

Space and Me

Space, the dimensions of height, depth and width within which all things exist and move. Space, be or become distracted, euphoric, or disoriented; cease to be aware of one's surroundings. How, I wondered, how can space contradict itself? Space is everything surrounding us, between humans, between objects, it's the space surrounding our earth, yet how, how can it be something describing the unawareness of one's surroundings? That thought played around in my mind momentarily, until my thoughts were realigned with you. The space between us, the space of separation, the space of nothingness and the space of everythingness. To tell the truth, I had no clue about what lay in the space between us, both metaphorically and physically. I would often wonder about where I would find you, where in the world you might be (although if I did know where you were then there would be no space between us because I would come to find you), on the other hand I did not know what emotions lay in the space between us, what was preventing you from finding me, what was it that made you want to leave, leave me, your son?

I had once seen a chart which displayed, quite objectively, the levels of personal space. I enjoy looking at graphs and charts very much. The chart said that the smallest zone of personal space was called 'intimate space' it described how it extends outwards from our bodies 18 inches in every direction and only family, pets and one's closest friends may enter. On looking at the chart I realised that I kept my 18 inches of personal space very private. I never let anyone into this region, this space, my space. I reflected on whether this was the case because I didn't know anyone intimately enough to allow in this space or if it was because of my autism; after some pondering, I concluded that it must have been both. If there was any person in the world I would let into this space it would be my Mum, but I don't know

my Mum or even know if she would want to be in my 18 inches of personal space so, really, I am wasting my time thinking about this unlikely eventuality.

I spend much of my time thinking, probably because my brain compels me to listen to its never-ending thoughts. Sometimes I feel that my own thoughts tire me out, but I know this is probably not the norm for many because I'm not a particularly normal boy. I feel very comfortable knowing what is going on in my surroundings, I like routines and disagree highly with the idea of change. I find that the world is a very unpredictable and confusing place and so to be in control of what I am able to be in control of is relaxing. The older I have grown the more I have realised that I can't be in control of all things in the world around me, if I could, I'd like to think that my Mum would have not let any space come between us but my Dad tells me that I should not think like this and that sometimes spaces just become bigger and bigger through no fault of our own. Perhaps a slightly naive way to see it all, but I like my Dad and like that he always tries to make me feel better.

A really strange habit of mine is my tendency to sort through all the post everyday of the week. I've never missed a day since February the 4th 2015 (that was the date this organised habit began). The routine consists of collecting observable data about the daily post, i.e. the colour of the envelope, if it has a plastic window on it, who it is addressed to and other fine details that I choose examine. Once I have collected this information from each day's post I put it into an Excel spreadsheet. This means I can then look back over months of post and find correlations and trends. The most obvious trend is that roughly 96.5% of the post is addressed to my Dad, which is boring for me - in fact I haven't received a piece of my own post since December 12th 2015 (my last Birthday), that's roughly 11 months of no personal post. It has now been roughly (exactly) two months and three days extra of no personal post to add to my spreadsheet, that makes it January 7th 2017. If you've done the maths

correctly you will realise that something doesn't quite add up and you would be correct. That is because it is 8:03am on January 7th and the post doesn't arrive for approximately another twelve minutes.

On rooting through the post on its prompt arrival, I was quite shocked to find that 1 of the 5 (20%) of the post was actually addressed to me. Intrigued by who it could be from and what they wanted, seeing as it wasn't my birthday, I opened up the letter. I firstly noticed how the handwriting was very neat and that the stamp was sadly offset on the envelope but I was still interested in reading it, so I used the letter-opener from the left-hand draw in the hallway table. It read:

Dear Rowan,

I expect this letter will come as quite a surprise to you, nevertheless I hope it's found you well. I understand it has been 11 years since you've heard from me or even seen my face and I'm sorry. I want you to know that sometimes the choices you make in life are hard or sometimes they aren't right at all. Leaving you and your Dad, although it once felt right never led to anything fulfilling. I missed watching my son become a boy and the fear of missing you becoming a man is what has compelled me to write this letter. I know I can never make up for the years I have been absent in your life and I will understand if you can't forgive me for that, but if you find a way to move past it all, I would like to join you on that adventure. I would be so grateful to hear from you.

*All my love,
Mum x*

I have never felt a feeling quite like the one I have now. A mixture of sadness and happiness and excitement. This letter has changed everything. I shoved it onto the hallway table and ran upstairs to my computer. Placing the data collected from both the envelope and other features, I plugged it into my spreadsheet. Oh boy, this really has changed everything. The trends of my postal data had been significantly altered and I felt buzzed to have finally seen some adjustment made to my graphs. All this

change made me confused but made me all the more eager to check the post tomorrow. But then I thought...I sat on the end of my bed and just thought. I thought about the content of the letter and forgot all about my postal spreadsheet.

Space, the dimensions of height, depth and width within which all things exist and move. I felt alive, I felt the weight of my existence and I pondered how the height, depth and width of my whole life had suddenly been changed. I felt the space between me and my Mum had shrunk and my life was changing to make space for her. Space, be or become distracted, euphoric, or disoriented; cease to be aware of one's surroundings. I was all these things, I had so many thoughts. I mainly thought about how my Mum could think that I wouldn't want her in my space. Although I sometimes felt angry at my Mum, most of the time I didn't, I missed her and thought of her whereabouts. My space is very important to me because it's mine, but if I was to let anyone into it, it would be her. So all in all, I'm happy that she wrote me a letter and I'm glad she said she loved me.

I set out to put all this into my own letter to send back to my Mum. Whilst sealing it I considered how the whole phenomenon of me writing and sending my own letter has in fact never happened before in my whole life. This got me thinking about my postal receipt statistics and how perhaps I could compare correlations and trends from the post I send and not just of that I receive. Fascinating I thought!

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