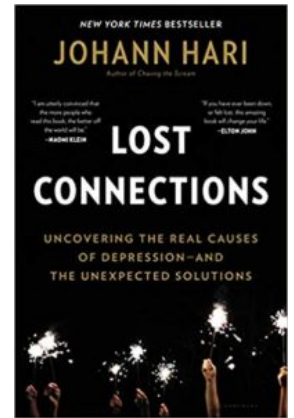


Don's "best of 2018"



Here are some highlights of my life in 2018 A.D.

Book - *Lost Connections* - Johann Hari - This book will only benefit individuals who have or are suffering from depression and/or anxiety, know of someone who is struggling with depression and/or anxiety, and those who want to adopt a healthy lifestyle and help other people do the same. In other words, everyone should read this book. Very accessible; hard to put down; very informative; potentially life-changing. One sentence summarizes the book: "An antidepressant isn't just a pill. It's anything that lifts your depression."



Meal - On the Tale of Three Cities trip I hosted in October, one night we ate at *Giovanni's* restaurant in the theater district of London. The place only seats about 35 so we were in tight quarters. A family from Sicily has run the restaurant for decades. The two hour meal was delicious and the conversation was memorable. I was reminded of the [wonderful things that can happen around a meal](#).



Concert - On the Tale of Three Cities trip, I wanted to end the trip with a memorable moment that no one would ever forget, so I hired an *Italian opera singer* to present a concert just for our group, in the chapel in Santa Brigida. We thought we had died and gone to heaven.



Person of the year - *Jason Webb*. Jason is the director of media at SCC. He is competent, multi-talented (professional trumpet player, mathematician), hard worker, low-maintenance, great emotional and social skills. Clone Jason and the world will be a better place.



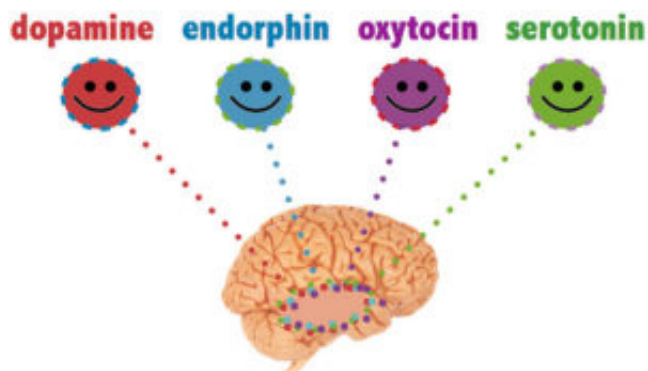
Travel experience - In July Mary and I went to *Peru* to visit the Sacred Valley. The highlight of the trip was Machu Picchu. It was one of the most enjoyable trips we have ever taken. I encourage you to [travel extensively](#). I'll probably host a trip to Peru for friends in 2020.



Best friend - Here's a picture of my best friend (my granddaughter, Marin, is also in the picture). All joking aside, I've had Buddy for 14 months and he has become my therapy dog-we visit about important and trivial issues every night before I go to bed.



Bottle of wine - Instead of highlighting the best wine I had this year (Hentley Farms, The Beast, 2012 Shiraz) I want to recommend two satisfactory table wines. Chateau St. Michelle Riesling is made in Washington and sells for around \$8; Alamos is a Cabernet Sauvignon from Argentina that sells for around \$9. You don't have to spend a lot of money to get a decent wine for every day consumption.



New space in my mind - I enjoy learning things that I have never thought of before. In November I started studying the four "happy chemicals" (dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, endorphins) and the ways we can increase these chemicals in our brains other than by taking prescription drugs. I'll post an essay on this topic next year.



Hobby - I love working in my vineyard. It's therapeutic to get dirt under my fingernails; I often work myself to exhaustion; I have a new appreciation for the cycle of life. I planted in March; here's a picture of the vineyard in November.