"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious, it is the true source of art, science, and friendship." - *Albert Einstein*

“What is a friend?

- One intelligence distributed across more than one body.” - MJN

What are you going to do with this year? What did you do with the last one?

I spent many years fully immersed in The Matrix while fully aware of what it was, for the most sensible of reasons -- to learn -- but I dropped out of it again for the most sensible of reasons -- to preserve and develop my intelligence.

This is the real difficult thing if you are unusual enough to want to explore your full potential -- you have to grow enough courage to give up your fantasy world of simulated reality, take a leap into the unknown, and step onboard the Nebuchadnezzar.

I thought that was the biggest step into the unknown I'd probably ever take, but I was wrong. Life is of course a series of steps into the unknown, and size of event is only one parameter. Duration of event is another, and it is that which currently leads me on ever further down the

rabbit hole.

The unknown I am exploring now is the emergence of intelligence in life on earth; an event that's been going on for a very long time (with robust disregard for anything in its way I might add). I haven't personally witnessed all of it, but that's just fuel for curiosity.

During exploring this over the past year I have also been aware that 2010 has been one of the happiest years of my life so far. That doesn't mean that lots of shit didn't happen -far from it. It does mean that I navigated through this year's shit with relative ease, because I'm finally getting the hang of how to fly this starship mind. The joy this brings is worth every hour of practice flying time accumulated in the past, and gives me great optimism for the future. What lies there I don't know, but all ahead full.

I'm probably the sort of person your parents warned you about -- telling you to be your real self and follow your creative dreams, when what society wants is for you to do what you're told, remain dependant, and make the most insecure ones feel less anxious for a little while by making them richer.

It's all part of the business. But humans are not part of the business; we ARE the business. Your choices are about how you are going to spend this one single precious life you have been issued. Whether you're going to spend it trying to be Mr. Anderson; society's ideal self, perpetuating the illusion that you have no personal power to deal with life's events and circumstances, or whether you are going to taste reality, enjoy it, find out the truth about what you really are and become all that you were meant to be.

Temet Nosce – Know Yourself – First of all it means accept that you are human. You don't know how long you're going to live, and you don't have a clue whether there's anything more after this bit. Imagine if this year were our last, and we were aware of that; how would we change our lives? Would we suddenly jump into being our real selves if we knew this really was our last shot at it?

I've tried out a lot of things that society promised would make me whole and fulfilled -- all the things that we are indoctrinated from preschool onward to believe will quiet the splinter of anxiety inside our minds -- but I found out from experience that The Matrix lies. It is fake. It has

nothing that can satisfy real human needs in real life; nothing to give life meaning and passion and joy.

Fortunately I also did what many of you do. You do what is necessary; what intelligent people have always done. You carry your own little candle and you look out for companion lights, out there in the murky fog of confusion.

Real friendship is one of the most subversive acts of all, as far as The Matrix is concerned. If society seems hell-bent on you breaking your balls to become its ideal brainless pet citizen, turn to your allies. Resistance is not at all futile; in fact it's fun. And I'd like to take this opportunity to say 'thanks' to the many of you who have been good friends in years past and also to new ones more recently met. Consider yourselves appreciated.

So happy new year. Will you spend it slaving on The Matrix hamster wheel, or at the helm of starship mind?

We make a big noise about infringements on our freedom, our personal and civil liberties, so why should we sit back docile and take it in the balls when our right to sanity is violated?

We are all capable of lives of great joy and meaning. It's what we are meant to be.

So for 2011 I wish you everything you wish yourselves.

Be excellent to one another, and party on dudes.

AR

Linford Wood

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