cannot do long-term things, I am not the type of person who sets long-term goals and works hard to achieve them. Instead, I do things based on my current beliefs, combined with the larger environment and my abilities, to benefit my own growth and development.

Money has not been very important to me, as long as it is sufficient. I am envious of financially free people and friends who have been more successful in their businesses. However, my freedom seems more important than wealth and other things. I don't want to do things I don't like, and I don't want to do things for the sake of wealth or others' expectations that go against my inner convictions. If life doesn't force me to do things I don't like, I won't do them. So I have learned to live frugally and have no desires, I don't want to sacrifice my freedom for material things.

Though a frugal me may have fewer friends and may be hard for my family to accept, I will do my best to fulfill my responsibilities for the family and help them live a decent life, but I cannot provide a wealthy life. I mean, in Guangzhou, I can work hard to provide a monthly living expense of less than ten thousand, but I cannot provide more than that, and I don't want to sacrifice my freedom to obtain unnecessary material things.

As a freelancer, I can earn more than ten million in a year, but what can I do with the remaining time? Since there's not much to do, should we work hard and earn money as much as possible while the economy is still not too bad? Or when we consider earning money, should we consider the best way to do so?

Having a house to live in does give me a certain degree of self-indulgence. I don't have to take on large mortgages for my parents' sake and work hard in a company for twenty years. Of course, focusing on work

and life in such a dedicated way also has its advantages. If we could roughly predict how the world would develop over the next twenty years, wouldn't we make it easier to make choices today. What would the world look like? What events should I participate in? What events could I participate in? Which things are worth long-term investment? What should I accumulate to establish a firm footing in society? What skills should I learn to meet the needs of future people?

However, I sometimes think, since we are like people in ancient times, who could not foresee the future any more than we can, just like people a hundred years ago could not foresee the future for a hundred years. As individuals, we are ultimately insignificant, and we cannot change this world or this society. We can only prepare ourselves. Exceptional scientists, entrepreneurs, and politicians, as individuals, have left their mark on history only by leveraging technology or crowd influence. To be honest, few people care about past people, everyone only cares about how to live their own lives. Future people also don't care about us, they only care about how to live their own lives.

If it were during the era of the first and second world wars, it would be good to hide in the mountains and not participate in wars or revolutions. I often think, if there was only me in the world, how would I live? If I came to a small island with all modern convenience facilities, how would I live my life?

I realize that I should not be too worried about the future or whether I can survive in this society. After all, everyone wants to live, what's the big deal. The difficult times have passed before. I don't need to be rich or wealthy, I just want to have food to eat and live for myself and my family. For example, ten years later, I will still be me, my abilities and connections will still be the same, so why can't I survive? I realize that this is actually related to the overall environment. Between 10 and 17 years, a normal engineer could find very good internet jobs. However, between 18 and 20 years, many engineers began to lose their jobs and had to leave the big cities or transform into doing something else.

This epidemic made us realize how our lives are influenced by the environment. However, our daily lives were also influenced by the environment before the epidemic. How does a country develop its economy? Where does the government invest people's money? What is international politics like? What is international trade like? Which technologies are popular among the masses? In good environments, even if our abilities are weak, we won't be afraid of not making enough money. In bad environments, even if our abilities are strong, we won't make much money. For instance, during our 14-15 years of doing e-commerce and public accounts, we might have made around ten thousand yuan a month with our hard work. But by 2020, we could only barely make a few thousand yuan in the first month. Our income came from our friends, our target user groups, and the general public. How much we could make and whether we could make it depended on their situations, whether they were doing well or not, and what they needed and would need in the future. Our efforts, however, were not as important. That's why Lei Jun said, "Go with the flow." What constitutes a good environment? A good environment first involves the circumstances of our own family,

then those of our relatives, followed by those of our friends, and finally those of netizens and neighbors.

It's quite difficult to retreat from the world. In the physical world, we communicate and interact with our families, relatives, and friends. In the digital world, WeChat and Douyin influence our values. Can we not be influenced by those around us? Can we not be influenced by our spiritual idols on the internet?

Furthermore, our bodies are complex. When we take good care of our faces with expensive treatments, our internal organs may develop problems. When our limbs are healthy and robust, our brains may have issues. Having a mansion, cars, and business may harm our bodies. Drinking purified water and eating a lot of snacks may harm our health. Our bodies are the most important thing, yet they are also the most complex. Therefore, material life may not be as important, and success and achievements may not be as important either. I don't know what I'll do in the future. I really have no idea what I'll do in the future. At this moment, I seem to have understood Feynman's words better. I don't need to figure out what to do in the future, nor do I need to pursue any success, nor do I need to conform to the world, nor do I need to seek the meaning of life, I just need to simply be myself, find things I love, and do that, making enough money to support my family is enough. As for what the future will be like, there's no need to be afraid or worried, just go with the flow. When the outside world affects me from doing what I love, when it makes me stop doing what I'm passionate about, then I'll face it head-on.

In this way, I strive to make myself happy and enjoy every day. I don't have to fear the unexpected. Because I'm happy, I have no regrets. Hmm, Feynman's words seem very reasonable. But what do I like to do? Where is my passion? Is there anything I enjoy doing that doesn't feel like work? What have I been doing all along?

Reading, writing, thinking, coding? Working on my own projects? Live streaming and giving lectures? Writing articles and making videos? Interacting with people? Learning and exploring? Tinkering with new things?

Human desires are numerous. We find it hard not to compare ourselves to others. If our friends are all doing well, and when we scroll through our friends' feeds and see their various good news, their buying houses, buying cars, getting loans successful, can we keep a calm attitude? The key is, we don't know where we fall short of them, they're doing well, why aren't we? Seeing these good news, sometimes we're happy for our friends and give them a like. Sometimes we're surprised and envious.

Without goals, we will be aimless and do things randomly. Ultimately, we still need goals, we still need to live consciously. Feynman also had his goals. He participated in the atomic bomb project, he lectured every year at the California Institute of Technology, he explored his ideas and wrote papers to publish. Feynman told us, we don't need profit-driven goals, we don't need to win the Nobel Prize, but we still need goals, and we need to play well on the journey, naturally and happily. Many times, doing something you love doesn't make you money to support a family. For instance, I write articles, and I've been doing this for a

long time, but I can't make a living from it. I need to find ways to occasionally take on ads or help promote fellow writers. I need to figure out how to make self-media better. In an increasingly difficult environment, making money to support a family seems to be getting harder and harder. So, when I don't have much money, I need to think about how to make money, adjust my mindset, and do a love-for-love job. When I want to make money, I also think about how to make a sustainable income, should I do something that makes money immediately, or something that makes myself or the company more valuable in the long run, how should I adapt to the situation. Should I make more friends or upgrade my future value-added abilities, how can I face the future world better, what can I do myself. Maybe I have some entrepreneurial experience, so I should struggle for a few more years to solve the basic survival problems of my life, and then come to a standstill. Today I talked so much, but I still don't know what to do in the future, let's just keep walking and thinking about it. I still have two cents in my pocket, don't be afraid.