2017 - The Year that was

Notebook:	Blog Posts		
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So it's the last weekend of the year and time for a more in depth than usual review.

I do a weekly review, usually just spending a couple of minutes looking at the list below and thinking about each item a bit. Recently however I have realised I need to start writing my thoughts down and rating these so I can compare over time.

Review :

1. Finances - Sent my invoices? Paid my bills? Next bills coming up? Financial snapshot? Assets and Liabilities listed? Working on creating a passive / portfolio based income stream?
2. Health and Fitness
3. Family and Friends
4. Production vs Production Capacity - Balanced?
5. Household tasks and general organisation
6. Recent Short Term Wins
7. Long Term Vision
8. Important but not urgent tasks
9. Learning and Education (what to direct my learning towards next)
10. Teaching, Training, Writing and sharing my knowledge.
11. Willpower challenges and strength.
12. Food/Nutrition.

First before I do this I want to take a general overview of 2017. To put it succinctly this was a year of recharge and rejuvenation. I was focused on myself more than the community and I'm in a better spot now than this time last year..

Also my outlook for 2018 looks to be interesting.
I'm going to be handing in my resignation effective the 1st of April. I figure 3 months is plenty of time. My current plan is to spend about 3 weeks in Germany, the initial aim is to be there for the 2018 Zday conference, helping organise and film it and catch up with the amazing activists and people. I'm expecting it to be about 1.5 weeks. Depending on people's availability I'll go to Florence, Vienna and Frieburg to visit friends in Europe, then spend a week or however long I have left in Berlin trying to soak up some of the Startup culture they have there.
Then for the big bit. I'll be heading to Vietnam (or maybe Thailand) and **spending 6+ months** writing my sci-fi novel, currently titled **The Story of New Eden**.
The reason for spending time overseas is twofold. I'll be able to focus better. If I spend time in Adelaide I'll be drawn into everything here and take on too many distractions. Secondly with the same amount of money I'd likely only get a couple of months in Australia.
If anyone knows of some good places in Vietnam, Thailand or similar that are: *Cheap to live, have some Internet access, have enough English speaking people and doesn't close early* (I'm a night owl, I'll happily stay up till 3:30am and sleep till 12 noon), then please let me know! I realise that the cheap to live conflicts somewhat with the Internet access and not closing early as usually rural places are cheaper to live but a city will provide the other parts.

OK, so to my review:

Finances [0.5 -> 8] *(BIG change for the better!)*
The financial snapshot I did on the 20th of Nov 2016 shows me in $10k credit card debt having maxed out two cards. I had about $3.6k in operating money to cover expenses. I even owed my girlfriend at the time's Mum as we needed a loan from her earlier on to cover rent. Things were hard.

I'd rate this a 0.5 out of 10. I'd hit rock bottom, although I've done so a couple of times before, but this was hard to get out of. Trying to do a startup whilst also covering both my expenses and my girlfriends and living in a more expensive place, it burns through money really fast. That said, it was manageable amounts of debt and something I've since bounced back from. With a full time job doing web development at The Distillery and some investments reaching maturity I have now paid off all my credit card debt, closed one of the cards (the remaining is for emergency only use) and have nearly as much in savings as I had in debt, I also have some more investments I could draw upon if needed. Not too bad! From financial struggle to financial thriving. Although I expect the trip overseas will likely cost me about $10-20k given the time duration and the fact I still have to pay for web servers, storage and other monthly costs on top of plane flights and of course general living expenses.

Still, I'm a long way off of my goal. My aim is to help create an NL/RBE style (Natural Law/ Resource Based Economy) sustainable town. Well it'll start with a small village first. The thing is, I expect it'll take about $30 Million in initial setup funds and I'd like to contribute up to 49% of that (don't want to be in a majority shareholder like situation).

Health and Fitness [9 -> 4] *(Yeah, kinda injured)*
This time last year I was a lot fitter. I had done the 12km City to Bay in under 55mins. However during my trip to New Zealand this year I injured my Achilles tendon and also dislocated my knee. I thus spent much of the year not exercising and went from under 5mins/km to over 6.5mins a km. I'm desperately trying to get some of my fitness back, but whilst doing an 18km run doesn't seem that hard, it's really bad on my ankle and I just can't run like I used to. Instead I've been doing 8km runs and only last night managed to do it averaging 5mins 25s a km. Finally an OK speed, but now I have to work on distance again.
I'm only running once a week, mainly due to full time+ work and all my other activism and other tasks making it hard for me to get home and do a smaller run in the middle of the week. But also because I don't want to damage myself further. Hence going from a 9 down to a 4. The one upside to not running as much is that I was doing a lot more stomach exercises, but whilst I've still got some flab around the stomach that doesn't really show as well as I'd like. Thankfully diet changes seem to be helping with that.

Family and Friends [6 -> 8]
I admit it, I'm not that close with my family. Not compared to some I know. I can go for most of a year without talking to my brothers and sister and many months without talking to my Mum, but I've been a bit better this year.
My sis is in an interesting spot, injured her leg and is also pregnant so I've spent a little more around around catching up.
Also, I've been living at my Dad's. So instead of only seeing him once a week or two at the usual Boungies dinner it's now daily.
I of course moved in with Dad at the start of the year when I moved out of the rental property I'd been in with my now Ex. I was going for a 6 week trip to Brisbane and New Zealand and basically just had the room full of gear that I couldn't easily fit into my storage unit. But I came back from the trip and organised things and have been living here since. I was going to move out a couple of months ago, but realised that I still need to keep saving for my trip, that the place I was going to move into didn't have fixed Internet access and that this is a great time to be spending with my Dad whilst I still can.

Production vs Production Capacity [5 -> 7]
Last year things were hard. I was emotionally and financially drained and at times depressed. I was meant to be working on my own startup but instead spent a lot of the time addicted to computer games. Over a 2 year period I played over 1,500 hours of **Ark Survival Evolved**. That's a LOT of gaming. It was a coping mechanism, but not a very good one.
This year, I've been through a number of really intense periods, followed by the daily grind which is still fairly draining. But I've been a lot better at detecting when I'm not in a good state and recuperating as needed. As I once read, you can endure world class stress if you have world class recovery.
So when work felt hard and depressing, I spent a couple of weeks watching TV shows like Supergirl. Instead of feeling really bad about not getting done the things I felt I should have been doing I focused on the positive feelings and tried more gratitude meditations, simply smiling a lot more and taking solace in the fact that things are getting better. Afterwards I was feeling back to my usual productive self.
Despite my injuries I've still be exercising where and how I can, including doing more biking riding or abs and arm exercises if my legs weren't up for it. Between that, meditation, occasional TV shows and the odd computer game (barely any gaming compared to the last few years), I've been keeping myself in balance.

But I'm also a lot more productive this year than last. Full time work instead of 3-4 days a week. I've only managed a couple of weekends working on my own programming projects (learning ReactJS, GraphQL, etc..), but I've got a habit now of spending Friday evenings after work writing my novel or at least going into the city and writing. Sometimes I'm really quite productive, sometimes I get distracted by friends and acquaintances and other times I actively seek any chance encounters with friends. But it was this start of a good habit, but realising how I need to really buckle down and spend a big chunk of time, without any

major distractions just trying to grok all the snippets of ideas and parts of chapters I've been writing over the last 4+ years and assemble them into a cohesive story. I suspect the hardest bit will be throwing away all the bits of story I want, but can't fit in.

<u>Household tasks and general organisation</u> [7 -> 7]

The nature of this has changed from me organising a whole house and even having to move out, basically on my own, to really only looking after a room and trying to clean up the kitchen after using it. I used to do a lot more batch cooking and cleaning. I'd do larger cleans once a week or so, but here in a more shared environment it's expected you clean up after yourself sometimes before you've finished eating (depending on when others want to use the kitchen).
My room is a mess, because it's also a working space. Right now I've got years worth of paper documents to scan and organise. I've not got a nice fast multi-page feed scanner and once digitised I hope they'll be a lot easier to manage and I'll feel a lot better about their safety and longevity. Yay for searchable PDFs and cloud hosting!

That said, I've got a bad habit of doing the washing on the Saturday and going for a run on Sunday. The sweaty running clothes start to stink up the room by the time laundry time comes around again.
Whilst I'm pretty good with organising my digital photos, I desperately need to sort through my browser bookmarks and some of my archived files.

<u>Recent Short Term Wins</u> [8 -> 7]

So, it's near the end of the X-mas and New Years holidays. but I've been driven and motivated. So far I've wrapped all the presents, travelled up to Murray Bridge to visit family for xmas. Checked out the OTR Motorsport park by Tailem Bend, had a Xmas dinner with other family in Adelaide.
I've backed up my laptop and then wiped it and re-installed Windows 10. I'm still in the process of installing everything again. I've also scanned hundreds of documents and receipts, gone to my storage unit to get a WHOLE lot more and managed to watch some Firefly (It's still good, even if the graphics are a touch dated). I've also done a financial review, an 8km run, finally got a staple remover (can't scan documents that are attached together) and I've organised my draws, washed the bedding, etc.. Unfortunately I was 10s too late getting to MSY to buy the 8TB ext HDD I wanted to buy. They closed exactly an hour earlier than the sign on their door and Google suggested, which was annoying. But, I've got until April to buy one and fill it with my photos and any content I'll want to have with me during my trip. Considering I've got a 25TB NAS and 9.5TB in photos and videos I've taken, plus about 4.5TB in Movies and TV shows I could watch. Well, the hard thing is working out what to bring with me, especially when there's the nagging feeling I could loose everything on the NAS.

Unfortunately, whilst a lot of that helps me work and be more productive for the next year, I didn't get to spend any time working on my own projects, something I wish I had more time for.
Still, this time last year my girlfriend and I were breaking up and my life changed from a downward financial and emotional spiral into a recovering one.

Taking short term to mean over the year there's been some great wins.
After over 5yrs the Repower Pt Augusta campaign has won! A 150MW Concentrating Solar Thermal (CST) plant is set to be built in Pt Augusta.
I spent 6 weeks off work, most of it in Brisbane helping out with the epic 2 day global Zday event there. I helped organise it, film it and present at it and was rewarded with some amazing conversations with passionate geisters. I then got to do it all again but on a smaller scale at the Auckland Zday even in New Zealand.
Ohh and Elon Musk visited Adelaide twice, once to announce the big 100MW battery and another to announce updates to the plan for getting to Mars at the IAC - International Astronomical Congress. Although I didn't get to see him either time.

Work wise, I worked on the www.southaustraliantrails.com website, especially on importing the large amounts of trail data. Although the biggest project of the year was the Phase 2 release of the [On The Run mobile app](http://). I've been doing the backend programming and still am. It's a living breathing project that is continuing to have new features and refinements and is rather back end heavy.

<u>Long Term Vision</u> [6 -> 8]
I feel like my core archetype is a problem solver. I want to fix things. I've got secondary characteristics based around being connected with people and whilst few would believe it, also elements of cleaning.
But, that core problem solver part of me learnt about 3 main concepts. The Kardashev scale, Crash Course and the NL/RBE.

Kardashev Scale

Firstly is the Kardashev scale. A basic way of denoting the size of a civilisation. A Type 1 civilisation is planetary scale, a Type 2 is solar system sized and Type 3 is galactic. It's actually based on the power availability and basically humans are around a type 0.72, Star Trek is a type 2 and Star Wars is a type 3.

"A common speculation suggests that the transition from Type 0 to Type I might carry a strong risk of self-destruction since, in some scenarios, there would no longer be room for further expansion on the civilization's home planet, as in a Malthusian catastrophe" -- Kardashev Scale : Civilization implications

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NPC47qMJVg&t=61s

My core aim is to help humanity become a Type 2 civilisation. Most likely after that it'll likely be computer/AI systems or species different enough to not be classified as human to us now who'll become a Type 3 civ.

Crash Course

Many years ago I watched the original Crash Course video series by Chris Martenson. I would've seen it in 2008 or 2009, when online videos was still somewhat new. But it pointed out quite clearly but in detail how humanity was facing three main crises. Energy, Economic and Environmental. It mostly came down to our dependence on oil, our dependence on Capitalism and it's need for infinite growth and the environment effects that both of those have.

Now, nearly 10 years later I've been a part of the Repower Pt Augusta campaign which championed Solar Thermal as a replacement for an old coal power station in South Australia, plus I'm a board member of CORENA. Without abundant energy nearly everything is impossible. But renewables is an energy source that gets cheaper over time unlike finite fuels.

Basically the Crash Course shows the major obstacles we need to overcome just to survive.

The Zeitgeist Movement

Watching Zeitgeist Addendum back in 2008 or 2009 was a pivotal point in my life because it was when I first heard about the Resource Based Economy - RBE concept. Proposed by Jacque Fresco of the Venus Project the concept is for an economic system which has sustainability and human wellbeing at the core. But it's based on systems design thinking, automation, and things like access over ownership.

The concept has been refined over the years and the Zeitgeist Movement, and advocacy based group has added the Natural Law part making it the NL/RBE. The idea is to being living within the carrying capacity of the planet. But it's so much more. Different governance, different ways of using and allocating resources based on need not money. It ends up being a post-scarcity / abundance centred society.

Basically, by changing to an NL/RBE humanity and the planet can thrive and become a Type 2 civ.

Check out http://www.kublermdk.com/2017/04/10/zday-presentation-price-of-zero-transition-to-an-rbe/ for my Zday presentation about how we can transition to it.

Although the first two are mostly covered by The Zeitgeist Movement and NL/RBE, the three concepts together give a sign post of where we should be aiming, what we have to be aware of and how we can tackle the problems.

So, that's been my long term vision for a long time. Help humanity become a Type 2, solar system wide civilisation, by helping transition to a new economic system.

It's the details that are hard. I was already part of a failed attempt, **Earth Communities** and I see a number of other attempts which may or may not succeed.

As per my Price of Zero presentation on the transition to an RBE, but also other people's similar transition concepts developed independently, the concept of building a new model to make the existing one obsolete is the core. We start small with a community, grow it out to a village, a town and eventually to a city, then spread and create more cities and the new concepts, tools, technology and behaviours are then disseminated and integrated.

But, setting up those initial communities needs money, land, people, connectivity and tools. My focus is on trying to gather some money, connect people up and help build some digital tools.

I'm aiming for $30 Million as a collective pool, with up to 49% of that coming from me. The rest likely to be crowd funded or at least collectively contributed. I suggest that because just the interest rates from that alone can be $1 million a year. Now, that

much is stuff all. $1 Mill/yr covers normal costs for about 14 people. The full $30 mill gives maybe 400 person years. e.g 1 year with 400 people or 10 years with 40 people. But, it's a good start. It's a goal post to aim towards.

The digital tools is a newer goal, one I only started thinking about this year when part of an awesome online chat group full of like minded individuals who've also been thinking about all this stuff for years. With others focusing more on the land buy side of things and with discussions about multiple communities and some of the amazing digital tech, from Crypto to secure communications, resource allocation and the like, I realised there's some tools I'd like to make to help these things happen. A suite of apps that'll help geisty communities.
Joining the Evolution Dojo online chat was one of the unexpected highlights of the year. Despite meeting with Peter Joseph the founder of the Zeitgeist Movement and many other TZM activists, helping deploy the new website and a number of other things, it was that chat room which I feel will have the best long term overall impact on me.

Future: Gather Together and The story of New Eden
So next year I'm claiming for myself. There's two projects I want to work on which are in line with my long term vision. The story of New Eden is the sci-Fi novel I've been working on in my precious spare time over the years. It started as a movie script, but someone else came up with almost the exact same premise and it's since morphed into something quite different. It's set 50yrs in the future and is the story of Eli, a 19yr old who thinks he's living in the last city on Earth the only one surviving after a Nuclear Apocalypse only to go on a quest and find that he's actually in a quarantined zone and the rest of the world runs as an abundance centered NL/RBE based society. He has to adjust to it, finds someone to love, uses neruoMods to talk with animals, nearly dies a few times, travels to the Moon and returns home as part of a hero's journey.
I've been researching for years, writing up sections, parts, ideas, chapters, bios and am starting to finally allocate some good names to the characters. I feel like it's been gestating inside me, but it's been kicking and growing for long enough. It's time to push this thing out into the world.

The other project is Gather Together. An event management platform aimed at grass roots organisations. I've been a part of plenty of orgs and to properly organise even just the monthly events properly usually too much work. Normally you create a Facebook Event or maybe send out an email. But to try and reach everyone you need to easily spread the message across multiple platforms. From Facebook and email to posting on the website, sending out sms reminders and email reminders. Then you've got to deal with last minute changes in the weather, venue or other such potential problems. Having a central system to coordinate all these and be able to schedule reminder messages, be alerted to potential issues (like more people have RSVP'd than the venue can hold) and be able to communicate quickly with people is just the first step.
Unfortunately I've only been able to spend about two weekends properly working on the platform, I only have an functioning API able to send out SMS's, but not able to schedule messages. The VueJS based UI I created was a flop and I'm still trying to learn ReactJS, MobX and GraphQL, or I'll just jump over to MeteorJs or AngularJs, but Meteor doesn't scale as well as I'd like and Angular whilst being great for the main site, isn't good for widgets and these days there's some cool ReactJs capabilities for mobile, desktop and even Augmented Reality.

So the Story of New Eden novel hopefully inspires people towards a hopeful, abundance centered future, whilst the Gather Together lets people connect and might some day pay some bills.

Important but not urgent tasks [4 -> 7.5]
Most of the important but not yet urgent tasks around around prepping for the trip overseas.
From scanning a vast array of documents and sorting them through to making space in my storage unit for all the stuff I want to put in there whilst I'm gone to buying plane flights and accommodation.
There's always the work on Gather Together, my novel and my other writing projects, including this post which niggle at me. But I'm in a far better position to work on them now than this time last year when my spare time was spent in Ark Survival Evolved taming or breeding dinos, helicopter harvesting (using two different accounts to collect resources faster), expanding my buildings or prepping for cave runs. I had a SHIT load of stuff in that game, but wasn't getting far in IRL. Now, I'm able to actually get things done that should be done.

Learning and Education [8 -> 8]
I'm still learning at a prodigious rate thanks to audiobooks. I'm usually listening to 3-5 books a month, depending on their length, contents and how I'm doing. Listening when riding to work, washing the dishes, going for a run, driving the car. If my hands are busy but my mind is free, then I'm usually listening.

Although I'm now also allocating time to my thoughts. Empty spaces of time where I'm not listening to an audiobook, watching a movie or actively engaged in thinking about anything in particular. It helps me process things that have been on my mind and not feel like my head is full, but without just dumping the ideas out like meditation seems to do when it clears my mind.

Still, I need to focus a bit more on learning ReactJS and the like and maybe one day I'll be able to implement a [CRDT](#) based [collaborative editor](#) similar to Google Docs.

Teaching, Training, Writing and sharing [4 -> 6]
I've been doing a lot more general writing. Or at least, I'm closer to what I consider the minimal amount I'd like to do. I still have a lot of thoughts that have partially turned into draft blog posts likely never to be completed, but I'm at least writing more, but nothing like what I would like to be doing. I've not even finished editing my own Zday presentation, let alone those from the No More Bad Investments Forum and I've got things to write up about the education 2.0 manifesto from years ago.

Willpower challenges and strength [7 -> 7]
The Keto diet and usual exercise things have been my main willpower challenges, not that I was that good at sticking to under 50g of carbs a day, but I definitely felt a change. The rest is about trying to get things done and keeping happy.
The next step is to be able to put off some projects (like editing videos) until after I've done a bit more work on my own (like the Gather Together API) so I feel accomplished enough to continue working on the other projects whilst having made at least some progress on my own.
That said, I've got a lot of things to finish off before my trip overseas, it's going to be hard to fit it all in!

Food/Nutrition [5 -> 7]
I recently tried out a low carb, high fat Keto diet, and whilst the full strict diet isn't for me, it's helped me kick my carb and especially sugar heavy diet, so that's a good start.

Written 30th Dec 2017 by Michael Kubler.