

Christmas Letter 2018

Dear friend,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I hope this letter finds you smiling on the future, as I am.

Six years have elapsed since my last Advent / Christmas letter. As I realize this, I sigh to myself.

I just reviewed [the 2012 letter](#). ([Here also is the 2008 Advent Tome](#).) Then, I was enthused about my involvement in the Orthodox Church, although grieved at having lost the church I helped build.

Two weeks after I wrote that Advent Letter, a beautiful woman in San Antonio, Texas reached out to me on Facebook. A Kardashian-beautiful mother of four, I let her captivate my attention and I wound up giving her four and a half years of my life and living in Texas for two years, from the fall of 2013 to the fall of 2015, all for naught. It turned out to be a dead end, and our last interaction was July of 2017.

Why? She didn't want to be known. I spent four and a half years trying to get to know someone who didn't want to be known.

I've been out of touch all that time because I didn't know what to say. I was in the midst of trying to figure the relationship out. Now that it has been over for more than a year, I feel like I can look back and describe what happened.

I learned a lot about Narcissism during that time. In 2015 I discovered a book called [The Narcissism Epidemic](#) that changed my life. [You can read my review of it here](#). She talked a lot about it . . . she accused her ex-husband of being a Narcissist . . . but as the old saying goes, "If you spot it, you've got it."

I'm back in Bellingham, at the same apartment complex where I lived when I wrote the 2012 letter, just a different building: 1920 18th Street, #F-202, Bellingham WA 98225. Obviously, I really like it here. It's nestled next to woods and a park where I can hear children laughing and playing during the warmer months. It has a wood burning fireplace that I use regularly.

I have a dog now, a German Shepherd mutt named Snickers with asymmetric ears that make pretty girls smile. I rescued him when the San Antonio narcissist decided to have him put down after her teenage daughter had lost interest in him. Since 2015 he has been my pal, my constant companion.



Snickers the Puppy



With Dad after his leg break Christmas 2015

When I returned to Bellingham in October 2015, I discovered that the situation at the family's ancestral home was in a state of chaos. Dad lost his balance a few days before Christmas late one night as he was maneuvering around his piles and clutter and fell, breaking his femur just below the hip. I took him to the ER and

he was home by Christmas Eve, where I had the traditional Scandinavian Christmas Eve dinner complete with Lutefisk waiting. While he was in the hospital I boxed, inventoried all the clutter and shelved it in the basement, to make room for his wheelchair.

I wound up living there for two years working on restoring order, relieving congestion, catching up on yard work, and developing my business. In October 2017 I moved to my present location, where I plan to remain contentedly until I buy my dream home. [Here's a short video I made, "White Christmas", on 12/23/16](#), showing the state I was in during that time, working on catching up on yard work and cleaning up the place. I mention the "good grief" of cutting wood and benefiting from it in the winter time.

In 2016 I pivoted my business. I shifted from helping anyone who needed help for a pittance, as I had done for twenty years, to focusing on real estate and property management, radically improving my income. If you'd like to see how my business model works now and where I'm going in the future, [here's a newsletter that explains it](#).

As far as the Orthodox Church goes, I've taken an extended break. I discovered that there's a deep vein of antisemitism running through the Church; it's so deep that it's embedded in the liturgical texts.

Right now the church is divided against itself. Constantinople and Moscow are in schism with each other over territoriality in the Ukraine.

But to me these are surface issues. The big lesson I've learned in all of this is that there is no room in the heart of a Christian for hatred. Zero. If you give yourself license to hate anyone (like hating Jews for killing Christ), you've let the camel's nose of hatred under the tent and the next thing you know, you wind up hating anyone and everyone. This is how it's possible for two brothers, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Patriarch of Moscow, to be at odds with each other. They gave themselves permission to hate.

Hatred is a poison. Just one drop of it can defile what was otherwise a drinkable glass of water. Just one drop.

So that's the big lesson for me about what's happening in the Orthodox Church and I don't know what to do about it other than shield myself from hatred, and pray. So my life is very simple now. I hope this is a temporary break because I miss everything that's good about the Church.

I'd still like to find a woman to love, who might also love me back. Since September 2017, for fifteen months, I navigated the murky waters of online dating and found that people abuse a tool that's designed to help them reveal themselves, using it instead to conceal.

I'm winding it down now, I feel like I've learned all there is to know, and I conclude that the best way to meet people is IRL – In Real Life. So I'm shifting my resources toward more IRL experiences like dance festivals.

I've learned a lot over the past fifteen months. I keep a journal, I've kept notes about everyone I've met and all I've learned. The journal is filled with tabs with the names of women I've met and the dates I said both hello and goodbye. From this entire body of experience, I've formulated a list of 23 traits I'm looking for in a woman, all apophatically ascertained (that is, the opposites of my actual experiences).

I won't belabor all 23 traits, but to give you an idea, aside from being beautiful of course, I need her to be available, wise, literary, philosophical, artistic but not "artsy", graceful, intelligent, cultured, spiritual, composed, witty, humble, respectful, competent, inspiring, grateful, and soothing.

All of these things I've learned by contrast compared to my actual experiences. She's a needle in a haystack; I don't know if she actually exists; but in faith, I'm holding out for her. [Here's the complete list, with explanations](#). If you know of a woman matching this description, please introduce us.

I'm working out regularly. I bought myself a top quality bench and a set of quality dumbbells, the rubber hexagonal kind like you see at the gym, ranging 5-65 pounds on two vertical trees that I keep in a spare bedroom. So to lift, I don't need to go to the gym, I just walk five seconds from my desk and do my thing. I use the [Jefit](#) app to track progress and it really works well for me.



Snickers in the “gym”

In case you don't bother to read [this newsletter](#), in a nutshell I'm about helping [property management companies](#) improve their competence and grow, helping [Family Offices](#), and [fixing the national debt](#).

Hey, it's only \$22T or so. No biggie. I figure it's the most patriotic, loving thing a person can do.

When I wrote [the 2012 letter](#) my son Johann was just entering college. Last May he graduated USC with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Now he designs rocket engines for Relativity Space in Inglewood, California, has a steady girlfriend of three years whom I suspect he'll be marrying soon, and giving me some grandchildren to dote on.

His mom is still alive, thank God, despite her struggles with Multiple Myeloma, living and working in Kailua, Hawai'i. One thing I'll say for her: she's a fighter. Tough lady.

Last Lent I wrote down my Theology, which you can read [here](#), if you want. You'll probably think I'm a heretic, but oh well. It's a seven pager.

What does the future hold? I'm just going to keep trying. I'm staying put here in this apartment until I decide to

buy my dream home, hopefully in cooperation with my [Muse](#), after I find her. I imagine she'll have a thing or two to say about design and whatnot.

I'll continue loving my son. I'll love whatever grandchildren he gives me. I'll continue working on helping property management companies, Family Offices, and the country. I'll love my dad by making it possible for him to remain in the ancestral home, keeping his clutter down to a dull roar, and making sure he has his beloved Lutefisk on Christmas Eve. And once in a while, I'll reach out to you with a letter like this. Maybe you'll reciprocate.

If the Orthodox Church can manage to get over itself and stop hating, perhaps I'll get back involved. Meanwhile I'm kind of enjoying obeying the Fourth Commandment.

As Saint John Chrysostom once said, glory to God for all things.

If you made it this far, thanks for reading. Please write back.

May God bless, guard, guide, and keep you.

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PS – If you'd like to learn more about what I've been up to over the past six years, [here's a list of books I've read and reviewed](#), and here are yearly news archives:

[2013](#)
[2014](#)
[2015](#)
[2016](#)
[2017](#)
[2018](#)