

## **The World is Not Enough. (Version 2 - 11/8/22)**

Ever gotten stuck in the middle of an ocean approaching sundown and hitched a ride on a yacht? Didn't think so. Well on a trip to Colombia, back before it became a tourist hotspot and resembled more of a Narcos episode, I accidentally did. The captain was no more than 19 years old, and had a crew of background dancers out of a Jay Z video. Thankful for the ride, I didn't ask to see the cabin, in fear of not coming back out alive. That was enough discovery for one day.

Fast forward 2 decades and the world seems a bit less serendipitous. The world today relies less on curiosity and instincts, more on a prescribed path to instant gratification. We're constantly in search of a hack. For everything. In this sense, and thanks to technology, the **world has become much smaller**. Everything is accessible, known and broadcasted. Leaving less room for discovery.

The previous travel anecdote occurred pre social media. Before the saturation of travel blogs, some who have never visited the destination being blogged about. The world during these times and those before it carried with it more mystique. Inquisitive minds sought out experiences unfamiliar to their own. In search of discovery.

I just came back from a work trip to Barcelona. Fancy hotels and business dinners aside, I tend to carve out time to intentionally get lost and live like a local. Literally turning Google maps off, and just walking to the port and back. To let the nuances of the city unfold. To notice, instead of look for.

As I wandered through the streets, I came across the Christopher Columbus museum. An original entrepreneur that sought to explore the unknown. Backed by an early iteration of venture capital, through Ferdinand and Isabella. I meandered through alleyways and corridors without intent. Practiced broken Spanish with patient locals. A far cry from the younger tourists I saw, with their 3rd arm out jockeying for position to capture the perfect light and angle for an Insta-opp. Or out visiting the same high end luxury shops that can be found in any major metro, online or coming soon to a metaverse near you.

The shared desire to discover *what may be*, brought Columbus and the Crown together in search of what serendipitous events may emerge. Compared to today's age, curiosity is dead. Travel to quench a curious thirst has been replaced by the desire to 'flex', boasting the world traveled on social media. A world where influencers and bloggers have prescribed where to go and what to see versus **getting lost with intention**.

Younger travelers today value seeing the world. Many pursue *known* experience, or 'Done for You Discovery' (D4Y Discovery). Granted convenience is helpful to enhance explorative activities in many ways. However, it also has its place.

The disturbing problem is the effect prescribed exploration has on awakening cognitive areas of the brain. Areas that exploration brings out in us. The path to discovery in itself awakens us. The brain loves to learn but doesn't love being fed information. Generally, experience trumps rote learning any day. Discovery is driven by a combination of curiosity and instincts. Both critical characteristics of evolution.

As a result of D4Y Discovery, has our species taken on a track to devolve through each successive generation?

Instant gratification is the easy way. Figuring it out is the hard way. Which do you think leaves a lasting impression? Learning to accompany you through life? Removing the element of discovery, or rather the discovery process, proves to be a disservice to ourselves.

Traditional school curriculums don't teach us how to think. Nor explore. They too follow a prescribed path to discovery, yet fall short in sowing the seeds to develop that **discovery muscle**. In school just the same, kids are looking for the easy path to an A. To get through it, and get to the next level.

So when the world is in everyone's hands, or rather fingers and laptop screen. What's next to discover? Simple. Ourselves. We're so fixated on consumption from every angle. The 'top 10' this. The 'best of' that. Why? With so much to consume and experience, we don't want to waste time settling for anything but the latest and greatest. At some point the critical mass of consumption is equivalent to a computer's gluttony with data. The inputs are continuous. An endless repository of 'things' with little resource left available to actually compute. Or digest, synthesize and revelate on its meaning. It's impact on ourselves. We need to stop and get lost more. To discover ourselves by discovering what's around us. The world is not enough, but we will always be enough.

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Ever gotten stuck in the middle of an ocean approaching sundown and hitched a ride on a yacht? Didn't think so. Well on a trip to Colombia, back before it became a tourist hotspot and resembled more of a Narcos episode, I accidentally did. The captain was no more than 19 years old, and had a crew that resembled the background dancers of a Jay Z video. Thankful for the ride, I didn't ask to see the cabin, in fear of not coming back out alive. That was enough discovery for one day.

Driven by a combination of curiosity and instincts. Both critical characteristics of evolution. Fast forward 2 decades and the world seems a bit less serendipitous. The world today relies less on curiosity and instincts, more on a prescribed path to instant gratification. We're constantly in search of a hack. For everything. As a result has our species taken on a track to devolve through each successive generation?

The previous travel anecdote occurred pre social media. Pre saturation of travels blogs. The world during these times and those before it carried with it more mystique. Inquisitive minds sought out experiences unfamiliar to their own. In search of discovery. I just came back from a work trip to Barcelona. Fancy hotels and business dinners aside, I tend to carve out time to intentionally get lost and live like a local. To let the nuances of the city unfold. As I wandered through the streets, I came across the Christopher Columbus museum. An original entrepreneur that sought to explore the unknown backed by the first iteration of venture capitalists in Ferdinand and Isabella.

The shared desire to discover what may be brought these folks together in search of what serendipitous events may emerge. In today's age, curiosity is dead. Travel to quench a curious thirst has been replaced by the desire to 'flex', boasting the world traveled on social media. A world where influencers and bloggers have prescribed where to go and what to see versus get lost with intention.

In a visit to Thailand's pristine Maya Beach only 7 years ago, I was in awe of its beauty. For a few brief slivers of time. Only to be assaulted by waves of tourists jockeying for position to capture the perfect light and angle through a selfie stick. Last month Maya beach was closed to the public indefinitely in an effort to revitalize the depleted ecosystem. There is fierce debate as to whether it should reopen again.

An equally disturbing problem is the effect prescribed exploration has on awakening cognitive areas of the brain that exploration brings out in us. The path to discovery in itself awakens us. The brain loves to learn but doesn't love being fed information. Generally, experience trumps rote learning any day.

Younger travelers today value seeing the world. They pursue experience. But at the expense of what? Curiosity. It's already known. What they'll be seeing when they visit. What they'll be eating. Granted convenience is helpful to enhance explorative activities in many ways. However, it also has its place.

Instant gratification is the easy way. Figuring it out is the hard way. Which do you think leaves a lasting impression? Learning to accompany you through life? Removing the element of discovery, or rather the discovery process, proves to be a disservice to ourselves. Much of our youth are setting high standards for themselves, which is a good thing. But also high entitlement to those standards without the consideration of taking the hard action to earn it.

Traditional school curriculums don't teach us how to think. Nor explore. They too follow a prescribed path to discovery, yet fall short in sowing the seeds to develop that **discovery muscle**. In school just the same, kids are looking for the easy path to an A. To get through it, and get to the next level.

On the other hand, entrepreneurs are our modern day explorers. As an entrepreneur one is innately curious. Inquisitive. Connecting dots. Finding solutions where others see voids. The pandemic ushered in a plenty of loss. However it spawned a lot of entrepreneurs that built valuable companies today. The lockdown also helped regenerate ecosystems and cities. Here's a look a New Delhi pre pandemic and then during:



Perhaps we should practice an annual monthly lockdown. Pick one month out of the year where we as a global community, we all decide to shut it down and hole up in our homes. Work remote. Reconnect with families. Let the earth and ourselves breathe. And learn to discover.