

I remember being in Berlin in autumn 1989, a few days before the Berlin Wall came down and witnessing how the wall, a huge forbidding edifice of concrete, barbed wire and no man's land that divided a city divided worlds, families, lives, guarded by young men with machine guns, a place of death for many years, just physically was dismantled and became a thing of the past once people stopped believing in the separation. It just dissolved.

We, my brother and myself and were in Berlin performing The Summit at the Tempodrom on the Reichstag lawn in October89. On an afternoon off, I went to see what was happening at the wall. it was a few days before the wall came down. Change was palpable. Picture this: at Checkpoint Charlie: a street crossed the wall going from west to east. There was a white line painted on the road, representing the border, guarded by East German border guards with rifles. At that time many East Berliners, 'Ossies' as they were called, had crossed the wall. They congregated at the wall on the West Berlin side to taunt the East German border guards 'guarding' the line, who, rifles lowered no longer believed the military orders' to shoot to kill anyone crossing the line. The Ossies would put fingers and toes across the line- where once they would have been killed for such an act, now it was a taunt, a joke about power. Belief in the wall had gone. Humour had worked its way into the belief system that built the bricks and mortar of the wall, that armed the guards. At that optimistic time, it felt human beings had evolved beyond wall building. Now, the old knee jerk fear re-emerges. The Mexican Wall and Brexit mentality sadly shows that the wall building mentality still exists, but the fact remains that the wall had to exist in people's minds for the physical wall to have any power and credibility