

Broken. I still remember the only feeling that lingered long after the emptiness disappeared. Emptiness brought by failure. My vulnerability. My motivation. My fate written before I was born; or changed by my actions; or both. That gloomy day changed me. This is the story of my truth, one of them. The only that really matters now. But my story begins before me, as it will continue after I'm gone.

I've always had a curious mind. This has got me into some trouble in the past. One time, it got me to the attic of my house. It was a small room filled with the dim light of the afternoon sun coming from a round window. It seemed like no one had been there in a long time. Everything was covered in a thick layer of dust and spiderwebs. While I was walking around, exploring, I heard a cracking sound echoing through the room. Accidentally, I stepped onto something with a rectangular shape. I bent down to pick up the thing that I had broken. It was some sort of framed *paper*. I took it closer to the window, so I could read it:

"The University of New Mexico

has conferred upon

Christopher Emerson

the degree of

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science"

That's my grandpa's name. I had heard about this document before, but I had never seen one; a *diploma*. It was a token from the past. Seeing the size of the document got me thinking, how did they manage to carry a document that large wherever they went? I tried to spot any folding mark in the surface, but I couldn't find one. At least that's what I would've done; fold it so it could fit in my pocket. Also, how could anyone know

if it was original? Where was the validation? For how many skills was it worth? Certainly, higher education was very different than it is now.

That made me realize that the era of *diplomas* and *degrees* like the one my grandpa had was long gone. Universities are no longer just a place, but a platform. They offer online programs to obtain particular skills, like programming, the most spoken language in the world. Each course is crafted to meet the unique set of needs of the student, thanks to personalized learning algorithms. To reinforce the process, and with the help of Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, and the capacity of running comprehensive and complex simulations, the teaching methods have become more interactive and complete. The segmentation of knowledge by subject is a thing of the past. Now, the lessons include all subjects at once. This gives us the liberty to analyze all the possible outcomes and controlling even the smallest details of the simulations. Higher education has focused more in tacit knowledge. Therefore, the demand for skills like critical thinking are on the rise. Their approach is teaching “How” to think, rather than “What”.

As part of the critical thinking, and to ensure an ethical development of technology and society, several top universities had started to invest heavily in philosophy and ethics. This has the intention to complement the curriculum of students that create the technology of the future. But the most important aspect of the role of universities is the validation of those skills through a blockchain program called *LifeBlock*. Many institutions around the globe worked together with *Genesis Technologies*, or *GenTech*, to generate the standard for a skill validation system compatible with *LifeBlock*. That’s the reason why now skills are standardized and have

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the same value around the world if it was obtained within the network of universities that participates in the *LifeBlock* program.

I was so lost in that thought that I didn't realize that the light from outside was almost gone. How much time did I spend up there? While I was picking up the shards of glass, I felt a brief sting in my right index finger; a jolt of pain made me flinch. I ran downstairs to my bathroom, so I could check my wound and wash the blood. Before opening the tap, a couple of drops of blood stained my sink. The contrast of the bright red liquid with the white porcelain caught my attention. It is fascinating how it only took a single drop of blood and a thought to create my *iDNA* and start my *LifeBlock*. Sometimes it seems like a very complicated system. I know that the technology behind it is called *Blockchain*, and it has been around since 2009 with projects like *Bitcoin* and *Ethereum*. The principle is "simple". Information is generated and registered in blocks that are updated simultaneously throughout a network. Once the information within that block is validated by other users, whether through direct involvement or Artificial Intelligence, the block is sealed and a new one is generated. Because this process is simultaneous, everyone in the network has the same information at the same time. As part of the information contained in a block is the reference of the one that came before, the *parent block*, and the ones that were created after it. This starts forming a chain of information. It is the most secure and reliable way to store data. I usually think of it as an iceberg. The recent information, like the snow on top, is changeable, but once more snow is starting to stack on top, it begins to solidify, until it becomes stable and immutable, like the 50-thousand-year-old ice. That's what happens when more blocks are added to the chain. Because the information that is stored must go through validation by several parties, at the end it reflects what everyone involved witnessed, hence is considered as the *truth*. Although all information is public, the identity of the

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individuals is protected by the *iDNA*, Identification Number Algorithm. An algorithm that codifies the identity of all of us, securing our privacy, and giving us access to our own *LifeBlock* profile. The name, gender, nationality, religion or skin tone are not important anymore. To the world, only the transactions of the alphanumeric characters matter, and the identity is protected.

All blocks are linked and traceable, pointing to their *parent block* all the way back to the *Genesis Block*. The first piece of information that was used to start the program *LifeBlock*. The *Genesis Block* only contains a phrase:

“Out of all blood, one heart.

Out of all thoughts, one mind.

Out of all eyes, one truth.”

Those words have become the pillars of our society; reflecting our striving for equality. Despite our physical differences, we all feel the same; blood runs through all of us; we have the same *heart*. Although everyone has a different opinion or creed, the validity of our thoughts is equal, so we are part of one *mind*. It is only because of our differences that we receive our *eyes* in society; our right and duty to participate in the validation process of *LifeBlock*. The sum of all our uniqueness create something greater than us. It is only by using all our *eyes* we are able to see the *ultimate truth*.

This philosophy is embedded in us since the beginning. I was told that when I was born, like any other person, two things were used to create my *iDNA*. The information of my first drop of blood, as well as the electromagnetic pulses of my first thought were used to create my identity. That’s the information contained in my *LifeBlock[0]*, the first block in my chain. The sum of those two characteristics gave me

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my *eyes* in society, my equal value to participate in the interaction of validating what others do and be validated by others. The *iDNA* is the connection to my *LifeBlock* profile.

Every aspect of my life is registered in my *LifeBlock*. Each block has the capacity for 500 entries. 365 of them are reserved to register everything I do daily; from what I eat, the physical activity I do, to my medical records. It is also connected to my *Crypto-Wallet*. Every December 31st at 23:59:59, the *LifeBlock* corresponding for that year is closed. If during that year I didn't use all the 500 entries, the remaining are assigned a value of zero and a new *LifeBlock* is created for the new year. The rest 135 entries are used for the extra things I choose to do or accomplish. For example, education.

The more skills I acquire, more entries are added to my *LifeBlock* of the year. If I reach the limit of the extra 135 entries within a year, a new block is immediately created, and I can keep adding entries. In theory, I could generate several blocks in a year. This possibility has opened the door to measure life in how many *LifeBlocks* we generate, rather than regular life years. The number of *LifeBlocks* lived is something to brag about. I've heard rumors of someone that by his 40th birthday had accomplished to have twice *LifeBlocks* than life years, but I have my doubts. As for me, I have managed to have a couple more than my age. This year, 2048, I turn 18, with 20 *LifeBlocks* in my profile.

This system has proven to have many benefits. The beauty of having the identity hidden behind a number and the profile public is that there is no room for discrimination. Now, to find a job, companies like *GenTech* must use pieces of code called *SmartContracts*. These are instructions embedded in each block that triggers an action when some criteria are met. For example, if there's an opening for a position, they request for a person that has the validated skills needed in *LifeBlock* for the job, and all what they obtain is a pointer with alphanumerical characters of the prospects that meet

that criteria. Unbiased. Fair. Equal. In my opinion, we have accomplished a meritocratic society thanks to technology.

Once I finished washing my wound, I went straight to bed. I needed a good rest after a long day. Earlier that day, I sent an application for an internship. It meant the culmination of a whole month working hard to obtain my validation for the skill on *robotic interpretations on human emotions*; the last one I needed to be eligible to participate in a program at *Genesis Technologies*, the company behind *LifeBlock* and *iDNA*. It has become the most valuable company in the world. The most remarkable part is that it was nowhere near the radar 25 years ago. Ever since I have memory, it had been my dream to work in the Applied Robotics department. But it is difficult to get in. Several skills are needed. Therefore, since high school I created the path that will get me closer to my dream. And I had taken this last step to the beginning of my new life.

The next morning, I woke up feeling like the world was mine. I was going to receive the results of my application. The notification of acceptance was scheduled to arrive at 9:00 am. For the rejections, the time was 9:01. By 8:50 I couldn't bare the expectation. Suddenly it was 8:59 and I could feel my blood rushing through my veins. The clock marked 9:00, finally!... 9:01. My notification center had a new item, "Thank you for your interest in the program...". I didn't finish reading the rest of the message. Disappointment. My aspirations disappeared like smoke. What went wrong? I asked myself. Maybe I missed a skill. Maybe there was something that I didn't do. Maybe I am not suitable for that position after all. If the system tells me that I was not the perfect match for that position, then I was never really prepared for it. The system is the *truth*.

The following day I tried to go back to my routine. I had to accept the fact that I needed to find a more suitable path for me. But the feeling of defeat lingered in my heart;

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like a ghost. Without noticing it, that feeling transformed into a thought that grew stronger in the back of my mind. Suddenly, it became an obsession. Why am I not good enough for the job? I did everything right. I followed the path. But the persisting and overwhelming fact that the system reflects the truth kept fighting my speculations. After all, the unbiased and fair system is verified by the *eyes* of everyone. It is the truth. Unless... No, I shouldn't be having those thoughts.

A few days after, at a coffee shop, a friend told me who had been selected for the position I wanted. I was shocked. I knew him since we were kids. We grew up in the same neighborhood. He was more athletic than me, for sure. But, was he more prepared for the internship? I doubted it. Then, the same thought I had wanted to suppress flooded my mind. What if the system was wrong? What if there's a flaw? What if the truth we are told is partially true?

Right after I went home, I started to go through my *LifeBlock*. I analyzed every block that I had had. This endeavor took me a long time, but I found nothing. I reached my *LifeBlock[0]* without finding a flaw. Each entry was stored and verified according to the standard. The system was truly flawless. With almost no hope left I started to analyze the last block. I must recognize that I did it because of my mania to finish everything that I start. Besides, it was supposed to be a quick check, just a bunch of numbers that were created at the beginning of my life.

At first glance, everything seemed normal. Just a very long line of alphanumerical characters. Too long to be a single drop of blood and a thought of a baby. Even though I couldn't understand the full code, something was strange. The information contained in *LifeBlock[0]* was too much. All 500 entries were full and not a single one assigned with zero. Then, I used a program that I had developed for one of the skills I got validated.

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A decoder that gave me a special recognition for the rate of success it has; another accomplishment for my *LifeBlock* that year. The output of the decoder was a set of parameters divided in two segments. The first one, corresponding to what I interpreted as the blood sample, also encompassed a full analysis of my DNA. A section within that segment named *chronic disadvantages*, included all the diseases and health conditions that might be triggered during my life. It was in descending order according to the probability of happening. The highest one, alcoholism, had only a 2% to 5% probability. I'm not going to lie, there have been a few cases of alcoholism in my family; long distant relatives. But because I've seen the struggle and destruction of this addiction, I have always been careful not to fall into that. That's the reason why I don't drink. Apparently, I am prone to developing that condition.

After I finished analyzing the first segment, I had an idea of what the second one was. A full analysis of my potential iQ, categorizing me under *slightly above average under ideal conditions* and a set of *recommended jobs* that I could perform. Why does *LifeBlock[0]* includes a projection of the best that I could be under "ideal conditions"? I felt the need to run my decoder once again, but this time, with a different block. The good thing about blockchain is that everything is registered. So, I decided to run the internship application through my decoder.

For my surprise, I had all the skills needed for the job, but an additional section in the *SmartContract* caught my attention. I guess my hunch was right. I found that, as part of the criteria, the individuals with certain propensities to chronic diseases were automatically discarded; me included. It took me a moment to realize the scope of my finding. After that, everything was clearer. I understood that *iDNA* not only refers to Identification Number Algorithm, but also to my iQ and DNA. The truth is that, since

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our first moment in this world, we are analyzed and categorized according to our *potential under ideal conditions*; delimitating the path we are allowed to follow. My fate was decided at my birth.

I felt broken. No matter what I do, no matter how much effort I put, how many skills I obtain, my future is set. I can't change my DNA. The most frustrating part is that the limitations are based in probability. Even if I don't drink a single drop of alcohol the rest of my life, that 5% probability is hindering my future. There's nothing I can do to change that. It will mark me forever on the *eyes* of everyone else. A probability is not the absolute truth after all. Then, a wild idea crossed my mind. If everything that is recorded in our *LifeBlock* requires to be validated, what if all I need to do is change the perception of everyone around me? Change the way the *eyes* look. I just wanted everyone to understand that, regardless those "limitations" we should have equal opportunities. After all, those are not true limitations. If there is chance, even a small one, for the predictions in my first analysis to not be fulfilled, I would have had proven my point. And I had 95% of chances.

After that discovery, I set as my goal to convince people around me that we all deserve equal opportunities. I also decided to leave my findings outside the conversation; I didn't want to attract unwanted attention. It was impossible; whenever I tried to get one person to understand my point, they had the same answer: "Our system is unbiased and fair". It was as if their faith was removed from other humans and bestowed into a program. Then, I understood. After years of building trust into a seemingly perfect system, we lost faith in one another. Now the truth comes programmed in *LifeBlock*. I needed another strategy.

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I once heard that it's easier to convince 100,000 people simultaneously than one by one. If the fact is being assimilated by several people at the same time, the others will follow. Just like the domino effect. The answer was clear. The execution, on the other hand, was remarkably difficult. If everyone else had lost trust in one another, the only solution was for the message to come from a trusted source. *LifeBlock* was the answer and the medium of my message. But, how could I deliver that message? And more importantly, what message?

I spent days analyzing *LifeBlock* source code in hope to find a weakness. How can a seemingly perfect system have a flaw that no one had detected yet? The odds were against me. Maybe this endeavor was pointless, a dead end. What if, after all, that was my truth? My destiny? It would be easier to accept the path that was chosen for me. But deep down, it didn't feel right. I felt like I was seeing life through a glass. Even though it was considered the *truth*, it didn't feel real at all. Just when I was about to give up, something remarkable happened. I found an entrance to the system. A back door that was only available during certain periods of time. Because the code was originally written in 2019, it had a minor delay every end of a leap-year. 2048 was a leap-year. Apparently, I had a chance after all.

My next concern was to decide the message I wanted to share. The way I saw it was that *GenTech* had created a narrative that became our reality after everyone believed it was true. Now, I had to change that narrative to improve our reality, to bring balance. If they based their story in something that was not entirely truth, I had to play under the same rules. I had to think of a half-truth that would change our *eyes*. It had to be convincing enough that, even though it is not the whole truth, it feels like it; something positive; fundamentally good. I wanted my statement to truly reflect what this society

should be built upon. Equality. A strong, positive, and short statement that will change the way we interact. To understand that we should have equal opportunities. That no matter what your genetics, or IQ says, we are all the same. That's it! That will be my statement: *Everyone is the same*.

Once I had the message, the execution of the plan was next. It was more challenging than I had expected, and my window of opportunity was small. Because every *LifeBlock* is closed at 23:59:59 on December 31st, and a new one is created at 00:00:00 on January 1st, I had one second to add my contribution to *LifeBlock's* code. My message, *Everyone is the same*, was going to be included in daily-life messages, news, and advertisements, as something that is as true as the fact that we need oxygen to breathe; hidden in plain sight until it becomes a full-fledged truth.

The time came, and I was able to execute my plan. After that, everything seemed to be the same. There was nothing significantly different. Perhaps, my experiment had failed. Perhaps my lie was not good enough. After a few months, I started to notice small and positive changes around me. It was exciting to finally start witnessing the first results of my social experiment. It was not something clearly defined; rather a change in the environment. Something subtle, intangible, but perceivable. Like the slight sensation of a change in the air. The neighbor was kinder in his "good morning". The drivers a little bit more respectful with pedestrians. A small, temporal success.

The real test of my contribution happened next year. *GenTech* released another job offer for *Applied Robotics*. That was the decisive moment. With that opportunity I would be able to confirm the success or failure of my endeavor. Anticipation and excitement flooded my mind when I received a notification. With an excited heart I opened it just to receive another disappointment. I didn't get the job, again. This time I

was so sure I was going to succeed. The small changes around me suggested that my lie had become a truth. That now everyone was the same. Incredulous, I decided to investigate further. Who had received the job offer? I knew the person as well, but something was different. The first time, I was able to somehow understand the reason. The first person and I shared a lot of skills in common. The resemblance between our profiles was outstanding. But this time, it was not the case. There was little in common, if there was anything at all. It seemed like if the pick was random. Like if they had chosen anyone, no one in particular. Like if... Then, I realized it. Like if everyone was the same.

My little white lie had become a full-fledged truth. But its ramifications were nothing I had expected. In my goal to establish equality with the statement *Everyone is the same* I had eliminated the room for individuality. Although we are all equal, we are definitely not the same. Each one of us have individual aspects that set us apart at a personal level. Our differences make us unique. Equally unique. Maybe, if I had gained more skills in philosophy I hadn't committed such mistake. But the system was based on a lie to begin with. I just tried to bring some balance. In doing so, I learned the power of the masses and the "flexibility" of truth. That a convincing lie can become the truth if enough people believe in it. After all,

Out of all blood, one heart.

Out of all thoughts, one mind.

Out of all lies, one truth.