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Dear Friends,

Our son, Feliks, is applying to an art program for the 11th and 12th grades of high school at a boarding school in a town a few hours from us. I'm of the "open up opportunities and let them fly" school of parenting and if he gets in, I'll be the biggest cheerleader for his ability to do this hard thing, even though sometimes it seems impossible. Is he ready? Will his Asperger's make it too difficult for him? Will being transgender be safe there? We'll never know until he leaps. And I respect him enough to let him try.

When I was his age, my parents opened up the opportunity for me to be an exchange student in Sri Lanka, no doubt with some of the same concerns (and some different ones). That experience fundamentally changed my life. Let them fly before you think they're ready. Let them surprise you. And let yourself fly. Falling is *always* possible, whether you fly or don't, so why not fly and learn important things about yourself on the way up, and sometimes on the way down?

Here are a few things from my week that may be of interest to you:

1. The end of the year is known for "best of" lists, and this one tops my list right now: [The 50 Best Nonfiction Books of the Past 25 years](#). My top picks from this list include [The New Jim Crow](#) by Michelle Alexander, [The Warmth of Other Suns](#) by Isabel Wilkerson, [Far From the Tree](#) by Andrew Solomon, and [The Old Ways](#) by Robert Macfarlane.

2. [NPR's Favorite Books of 2019](#) - let me especially recommend these books from this list: [Deaf Republic](#) by Ilya Kaminsky, [The Tradition](#) by Jericho Brown, [An American Sunrise](#) by Joy Harjo (all books of poetry), [How to be an Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi, and [Underland](#) by Robert Macfarlane, to start. Time to snuggle in for a winter read-a-thon. (*The Amazon links are simply so you can see what the books are about. They aren't affiliate links. Don't forget to shop at independent bookstores when possible.*)
3. [This](#) is one of my favorite headlines all week. Just imagine his sense of pride.
4. "In the end, design is all about empathy. This is what leads to creativity, inspiration, and breakthrough solutions to problems." -Leon Segal
5. Explore [tea and spaciousness](#).
6. If you can get past [the headline](#), you might actually enjoy this, especially the ending.

What's coming up:

**Hard Conversations: Intro to Racism** - educate yourself on systemic racism, white privilege and white fragility, the myth of colorblindness, and how to be an effective ally. The 17th cohort of this class begins January 7th. For details, [go here](#).

**First 37** - Join me for the first 37 days of 2020. A whole new decade! How can you set yourself up for success in the new decade? We will discover, write, see, and create together for the first 37 days of 2020. [Go here](#) for info.

**Life is a Verb Camp** - Only 45 tickets remain. October 29 - November 1, 2020, near Asheville NC. The Early Bird Registration rate is available until 12/31/19. [Go here](#) to get information and to register. Email [support@pattidigh.com](mailto:support@pattidigh.com) to get information on payment plans.

With hope for the holidays,

Patti

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