The Placement Diaries: Week 36 - Void Year

20th May 2022

I know I've probably said this a lot in the past, but at this moment in time, I realise that this is an unshakeable feeling, a recurring theme which has essentially defined my year through and through, to the point where this is essentially the defining factor. To be frank, it feels like I've wasted my time with this, going through the motions simply because there wasn't any other choice, since my only option was to see this year through to the end.

Throughout the year, I've had this same niggling feeling, but at first, it felt as though I was new and inexperienced at this whole thing, but now, I know it isn't that, this is something that I thought I wanted, only to realise that I don't want it after all, that this probably wasn't even my dream to begin with. I've pitched, and I've wrote a stupid business plan for a business that won't exist, all whilst having dilemmas, and dealing with uncertainty in between.

Only through experiencing all this that I've realised that not everything is cracked up to be, that nothing really does what it says on the tin, since it's just a marketing ploy. I gain no qualifications by taking up this placement year (although it will affect my degree outcome, either for better or worse), nor do I get paid, so why the hell did I decide to do this in the first place? Was it to gain some arbitrary experience in something or the other? Did I decide to do this placement year for the sake of doing one since that was essentially the option that I thought would suit me?

If I could go back in time to last year, I'd tell myself to skip the placement year altogether, since there isn't that much value to it. I've given it my all, and that's the best I can do. I've done everything I can, and maybe having a whole year to do a side project is probably the worst thing which can happen, along with having endless possibilities, because as freeing as it sounds, it isn't.

In fact, essentially having unlimited time to do whatever you want is as stifling as having none of that at all. If I had skipped this placement year, I would have been able to do my degree in one go, and now, I would have focused on doing my degree show, as well as possibly having a graduate job lined up for afterwards.

Everyone else on my course went into their final year, so now I'm lagging behind, voluntarily playing catch up. It seems that at this moment in time, I've essentially put my life on hold for a year, essentially being in a coma, what with working from home, not

really seeing anyone or socialising, and to put it simply, doing nothing whilst trying to look busy at the same time, to do something that I thought I always wanted, only to realise that I don't want that thing after all. I feel annoyed with myself for choosing to put myself through this, only to have little to no tangible outcomes at the end.

I could have had my whole life ahead of me, but all I've done is put graduating off for a year when I could have easily got my degree over and done with by now, not to mention that my final year will consist of being with people who are a year younger than me, inevitably feeling alienated since everyone I know has moved on with their lives, when all I've done is put it on hold to chase an old dream which I've now outgrown.

I realise that I don't enjoy marketing myself, nor do I really want to deal with customers or clients, since now, I feel responsible for them, where I always have to be my best, for the fear that they might go to someone else instead, leaving me behind in the dust. I now have to compete with a whole host of other small business owners and entrepreneurs, constantly one-upping each other and themselves, creating their own little self-inflicted rat races.

I don't want any of this anymore, and to be honest, I just want this year to finish already, since it's dragged on long enough, and at this point, I'm doing everything for the sake of doing everything, with no meanings behind it, doing it just to satisfy some arbitrary external thing. I regret ever taking this up, because now all I've got in return are my research interests being diluted, and my creativity being diminished.

So, that's how I've felt, and at this point, it feels like I'm waiting for the end, so that I can finally resume my life again, because all I've done is work from home, and now, that's the last thing I want. For a year that expects you to be outgoing, to take risks, and to venture out from the classroom for a year, this has been extremely ironic, since it's essentially been all talk. Every single word in my business plan and my pitch is empty, and they don't contain any value at all.