



Spending: How much does a New Year really cost?



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Photography thanks to:
Andrew Montgomery, Michael Quinn, and Tim Marshall

Once again, the new year seems to have crept up on me without warning. It seems the older I get, the easier it is for time to slip by unnoticed, until one day I turn around mid-sip into my morning brew and BAM! There it is. Three years have gone by and I didn't even see... Ok, three years is quite the exaggeration, but you get my point.

I read a small quote by someone recently, I don't even know who said it originally, but it really blew me away - "How we live each day is how we live our lives". What an outstanding thought. That those days we let quietly slip by while we wait for something better is actually what life is made of. And as we all pull our purse strings a little tighter, it got me thinking about what it really costs when we spend our time.

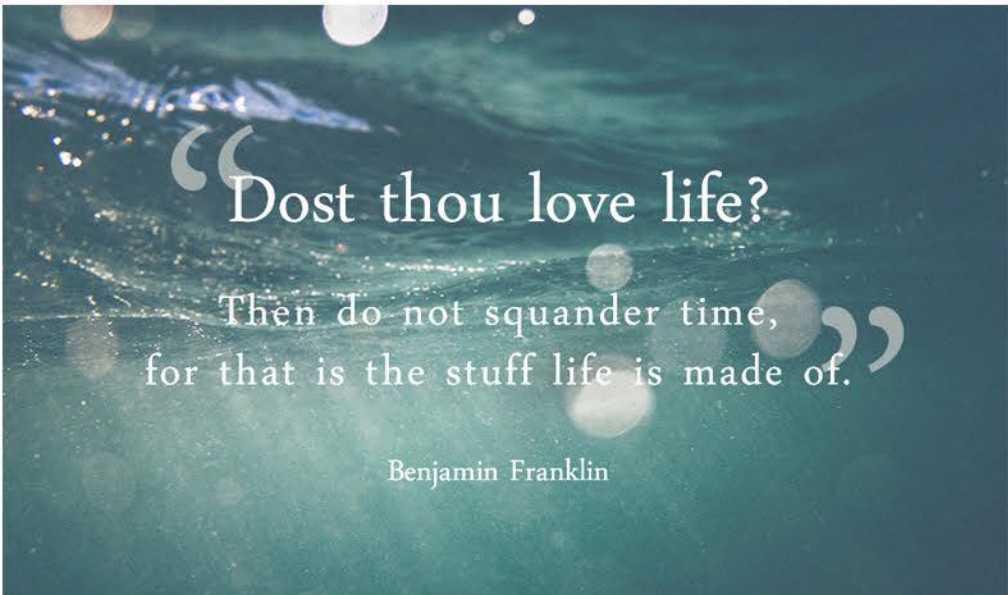
I've been an over-subscriber of the "one day" school of thought for most of my life. One day, things will be clearer. One day, all of my dreams will come true. One day, Chris Evans is gonna sit on the bar stool right next to mine... But in the meantime, here I am sat around waiting for one day to get here, letting day after perfectly good day slip right by without a second thought. Until I just happen to look behind me and see a great pile of them stacked up high like expired tickets. That's all spent my friend, no returns and no store credit. And you have to ask yourself, with all this spending, what is it I actually got in return?



I went through all my old family photos this Christmas, as I unexpectedly found myself back in the UK for the holidays. It seems an odd and very human process to capture moments of life, then move swiftly on and forget how cherished they are until they find themselves out of the bottom drawer and spread all over the living room. Even more so these days, where capturing a moment seems to have gone so far that you miss the moment entirely. Capturing and preserving seems so significant, yet in the process the moment is never enjoyed, and so did it ever even exist? Yes I'm looking at you, guy with his iPhone up and at 'em for the entire concert...

One of the first things I did this new year was spend time at my Grandad's hospital bedside. I lamented all the time I had frivolously spent, waiting for my "one day" to get here, trying to wait out that perceived rain cloud that was a bad time in my life. All those days I wished away because something better was just around the corner. The age old thought we all play with when we lose someone we love - 'what would I give to get that time back?' - The hard truth of it is you will never get it back. It's gone. You're gone. A version of yourself from a time and place that you'll never be again. And so we lament, and carry on with our flippant spending habits until the next time we actually stop to check our balance a few years down the line.

It's the thing we feel most poor of, and yet the thing we have in abundance. It seems a foolish thing to continually underestimate the true value of time well spent.



Now I've never really been one of these "seize the day" sorts, where every morning has to bring a new adventure, and if you're not planet-hopping or throwing yourself out of planes your not really living - Geez, it's exhausting to even think about. But this year I have discovered a new-found appreciation for the day to day. Because really, that's what makes up a life.

Getting to "one day" does take work. Those dreams I have, that life I want. It's there and it's waiting for me. Some days that means work. Hard work, and lots of it. Some days it means taking a chance or being brave, and some days it means darkly sobbing into a tall, fat glass with a foamy rim and cool, honey bubbles. There will even be days when I just stay still, and do nothing. Sit and watch the Captain America films. Again. Or wash the dishes, scrub under the toilet, rearrange the bookshelf, argue with the radio and so on and so forth...

Some will be big. Some will be quite small. But each and every day that passes is an opportunity for me to be the best version of myself, and revel in all the thousands of big and little things that make up my existence on this planet.

And maybe my "one day" is tomorrow. Maybe it's not. Maybe it'll never come. But I know for certain that no matter what it brings, each day in-between is worth it's weight in gold.

Happy New Year guys. Whatever you end up doing, make it count.