

Getting real meta on "My Daily-s"

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After crossing the threshold of one full year of daily updates, the data nerd in me got a bit curious. So, I decided to get *really* meta on this reflection thing. For those that care, here are some of the results & background info (since I've gotten lots of questions on this over the year).

The data is from January 26, 2011 – January 26, 2012 (365 day span)

POSTS

Total daily postings missed: 8

Total status 'likes': 464

Total status comments (not including my own): 151

Top 5 posts (based on interactions, in order of 'popularity'):

Today I...

- (1) *... remembered that you don't have to wait 'till something is gone to know what you've got. Realize.* (July 31)
- (2) *... caught myself saying "I can't". So I stopped, and instead used "I can" & "I will". Boom.* (September 26)
- (3) *... left behind family, friends and the fully familiar. Adventure time.* (November 19)
- (4) *... rediscovered the danger of a single story, and the liberation that comes with the discovery of multiple perspectives.* (November 24)
- (5) *... experienced an inexplicable feeling of excitement, calm, gratitude, possibility... all mixed in to one. One thought that crossed my mind earlier about sums it up: "This is my life right now. And I absolutely love it."* (August 10)

PEOPLE

Unique individuals: 139

Most FB interactions by an individual*: 81

Average individual interaction: 4.5

Impacted enough to use this as a model for own daily reflection: 2

Top 10 visible supporters: Angeli, Cecilia, Courtney, Elaine, Jamil, June, Meena, Rebecca, Shamil, Shazeen

* defined as a "like" or comment on any "Today I" post, relevant to that post

Things I learned from this: I miss data analysis. It's fun.

Things I hope to get out of this: questions, challenges, conversations.

BACKGROUND

“My Daily” (as I refer to it my head) is my conscious effort to focus on one positive aspect unique to the day that just came to a close. WHY?

It makes me pause.

There are days so jam packed that it’s tough to stop and really think, if even for just a few minutes. My Daily forces me out of the now, to somewhat meaningfully reflect on my past 24 hours.

It keeps me on my toes.

“Any man who knows a thing knows he knows not a damn thing at all” – K’naan

Sometimes something happens early in the day that I think “this is it – what I’ll post about tonight”. But life happens, and reminds me to never, *ever* assume. The beautiful unpredictability of life is that, good or bad, unexpected can always happen: something that means more to you than what has already passed. There’s no real way to anticipate that, but being aware of this is huge for me; my Daily is a tangible reminder of this.

It is usually not easy.

These posts are always authentic. Making shit up would just be me lying to myself and anyone reading.

THE GOOD

Some days so many good things happen that I don’t know what to post about – that builds a ridiculous amount of gratitude. Most days, it just reminds me how obscenely lucky I am in the grand scheme of things, and that I’ve really got nothing to complain about. Instant whine-stopper.

THE BAD

Just like anyone else, I have those days. One shitty thing happens after another / you’re hit with so much apathy that you can’t get yourself to accomplish anything / you’re hurting / tears are involved, etc. They’re tough, because sometimes it’s hard to pick myself out of that. But pain, loss, anger, frustration... just parts of life. I find confronting them / acknowledging them (or even ignoring them for the time being) and focusing on one positive thing pretty empowering.

THE NINJA

Then there are the ‘whatever’ days. The ones that leave me feeling like “nothing really happened today. I just went through the whole day with nothing remarkable (good or bad) to differentiate it from any other.” *Those* days are probably the toughest; I really need to dig deep to find something to authentically post about. No matter how long it takes (once it took me a good hour+) I don’t stop ‘till I get it done.

It is a foundation.

This exercise is a now-solidified routine in my life. I’ve since been able to use it as a springboard & reminder for other habits. Baby steps.

BENEFITS OF 'GOING PUBLIC':

1) I have an ulterior intrinsic motivation to post. Not only for the process itself, but the tangible product – a post a day; something to show the world. Also, it's measurable data. Nerd attack.

2) Anything I've done that I viewed in the "just for me" silo has never stuck. Eventually something more social (work, school, family, relationships) would take precedent. Self-development on Solo Island isn't for everyone. I now feel like My Daily goes beyond just me -- but I'm still getting what I want & need out of it every day. Win-win.

3) It's hard for me to consistently stay accountable to myself long-term without some external influence sprinkled in the mix time & again. Public posting was an easy way for me to mitigate that – even if nobody actually reads it, the mere possibility of others consuming what I put out there was enough for me to feel supported & accountable.

4) It's become one of my 'things' now. I've always been pretty hyperaware of others' perceptions of me. Since I can't be sure how many people (if any) are following the post on any given day, a neglected post could be very visibly missing. Image maintenance is a powerful thing, and I'm basically harnessing my need to be viewed a certain way into something that benefits me. Plus looking back at this consistency now makes me one happy clam.

5) My posts have become a catalyst. Whether a specific post or the "Daily" habit itself - good conversations with friends & acquaintances have come of it. Talking about pop culture, memes, food, politics, world issues... it's all well and good. But oftentimes, more meaningful conversations for me involve the driving forces behind everything - aspirations, ambitions, hopes, fears, challenges... the 'deeper stuff'. Everything stems from the human condition. I love it, and will happily talk about it 'till the cows come home. This makes it that much more likely.

6) It has made others take pause. That's why I keep most of my posts "horoscope-like" vague; too specific to me, and they lose personal relevance to someone else. Some of the most memorable conversations I've had stemming from posts involved someone's radically different interpretation of my post as applied to their own life. If by publicly sharing something I do anyways can impact someone else positively, even remotely, then a thousand times yes. It's pretty selfish of me to be honest - makes my life more interesting.

And to address "why Facebook?" – well, because it was there. A platform I was always on anyhow, with built-in readership (rather than a blog / website) presented a minimal effort way for me to start. I did this first and foremost for my own benefit, and honestly didn't intentionally start it to be a long-standing habit. I may do something different down the line, but thus far 'the Facebook route' has served me quite well.

If you got this far, congratulations. You've probably got some other work to do or have midterms on the horizon. You also probably know more than may have wanted to about me & this little habit of mine. I just felt compelled to share. So here it is, world. "Thanks for watching."

Peas & love,
~ H