

Answers to Visa's questions

[Original Tweet](#)

Warm up questions

What do you do to relax?

I don't. Relaxing just ~ happens ~ if the conditions are right. I've never been able to consciously decide to relax.

- If I can't relax it's because I have stuff to do or something I'm stressed about. I relax by getting stuff done so that relaxing happens.
- If I can't control what I'm stressed about, I journal or speak about it out loud to either convince myself to extract a different meaning or minimize the existing negative meaning.
- If that doesn't work, I distract myself with really stimulating activities.

What do you do for fun?

Hm, well, there's what I find fun and what I end up doing for fun.

Things I find fun, a grab bag:

- doing things i'm good at. the better i am, the more baseline fun there is in it for me
- writing. i always have ideas in my head. the more i write, the more ideas replace them, and it's fun to see what they get replaced with. what's in the infinite box of chocolates this time!?
- talking about my hopes, dreams, plans and those of others. uncovering why people do what they do. what feelings are people trying to feel or not feel? Why?
- Learning things with legible progress
- Jazz improv but with conversations. Getting a good joke, meme, or scene going is absolutely chef's kiss.
- I like puzzle-ish activities (e.g. coding), but not for their own sake. Like, I would never do a puzzle, I don't see the point. I know the end result. But I'd do one if I wanted to see What Would It Look Like If I Did X, or if I wanted to solve a problem.
- I love taxonomizing things and making things more legible. I like obnoxious questions like.. Why is drinking not a subset of eating? Why is it not OK to say "I'm eating water" - is that not technically true?
- I like thrills, but it's a narrow band. If it's just the right amount of thrill it's addicting. For example, I don't gravitate towards scary movies because it's "too" thrilling. But driving 10-15 kilos per hour (that's what they use in Singapore, right? haha), deliberately paying *just* a little bit too little attention to the road to make it *slightly* dangerous... that's how i get my kicks.

- Oh, I love taking tests. Re: narrow band of thrills above, I have a habit of slightly under-studying for e.g. math tests so that I'm still learning as I'm taking the test. The idea of taking the test purely for testing purposes if I already know everything sounds SO BORING. I have to not know at least something or feel not as fluent as I could be in order to be motivated to do it.
- I generally love making things. Part of it is an ego thing. I like seeing my ideas exist in reality. But also I like the iterative process of "What if X?" -> oh! Actually I think I want Y -> Yep it's Y, what about Z?
- I also like analyzing what makes things "good" - why is that funny/not funny? Why is the story good/not good? Why is this persuasive/not persuasive?

What I end up doing for fun is usually a combo of hanging out with my best friends, scrolling social media, and writing.

Why are those two lists different? I think laziness/activation energy/executive function requirements. Happy to dig deeper if you're curious.

What kind of media do you like- movies? music? video games? What're your favorites? Why?

Movies:

superhero movies, movies with expansive but consistent systems for magic, powers, abilities, social organizations. Romantic comedies are chef's kiss. I tend to like teen movies/tv shows. I also like epic / "Whoa" movies.

Favorites: Thor, Forgetting Sarah Marshall, Sleeping With Other People, Vampire Diaries, Teen Wolf, Cloud Atlas, Inception, Interstellar

Reasons they're my favorite:

- Thor I especially love that scene when he gets his powers back. When he finally becomes earnest and gets rewarded for it. The epicness, ah, it sends chills down my spine.
- Forgetting Sarah Marshall - omg it's just so funny, such good writing, and so charming.
- Sleeping With Other People - also great writing, also funny, also relatable and cute.
- Vampire Diaries, Teen Wolf - I love that people feel things. Expressions and emotions aren't muted at all. I also love when people have powers, because I love imagining that I also have those powers.
- Cloud Atlas, Inception, Interstellar - I love feeling epic (lol which is the name of the final season's finale for vampire diaries). Like that "Whoaaaaa deeuud" feeling

Music:

I'm kind of a basic bitch in this respect. I like top 100 pop, but I also veer into country, punk, screamo, and some Spanish music.

I hesitate to name favorites because it's very seasonal for me. I don't have a song that has stood the test of time as a "favorite". But currently I'm rly into

Nervous System by JOSEPH, Tusa by KAROL G, Heavy by Peach PRC, Enchanted by Taylor Swift

Reasons they're my favorite: Either my body likes the sound, or it resonates. Like, I feel like they're talking about *my* feelings. I feel seen, validated. Also, for Enchanted specifically, I like to pretend Taylor is someone I have feelings for, and she's singing that about me. Heheh

Video Games:

I have two categories of video games I like, but I don't play video games because I don't have the self control or desire to moderate myself.

I like social party games (smash bros, mario party, COD) and blizzard games (diablo, wow, starcraft) lol. Oh, i also like chess but to me it's just a "pass the time" game - I don't really have a desire to get good at it.

These are also very seasonal for me. At one point I loved each of those blizzard games and would play for 12 hours a day. But now, I have no interest. Well actually, all my friends are playing Diablo IV right now and it's tempting, but I have too much other stuff to do.

Reasons they're my favorite:

- smash bros - it's just so satisfying to knock your friends off the edge, flying.
- The appeal of WoW for me was leveling up, mastering professions, and having an excuse to chill with friends and chat about whatever while we dungeoned.
- Diablo is a similar appeal: leveling up, getting good, and then beating people, specifically my friends so i could kindle their competitive spirit.
- Starcraft: same appeal but you could build things!! It was fun to build things. That game required a lot of coordination and executive function though - past a certain point i couldn't do it and have fun at the same time

What kind of movies, music, video games do you not like? What don't you like about it? Why?

Movies:

Hmm. I tend to not like most documentaries. They're too slow from an information per second point of view.

I tend to not like pure romance movies - they often don't seem "realistic" (as in acceptable movie realism) and it takes me out of the moment. The ones that pull it off are the ones where I don't even care that it's unrealistic, they capture a feeling that I feel/resonate with so it's fine.

I don't tend to gravitate towards pure action movies (e.g. fast & furious, john wick) for a similar reason i don't gravitate towards puzzles (sudoku, tabletop puzzles, etc). It's neat to look at but what's the point? What's it building towards?

I also tend to have resistance towards starting movies/shows in entirely new universes, and have a preference for sequels, spin-offs, etc. I love that I already know the characters, rules, magic system, themes, etc - I can get to the fun part a lot quicker by just seeing the story unfold.

Music:

Music I don't like is hard to articulate. Basically anything I can't relate to. Anything too slow. Anything too boring (e.g. not enough sound to give me sound-gasms).

Video Games:

I don't like most video games because I don't like learning new video games generally. Same reason as watching new movies based on new universes. The learning part is kind of a drag. How do these mechanics work? Ehhh

I also don't like video games where the culture is really bro-ey and competitive. I like healthy competition environments. Not video games where it's common to see "lol you suck kill yourself" in the chat.

What's annoying? often ppl get a bit sheepish or apologetic but it's very valuable information, to know what you won't do

- I *hate* doing things a certain way when I know there's a better way to do it. Even if there's only a chance there's a better way, it kills my motivation to do it.
- I don't like being in groups above ~6 people unless we can organically fragment into smaller groups. I have to work harder to get words in, which I don't enjoy, I feel bad about people who sit for long periods of time waiting their turn, which I don't enjoy, and i worry about the increasing number of people who find whatever is being talked about irrelevant.
- I generally don't like reading documentation or research papers or textbooks. I get too overwhelmed trying to absorb everything. I specifically don't like 1) having to ignore my impulses to indulge other things i'm curious about when I have a Job To Do, and 2) having to figure out what's relevant and what isn't
- I don't like losing lol. Well actually I don't mind losing, I just don't like losing if I don't see what i could have done better. If I feel like I can't make progress I get uninspired.
- I don't like masking my feelings. For example if I'm at work in a meeting and I'm bored, I haaaate having to pretend to be interested. It's such a drag.
- There are a lot of things I find annoying but i secretly admire lol. Like people who type in all lowercase. Who do you think you are?? You're just that casual?? But also, props, it's funny and i'm jealous and i catch myself doing it too lol

- I HATE most company websites. Specifically the page where they tell you what they do. It's always so VAGUE. And so UNAPOLOGETICALLY vague. Like are you serious? I came here for answers and you think this is OK?? How dare you.
- I hate when people argue just to argue. Specifically without establishing that the conversation is not intended to be productive. It's such bad conversational hygiene.
- Actually that's another thing that annoys me: bad conversational hygiene. Monopolizing the convo, interrupting people, bad reply game in general: GROSS.
- For profit or obligations specifically, I hate having to learn how to do the thing at the same time as doing the thing. If I'm not doing it for fun, I want to know, walking in, that I know exactly how to do it so I can get it done and not have to worry about getting distracted / keeping myself on task along the way. I'm not a "tell people I know how to do it but secretly figure it out along the way" kind of person. If I don't know how to do something that I told someone I'd get done, that stresses me out.
- People who don't care to play positive sum games annoy me. The "i got mine" mentality is so gross to me.
- People who think "I had to go through this so you should have to" also annoy me.

Dream career / calling

What do you do?

For money? Currently: nothing!

Most recently, for money: video editing

Historically, for money: waiting tables, tutoring math, software engineering, data analysis, video editing

In general? Right now I spend most of my time

- Social dancing (salsa / bachata)
- Writing (<https://pole.substack.com/>)
- In animation school, making animations ([here's a thread](#))
- Making [occasional youtube videos](#)
- Hanging out with my besties and other twitter folks

What do you want to be doing?

Mostly the same as above. But also with a "good" income (e.g. \$60k-120k USD/year).

Social dancing, writing, making animated youtube videos, hanging out with my besties and other twitter folks. There are a few differences:

- I want to spend less time "practicing dancing" and about the same amount of time (1-2 times a week) going to social dance outings and just dancing. But be good at it.

- I still want to be writing, but I want to spend less time on it. I want to cut down on the “non-fun” part i.e. taking the word vomit on the page and making it into something people enjoy reading.
- I’m making animations, but not necessarily youtube videos. Ideally they’re “the same process”. Like I want to be cranking out youtube videos with animations - having a cohesive way of doing both.

I also like the idea of being a “secret shopper” / consultant for other content creators. Pointing out things like, “it gets confusing here” or “this part needs more energy” or “this is too verbose, i got bored”.

What is stopping you from doing what you want to be doing?

Regarding the bullets specifically, just time.

- I’ll get better at dancing over time to the point where I don’t need to practice as much.
- I’ll get better at writing once I better find my voice.
- When I can crank out animations quicker it’ll become sustainable to make e.g. weekly videos.

For me the biggest blocker is monetization. I know that content (e.g. animated videos) is valuable to people, but it’s not obvious how to do it in a way that is both lucrative and enjoyable.

How might we be able to fix that? What might it look like when that's solved?

Well, the TL;DR is that I need to put in the time (months, years) to get good. I know that the three things that derail me the most are

1. Shiny object syndrome - e.g. ooh what if I made money from copywriting or building marketing funnels, wait how do i factor that into my existing plan?)
2. (money) anxiety - e.g. shit i’m running out of money, I need to start generating an income, how am I most immediately legibly marketable? Being a software engineer. Ok should I focus on that??
3. Discouragement - e.g. aw man, maybe this isn’t as fun as i thought, if it’s not fun what’s the point of risking so much time / effort / career capital? I might as well do a job i don’t like, at least i make money. What if there’s something else out there that i’m a better fit for? See: 1

Preventing 1) might involve unfollowing a variety of people on twitter + unsubbing from newsletters

Preventing 2) not sure, but excel-ing out my expenses has helped alleviate some of that anxiety

Preventing 3) also not sure, other than recalling other times where things have been Not Fun until I got good at them and then they became Fun

Also, having a consistent stream of ideas / inspiration to make videos about. For example, I'm interested in business valuation and stock trading. It might be the case that I should pick up a textbook and just keep making videos about things I had trouble understanding.

Dream Audience

Who's your dream audience? What sort of people do you wanna reach?

Definitely FAN-slanted folks. Nobody rude. Ideally curious, self-aware, open-minded folks.

Where do they hang out?

Twitter/TPOT, various discord servers (small bets?), subscribed to the substacks of various FAN-adjacent figures

What do they care about?

Hmmm, this is kind of tough to get specific about. Various positive sum social causes for sure. Productive disagreements. Societal progress. Making money, tastefully.

What's the intersection between your work and what they care about?

Well, I suppose the most obvious purposes for animated videos are to sell and to explain. So making them money and explaining concepts they want their audiences to understand.

Could you make better stuff or modify your stuff to be a better fit, w/o compromising your values?

I'm sure I could. Making videos explaining things definitely aligns with me. I like the idea of spreading information. I don't think I'd have to do much modifying of myself to fulfill this need.

Selling things is iffy. I don't want to make videos that sell things in a "sleezy" way (e.g. creating problems that aren't there or over-exaggerating problems to increase conversions). But past that, I like the idea of selling by explaining. Like, here's a genuine glimpse of our journey trying to solve this problem, here's what we think the best solution is, buy it if you want.

How do you want to be perceived?

Funny, confident, inspiring, attractive, leader figure.

How would you like people to talk about you?

“Oh yeah, Josh really helped make my content awesome.”

“Oh his videos are so good. So clear, and i don't get bored at all”

“Damn, lots of people look up to him”

“Wow, he's really got his shit together”

“I trust him to get shit done”

Dream Biz Operations

Who would you be most excited to work with? Why?

I think it'd be cool to make animated educational content for Kyla Scanlon. I like her vibe, I like the friendly positive-sumness and the emphasis on feelings and meaning. I like the idea of breaking down things that are important but opaque for the masses.

Same thing with Byrne Hobart - his writing is good but terse and hard to parse. The ideas are great, the analysis is great, but there's so much friction from the outside in.

I often find that a lot of good technical writers have interesting content but it's detached from its meaning/purpose/goal. I'd love to help them flesh out why these things are important and help make it digestible to others.

I'd love the excuse of making content for people to learn about whatever it is they're passionate about!

What would be the most incredible thing that could happen to your project/business/operation? Why? How could we make that more likely? What are some intermediate steps we could define?

Well, the two things are 1) finding my stride as far as both being good and also feeling confident and 2) finding a great long-term client.

I define 2 as in someone that I'm confident I can help that I learn from when I make content for them.

It'd be incredible because I'd 1) feel like I could add value, 2) feel financially secure, and 3) feel like I was learning things.

I think we could make that more likely by.. Eh it's simple, really. Do the work, post it on twitter, tag relevant people.

The next intermediate steps would be 1) learn illustrator better and 2) practice replicating some basic animation videos like [Zach Pogrob's](#):

Example: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CtOnyueAI7S/>

What exactly is it that you do for people?

> something that is worth getting into a lot of detail on, including all the sidenotes. you want a very high resolution picture of the person who comes in with a problem and leaves with a solution, the full emotional landscape of that

This one I don't have a lot of clarity on. I'm at "I make animated videos for people".

Some examples of problems I could solve are:

- Making YT/insta/etc paid ad creatives
- Making logo animations
- Making video sales letters
- Product demos
- Explainer videos

Do you have a sense of what your current brand is? how would you describe it? (what's the backstory?)

Not really.. I'm kind of ashamed at how little visibility I have on this question. I can focus on the backstory:

I got into animating videos originally because

- 1) I was interested in various technical topics (math, comp sci),
- 2) Nobody explained things in the way that I wanted (fast paced but also highly legible/clear)
- 3) So I tried making my own

I've also explored all sorts of angles from different domains about how to make things clearer:

- Data visualization:
https://youtu.be/xplSAMwITmY?list=PLT4XLHmqHJBdB24LAQPk_PV7wrwpJFh5a&t=621
- Typography: <https://fonts.google.com/knowledge/glossary/legibility>
- Pedagogy
- Presentations
- Story telling
- Cognitive psychology

And I feel like, for any given video, I can point out pretty quickly why something isn't clear and what would make it clearer (e.g. these two things need to be disambiguated, this is too abstract, it's not clear what mini-problem this content solves towards the big goal).

Who are some people you'd like to be mutuals with, or that you'd like to work with, be associated with? (why?)

Oooh. Morgan Housel. You (Visa). Kyla Scanlon, Byrne Hobart, Kris Abdelmessih, Ali Abdaal, Grant Sanderson (3blue1brown).

I'd like to work with them because they're extremely intelligent, FAN-quality people with solid missions. Big positive sum, good reply game vibes. And that's the kind of person I want to be.

Abstract / Misc Questions

What are your open questions? What are you trying to answer?
What do you want to learn more about?

- Is it possible to just follow your curiosity down a rabbit hole and make money from documenting what you find?
- Is it possible to make a 5-10 minute animated youtube video every week?
- To what extent can i use animation and story as a substitute for cognitive load and working memory when it comes to teaching people things?
- Is it possible to make a playbook that can reliably make any piece of content funnier, clearer, more interesting, more relatable, more appealing to a certain desire?
- What would it look like to mix and match videos + pictures + writing? For example, a newsletter in the format of text text picture text animated-gif text picture text animated-gif
- Where are the positive-sum games when it comes to trading and investing? What does the average person need to know to be successful in both of those? If everyone learned how to be successful in those things, would it make no one successful? What could everyone learn that wouldn't detract from everyone else's success?
- Many of my friends have a lot of potential energy to be creators - how can i help them see beyond the wall of the "getting good slog" and access all the ideas they could have?

Theme Park: Suppose you were given some land and tasked with making "some kind of theme park". you don't have to worry about money, it just has to represent your values at the deepest/highest level. What would it be like? How would you use it?

I'm thinking of a section for any/all creative/inventive domains. A maker's workshop. A dance studio. Painting, drawing, etc. Personalized tutors so that no one is ever blocked in a way they don't want to be.

The dance studio has all sorts of sensors and VR so that if you want to be technically precise, it tells you exactly what you need to do to look the way you want to look (e.g. your arm needs to be 2 inches to the right for the 2nd count). If you want to learn a sequence and you can't remember the next part, it shows you in incrementally increasing detail, depending on how much you need.

The mental model I have is Google Maps - except you're following the same route over and over and it tells you less and less over time until you can just navigate the route independently.

Same thing with the piano room. VR or maybe just lights to point to exactly what keys should be pressed at what times. Incrementally reduced training wheels.

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Ideally all these works produced are categorized and indexed by a variety of filters and relationships. Mood, length, type, author, difficulty, etc.

So if you've mastered e.g. a jazz song with a certain mood, you can find e.g. paintings with that mood, or other jazz songs slightly more difficult with the same mood, or jazz songs with different mood same difficulty, or PEOPLE working on that same piece you just learned

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There's a weekly expo for people to gush and show off what they made