

Happy New Year, from Tokyo

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Contents

1 Learning	1
2 Family and Friends	1
3 Physical Fitness	1
4 Being a Foreigner	2
5 Would I do it again?	2

On April 15 2018, I moved to Tokyo, Japan. I suppose that changed a few things in my life. I started working for a company that does all kinds of things with mobile games. So far my team has been very busy creating a market place for all kinds of digital items, called [Asobi Market](#).

Of course, moving abroad is a challenge. Especially, if it's to a place that is geographically and culturally far away. I'm trying my best to adjust and find a little niche that I can call *home*, at least for now. I have been meaning to write down for quite a while now what I've been up to so far. I will try to sum it up.

1 Learning

Here's what I've learned in 2018 since moving to Japan:

- I have learned a lot about Cryptocurrencies and especially Ethereum.
- I have learned how to architect and manage the development of a full-stack web application.
- I have learned how to launch and build a product together with a fabulous team of developers.
- I have studied for the JLPT N1 (and wrote the exam on December 2 2018).

But there are areas where I still struggle:

- I am still learning how to be a strong, empathetic and patient leader.
- I am still learning how to work with inefficient management.
- I am still learning how to be courageous enough to say what I actually want.
- I am still learning how to speak Japanese and express what I think.

While I can look back and say *look at all the things I have learned*, I also see *all the stuff I have been so ignorant about and still am*.

2 Family and Friends

I have been able to grow many amazing friendships, both with Japanese and foreigners. But I've also left behind many friendships in Germany. I also get to see my family less often, especially my father. I feel happy and sad about that.

3 Physical Fitness

I have started bouldering, and go several times a week. My body seems to be grateful. I also started biking, and purchased a wonderful road bike. I have taken it to Yokohama on a long day trip. More and more, I feel a strong desire to spend less and less time in a stuffy office.

4 Being a Foreigner

Being a foreigner makes life easy in many ways, but it also makes life really hard in many ways. I get to ignore rules that locals would never be able to ignore. But I also get ignored in many ways, and often feel like the only one to watch out for myself is me. In a way this makes me feel lonely and weak, but at the same time it also makes me feel more empowered than ever before. Never before was the link between my own actions and good results so obvious.

5 Would I do it again?

I moved to Japan at age 25. I think if you're young you can put up with almost everything. Now I'm 26. I still live in the same miniature apartment my company placed me into in April 2018. Would I do that again now that I've done it? I don't think so. The *adventure* factor wears off quickly, and at the end of the day I just want to have a normal life without too much unnecessary excitement. It gives me the opportunity to focus on what I find actually exciting.

So what will happen next? Right now, it looks like I'm going to stay here for quite some time. So, buckle up and enjoy the ride.