

Brendon Hertz Content Portfolio



Passion Project Management: Eau Claire Analog

ISSUE ONE

EAU CLAIRE ANALOG



A FILM PHOTOGRAPHY ZINE



Eau Claire Analog was conceived on March 11, 2016. That was the day Jon brought me my dad's beat-up film camera made in the eighties. I had made the decision, after exploring photographers on Instagram and in various photography collections, that it was time for me to convert back to film. I hadn't shot a film camera since I was a kid with a cheap point-and-shoot. I'd never taken a photography class in high school or college or anywhere else. I knew nothing of the process other than that the photos I saw online and in print contained some sort of inexplicable magic. I burned through roll after roll trying to attain that same magic I saw in others' images, and hundreds of rolls later, I'm still giddy waiting, actually waiting, to see how my photographs turn out.

Of course, film photography takes a lot of patience. Today, it is so easy to go around and take snapshots on smartphones of pretty much anything even mildly interesting. Not only must film photographers wait for their photos, but they must also wait for that moment in which light, subject, story, and execution all intertwine. These intersecting pieces are what make up the intangible magic of film photography.

Another part of this magic, for me, has been film photography's community. Between the cracks of the multitude of digital photographers in the world now, there lies a robust community of both nascent film photographers and veterans of the trade. It was an online community that initially hooked and taught me, but I soon discovered that there were groups of photographers meeting both through the internet and in person. Ultimately, these people, both friends and strangers, push me to constantly try to improve my own work. All of the people included in this zine inspire me, almost every day, with new material.

Finally, Eau Claire has a special place in all of our hearts. The photographers whose work you see in this zine know this place intimately. They are the people you see out at the bars or in the grocery store. They are your neighbors and friends. The photographs in this zine come from the hearts and minds molded out of this place: a place inspired with lonely basketball hoops alongside stoic farms, barren porches paired with full smiles, and empty couches sitting in lawns outside the walls of houses that hide the magic of community within.

Brendon

I spearheaded a zine and film photography collective with a group of photographers from my hometown. The project began over the course of a year on social media, but as momentum for the project grew, I decided to create a zine for the collective. Part creative director, part writer, part photographer, part coordinator, and all leader, there were moments when I didn't think this project would finish.

Collaborating with a graphic designer, nine photographers, a number of local businesses, and a show venue, we were able to create enough buzz to be featured in an alt-weekly magazine and create something that the community could get behind. Leading this process, from inception to completion, taught me that vision can go far with the right team in place. The outcome was a high-quality product to readers within a reasonable budget.

HONOUR.

The Monthly Essentials. Nov '17



Photos for this newsletter by Honour Essentials

Catering to Customers Using E-mail: Honour Essentials Newsletter

Two brothers began Honour Essentials through transformation—taking an old idea, men's shaving and grooming, and instilling their values into skincare products: innovation, efficiency, design, and reverence for the environment.

Issue 01 / Beginnings

Welcome to the first edition of the Monthly Essentials.

We built HONOUR Essentials with a simple mission to help transform your morning ritual for someone like you to get ready every day. We're driven by our appreciation for quality craftsmanship, modern design, and respect for the morning tradition—it's the passion that inspires our innovation.

So we created the Monthly Essentials, to help you transform your morning ritual into the best fit for you by providing inspiring and unique content.

In the spirit of the founders, Matt and Jerad, our first newsletter's focus is transformation. Where should you start? Here are some simple considerations that could make a big impact.



01 / Consider your time first

Is it worth hitting that snooze button one more time? Some will tell you it's best to get out of bed at the first recognition of your alarm. But if you have that extra ten or fifteen minutes to wake up, will snoozing help you better prepare for your day? Or perhaps you'd like to use that time for a peaceful meditation session, a longer shower, or a coffee at home instead of one for the road.

Honour Essentials approached me about working on a campaign called Morning Ritual. The idea was to create content that added value to customers lives while also directing them to products that could help to enrich their lives. Honour is a company that sells their own coffee and men's shaving and grooming products, so I proposed the idea of a launch email that focused on a morning ritual tip sheet that referred subscribers to specifically embedded products.



02 / Make a list.

Many of the finest morning ritualists have found the secret to their success is setting their plans out on paper. Writing down your morning ritual will help you break down how much time you're spending on any individual activity. After you've made your list, estimate the time you spend on each piece of your morning ritual, and adjust as needed. Five minutes here or there can make a huge impact.



03 / Get the right tools.

Being ready for the day includes making sure you feel like your best self. Using the right products—such as **Honour Essentials Exfoliating Rinse**, **Shave Well Cream**, or **Revitalizing Moisturizer**—is a key to feeling prepared. Using a skincare product made from the same single-origin bean as your coffee should bring you some peace of mind. Remember, feeling good about your morning ritual is feeling good about yourself.



About the Store

Walking into Revival Records for the first time, one gets an overwhelming sense of community. It is a community of seekers, not only in the sense of finding the next great piece of nostalgia or favorite hit song, but seekers of ideas, movements and emotions, of like-minded ears and close friends. Old 45s hang from the ceiling as if to say those who enter have a common goal in preserving music and sharing it with others. The staff will share their favorite recent albums with you as if you are family, and the old phonograph player, displayed prominently on one shelf, is a reminder that what this store is selling goes beyond just goods. Revival Records is in the business of sharing the experience. Sifting through record crates and shelves, bringing a favorite album to the counter, and bringing it home to play for oneself and others is a timeless act that allows others to share their ideas within the Chippewa Valley community and beyond. Revival Records has created an atmosphere that promotes the sharing of the listening experience and feels like a lot more than a business, it feels like an extension of home.

Informational Content &
Keyword Repetition:
Revival Records



Billy Siegel



Revival Records



After I stepped into Billy's record shop, I felt like a part of something greater. When Billy asked me to write the biography for his website, I wanted the customer to feel like they understood what it meant to enter his store. To add emotional weight, I chose my words carefully: home, nostalgia, community, and family. These words are repeated throughout and used to evoke feelings associated with that theme.

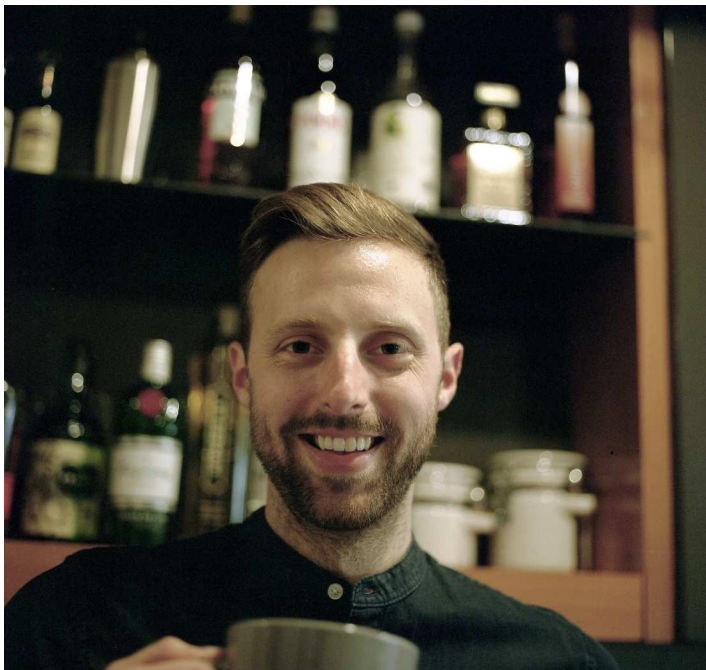
"I try to be deliberate in my morning that I don't think about work more than I have to until I walk out the door, at which time I start planning for the day. The time before I leave home – coffee, breakfast, morning stretches or exercise - I try to keep that for myself and rely on planning the rest of the day during my commute." @rileyjwilliams



Maintaining Theme Through Words & Pictures: Honour Essentials Morning Ritual Instagram Campaign



"On the weekends, I'd like to say I take advantage of everything that I don't have time for during the week, but I instead I find myself really trying to savor that feeling of possibility and freedom, the feeling that the rest of the day isn't yet written so I can take my time. On the weekends, there's something decadent about being able to slow down with intention and turn a process into a ritual." @rileyjwilliams



"Hitting resonance with that fresh outlook and energy at the start of the day can help you accomplish so much. The right album when I'm getting ready is essential for setting the mood for the rest of the day. Some days I need to something to calm and focus me so that I don't feel rushed, but other days you need something to match your attitude when you wake up energized and really feeling yourself." @rileyjwilliams

Order Up: Double Cheddar Burgers, Longstanding Rivalries, and Wisconsin Built's Rest Less

by BRENDON HERTZ on Apr 11, 2012 • 12:22 pm

1 Comment



Finding an Angle Using Long-Form Writing: Wisconsin Built for PeerValidated.com

"Baseball Season is upon us as an early spring air blowing through the half-cracked door to our left has sparked us with the possibility of some kind of awakening tonight, but then someone decides to start singing rap songs from the corner booth. It's only one of many contradictory events of the evening."

Baseball season is upon us as an early spring air blowing through the half-cracked door to our left has sparked us with the possibility of some kind of awakening tonight, but then someone decides to start singing rap songs from the corner booth. It's only one of many contradictory events of the evening. I'm talking with duo Eric Christiansen and Thom Fountain of Wisconsin Built late at night just before the release show of their new album, *Rest Less*, this Thursday at the House of Rock. "Is that Fitty?" Eric Christensen asks about the tune hummed across the table, referring to rapper 50 Cent. "No," someone responds, "It's Rough Riders!" "Oh," Eric replies, slyly adding, "that was, like, their one hit then?"

This comment sets the tone for the evening. Eric seems like the type of person who likes to get his witty two-cents in, but he often sits back to let Thom do the serious talking. On the surface, Thom and Eric look contradictory themselves. Eric is tall, has longer, curly hair, and rests wise-looking glasses on his nose. He looks more likely to be in an indie-type band than Thom, whose hair is cut fairly short and who usually sports a fairly "put-together" look. We ease into the conversation: Herbie Hancock and the origin of bass clarinets in popular music (Wisconsin Built will have a clarinetist joining them on stage Thursday), the band 30 Seconds to Mars, and topping-less pizzas. It's clear through these conversations that Eric and Thom have a unique relationship as band mates; even though they've only been playing together since 2010, it seems that they could talk about pretty much anything while keeping a rapport with their audience at the time, be it at the bar or on stage. I imagine them on stage the night of the show, and ask what I should expect.

"It's going to be a little different," Eric says of the release show on Thursday, referring to having extra instrumentation added for the occasion. Drummer Day Sumner will also be joining Wisconsin Built for some songs, but Wisconsin Built is no stranger to a supporting cast. The band originally began with Brian Johnson, Matt Wagner, and Eric. Thom came an instant later (he claims he missed the first practice), adding bass or drums at times, but has since settled in at the kit. The band has had Sumner play with them before, but they seem content staying a duo. "I feel like Eric and I are on the same page for the most part. It's really easy for us to knock out songs [together]," says Thom.

It's somewhat ironic that Thom and Eric have such a seemingly tight-knit friendship with one another. It's easy to see that they have a lot in common, but they both come from different backgrounds. Thom came from a military

family that traveled a lot throughout his life; he was born in the Netherlands, and also lived in New York for a while before coming to Eau Claire (Thom would be angry if I didn't mention his family is from Green Bay originally). Eric, on the other hand, is from near the Green Bay Area. Both Thom and Eric love the Packers, but that might be where their sports allegiances divide. Baseball season has just started, and Eric roots for the Milwaukee Brewers, while Thom sets his sights high for the Chicago Cubs. When I ask them if this causes any friction in the dynamic of the band, they laugh, but they also seem to get sufficiently riled up about the rivalry in a short burst of heated conversation. It's clearly this dynamic of humor and a little bit of "fight" that makes the pair work well together as a band.



Though this piece is an older example of my writing, it demonstrates my ability to use leadership skills in order to craft a piece of writing. In the process of creating this feature story, I set up one location interview. After writing the first draft and conducting the first interview, I had come up with some unanswered questions. I also realized that I needed more pictures to include for the piece.

I recruited our staff photographer and asked the band to meet us at their favorite local restaurant, where I conducted a follow-up interview and directed the photos that accompany the body of the piece. In the end it was the second interview that yielded many of the quotations used in the final draft. Getting the story right meant going back, getting more people involved, and mining for direction.

The next day, I meet the band at Culver's for a quick meal and custard. It's one of their favorite restaurants, enough to give it a thank you in the liner notes of the album. We choose a corner booth, where Thom and Eric claim many of the Wisconsin Built band meetings have been held ("99% of the time, we're here, in this booth, eating," jokes Thom). We talk about their new album, some of their local influences, and, prodding the sports rivalry once more, Cubs versus Brewers.

Thom and Eric both agree that one of the things they like about the album is its versatility between songs, and the importance of that in relation to a good live sound. "There's a lot more movement in it. The bigger parts can be much bigger, and they can be these really full, rock song kinds of things, and that makes the much quieter, really simple organ stuff a lot more poignant," Thom states. Eric concurs jumping in with, "We just didn't want to do a thing that was always going to be the same." The band speaks of the album as something much more than songs—it is an entity to them: something that has a future beyond just what has been recorded. They are also proud of the fact that the album is a cohesive unit, not just separate songs creating an album. "The goal behind the whole thing was to make it blend together so it's one—it's a whole package," Eric notes. However, Thom says he has a favorite song on the album. "I really like 'Home,'" says Thom. "That song really sets the tone for the album. It works well [with the rest of the songs]." Both Eric and Thom have strong ties to Wisconsin and Eau Claire, and this comes through during the course of the interview.

Audio clip: Adobe Flash Player (version 9 or above) is required to play this audio clip. Download the latest version [here](#). You also need to have JavaScript enabled in your browser.

Brian Moen and Laarks are cited as being some of the band's influences. Thom starts to gush about Brian as if Brian were a big brother. "He's a really great drummer. He's a really great designer. It's like, just stop, man! Stop making us all look bad." Eric agrees, saying that the band really seems to have it together sound-wise. They also say they're influenced by The Daredevil Christopher Wright and, more directly, Moro. Thom used to live with Moro's drummer and learned a great deal from him as a musician.

When I ask how Thom became a Cubs fan, Eric responds, while smiling, "It comes with being the worst person." He's half-joking, but Thom gets serious fast. He explains that his mom was a baseball fan, and, with the family moving "around every year or two," WGN was the only network that was everywhere and broadcast all 162 Cubs games. He goes on to explain how he got to listen to famed announcer Harry Caray and has been a fan ever since. "The Cubs aren't even a factor," retorts Eric about the rivalry. "There's not even anything to worry about." Despite their differing standpoints on baseball, you can be assured that this won't affect their music, their professionalism as musicians, or the release of their album.

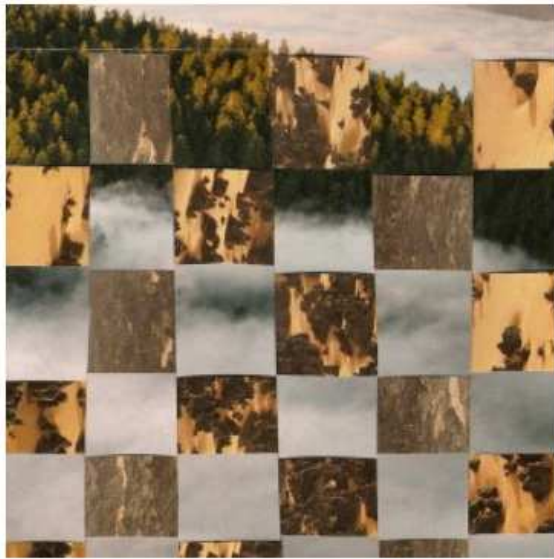


Rest Less will be released for digital download and on vinyl record as well. When asked about why they chose to put the record out on vinyl and support this particular format, both Eric and Thom's responses reveal that they are more than just musicians; they consider many aspects of being in a band beyond the music. Eric starts in after a short pause, "The only time someone wants to be tactile and *put on* something, it's going to be a record."

Ultimately, my philosophy behind quality content is impeccable writing, but it's so much more than that. It's about considering which words fit with a brand or campaign. It's about providing content worth wading through a sea of mediocre writing and photographs. It's about making people feel like they are there, that they are a part of something.

When I am working on content, I put myself in the shoes of the audience: customer, client, reader, and me. Quality content also has a personality, and that personality needs to have truth to it. A sense of honesty comes from choosing the right mood and revealing to an audience the pieces of a story that will most appeal to them.

My process begins with considering audience and finding an angle, but there's always a need to find that intangible human element in any story. Whether that story is related to selling a product or selling a person, the key for me is to find something genuine and go from there.



"There's this whole aesthetic value that comes more with a vinyl than a cd," agrees Thom. His face starts to get serious. "I can think of a lot of album art on cds that, as soon as I look at it, I'm kind of like, 'Man, I wish this was on vinyl, because this [artwork] would look really cool blown up, twelve by twelve, and with the way the printing works; it's usually this high gloss thing.'" "And, the packaging is more pleasing," Eric adds. If anyone else said this, it would probably sound pretentious, but Eric pulls it off with his very laid-back tone. Thom continues on, explaining why the record is important to the band as well. "It's this put together thing where you fill in the blanks and get it made. It's up to you. We had the fold-overs printed at one place, we got the jackets from another place, and we're doing the inserts ourselves. So, we're putting it all together ourselves, and there's just this nice feeling about it"

After sitting down with these guys for a few hours, I am happy to say that I also have a nice feeling about putting the next Eau Claire album release in the hands of these two. Wisconsin Built certainly lives up to its name; the members of the band are both humble and unique, they're funny and friendly, and they're willing to share their well-crafted stories through the music they create and otherwise. They adore the Packers whole-heartedly, they love a good double cheddar burger, and they say "home" with a Midwestern accent and a smile on their faces. Ultimately, it's a rare thing to be able to sit down with two people who seem so comfortable with one another and, at the same time, are able to push one another towards new creative avenues. This is evident in Eric and Thom's musical stylings as well as their conversations with others, and it is why this particular writer is looking forward to a homespun Wisconsin Built Thursday night.

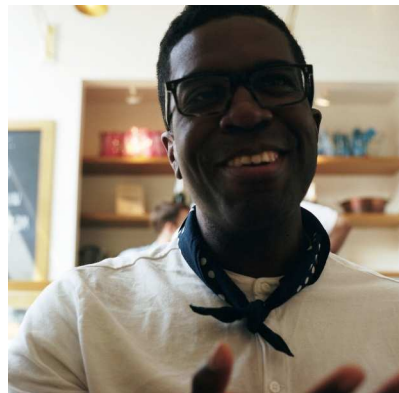
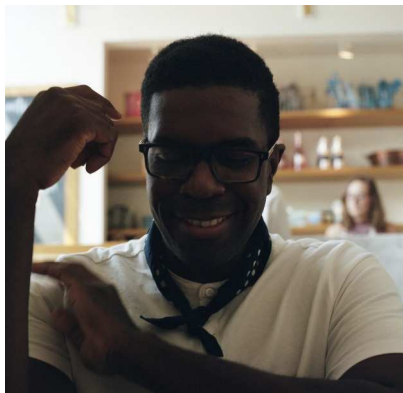
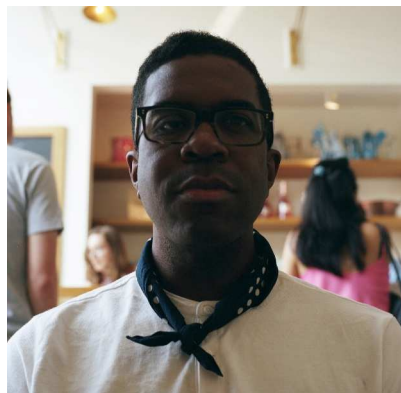
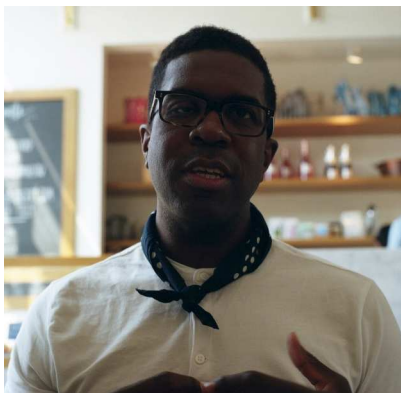
-Brendon Hertz, April 2012

Wisconsin Built's release show for Rest Less is this Thursday, April 12th at House of Rock. 10pm + Free – Adelyn Rose and Dexter Wolfe to play in support.



Tags: Brewers, Cubs, Eau Claire, Eric Charles Christenson, Packers, Rest Less, Thom Fountain, Wisconsin Built

Adding Value Through Entertainment & Connection: Honour Essentials Newsletter



Outtakes from Honour Essentials photo shoot

For this part of the Honour Essentials campaign, I was able to combine a number of skills to put together a story on Antonio, an influencer in Seattle. Scheduling an interview with Antonio, I put together a list of questions that catered particularly to the Honour campaign's goal of highlighting morning rituals. When creating the interview questions, I considered Honour's image: one of positivity, inspiration, and innovation.

After meeting Antonio, I could tell he embodied many of these same traits. He had a very warm and charismatic energy about him, and so I decided to capture candid portraits of Antonio to reflect that. He used his hands a lot when he spoke in order to emphasize his words, and so I chose to incorporate that uniqueness into his portraits.

I find that putting together the pieces for good content means establishing a good foundation for that content. Effective interview material, word banks, style references, and brainstorms can all play a huge role in the outcome of any given project.

Having a background as an English teacher, writer, linguist, and editor, I consider myself a jack of all trades, but also a master of one. Whether it is considering reach, accuracy, or effectiveness of content, there is always one subject in which I consider myself an expert: using words to propel ideas and stories.



The Monthly Essentials Dec '17

Issue 02 / Inspiration

I agree to meet Antonio Smith at a high-end doughnut shop in Capitol Hill, a Seattle neighborhood which has seen the greatest influx of tech workers and all of its benefits: an explosion of restaurants, coffee shops, and specialized boutiques featuring products that range from sneakers to luxury cars. I get there early to make sure I have everything prepared to go as soon as Antonio arrives because that's what you do when you ask a man like Antonio for an interview. He's got time for everyone but never enough time, and I respect that.

"I didn't try too hard to put this outfit together, but trust me when I say I know what I'm doing."

As he walks in, Antonio exudes the confidence of a man who has thought of everything already. I can tell right away that he has because the thin dark blue neckerchief with white polka dots around his neck matches the store's clean white walls and dark blue signage. The second thing I notice about Antonio is how big and warm his smile is: something that hasn't changed since the first time I met him. He has style I admire. It's simultaneously flashy and understated. It says "I didn't try too hard to put this outfit together, but trust me when I say I know what I'm doing."



It's not hard to believe that a person like Antonio has a lot of drive. What is so surprising to me is that he makes it seem so effortless to do, well, pretty much anything he takes on, and Antonio takes on a lot. One of Antonio's projects around Seattle includes Seattle Gents, a group of men committed to promoting men's fashion in Seattle, but he can be found at events ranging from foodie gatherings to car shows, parades to airline soirees, photo shoots to runway shows. Antonio has met some of the finest chefs in town; he knows some of the finest production people in the fashion industry here. His secret, I learn, is that when he started Seattle Gents, he believed he could do anything. He still does.

"To tell you the truth, what really gets me going is if I exercise in the morning. That gets my mind thinking about stuff."

I ask Antonio what he does to get moving in the morning, what his morning ritual is. He responds quite frankly, "I'm always typically going in the morning naturally." No surprises. A man like Antonio is simply always going. "To tell you the truth, what really gets me going is if I exercise in the morning. That gets my mind thinking about stuff. And then, once I get that out of the way, I know I have my exercise." Now I understand the key to Antonio's drive and making it look so easy. Doing one activity necessitates another. He's mastered the art of multi-tasking down to the most basic parts of his daily routine.

Another piece of his magic, according to Antonio, is that inspiration is equally important in morning ritual. "When I have good exercise, look on social media and see what people are doing to get me inspired, try to read some quotes, or listen to inspiring talks, it gets me motivated." Direction and forethought is inherent in everything Antonio says. Even when I try to throw him a curveball, he rarely hesitates and comes back with a juicy piece of wisdom. I wouldn't want to take him on in a game of chess: he's many moves ahead in this interview.

"You measure someone's life by the people they affect. I want to influence and affect, positively, a lot of people."

A man who looks and talks this good has the potential to be dangerous, but by the end of our conversation, Antonio's confidence has deliquesced to a sort of moral fiber. His smile and geniality have melted away anything intimidating about him, and after our short talk I feel that he is a friend. "You measure someone's life by the people they affect. I want to influence and affect, positively, a lot of people. That's my ultimate goal to be quite honest." This would be a daunting task for any hundred or thousand people, much less one person alone.

The beauty that embodies Antonio's ambition and mentality is that people are eager to join him in his quest, and he has infused Seattle Gents with this message: it's better to be many than it is to be one. Surround yourself with good people and you become a better one yourself. I ask one final question of Antonio before he moves on to his next meeting for the day: why? "Because anybody can kick the bucket at any time. I'm always excited there's another day to affect people positively."

Antonio can be found on Instagram (@antoniocdsmith). Read his blog at antoniocdsmith.com. Follow his adventures with the Seattle Gents on Instagram (@seattlegents) and at their website www.seattlegents.com.

