Twitter Thread by visa is damp and cold ■



visa is damp and cold ■
@visakanv



when I was a teenager, the dominant criticism my closest friends had of me was that I was too arrogant, and they were right. I was too caustic, abrasive, eager to nitpick, quick to criticize, and I was way too certain of myself. I spent my entire 20s trying to correct for this

the social niceties stuff were relatively trivial for me to address. learning to be gracious, patient, I could manage all of that. But "too certain of oneself" goes order of magnitudes deeper. It goes into philosophical territory about risk, certainty, the nature of knowledge

I very seriously experimented with beliefs like "almost everything I know is wrong to a degree I do not understand", "my mental models are contaminated beyond repair", "I have been indoctrinated and need to be deradicalized", I subjected myself and my mind to radical rewrites

Over 8+ years I wrote over 800,000 words of introspective journaling, investigating my own mind, investigating the investigator. I read & talked to thousands of people from around the world to seek out different ways of thinking, seeing, being, believing, knowing, understanding

I tried to think of myself as a robot that needed debugging. I actually made substantial progress with that

I tried to think of myself as a garden that needed tending. I made substantial progress with that

I tried not to think of myself at all, and I transcended progress itself

I experimented with trying really hard, and I experimented with not trying at all

I experimented with scheduling and calendaring my life, and I experimented with throwing everything to the wind

I questioned everything several times over, and I questioned nothing

And... at the end of it all... in the middle of it all... I attained a level of calm clarity that, ironically, gave me even more of an aura of "certain of himself" than ever before

I know how it looks, I know how it sounds

but my priority is to live and speak honestly

it's not that I don't make mistakes
it's not that I don't get things wrong

I do

but I am like a musician who's skilled at improvising – I recover from my mistakes gracefully, I work them into my playing

what troubles some people is that I am insufficiently self-deprecating

and I am not a "natural" at this – this skill is something I've picked up from a 15+ years of practice and study, the way a skilled musician would

and I talk about it openly because when I was a kid I wished someone would tell me this stuff, and nobody did, not quite

I can return now to my friends' original criticism and discern what they were trying to say, that they couldn't quite articulate properly. there are many different latent messages encoded in a statement like "you are too certain of yourself"

1. your frames are too rigid → this is something you can fix by learning to be more flexible with your frames

2. you are too confident → this conflates bluster and bravado (bad) with the casual, sleepy ease of having deep knowledge

https://t.co/L3uYqiJzFA

> people often think of confidence as bluster and bravado, loud and obnoxious. that\u2019s often actually insecurity
>
> the good stuff is often really quiet and natural: the casual, almost sleepy ease that comes from knowing your stuff really well pic.twitter.com/SJxfUquwaL
>
> — visa is damp and cold \U0001f327 (@visakanv) November 18, 2020

I have rebuilt myself from scratch in the absolute wilderness, in total isolation, in the dark night of the soul

twice

having done it before, I know I can do it again

the result is a kind of fearlessness that attracts some people and repels others

¯_(■)_/¯

recent meditation has made me realize that I have been trying to mask this, trying to suppress this, to be polite. to be civil. to not be arrogant. to not intimidate and scare people.

but this is dishonest of me, and I want to live an honest life

https://t.co/5H9H62Afwl

> at this point my reply game is so powerful I truly feel like an overpowered RPG character walking around regular people, trying not to accidentally hurt anyone
>
> — visa is damp and cold \U0001f327 (@visakanv) September 12, 2020

btw, here are some of the things that my friends were telling me I was cocky and arrogant about:

1. that I was going to marry my first girlfriend (I did)
2. that I was going to build an international audience (I did)

3. that I was going to make a decent living without going to university (I do)
4. that university professors would want to hang out with me, an autodidact (they do)
5. that I was going to be hired for somebody who respected my idiosyncrasies, without a resume (I was)

6. that I would have a successful business and be invited to speak/lecture at universities (done that)
7. that my band would play at the esplanade powerhouse stage, despite not being great musicians (we did)
8. that I would be the #1 search result for my first name (pretty much?)

9. that I would write and publish books that hundreds of people would want to buy and read (yep)

I could go on.

Looking back, I think the right frame is: they witnessed me disregard their internalized shared limiting beliefs, and saw this as a status violation on my part

looking back, I'm not sad that they were wrong about me

I'm sad that I allowed them being wrong about me to let me be wrong about myself

I definitely allowed their thinking to contaminate mine

hanging out with unambitious people definitely dimmed my own ambition

never again

also, they never admitted to being unambitious – a thing that I might've been angry/mad about a few years ago, but now kinda chuckle about. it's absolutely fine to be unambitious. you can live a good, simple, worthwhile life.

the worst thing here is the *pretense* of ambition.

people who *pretend* to be ambitious waste the valuable time and energy of actually-ambitious people, sucking them into their sitcoms and distracting them from the actual adventures they ought to be going on

https://t.co/JFXNGWhMez

> an additional confounding factor:
>
> not only do most people not have any real creative vision or ambition...
>
> many people entertain themselves by PRETENDING that they do
>
> most people want their lives to be sitcoms that pretend to be adventureshttps://t.co/vEsESFYja4
>
> — visa is damp and cold \U0001f327 (@visakanv) July 23, 2019

but, yknow. people gonna people. there's no sense in getting mad about it. the thing is to focus on finding the people who get you. https://t.co/oKn7C21lVv

> but now I realize the only thing that matters is finding True Artists and supporting and challenging them, and the bottleneck there is my own thinking, my own behavior
>
> a summary:
>
> 2007: fuck everyone
>
> 2013: fuck you guys
>
> 2015: fuck Visa
>
> 2019: there is no fuck
>
> \U0001f602
>
> — visa is damp and cold \U0001f327 (@visakanv) July 23, 2019

I am not looking for people to affirm me, tell me I am so great, agree with everything I say, etc. I don't want that. I don't want fanboys or haters (who are fans too). I'm looking for other creative, ambitious, playful people to play with, folks who prioritize doing cool things

I am here to find the others. Part of doing this means volunteering to be hyper-visible, which means being vulnerable to attack. I debated with myself internally, extensively, for years. I didn't feel worthy, and simultaneously, I was afraid

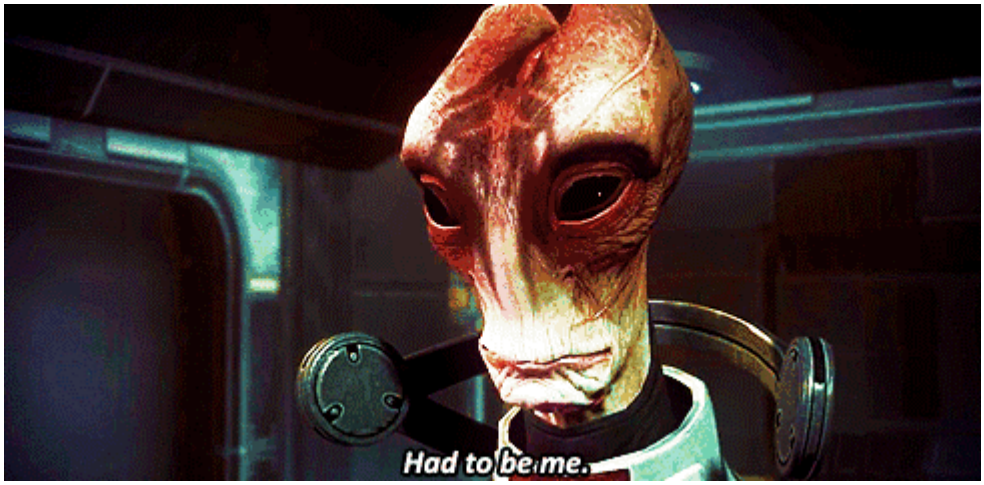
https://t.co/NMS7nWz07e

> A long term tension in my life: I don't feel qualified to lead, but I don't see anybody really worth following, either. When, where and how did I inherit these annoyingly perfectionist standards and ideals?

— visa is damp and cold \U0001f327 (@visakanv) April 4, 2018

but when I see the friendships that people forge with each other in my mentions, I realize it is the right thing to do.

I would honestly kinda prefer it if there were someone else I trusted to take the lead... but nobody sees things quite the way I do.



a cheesy-yet-true answer is "I think of the children". I think of the curious kids who are miserable, stuck in shitty social graphs, who could do wonderful things if someone just showed them how. I was one of them; I am being who I wished I had in my life

https://t.co/mKj6ygOWVq

> dang....you're a deep deep mofo monster man (in a good way!). How do you develop that kind of killer (or shd I say winner) attitude. So focussed on self-development yet not crossing over into selfish or cocky territory. I need a few sprinkles of this thread to rub off on me.
>
> — Suhail (@tweepul) January 6, 2021