

Jonathan Foust 2016 Annual Review

This review explores three questions*:

1. What went well this year?
2. What didn't go so well this year?
3. What am I working toward?

*This a format suggested by James Clear (www.jamesclear.com.)

1. What went well in 2016?

Happy Home and Hearth

I keep say to Tara, "Let's remember these are the good old days." I'm blessed in my marriage and am enormously grateful to live in such a beautiful location here in Northern Virginia. I'm able to get out most every day on the river before sunrise, greet each day paddling and floating and end the day with a walk in the meadow. Working mostly from home in the woods and doing 'surgical strikes' into the city works for me.

Health and Vitality

I mostly feel great. Migraines have decreased from last year. I've put on at least ten pounds of muscle since last year due to more regular nutrition and daily exercise paddling, swimming and/or yoga. It's been a few years now that I made the move to a (modified) vegan diet. Modifications to my vegan diet include eggs and recently, I'm dramatically upping Omega 3's, including fish oil and am monitoring the results.

Public Speaking and Teaching

This was another full year of talks, leading retreats and trainings.

I strive to make my talks, presentations and trainings, clear, engaging and pragmatic.

Here's what I did this year:

- Led the Year of Living Mindfully program (8th year)
- 40+ Dharma Talks
- 4 residential Vipassana Retreats, including one in Holland
- 2 9-day Guiding Meditation Teacher Trainings at Kripalu Center
- 7 daylong retreats
- 2 intensive weekend retreats at Kripalu Center (The Energy Intensive)
- 1 5-day retreat at Kripalu Center (The Still, Small Voice Within)
- A weekend retreat at Bowdoin College
- An ongoing series for an amazing group of DC-based CEO's and business leaders
- A presentation on mindfulness for lawyers in the EPA
- A guided meditation at the Rayburn Office Building on Capitol Hill for House of Representatives members and staff
- 1 wedding (officiating)

Creative Ventures in Photography, Video and Writing

I continued to develop my skills in photography, video and writing.

The key is a commitment to produce, no matter what. Some of what I've done this year:

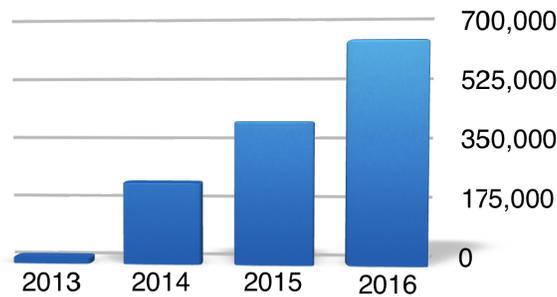
- I shoot something every day
- I write something every day (check out [DayOne](#) software for mac and ios.)
- I publish many of my best photographs on my blog and in my monthly newsletter
- I publish a minimum of one video a month
- I publish a weekly image with a haiku
- I have been outlining ideas and stories for a potential big writing project
- I've edited down 75,000 images and videos down to about 100 for an exhibition and book
- I've published a few short pieces through Kripalu publications
- I do trainings and courses on Creative Live ([creativelive.com](#))

Getting My Stuff Out There

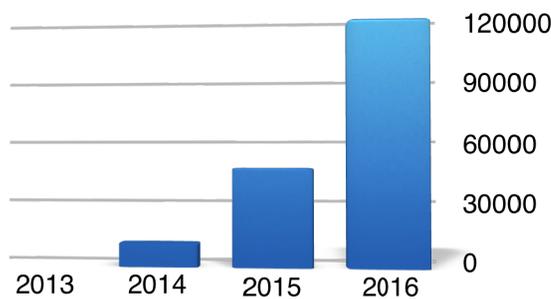
This last year I focused on regularly and reliably sharing talks, meditations, images and videos that might be helpful to folks. My weekly talks are [on iTunes](#) as well as a [youtube channel](#) which also offers monthly videos. A monthly newsletter ensures I keep generating photography, a monthly video and fresh ideas. I've added more guided meditations to the "Insight Timer" app and have talks on DharmaSeed.

A few statistics:

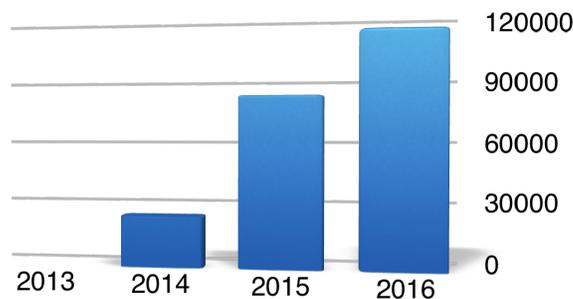
Podcast enrollment continues to grow with over 600,000 downloads to date



Youtube viewership is growing with almost 120,000 views this year



My website is more visible with about 115,000 page views this year



Simplifying

I'm focusing more on what lights me up and continue to streamline my systems around what I do.

I engage in periodic purges of my worldly possessions and there's more to go.

Savoring

Some great adventures this year:

- An annual ten day personal silent retreat at the Forest Refuge in Barre, MA
- Some dedicated creative time on St. John's
- Time in Paris with friends, hiking in the Alps with Tara and then leading a three-day Vipassana retreat in central Holland
- Most of September on the Cape mixing creative work with adventures
- Weekly "date nights" with Tara and bi-weekly check-ins
- Morning paddles on the river and evening walks in the meadow
- Not least, the gift of living in the woods

Serving

I continue to serve in a few capacities:

- Guiding Teacher for the Insight Meditation Community of Washington (www.imcw.org)
- Supporting IMCW's Mentoring Program (<http://imcw.org/programs/mentoring.aspx>)
- I do what I can to make the teachings and practices available to all, including the Monday night class available to all, freely posted talks and meditations
- I do what I can to make 1:1 sessions affordable and available depending on my schedule

2. What didn't go so well this year?

“Growing the Business:” Make it Happen or Let it Happen?

Do I more aggressively promote what I do or just stay the course and offer what I do freely?

My classes, trainings, and retreats are consistently full, but I wonder if I should more actively promote my talks and offerings out into the world and wonder if social media makes sense.

I need to figure out a strategy and stick with it.

Migraine-Free in 2017?

I'm learning more about these debilitating headaches. I've experienced fewer of them and have more insights into what cultivates them, but I have still a number of times this year when I get shut down with pain. There is more to learn here and I am motivated by the idea of being migraine-free this year.

That Photography Exhibit and book in 2017?

Last year I set a goal of a photo exhibit and book in Spring of 2017 but I ran into an unexpected issue.

It may be illusion, but I think I'm getting better at this. I have a more keen eye and am more skillful at post-processing. I've been shooting more HDR (High Dynamic Range) photography, which is a new skill to develop.

I'm getting better results and can't help thinking with another year I'll have better images to work with and share.

Sloppy Financial Accounting

My financial tracking and accounting skills are laughable and always result in a year-end scramble to pull things together. I need to get this together.

The “Next Big Thing”

One of the advantages of doing an annual report is I get to see what doesn't change.

Last year at this time I was also contemplating the ‘next big thing.’ I do feel I'm closer to clarifying a big project that may have legs.

3. What am I working toward?

Be Happy and Have Fun

Is there a higher aim than being happy regardless of externals? And having fun?

Complacency is the near-enemy of contentment and I trust that cultivating happiness and fun results in more creativity, self-expression and effectiveness in the world. This is my inquiry and practice.

Cultivate Presence and Compassion

The book “The Power of Full Engagement” recommends spending less time managing projects and more time managing energy. Wise guidance.

I benefit greatly when I cultivate gratitude and appreciation, immerse in nature, immerse in the creative process and not least, open to more intimacy and authenticity in my relationships.

Cultivating greater presence and compassion with my wife is a priority. We intend to do this by, in addition to our weekly check-ins and date night, adding more time to pause, check in and connect.

Continue to Simplify

The simpler things are, the happier I am. I made some strides last year and want to keep the momentum going.

On my list:

- Get help managing my finances
- Get rid of stuff I no longer need, especially old technology
- Stick with simple routines that work

Continue to improve as a speaker and teacher

- Get more feedback
- Listen to my talks
- Listen to great speakers and research best practices in speaking
- Focus on excellence in my offerings
- Stick with my rule of ‘never holding my best stuff back’

Cultivate consistent wholesome habits

I'm follow the adage “You can manage what you can measure.” This is what I'm tracking in 2017 for daily habits:

- Morning time outside
- Meditate every day. No Matter What.
- Write something each day (check out [DayOne software](#).)
- Yoga and focused movement (physical therapy)
- Exercise (paddle, swim, hike)
- Shoot at least one daily photo and video clip
- 20 minutes on multi-media (editing)

Dedicate Time to Creativity and Putting Stuff Out There

I have benefitted a lot from my commitment this last year to Putting Stuff Out There No Matter What. This keeps the juices flowing.

I'm going to stay with this commitment into the new year.

This includes:

Photography and Video

- Shoot each day
- Work on composition and editing skills by doing trainings and daily practice
- Organize my raw stuff into presentable formats using keywords and collections
- Publish at least one photo / week
- Publish something video-related at least once a month
- Experiment with new formats
- Produce some prints
- Enroll some skilled folks to give me feedback

Writing

- Write something each day
- Publish something substantive in my monthly emails or on the blog at least once a month
- Do a weekly haiku
- Respond to attractive offers to write short pieces
- Continue to capture and catalog the best stories from my talks
- Keep working on my outline
- Write up one of my best possible stories for a book each month
- Enroll some advisors on this book idea
- Read some good book proposals
- Stay in the loop with NMP and his writing process

Serve

Teaching

- The ninth Year of Living Mindfully program
- Anchor the Arlington Monday Night Class and offer 40 Dharma Talks, more or less
- 4 residential Vipassana Retreats
- 2 300-hour teacher trainings at Kripalu Center
- 5 daylong retreats

- 2 intensive weekend retreats at Kripalu Center (The Energy Intensive)
- 1 5-day retreat at Kripalu Center (The Still, Small Voice Within)
- Continue with the ongoing series with this group of CEO's and business leaders
- Weekend retreat on Transforming Fear at Garrison Institute with Tara
- Daylong on relationships with Tara
- Develop and deliver the mindful movement component for the Awareness Training Institute teacher training
- Deliver a YPO Presentation in Boulder
- Respond creatively to juicy invitations that show up

Working 1:1

I work 1:1 extensively with participants in the Year of Living Mindfully and will make myself available as I can to those who want to explore the 1:1 Body Centered Inquiry work I offer.

Mentoring

I'll continue to support the IMCW Mentoring Program as a Guiding Teacher

Savor

Celebrate often. Some adventures this year:

- Daily local adventures in the woods and on the river
- Ten-day personal silent retreat at the Forest Refuge
- An annual boys adventure in New Mexico
- Time at the Brach ancestral home on the Cape
- The month of September on a creative retreat
- A possible family gathering

The Bottom Line

Man, am I blessed. I'll continue to be as awake and open as I can be and bring kindness, compassion, excellence and creativity to all I do.