

Title: Don't be an ass

This is an homage to "Don't be a donkey" by Derek Sivers.

You have probably heard the story of Buridan's ass. Not that kind of ass. A donkey. But if not, then indulge me for a moment: Buridan's ass is standing halfway between a pile of hay and a bucket of water. It keeps looking left and right, trying to decide between hay and water. Unable to decide, it eventually dies of hunger and thirst.

Does that sound like you?

We've all been there.

Are you naked and afraid because you want to try out many different things at once?

The world wants you to pick one thing so it can fit you into a neat little box. But you want to pursue several different boxes.

Guess what? You can.

I wanted to check the collegiate athlete box. So I did. I wanted to check the working in professional sports box. So I did. I wanted to check the solo cross-country road trip box. So I did. I wanted to check the travel to foreign countries box for months at a time. So I did. I wanted to check the work for myself box. So I did. I wanted to check the work in tech box. So I did.

Now I'm thirty. And I'm just getting started.

What boxes do you want to check?

The problem is thinking you have to do it all.....right now. If you don't do it now, then it'll never happen, right?

Wrong.

The solution is to think long term. Fully commit to one path for a few years. Then commit to another path for a few years. Then rest, reassess, and commit to another. Over and over.

Don't be an ass. A donkey can't think long term. If it could, then it would obviously eat some hay first. Drink some water second. And be ready to move on.

You can have your pizza and eat it too. All you need is a little dose of planning and patience.

Let's say you're also thirty and have ten different boxes you want to check. You can do each for five years, and have checked them all by eighty.

What if you don't make it to eighty? Good question. But here's a better question. What if you do? Chances are high as long as you don't eat that pizza every single day. So why not prepare for it?

You can fully commit to one box at a time. Don't succumb to the FOMO that the world thrusts upon you.

You've proved this can be done. When an urgent task falls on your lap you are able to focus and get it done. Even when your phone vibrates in your pocket begging you to watch that viral Tik Tok video. You ignore it because you know that it will still be waiting after you finish. So, simply extend your time horizon to years instead of minutes. Commit to one thing at a time, knowing you can do the others later.

You overestimate what can be accomplished in a day and underestimate what can be done in five years.

Think about your eighty year old self. What boxes would they be thrilled to have checked? Use that as your guiding light.

I can't tell you what to do because your situation is unique. But I can tell you what not to do.

Don't be an ass.