

A SOLUTIONIST MINDSCAPE  
EDITION 01

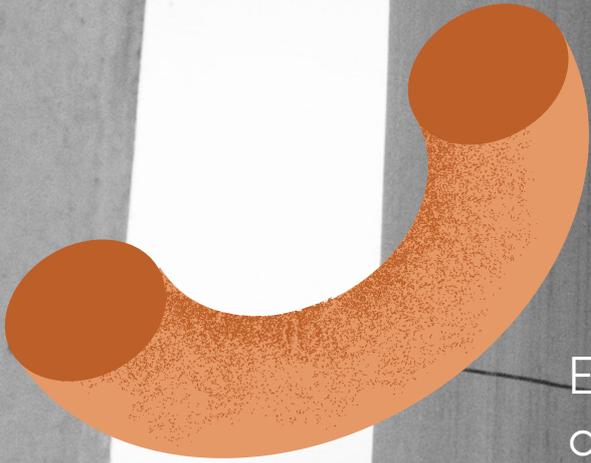
EVERY  
ONE'S  
BUSINESS

READER BEWARE. MIND-ALTERING IDEAS ARE CONTAINED WITHIN



Things are not difficult to make; what is difficult is putting ourselves in the state of mind to make them.  
- CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI

# WHAT THIS IS, PARTLY



Everyone's Business is an experiment in discrete exuberance. The present moment flows along, and carries us all with it. We each are sovereign members of the earth, containing within, multitudes of gifts, skills, intuitions, waiting to be stoked into a type of energetic creativity, that has the potential to create an even better world for us all. Human development is a lifelong, heroic, messy endeavour which thrives in shared purpose, and knowledge. Consider this a playground for the mind, and permission to take the act of living as seriously as needed, to enjoy it as fully as possible.

TESTING TESTING

# A SYMPHONY



Where to begin? The story starts in 2016, when I founded per se with my twin sister, with the guiding philosophy of Just One. We opted to make one product at a time, limited edition, no surplus stock, made in England often, made to last one lifetime at least.

Each design would express a deeper, underlying intuition we had, that if one could be highly discerning and selective in the accrual of individual objects, then why could this not extend to include the same judiciousness in how we collect and cultivate information, ideas, even relationships, to build a life of meaning and integrity from the ground up. The product we would make was simply the first note in an entire symphony of interconnected decisions, solution-finding and collaboration, in the creation of a life well lived, in whichever guise that takes per individual.

Six years in, this premise remains entirely intact. Over this time I have also collaborated with large-scale firms and consulted start-ups - from brand development and story-telling, to manufacture and investment - that are seeking to enfold these values into their products and practices. The latest iteration of this philosophy in my own work, is what I present to you today. **Everyone's Business** is a mindscape for those curious enough to see if there are ways to design a life that feel enriching, empowered, and ultimately, hopeful.

I have curated, and shared, stories of people from a range of walks of life and experience. This is a space where time is suspended, no 24 hour news cycle. It's a place where my love of writing, insatiable curiosity and graphic design comes to play. Finally, it's a labour of love which allows my natural states as a serial dabbler and haphazard forager of self-illumination, to find refuge. Please come in, and make yourself at home.

Always,  
Hardeep, often referred to as, H  
[@antsthesizeofwhales](https://www.instagram.com/antsthesizeofwhales)

## VOICES FEATURED

origin: noun of action from past-participle stem of Latin *contribuere*, "to bring together, add, contribute."

Jeff Weeks  
Keiko Uchida  
Arthur Stitt  
Caroline Issa  
Tomoko Kakita  
Carlo Rovelli  
Alberto Rosmini  
Geraldine Dohogne

## QUALITIES THAT DREW ME TO THE CHOIR ABOVE

curiosity  
quietude  
industriousness  
self-awareness  
forthrightness  
generosity

# SOME OF WHAT TO EXPECT

## PLAY

In 1941 Isamu Noguchi imagined a playground like no other, Contoured Playground - a space that encouraged freeform play. The imagination alone of the child would furnish the undulations of earth. What can we extract from this concept today for adults and children alike?

## ARCHITECTURE OF CONTEMPLATION

Nietzsche, in his January essay, talks of 'architecture for those who wish to pursue knowledge' and 'expansive places for reflection.' What are these spaces, the principle of design, the underlying ethic, and how can we enfold these ever more keenly into our daily lives?

## NUMBER DROP

Letters are all well and good for saying some things. Other times, a number speaks far louder, and with a little more wit. So, we made some calls, and corralled some numbers, to come in, and share their story.

## FEBRUARY DISPATCH FROM KEIKO

What does February hold for us? Japanese Tea Master Keiko Uchido shares a dispatch.

## FURTHER STIMULI

## 10 COMMANDMENTS

Commandments from the mind that architected the first splitting of the atom; taking the time to know what you stand for. What did Leo Szilard come to know?

## CARLO ROVELLI

Theoretical physicists do not often commandeer billboards. So, we decided to rent one in cyber space, and put questions to said physicist: what would be shared on this billboard, and where would it be. The practice of distilled thought in play.

## TOMOKO KAKITA – THE CRAFT OF FUROSHIKI

Wrapping a sourdough loaf made with love to bring to a dinner party, or enveloping a pair of handmade knives from Blenheim Forge, you are what you wrap. Tomoko Kakita shares the ancient Japanese art of wrapping.

## OF MEANING AND CAPITAL

In conversation with Arthur Stitts of Calverts, a print and design studio creating paper-related magic, as a coop, since 1977.

ANNOUNCEMENTS PAGE: exciting new things, exciting re-discoveries, solutionists, tinkers etc etc etc.

# AND A BIT MORE

## PERSONAL MOATS

Daniel Gross, founder of start-up accelerator Pioneer, muses on ways to develop individual traits to thrive in the future, as the age of man seems to be on the edge of being replaced by the age of data.

## A PROJECT OF ONE'S OWN

An essay; 'Many kids experience the excitement of working on projects of their own. The hard part is making this converge with the work you do as an adult. And our customs make it harder. We treat "playing" and "hobbies" as qualitatively different from "work.'

## THE ARCHETYPES

Former developmental psychologist and MIT Media Lab Professor, Edith Ackermann, delineated in her view, the three archetypes of playful personae: the poet, the trickster and the craftsman. We look at the definitions, and observe individuals who dip into these profiles in unexpected ways.

## TO SEE WITH NEW EYES

Frank Oppenheimer, Diana Vreeland, and the power of seeing what others cannot, and sharing what they can, see.

What is the relationship between that first impression, or experience, and what we go on to do with the byte of information? We ponder if there is a way to formalise the act of self-awareness, drawing on Greek traditions of thought.

## SUI GENERIS

MacArthur Fellow Jeff Weeks has about him a special quality that is hard to define, but sits in the neighbourhood of humble wonderment. A mathematician by training, perhaps even by nature, Weeks has been hugely influential in the fields of geometry and topography. His fields of study may not always reach our daily lives in an overt manner, but his story as a human navigating the world, carving a path of independence in the midst of deep collaboration, and stewarding the next generation of students, is a story as close to our individual lives as any.

## COUNTER (INTUITIVE)

Here we explore the concept of heterodoxy, when it come to creating new approaches and concepts. As Einstein was credited with saying, "you can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created."

## DOERS VS THINKERS

The perennial, alleged distinction between those who think on ideas, and those who act on them. Here is a newspaper clipping from Buckminster Fuller, distilling the finer qualities of a doer, to a ten year old.

more of what to expect

XKCD; THANK YOU; LOTS OF OTHER THINGS – ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SCROLL AND PERUSE.

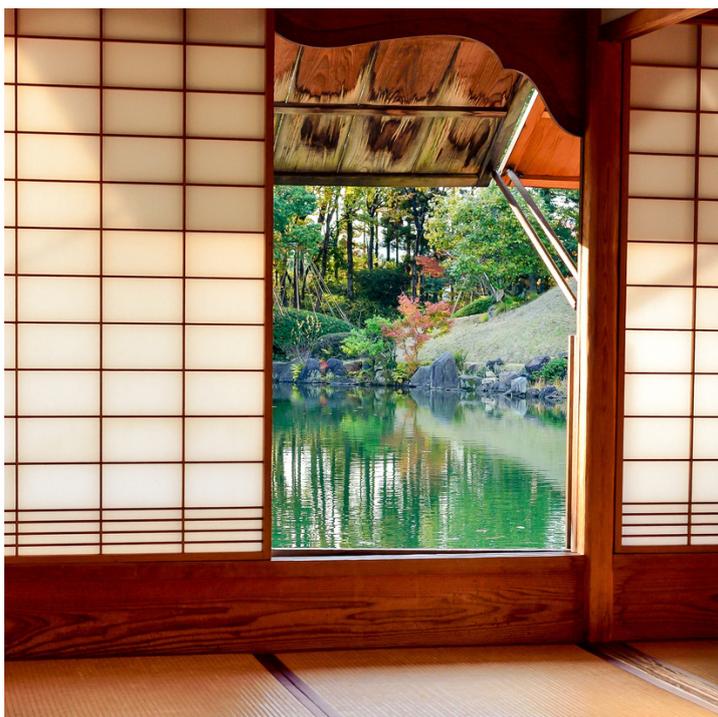
In the seminal **Book of Tea (1906)**, Okakura Kakuzō describes how 'tea ... is a religion of the art of life.' Each month team Master Keiko Uchida pens a letter, sharing a seasonal observation, interlacing a components of Japanese culture and history. Here is February's.

I am a big fan of matcha tea and have been practicing the Japanese tea ceremony for over 25 years. I teach the Japanese tea ceremony in my tearoom in London, and it's my aim to introduce Japanese culture to people through the Japanese tea ceremony.

The Japanese tea ceremony was developed in the 15th century as a Zen ritual and transformed into the comprehensive art it is today in the 16th century. The tea ceremony includes gardening, interior design, decoration, calligraphy, poetry, kimonos, flower arranging, ceramics and of course tea. We use all five sense to enjoy the art of our surroundings and the taste and fragrance of the tea.

In Europe traditionally women held the keys to the tea caddy, so tea is historically linked to ladies. In contrast samurai in Japan practiced the tea ceremony with great enthusiasm. Very high-ranking samurai such as Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi were famously obsessed with the tea ceremony, and built zen gardens with tea huts, and collected many tea related art pieces

The 16th century was a time of war in Japan, and the life of a samurai was far from peaceful – in fact Oda Nobunaga was assassinated by a former ally in a brutal coup. While much of the art collecting was high-ranking samurai wanting to show off their wealth and good taste, practicing the tea ceremony was a way of finding a peaceful environment and mental balance.



# TEA WITH SAMURAI



The tea ceremony showed them the contrast between a life of war and peace, light and shadow, action and stillness.

I used to work in a fast-paced and often aggressive environment in Tokyo. I found that practicing the tea ceremony weekly in my teacher's tea hut was essential to keeping some balance in my life. After many years, I still remember the smell of tea and incense in the air of the tearoom. In fact, it is a treasured memory and has influenced me and my outlook on life.

We all have stress. Whether it's due to COVID, the inflation rate, fear for the future or something else entirely. In Japanese we say 'ichigo-ichie' – each meeting is a once in a lifetime event. I truly believe that each meeting and each moment is precious. Perhaps, we don't need to be active and try our very best all the time. We can enjoy the serene stillness with a cup of tea and remember to be kind to ourselves and also to others.

# THE PYRAMID OF THOUGHT

ARISTOTLE

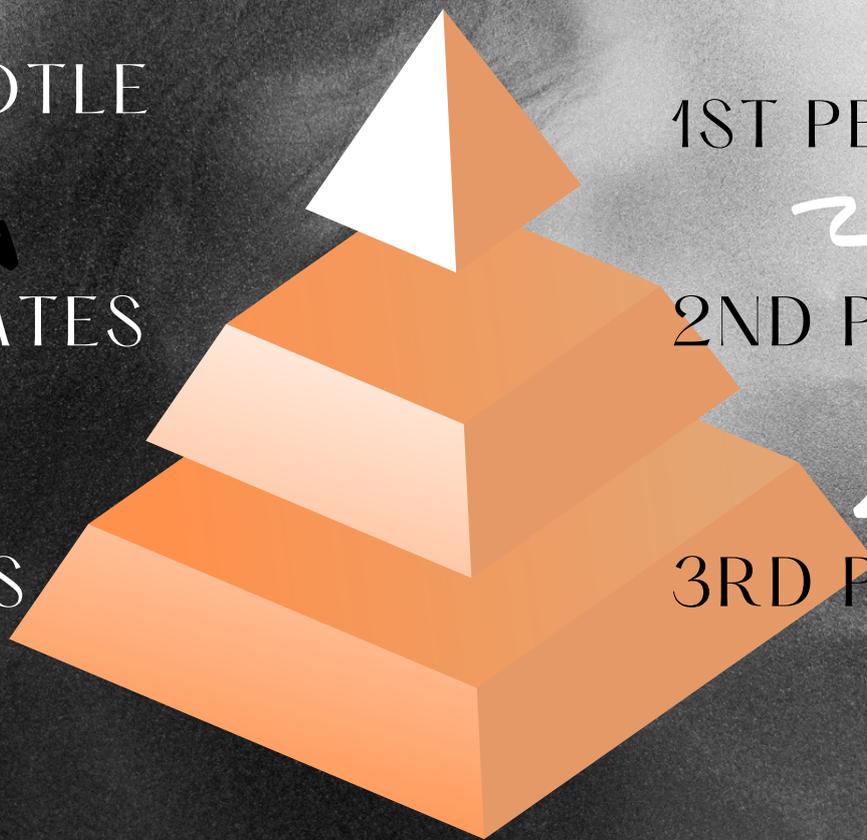
1ST PERSON

SOCRATES

2ND PERSON

STOICS

3RD PERSON



Most organic life on earth could arguably be called Aristotelian by nature, in that the act of living is experienced at a highly subjective level. Humans specifically see the world through their single perspective, as 'lords of our own tiny skull-sized kingdoms, alone at the centre of all creation.'<sup>\*</sup> But the trick is to broaden one's perspective and sense-making ability, from this initial subjective, anecdotal observation and experience of the world, to one that enlarges its purview through Socratic dialogue between people seeking truth, culminating in the 80,000 foot view of the Stoics; an objective, logical interaction with the world that is not waylaid by reactionary emotions, prejudice and deleterious self-interest.

One can travel up and down the pyramid at will, somewhat like a game of snakes and ladders. Sometimes the Aristotelian view will be the most appropriate, say in matters of the heart, but when living in a neighbourhood of 7.8 billion people, there is an argument to be made for moving out of the first, into the second and when possible, third person, multi-level player approach to understanding, and acting in, the world. Thoughts?

<sup>\*</sup>david foster wallace



# EXPLORATORIUM

Oppenheimer. When you read the name, whose face is it that is conjured forth? Is it that of the 'father of the atomic bomb', a face, and life, ever after haunted by the realisation of the world-destroying capability now unleashed in the world? You would be right. But another Oppenheimer, of the Frank variety, forged a new path after the Great Atomic Race, and Red Scare of the 50s in the States.

Frank Oppenheimer, physicist, former ranch hand and passionate educator opened the Exploratorium in 1969, a science museum in San Francisco, devoted to cultivating and championing scientific curiosity and invention.

Inspired by museums that successfully inculcated the wonder and ingenuity of the scientific process and outcomes, such as the Science Museum in the U.K., Oppenheimer set out to create just such a facility that would capture the imagination of old and young alike, across the socio-economic spectrum.

Oppenheimer's intuitive desire to push out of the confines of traditional museum architecture led to fundamentally new ways of seeing. Take the example of the unfinished space which opened quietly to the public, with no fanfare. There was no rush to complete the finer details; instead, visitors were invited in to see the process of assembly unfold in front of their eyes.

Active, real time experimentation and exploration was the order of the day at the Exploratorium. Oppenheimer saw the space as a crucial supplement to the traditional science curriculum taught in schools. He designed close to 100 experiments that attendees could experience, with the hope that the embers of curiosity would be adequately stoked.

Teachers were also provisioned for, in the creation of programmes to train science educators to expound not just the topic at hand, but to engender the spirit of playful inquiry itself.

Creative exploration in the most traditionally understood way - works of art - was also woven into the fabric of the Exploratorium. Oppenheimer commissioned artists to display work throughout the galleries, and he also penned a paper discussing the connections between art and science.

He also pioneered how people explored the space. The Exploratorium Explainer program hires high school and college level students, and trains them in the exhibits. Oppenheimer felt that younger members of the staff would convey more overtly the sense of wonder and openness of discovery, instigated by the displays.

The Exploratorium, after a site change, and renovations, lives on today. It has grown in its reach and impact, and fulfils that great purpose envisioned by Oppenheimer, to create a home for curiosity and awe, and to empower the individual to see worlds beyond those we can observe with our own eyes.

[www.exploratorium.edu](http://www.exploratorium.edu)

**BOOK Something Incredibly Wonderful Happens:**  
Frank Oppenheimer and His Astonishing  
Exploratorium; K. C. Cole. [Here](#)



# MET-A- VREELAND

Diana Vreeland: fashion magazine editor, curator, sender of ebullient memos, over-rouger of cheeks; the persona of Vreeland has grown and multiplied vigorously over the decades.

Her legacy however, is rightfully earned - her ability to nurture talent in her field of fashion, the sharpness and adroitness of her critical eye, and the forthrightness of her demeanour, was the making of a formidable, cultural tastemaker.

One of the defining moves of Vreeland's career was to accept the role of Special Consultant to The Costume Institute, housed within the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The formal, staid, formulaic nature of previous costume exhibits was replaced with displays of energetically positioned mannequins, outsize props, shockingly rich colours and above all, layered stories on the history of costume, that showcased the story of dress in the Western world.

The role of archaeologists is to dig into the earth and find evidence of our human ancestors, to search for tools and objects that suggest what we were. But time is a brute force, as is erosion and decay, such that the material world beyond bone, metal and pottery, is no longer visible. The clothing of a given period expresses the then availability of resources and gives an insight to the mores of that particular time; without out it our ancestors are literally rendered. naked .

The Elizabethan sumptuary laws in England for example, dictated a very clear hierarchy of what colours could be worn and by whom, which expressed one's social class - hint, the richer the colour, the more the reserve of the rich and titled. In contradistinction, Mahatma Gandhi's uptake of the khadi, an Indian-made garment using traditional domestic fabric, was a stand against a persistently infringing colonial power.

||

It can be easy to assume that fashion is an ephemeral distraction; there are grey hoodies and black tees in certain west coast cities of the U.S. to furnish a small army, that attest to this sentiment, after all. But all clothing, and dress more broadly, is partaken by the majority of humans, regardless of culture, creed or ethnicity, the world over, and it speaks volumes of a given person, and the identity they have chosen to adopt. Even observing the most remote, un-contacted tribes in the Amazon rainforest, the body is adorned in colour and pattern.

Vreeland cultivated a reputation of exception, which allowed her to be highly experimental. The outsider is often given far more room to deviate from accepted norms, and when you merge this creative license with the genuine flair of Vreeland, you have on your hands a transformative experience, plus some pithy, rum quotes that'll play and play.

**DOC The Eye has to Travel;** Lisa Immordino Vreeland

## LEO SZILARD

It was whilst crossing the road, specifically Southampton Row in central London, that Leo Szilard, an Hungarian emigré escaping the Nazi regime, had an idea of how to create a nuclear chain reaction by smashing neutrons into the nuclei of an atom. Thereafter the history of the atomic bomb is known. Szilard, realising the enormity of his discovery, spent the rest of his life as a pacifist, urging world leaders to desist from a nuclear arms race. Here are his commandments, that were published posthumously by his wife, as a form of commemoration. They were written personally, but by sharing them, we get to see inside a mind that was parsing complex ethical issues, and seeking a code to living that in another version of events, may have lead to a very different outcome.

## 10

## COMMANDMENTS

1. Recognise the connections of things and laws of conduct of men, so that you may know what you are doing.
2. Let your acts be directed toward a worthy goal, but do not ask if they will reach it; they are to be models and examples, not means to an end.
3. Speak to all men as you do to yourself, with no concern for the effect you make, so that you do not shut them out from your world; lest in isolation the meaning of life slips out of sight and you lose the belief in the perfection of creation.
4. Do not destroy what you cannot create.
5. Touch no dish, except that you are hungry.
6. Do not covet what you cannot have.
7. Do not lie without need.
8. Honour children. Listen reverently to their words and speak to them with infinite love.
9. Do your work for six years; but in the seventh, go into solitude or among strangers, so that the memory of your friends does not hinder you from being what you have become.
10. Lead your life with a gentle hand and be ready to leave whenever you are called.

Translated by Dr. Jacob Bronowski.

4

different words that the Japanese use for 'space'. One is '**wa**' where space is relational, creating interpersonal connection; two, '**ba**', which organises space to increase knowledge or create new experiences; three '**tokoro**', which draws on context on how well the space is created, or chosen for a given purpose; four, '**ma**', refers to negative space, free space or the space between things -how places are curated and created, to engender awareness and quiet.

2

metres, the length of DNA stretched out from one human cell. If all of the DNA in a human's cells was put together, it would be about twice the diameter of the Solar System. Feel free to re-read that.

80

%, the amount of ocean that remains unmapped, unexplored, unobserved.

2.4

billion, the number of seconds that make up a life of 75 years.

NUMBER DROP

5

years, the amount of time a crow will remember a human face associated with a harmful or stressful experience.

175

million, the number of years that dinosaurs were dominant on the earth. Humans of one species or another, at a stretch, have been dominant for no more than one million years.

300

The number of different words for 'snow' in the Sami languages, spoken by the Sami, one of the indigenous people of Sweden.

2

The number of lives that we all have, according to Confucius, 'We have two lives, and the second begins when we realise we only have one.'

Dear Michael,

Thank you very much for your recent letter concerning “thinkers and doers.”

The things to do are: the things that need doing: that *you* see need to be done, and that no one else seems to see need to be done. Then you will conceive your own way of doing that which needs to be done—that no one else has told you to do or how to do it. This will bring out the real you that often gets buried inside a character that has acquired a superficial array of behaviors induced or imposed by others on the individual.

Try making experiments of anything you conceive and are intensely interested in. Don't be disappointed if something doesn't work. That is what you want to know—the truth about everything—and then the truth about combinations of things. Some combinations have such logic and integrity that they can work coherently despite non-working elements embraced by their system.

Whenever you come to a word with which you are not familiar, find it in the dictionary and write a sentence which uses that new word. Words are tools—and once you have learned how to use a tool you will never forget it. Just looking for the meaning of the word is not enough. If your vocabulary is comprehensive, you can comprehend both fine and large patterns of experience.

You have what is most important in life—initiative. Because of it, you wrote to me. I am answering to the best of my capability. You will find the world responding to your earnest initiative.

Sincerely yours,

Buckminster Fuller

# THINKERS AND DOERS

What is it in a child of ten years that bubbles up from within, that makes him or her write a letter, asking the difference between 'thinkers' and 'doers'? One word - initiative.

The reader most likely is familiar with the phrase, 'use your initiative'. Perhaps it was spoken to you as a child, perhaps you speak it now to your child. This is the call to adventure, to literally begin in Latin, *initiare*, from *initium*, meaning 'beginning'. Fuller's letter promulgates active, individual, engagement in the pursuit of new and previously unknown frontiers of knowledge. There is no waiting for others to opine; the young writer here is asked to occupy the centre of the doing machine, to discover within themselves novel approaches to things that have to be done, whilst simultaneously creating space for the expression of one's self, outside of societal grooming.

EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

"In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the expert's mind there are few."

- SHUNRYŪ SUZUKI

"Make us all look irrelevant."

- VIRGIL ABLOH

# THE ARCHETYPES

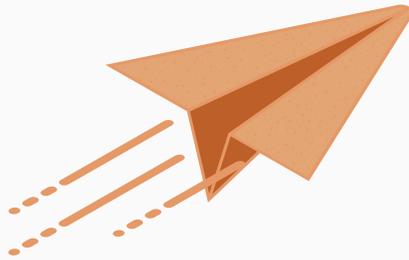
Psychologist Edith Ackermann's work sits at the intersection of developmental psychology, play, learning and design. Consulting for LEGO, she knew something of the role of whimsy, of making room for that liminal space between the 'brain' and the 'body, between 'cognition' and 'emotion'. In this paper presented at an Exploratorium conference, Ackermann highlights three archetypes that we can draw upon, to unleash within ourselves 'the imaginative, the creative, and the heartfelt' the poet, the trickster, the craftsman. Each of these three identities can lay within the same person, and are called upon at different times, for different needs. Sometimes we choose one role, but all too often, none. Perhaps there is space to integrate one, or several of these personae, into our daily existence?



## THE CRAFTSMAN

'making is thinking'

'Through mindful immersion, the craftsman establishes an intimate connection among head, eyes, hands, and tools (or machines). And as he perfects his art, the materials at hand speak back to him through their resistances, ambiguities, and by the ways in which they change as circumstances change. An enlightened craftsman is someone who enjoys such a dialogue and, in doing so, develops an "intelligent hand" and a "playful mind." He falls in love with the materials and becomes so fluent in using his tools that he feels at one with them.'



## THE TRICKSTER

'a mindful provocateur'

'The disruptive side of human imagination is epitomized by the figure of the trickster. Trickster is an emblem of artistic and cultural renewal. He fascinates for how he transgresses boundaries and blurs distinctions. The jester, or joker, is a wise person who is employed to tell jokes and provide entertainment. Like a clown, he is a fool, yet his role is more than just to amuse. A clown may not be a troublemaker in the same way, but he, too, shines by turning things upside down. All three put much seriousness and artistry into their feats. Without technique, a clown would be ridiculous, a trickster pitiful, and a jester fired!'



## THE POET

'to begin, begin'

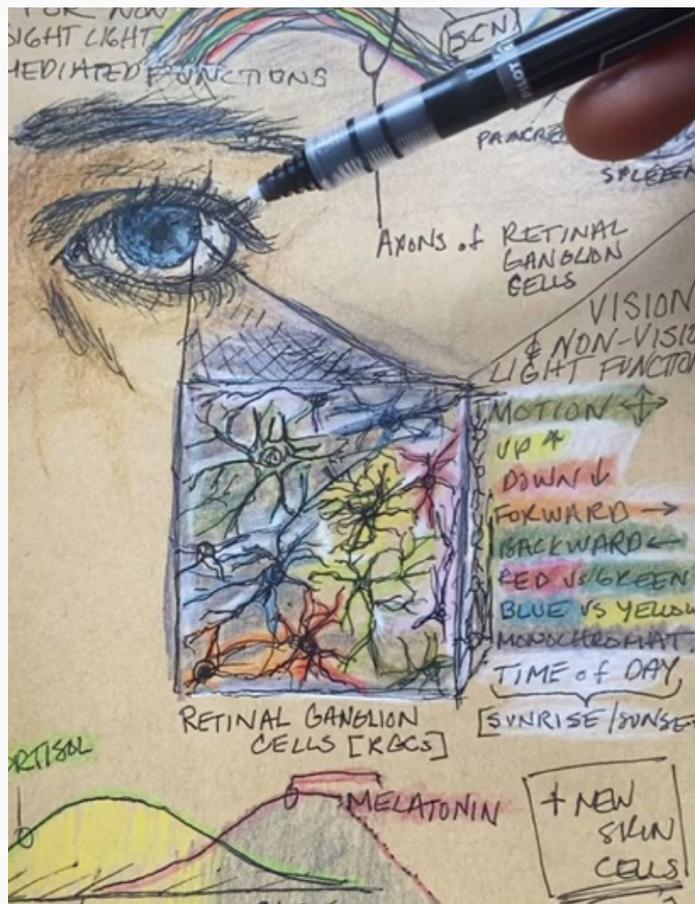
'The poet is a master artisan at the service of the human psyche. More than the scientist, and maybe better than the jester or the craftsman, the poet knows how to bring his or her creations to life in ways that resonate with our inner being. When the poet uses words, the words sing and dance (they don't just signify), and when he or she uses images, the images reverberate.'

The word 'craftsman' conjures immediate associations: the sculptor, the weaver, the painter, the potter. But Ackermann's interplay of an "intelligent hand" and a "playful mind" extends beyond these traditional arts, liberating this designation from the few to the many.

Dr Andrew Huberman is a tenured professor of neurobiology and ophthalmology at Stanford University School of Medicine. An educator in the truest sense, Huberman brings science into the realm of approachable, system-level thinking and actionable advice.

Huberman's skills as a draughtsman are often employed in the dissemination of information, which he achieves through his highly successful podcast. His combination of detailed illustration, vivid colours and pertinent notation, with more stylistic compositions such as the eye here, represent as much that flow and 'intimate connection' identified by Ackermann, as a draughtsman at his drawing board in the eighteenth century.

Noted physicist and gifted illuminator of science, Richard Feynman, took up drawing well into his career as a theoretical physicist. As well as being a Nobel prize winner, he played the bongos, enjoyed a good prank and was an expert lock-picker. When asked why a man that lives in the realm of abstractions, also then took up drawing, he responded: "I wanted very much to learn to draw, for a reason that I kept to myself: I wanted to convey an emotion I have about the beauty of the world." Feynman here bridges the gap between the beauty of quarks and gluons and the material form of nature, mediated by the hand.



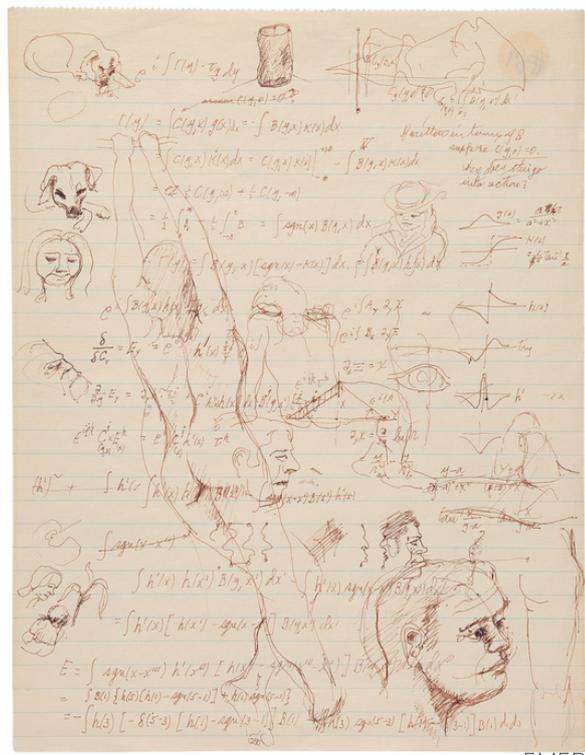
\*drawing by Dr Huberman

In D.H Lawrence's **The Rainbow**, we move from the realm of art to man's literal connection to earth, where there is no separation between land and human; the rhythm of pulsing life within the soil is mimicked in the toil of the body. Working in sync with the land, Tom Brangwen, the archetypal steward of the earth, merges with the soil he tills, 'He worked very hard, till nothing lived in him but his eyes'.

Robert Tomlinson, a fourth-generation grower of forced rhubarb in Yorkshire, treads that same path today of the craftsman liberated from the formal arts. The process of growing this crop is rare and requires an intuitive connection with the earth; it entails growing the rhubarb outdoors for two years, before being brought into darkened sheds, to then be harvested, by hand, in candlelight.

From Rickson Gracie, one of the all time greats of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, we hear how in competition, he became all body, all instinct: "I take my conscience off completely and enter into a zone of emptiness. My mind stops thinking and I start to live inside my instinct and my training. I do not think about a thing, nobody, I do not hear any noise. There's just me and my opponent."

The craftsman wears many guises, with the only tenet seemingly the mind-body connection, to make matter conform, albeit temporarily, to the vision of the maker.



\*sketches and formulas by feynman

MATT SHLIAN | PAPER ENGINEER

**"Researchers  
see  
paper  
engineering  
as  
a  
metaphor  
for  
scientific  
principles;**

**I  
see  
their  
inquiry  
as  
a  
basis  
for  
artistic  
inspiration."**

## THOMAS SOWELL | ECONOMIST

Thomas Sowell, economist, academic, author, is known to offer counterintuitive views on poverty, capitalism, and education. The public intellectual can sometimes be attributed with trickster qualities as they offer ideas that run contrary to popular beliefs and thought. The seeming contrarian however provides an essential counterbalance in order for people to interrogate their ideas, to separate dogma from data, and to arrive at a more robust model of the world. When the residue of subjective reactivity is burned through, space is created for new possibilities, and solutions, to arise.

“Each  
new generation  
born is in  
effect an invasion of  
civilisation by little  
barbarians, who must  
be civilised before it is  
too late.”

## CREATION OF MAN | MIWOK (SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY, CAL.)

In Native American myth, nothing represents the spirit of the trickster more than the coyote: wily, mischievous, unpredictable. This creature of lore is essentially portentous of change, and is often associated with a creative energy, which we see in this story. The notion of break first, apologise later, could find its roots here in the spirited coyote.

After Coyote had completed making the world, he began to think about creating man. He called a council of all the animals. The animals sat in a circle, just as the Indians do, with Lion at the head, in an open space in the forest. On Lion's right was Grizzly Bear; next Cinnamon Bear; and so on to Mouse, who sat at Lion's left.

Lion spoke first. Lion said he wished man to have a terrible voice, like himself, so that he could frighten all animals. He wanted man also to be well covered with hair, with fangs in his claws, and very strong teeth.

Grizzly Bear laughed. He said it was ridiculous for any one to have such a voice as Lion, because when he roared he frightened away the very prey for which he was searching. But he said man should have very great strength; that he should move silently, but very swiftly; and he should be able to seize his prey without noise.

Buck said man would look foolish without antlers. And a terrible voice was absurd, but man should have ears like a spider's web, and eyes like fire.

Mountain Sheep said the branching antlers would bother man if he got caught in a thicket. If man had horns rolled up, so that they were like a stone on each side of his head, it would give his head weight enough to butt very hard.

When it came Coyote's turn, he said the other animals were foolish because they each wanted man to be just like themselves. Coyote was sure he could make a man who would look better than Coyote himself, or any other animal. Of course he would have to have four legs, with five fingers. Man should have a strong voice, but he need not roar all the time with it. And he should have feet nearly like Grizzly Bear's, because he could then stand erect when he needed to. Grizzly Bear had no tail, and man should not have any. The eyes and ears of Buck were good, and perhaps man should have those. Then there was Fish, which had no hair, and hair was a burden much of the year. So Coyote thought man should not wear fur. And his claws should be as long as the Eagle's, so that he could hold things in them. But no animal was as cunning and crafty as Coyote, so man should have the wit of Coyote.

Then Beaver talked. Beaver said man would have to have a tail, but it should be broad and flat, so he could haul mud and sand on it. Not a furry tail, because they were troublesome on account of fleas.

Owl said man would be useless without wings.

But Mole said wings would be folly. Man would be sure to bump against the sky. Besides, if he had wings and eyes both, he would get his eyes burned out by flying too near the sun. But without eyes, he could burrow in the soft, cool earth where he could be happy.

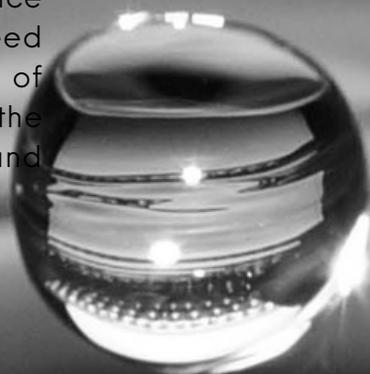
Mouse said man needed eyes so he could see what he was eating. And nobody wanted to burrow in the damp earth. So the council broke up in a quarrel.

Then every animal set to work to make a man according to his own ideas. Each one took a lump of earth and modelled it just like himself. All but Coyote, for Coyote began to make the kind of man he had talked of in the council.

It was late when the animals stopped work and fell asleep. All but Coyote, for Coyote was the cunningest of all the animals, and he stayed awake until he had finished his model. He worked hard all night. When the other animals were fast asleep he threw water on the lumps of earth, and so spoiled the models of the other animals. But in the morning he finished his own, and gave it life long before the others could finish theirs. Thus man was made by Coyote.

## JOHN THE POACHER | THE FORAGER

Gibran, Dickinson, Neruda, when we think of the poet, a roster of names populate the brain. But Ackermann's definition of the poet as a 'master artisan at the service of the human psyche' need not be limited to the poet of the page. Here, we find the artisan in nature, and amongst music.



John, a resident of East London, has, over the course of a decade, through the time old art of autodidacticism, become a master forager. He is entirely self-taught, profoundly unassuming, encyclopaedic in his knowledge and pure somehow; spending time with John is like looking through a drop of water. Having learned how to fish at a young age, year over year, John has cultivated a deep companionship with Nature, keenly learning and knowing within his purview, every tree, plant, mushroom, flower that chooses to tickle the earth with its growth.

Of a given Saturday morning, John will gather his troops of civilian foragers. Eyes low to the ground, feet gently pressing as if on hallowed earth, the game is afoot. It could be that within three minutes of walking, London Blewits will be plucked, fruit tasted from a strawberry fruit tree and the spongy bark of a cork oak tree caressed ever so.

For three hours, the conversation will be far reaching, with notes of delight and laughter frolicking amongst the fungi and wild chives that poke their head through forlorn pavement cracks. Much as a woodsman is acknowledged implicitly by the forest, so do locals greet John as he folds through the East End, eyes alert to the wonders of nature, the bouquet of flavours hiding in plain sight, flanked by willing disciples of this ancient practice.

BENJAMIN ZANDER |  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR, BOSTON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

“The best review I ever got was not from a music critic, but from my father. He was 94 years old at the time and completely blind. He attended a Master Class I gave in London and sat there in his wheelchair for about three hours. When it was over, I went to speak with him. He lifted up his finger in his characteristic way and said, “I see that you are actually a member of the healing profession.” It seemed to me the highest accolade.”

# A PROJECT OF ONE'S OWN

by Paul Graham, co-founder, Y Combinator

A few days ago, on the way home from school, my nine year old son told me he couldn't wait to get home to write more of the story he was working on. This made me as happy as anything I've heard him say — not just because he was excited about his story, but because he'd discovered this way of working. Working on a project of your own is as different from ordinary work as skating is from walking. It's more fun, but also much more productive.

What proportion of great work has been done by people who were skating in this sense? If not all of it, certainly a lot.

There is something special about working on a project of your own. I wouldn't say exactly that you're happier. A better word would be excited, or engaged. You're happy when things are going well, but often they aren't. When I'm writing an essay, most of the time I'm worried and puzzled: worried that the essay will turn out badly, and puzzled because I'm groping for some idea that I can't see clearly enough. Will I be able to pin it down with words? In the end I usually can, if I take long enough, but I'm never sure; the first few attempts often fail.

You have moments of happiness when things work out, but they don't last long, because then you're on to the next problem. So why do it at all? Because to the kind of people who like working this way, nothing else feels as right. You feel as if you're an animal in its natural habitat, doing what you were meant to do — not always happy, maybe, but awake and alive.

Many kids experience the excitement of working on projects of their own. The hard part is making this converge with the work you do as an adult. And our customs make it harder. We treat "playing" and "hobbies" as qualitatively different from "work". It's not clear to a kid building a treehouse that there's a direct (though long) route from that to architecture or engineering. And instead of pointing out the route, we conceal it, by implicitly treating the stuff kids do as different from real work. [1]

Instead of telling kids that their treehouses could be on the path to the work they do as adults, we tell them the path goes through school.

And unfortunately schoolwork tends to be very different from working on projects of one's own. It's usually neither a project, nor one's own. So as school gets more serious, working on projects of one's own is something that survives, if at all, as a thin thread off to the side.

It's a bit sad to think of all the high school kids turning their backs on building treehouses and sitting in class dutifully learning about Darwin or Newton to pass some exam, when the work that made Darwin and Newton famous was actually closer in spirit to building treehouses than studying for exams.

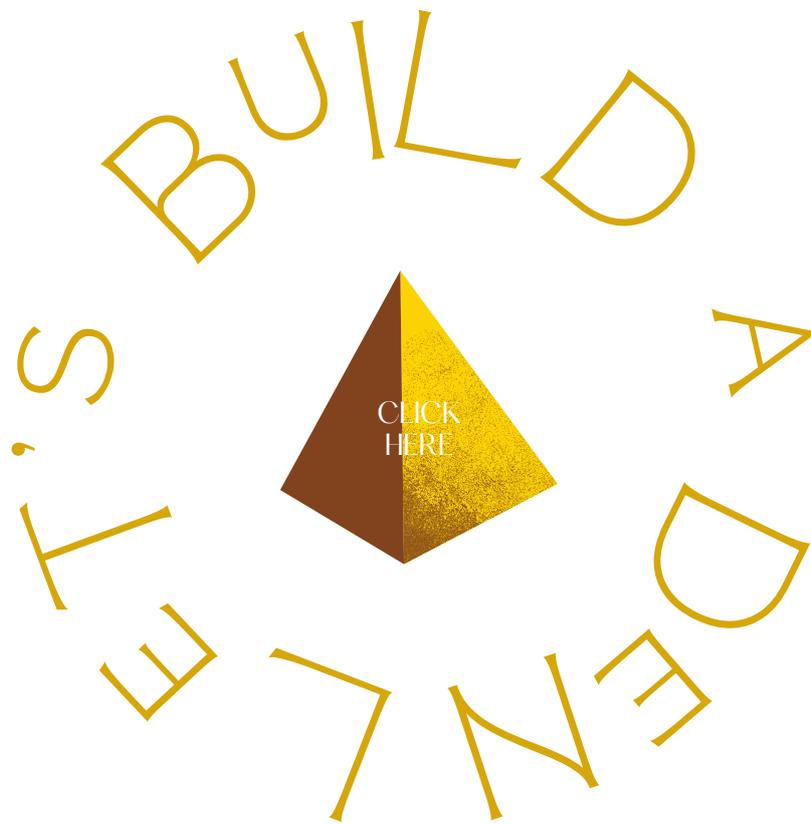
If I had to choose between my kids getting good grades and working on ambitious projects of their own, I'd pick the projects. And not because I'm an indulgent parent, but because I've been on the other end and I know which has more predictive value. When I was picking startups for Y Combinator, I didn't care about applicants' grades. But if they'd worked on projects of their own, I wanted to hear all about those. [2]

It may be inevitable that school is the way it is. I'm not saying we have to redesign it (though I'm not saying we don't), just that we should understand what it does to our attitudes to work — that it steers us toward the dutiful plodding kind of work, often using competition as bait, and away from skating.

There are occasionally times when schoolwork becomes a project of one's own. Whenever I had to write a paper, that would become a project of my own — except in English classes, ironically, because the things one has to write in English classes are so bogus. And when I got to college and started taking CS classes, the programs I had to write became projects of my own. Whenever I was writing or programming, I was usually skating, and that has been true ever since.

So where exactly is the edge of projects of one's own? That's an interesting question, partly because the answer is so complicated, and partly because there's so much at stake.

**continue to read the rest of the essay [here](#)**



# ANNOUNCE- MENTS

a spotlight on new projects, on old but still relevant ideas, on potential solutions and all other manner of happenings



## 01

### ARC INSTITUTE

Stripe co-founder Patrick Collison, in collaboration with Stanford University, UCSF, and UC Berkeley, launches Arc. Arc Institute provides scientists with no-strings-attached, multi-year funding, removing the need to apply for external grants, and invests in the rapid development of experimental and computational technological tools. Solutions to leading health problems without the bureaucracy and ethical double-speak. They are hiring, too. [Explore](#)

## 02

### IDEAS BEYOND BORDERS

IBB is 'a nonprofit that translates, creates, and distributes content to advance critical thinking, science and civil rights in the Middle East.' Created by a refugee-cum-social entrepreneur, with a mission to revivify a culture of learning that blossomed hundreds of years before the English Enlightenment. [Explore](#)

## 03

### CLIMEWORKS

Carbon capture officially becomes a reality. Climeworks' Orca plant pulls carbon molecules directly from the air, which are then pumped into nearby volcanic rocks, where, using technology created by Carbfix, they will form long-lasting carbonate minerals that remain in place for thousands of years. [Explore](#)

## 04

### URBANA

Congratulations to Kashef Chowdhury, founder of URBANA, on winning international recognition for Friendship Hospital - a community hospital in rural Bangladesh - built in collaboration with NGO Friendship. It is constructed using local materials, entirely aligned to the needs of the patients, and is designed to work with challenging natural conditions, such as rising water levels. [Explore](#)

## 05

## THE OCEAN CLEAN UP PROJECT

First, look up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Then, meet Boyan Slat. Aged 16, Slat observed the alarming number of plastic bags on a scuba diving trip in Greece. At 18 he founded The Ocean Clean Up, with the aim of reducing by 90% the amount of floating ocean plastic by 2040. [Explore](#)

## 06

## EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM

For those interested, EA Virtual Programs are opportunities for anyone globally to engage with the concept and practical application of effective altruism via readings, videos, podcasts, exercises, and small-group discussions held weekly. The next round of programs shall commence on March 7th. [Explore](#)

## 07

## FIN LIT

The Financial Times launches the FT Financial Literacy and Inclusion Campaign. Financial literacy, which is a highly potent antidote to generational poverty, is largely missing from the curriculum of most schools. If you'd like to get involved, or simply become informed, information awaits. [Explore](#)

## 08

## LESS CONCRETE, MORE EARTH

An architect whose body of work engages with a region beyond a one-off project is not all that common. Anna Heringer has completed several projects in Bangladesh spanning civic, educational and pastoral functions, employing local materials, methods and labour. Anandaloy Building for example, completed in 2020 hosts a centre for people with disabilities and a small studio for the creation of fair fabrics - Dipdii Textiles. Add this to a roster for four further projects, each built with the local community, for the local community. [Explore](#)

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.."

- JOHN MUIR

# THE CRAFT OF FUROSHIKI

with Tomoko Kakita; **founder, ma space design**

Tomoko enters the room with a slight bow, and an open demeanour. Nestled quietly by her side is an exquisite bundle of fabric wrapped in such a way as to be a vessel: both a highly ordinary replacement for a more commonly used bag, but also an item that whispers quietly of an old craft - Furoshiki - that dates back 1200 years. The story of what brought Tomoko to her current incarnation as a purveyor of this craft, is one of personal transformation. Furoshiki - the art of wrapping cloth - most often for gift giving but not exclusively, found Tomoko at a time when she ready for that call to adventure.

"The nature of furoshiki is an expression of being nurturing towards nature as well as being about, you know, consideration for how you live and consume and interact with products."

"We can choose right, better" Tomoko comments, on the transformation that she hopes to enact through furoshiki, towards a form of biophilia - a love of earth and nature. But her expression is not didactic, but rather the words pour forth melodically, thoughtfully. Here is an individual who has gone within, asked some very hard questions of herself, and decided very clearly the type of life she believes is meaningful, the type of work that gives her purpose and energy, and has come to know that although each must walk their own path, there is space to "inspire people, to give the tools to help them think."

Four years ago the idea to honour nature by encouraging a circular, sustainable way of life, made its way out of the ether and into in the mind of Tomoko. She talks of one especial trip to Hampstead Heath, the warm sun hanging in the sky with baited breath, where she got to thinking about her life to date including the painful loss of a beloved sister, who had been passionate about the natural world. Furoshiki was a craft that Tomoko had been raised with, that honoured nature by limiting waste, and imbuing items with meaning, beyond pure utility. Gifting is a significant part of Japanese culture; it is highly formalised with specific rituals occurring in line with the seasons, and there is a strong component of reinforcing bonds of kinship and friendship through the act of gifting. The fabric of Furoshiki used to wrap items will often reflect the time of year, the shape and size of the item will dictate the specific method of wrapping and typically, once the present is unwrapped, the gift giver will take back the fabric to reuse for a later gift.

Back to the Heath. With the weight of all this meaning and ritual combed through the fibre of her upbringing, Tomoko had the impression that the culture she now found herself in had departed from these higher values, values that her sister had held deeply also; the expediency and convenience of the modern age was eroding our connection to nature. Sitting amongst the undulating mounds of the Heath, using Furoshiki as the conduit to encourage a more connected, sustainable lifestyle, seemed to Tomoko her way to give something back, to make a difference. She would launch a brand.

But then, nothing.

Fast forward two years, a global pandemic swept through many parts of the world and that Heath epiphany reared its head once more. This time Tomoko decided to heed the call. As her world was thrown into tumult with cancelled projects and ensuing isolation, the same questions from a couple of years back resurfaced, but this time they had the force of conviction, morphing self-questioning into transformation:

"What's my vision and what's my purpose? What I am trying to achieve through this brand? And you know, when we go through a difficult time as I did during lockdown, it was one of the things I realised that I never faced my emotions in the past. And that was kind of part of my exercise that I did. Who am I? And what do you know? And then one of the things I realised was I didn't face the loss of my sister. It was very sad, so I buried it, I tried not to think and then I made my life busy so that I didn't have to think about it. The lockdown came and I had the time, and that was the time I started the exercise of, you know, thinking about myself. I went deeper into it. The sadness came out, and in a way through my brand, I could celebrate, you know, that she existed and I could, in that way, continue her legacy to do something good for the environment."

She started with an Instagram page, showing different forms of furoshiki. Tomoko also shared her philosophy of 'ma space design' - designing for 'negative', or empty, space. Furoshiki is not only about the gift that is wrapped exquisitely inside, is it about creating a space, a container, for ensuing delight, joy and gratitude. This extends beyond the wrapping, which is but an expression of a deeper value that Tomoko employs in her work as an interior architect. The form is rarely the whole message, and the opportunity to create a space for new connections amongst people or between thoughts and people, is clearly a driving force for Tomoko.

From the Instagram page followed a message from the same ether that prompted Tomoko to launch her brand - a publisher seeking to bring furoshiki to a larger audience. Then followed a book, private events, teaching the craft to other seekers, to the latest incarnation, a collaboration with a perfumer looking to rethink their packaging, and to orient to something sustainable, whole, connected. Tomoko, in recounting the recent whirlwind, often uses the word luck. So, what exactly does she think of luck?

"I felt like I was so lucky. But at the same time, I was kind of ready. I had some thoughts but it all happened when I started taking action; it started with deciding. I started, even though I didn't have big followers on Instagram. The publisher found me because of the Instagram and then that's when I was ready to say yes, to take that opportunity, which was great. If I didn't first have a clear idea about what is my message, what I'm trying to create, probably I couldn't have taken the opportunity."

The process of starting a brand is no small feat, with a steep learning curve. Asking Tomoko what she has learnt during this real-time MBA, the conversation becomes meta, quickly, "what I learned was even though I don't have a skill, I can learn and I can make it happen; that was a big discovery about myself. It's possible. Like almost everything is possible if you have a will to do it and if you have a passion."

Our conversation rolled on through various valleys and troughs, of meaning and mishaps, until we ended with a discussion on the concepts of scarcity and abundance. Ma Space Design does not work from a base of want, or lack, but rather it expands upon ways to reconnect to the natural world, by adjusting our consumptive lens. But this outlook was not always so apparent to Tomoko:

"I was in scarcity for a long time. And when you're in scarcity, you can't keep healthy. And I am practicing to be in the state of abundance, you know, I'm lucky to have a roof, I can afford food, that is obviously, you know, a great thing and, then it's appreciation. It's that difference. Someone said that when you change expectation to appreciation, your life changes, and it is absolutely true. Appreciation is the key to being abundant, and when you're in abundance, you can give more."



CARLO  
ROVELLI

Theoretical physicist; co-founder of The Global  
Peace Dividend Initiative

We asked theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli, should he be given free reign of a billboard, what message would he impart upon it, and where would it be placed?

what:

“do not trust  
your teachers!”

where:

“A bit hidden, in unexpected  
places, so that the best mind  
only can stumble upon it...”

# PLAY

ORIGIN: OLD ENGLISH PLEG(I)AN 'TO EXERCISE', PLEGA 'BRISK MOVEMENT', RELATED TO MIDDLE DUTCH PLEIEN 'LEAP FOR JOY, DANCE'.

"Go play." Was ever a phrase so straightforward, so clear in its instruction? But only if used in a certain context, that is. To a five year old yes, that's clear; to a 10 year old, that still works; getting to 14, the sell becomes harder; in your 20s, and onwards, go play has morphed into, well, what...go be entertained?

Developmental psychology is clear on the importance of play as a mechanism of learning for children. Play is a form of safe experimentation where boundaries are pushed, stress-tested; it's a way for imagined realities to be tried on with limited exposure to danger or opprobrium. Play could also be described as creativity in motion, a kinetic means of literally stepping outside of what is already known, in order to create new possibilities. It's problem solving in its most hedonic form.

What may or may not be abundantly clear, is the centrality of the mind in some capacity, as the ignition to this form of experience. The brain has a hypothesis, a murky, as of yet unformed idea about the world; the body, as a sentinel, is sent out to transform this neuronal haze into something that can be formalised, codified, and essentially cindarellled. Architect-designer Isamu Noguchi, understood the richness of a child's mind as the seed of all seeds. In 1941, he designed a playground loudly restrained in formal stimuli, but utterly prepared to provide a baseline topology from which to build impossible worlds, that in time, would be distilled into helpful knowledge.

As an adult however, play becomes something else. It may take on the vestments of entertainment, a hobby or an interest, clearly demarcated in the calendar, rarely to bleed out of the margins into the remaining 22 hours of life apportioned per human, per day. Play's cousin - creativity - is relegated to the realm of the artist, be it a musician or a comedian, and is ring-fenced thereafter. To this bouillabaisse add the stupor of ever greater levels of specialisation in the workplace and the delegation of seemingly irritant or inane tasks to technology. Life, especially in developed economies, is so easy, that most of the contours have essentially been flattened.

However, if we accept the premise that play provides the chance for a child to try new things and partake in fun, free flow unimpeded experimentation, with the acceptance that mistakes will be made but lessons also learned, in what multiverse are we living that we think this utility ever stops being important? If you believe (an important component of play, incidentally) that play is a serious lifelong activity, then it belies us to seek out ways to add this into our daily repast. It seems that it's actually even more important to access the joy of play as the problems in life become ever more complex, demanding of us an ever greater dexterity of thought, to solve for living.

Architect Bjarke Ingels talks about the encoded environment of urban spaces - the movements through the space are set, the nomenclature is fixed. However, in nature there is the potential for the undone and unruly to make space for novelty, as he notes, "nature in some way is a grown up's playground." John Muir, writing about the Redwoods, clearly expresses reverence for nature, but his turns of phrase show a delight and lightness of touch, which creates a doorway for the reader to enter a new perspective, 'when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.'

Overhearing a couple in a coffee shop, where one partner says to the other, "life with you is fun", is an indication that play and fun are interchangeable, and occurs both in the solo pursuit of an activity that delights and challenges the participant, but is also a communal act of collaboration. This applies to all manner of relationships we keep, whether in the home, at work, and the many places in between. Just ask Esther.

# PLAY

continued

Play is both a place, and a state of mind. In the view of Yvon Chouinard, founder of outdoor brand Patagonia, play is part of a much larger story, which is the cultivation of life itself: 'a master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play: his labour and his leisure; his mind and his body; his education and his recreation. He hardly knows which is which.' It may seem a stretch for a sewage plant engineer or a firefighter to consider no separation between work and play. But play comes in the form of camaraderie and mutual ribbing, which is typical of the high stakes environment in front line services. The engineer is a problem solver, a keep of keys to the smooth running of a service that we rely on as much as clean air and water, an imagineer whose mind is needed on high stakes, which requires a creative, flexible and perennial learner state to be the norm.

But let's also not forget the digital age, and virtual infrastructure in which we find ourselves encoded. Play is a gateway to connection, and can be deliberately designed for. Technologist Jaron Lanier remarks on this, in reference to the launch of Together mode: 'playfulness is not a waste of time, even for adults. It is not a bug in human nature, but rather a fine-tuned process crafted over deep evolutionary time that transcends species. It is how we learn to interact with new people, how we build trust and comfort, and how we investigate our environment.'

Play needs to be reclaimed for the grown ups in the room, there's too much at stake if it's left to the children.

# (COUNTER) INTUITIVE

Whether a teacher striking new ground in the dissemination of information, or new ways of looking at seemingly known information, re-tooling our approach has the power to radically change the way we perceive, and interact with, people, ideas and concepts out in the world at large.

## RICHARD FEYNMAN

### START AT THE END

Nobel physicist Richard Feynman would read the end of scientific papers first, and then think his way backwards to the methodology, to see if he could arrive at the answer independently.

## JONATHAN HAIDT

### WHOLE SELF

"Do not bring your whole self to work...instead bring Buddha, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus to work, and you will be gold to your employers; you will be able to thrive, to create value for others, and in the long run, for yourself." Jonathan Haidt in conversation with Yuval Noah Harari [Here](#)

## HELEN KELLER

### BE LIKE WATER

Keller, rendered deaf and blind owing to a series of childhood illnesses, was largely considered unteachable, and worse, without any potential. Undaunted, her teacher Anne Sullivan broke into Keller's dark world of quietude, the day she traced upon the hand of her student the word 'water,' whilst submerging her hand in the element. This simple act of finding a new way to express a category of knowledge, unlocked within Keller a voracious, and powerful, mind.

## BUCKMINSTER FULLER

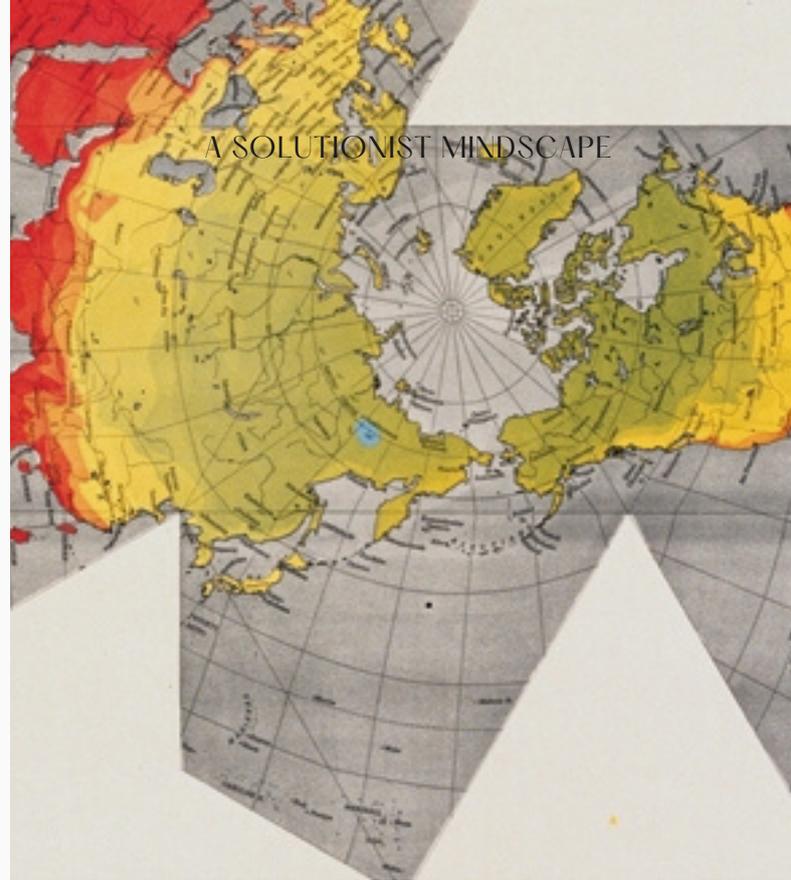
### ONE WORLD, ONE ISLAND

The Dymaxion map. The first of its kind, dreamt up by engineer-cum-loquacious visionary Buckminster Fuller, is the only flat map of the entire surface of the world which presents planet Earth as one island in one ocean, without any visually obvious distortion of the relative shapes and sizes of the land areas, and without splitting any continents.

## NIKOLA TESLA

### MIND PROTOTYPES

Tesla would often prototype ideas in his mind, for several years, trialling all type of configurations, materials, and specific components before committing a design to the page. This method of thinking saved on materials, labour and allowed for ideas to be interrogated from several angles, before serving them to manufacturers.



## BENJAMIN ZANDER

### GIVE THEM A STRAIGHTAWAY

Musical director of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Benjamin Zander, awards his students an 'A' grade at the outset. How the student gets there, is their choice, and responsibility. Taking the stress and anticipation out of the finish line, creates what Zander calls, 'the art of possibility.'

## SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN

### GOD SENT

An unknown mathematician born in a nondescript town in India, in 1887, catches the mind and imagination of a Cambridge don years later. He will go down in the history of mathematics as solving theorems with formidable, incomprehensible alacrity and precision. Deeply religious, Ramanujan firmly believed his knowledge was revealed to him by his family goddess, Namagiri Thayar.

## JEFF WEEKS

### THROW THE BOOK AT THEM

"My high school physics teacher took four of us "quicker kids" and told us not to come to physics class for the rest of the year, but instead, he told us to go to the library during that hour and learn physics with each other, using a book he gave us. It was a marvellous idea. Learning how to explore new ideas with each other was a vastly more useful experience than sitting in class."

# PERSONAL MOATS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by Daniel Gross, founder, [Pioneer](#)

People will often define a company by economic moats: network effects, scale economics and so forth. I also think we should be all developing our personal moats. Things that will help you maintain an edge over everyone else. Below are mine. What are yours?

**READ LONG-FORM CONTENT.** The ability to read and focus for lengthy periods of time is going to be an increasingly rare trait. On a million-year time-scale, the popularity of the written word will seem like a fad. We'll go back to what we had before: video and audio of other humans. They're just so much more interesting than words. I believe the pastime of reading will be a hobby of the elite. Some believe that video will be just as good a medium to consume. I doubt it<sup>[1]</sup>. It's certainly worthy investment as a Pascal's wager.

**WRITE FREQUENTLY.** Writing helps you organize your thoughts. It encourages you to have structured thinking, which is very helpful when communicating concepts to other people.

**A HEALTHY BODY.** You cannot succeed if your mind is clouded because you're not sleeping well or eating sugar all the time. Don't overeat carbohydrates. Give yourself enough time to sleep. Make time for exercise. Work hard and smart. Get used to eating healthy food. Get started on these routines ASAP. It seems to get harder to change habits later in life.

**GET LUCKY.** We're all born with a metal detector, but few people use it. You should constantly be hunting for golden opportunities. Expose yourself to new and interesting people. Notice when the detector fires (when a good opportunity comes by), and take advantage of it. Three specific suggestions I can offer on increasing luck:

**Generate unique ideas.** To quote Steve Jobs: "at some point you look around the world and realize that it was built by people no smarter than yourself." Get in the habit of thinking about what you'd improve in the world. Notice all the things that annoy you. Try to think about how you'd fix them.

**Be skeptical and optimistic.** Don't just nod along when someone says something. Think. Is what they're saying correct? Don't try to be contrarian for the sake of it, but get in the habit of judicious thinking.

**Embrace adventure.** Even when they find hidden gold, many people struggle to act on it. Opportunity involves risk. People worry too much about the potential downside and forget the upside. Your biggest enemy is your own status-quo. Be ambitious. Break out of your local maxima.

**GET BUSY.** Get in the habit of doing stuff. If you enjoy your job, great. If not, develop a hobby. Don't over-optimize this. It doesn't have to be a grand project. Do anything you enjoy that also provides value to other humans. Try to do it as much as possible. Brag to people about it. Mould your identity such that you're known as a productive person.

**KNOW YOUR MIND.** Quoting Buffett: "If you have an IQ of 160, give away 30 points to somebody else. What you do need is emotional stability." If you sleep and eat well, you should be off to a good start. But life can always catch you off guard. You need to be able to identify your own emotions in the third person and not get caught up in them. Meditation can help with this. Once you're more self aware you can exploit your personality to your benefit. Are you more productive in the morning or evening? Optimize your schedule around that. Reflect on what motivates you, and use that to hold yourself accountable.

**DEVELOP AN INSPIRING ENVIRONMENT.** Surround yourself with people who motivate you. If you can't, spend a lot of time reading about great people. Reading often gives me ideas that I couldn't have learned in a bulleted point answer (I will find myself "acting" like Ben Franklin after reading his biography). I'd also try to find people to bounce ideas off of, regardless of their intellect. Talking is a great way to define and sharpen your thoughts.

Oh, and always, always wear sunscreen.

[1] I couldn't find any reputable studies supporting this. Yet. But I believe in the (just invented) Michael Bay Law: Capitalism will optimize all media towards short-term interestingness, not knowledge retention. The ideal movie will be The Transformers++. Incredibly engaging, not very educational.

# THANK YOU

## THE DREAM BOTTLE

Dear Amy,

I must write a special letter and thank you for the dream in the bottle. You are the first person in the world who has sent me one of these and it intrigued me very much. I also liked the dream. Tonight I shall go down to the village and blow it through the bedroom window of some sleeping child and see if it works. With love from, Roald Dahl (1989)

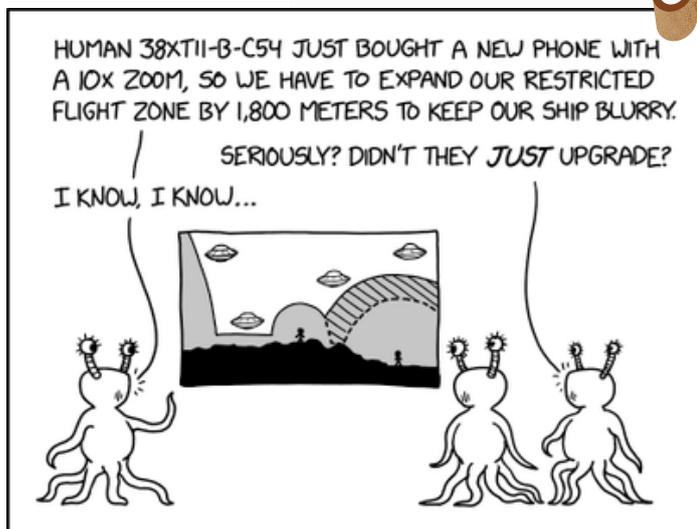
## THE WATER DRAINERS

Chernobyl. Calamity struck, further calamity had to be mitigated. After the initial explosion, when the nuclear material started to smoulder downwards out through the floor of the central reactor chamber, it threatened to integrate with a large amount of water that had gathered there as a result of early firefighter attempts to extinguish it with hoses. This mixing would have ignited a second reaction that would have been the equivalent of a 5 megaton explosion. The result? It would have levelled Kiev and Minsk, and would have ejected the nuclear material from the other three Chernobyl reactors with such force that would have rendered much of Europe uninhabitable for hundreds of years. Engineers Alexei Ananenko, Valeri Bezpалov, and Boris Baranov went into the ruins of the Chernobyl plant, knowingly facing almost certain death from that level of radiation exposure, to release valves that would drain 5 million gallons of water. Thank you.

## THE LIME ROLLER

To the supermarket cashier, who, as he gently rolled the lime I had bought down the slope, into my shopping shop, although be-masked, shared with me a glint of humour in the eyes and gentle chuckle. Thank you. H

Send in your thank you, to be featured, if you like, to:  
ASK@PERSE.LONDON



THE HARDEST PART OF BEING AN ALIEN OBSERVING EARTH IS KEEPING TRACK OF WHAT CAMERAS EVERYONE HAS.

[xkcd.com](http://xkcd.com)



A remote, un-contacted tribe discovered in the Amazon, shooting arrows at a drone camera.

Do you know the average number of **years** it takes to build a cathedral? We're talking in the realm of one to two **hundred** years. In a time when the average life expectancy was 40 years of age, if you as a **mason** started work on said cathedral, you would never see the finished product. If you saw the finished product, you had not seen the laying of the foundation. Generations of a family would work solely powered by an idea; they would not live to see the fruits of their labour, never a chance to sit in the quiet **hallowed** pews that others would sit upon, and contemplate that same idea that fuelled the architects of that container.

From Mayan temples to Göbekli Tepe, to sweat lodges used by select native American tribes to perform important rites of purification and healing, or the modern day mall, homo sapiens crave spaces that allow them to **congregate**, and enact upon them a **change** of mental state. The travails of **time** make builders and destroyers of us all, and **structures** of a given society reflect its current priorities. Churches over time, especially in cities, have been de-toothed from their religious origins. They are receptacles of art, sources of solitude, and often still, the site of major life events, running the span of beginnings, endings and mergings. But the history of these spaces is complicated and also highly specific to a certain group of people. Nietzsche is clear in his St Januarius missive that the vestiges of this specific past, the **art**, the dogma, the baroque, is too overwhelming for the mind that seeks none of the proselytising, but much of the *vita contemplativa*.

We have technology enabled solutions, including **applications** that sit on our phone to inculcate quiet, rest or untrammelled focus. But as the architectural record shows, as soon as humans could manipulate their environment, they did not leave to chance physical spaces that allowed for congruent meaning-making. A museum, one could argue, has a similar hushed reverence as a religious building, plus **the** beauty, just swap out the hard wooden seating for a great canteen. For others it is a golf course, some the comfort of a kitchen, cooking and **nurturing** those they love around them. What **Nietzsche** perhaps underestimated was the resourceful of the human spirit. The intimacy of small places, the gathering of people within informal, seemingly quotidian settings, the ability to connect and find kindred spirits who find respite in a game of football, even if they live in a region ravaged by

We asked some individuals **which** spaces they frequent, to enter a meditative, or rested, state. Perhaps you will note familiar, shared spaces; perhaps you will feel overdue a meditative visit to your own, sacred **place**; perhaps the life you have allows for a meditative state to reside within you, permanently. If this is the case, please do get in touch, we need to learn from you.

# ARCHITECTURE OF CONTEMPLATION

**CAROLINE ISSA**  
CEO, FASHION DIRECTOR  
TANK MAGAZINE

"My go-to place most recently, well, over the last few years, has been Regents Park – the area near the Rose Garden especially. Perhaps it's in the way it's designed and the path it makes you take, perhaps it's the contrast between natural chaos and clipped, pruned and organised flower bed – it's the place that I find solace in, that I go to when I need to clear my head, and that brings me the natural reminder of the world when my urban jungle of Central London gets too much. Lockdown reinforced what a treat it is to have Regents Park at my doorstep, but I do find much calm and helpful solitude there."

**ALBERTO ROSMINI**  
CO-FOUNDER, BAKER-IN-CHIEF  
SIGNORELLI

I find peace through sport and work I'd say; my runs in the marshes, my swims in the Olympic pool, my detailed night bakes, my late night stretching when I come back home from work...physical activity and manual work brings a lot of peace and rest to my mind, makes things live! My family tree brings a lot of stability too that is a good foundation for my peace. Cooking makes me very happy, my mind goes very silent.

**GERALDINE DOHOGNE**  
FOUNDER  
GERALDINE DOHOGNE

Silent places such as churches and cathedrals – the height and sense of the cold, grandeur, makes you think and admire the place and the construction details. Places that reflect someone's life – a true vision, a true sense of place and a richness of details, such as John Soane's house. Nature, for rewinding the brain and getting a new breath of creativity. Places that are not overcrowded and just leave you the space you need for yourself in height and depth – typical moments that make you feel nearly alone in a big world, these are moments to recharge your batteries.

# MEANING MAKING MACHINES

"There's no use arguing that modern society isn't a kind of paradise. The vast majority of us don't, personally, have to grow or kill our own food, build our own dwellings or defend ourselves from wild animals and enemies. In one day we can travel a thousand miles by pushing our foot down on a gas pedal or around the world by booking a seat on an airplane. When we are in pain we have narcotics that dull it out of existence, and when we are depressed we have pills that change the chemistry of our brains. We understand an enormous amount about the universe, from subatomic particles to our own bodies to galaxy clusters, and we use that knowledge to make life even better and easier for ourselves. The poorest people in modern society enjoy a level of physical comfort that was unimaginable a thousand years ago, and the wealthiest people literally live the way gods were imagined to have.

And yet."

# SU| GENER|S

with Jeff Weeks, **geometrician**

From working with cosmologists to try to ascertain the shape of the universe, to getting students to inhabit worlds that are beyond the scale of the human eye, reality means something quite different to Weeks. There are several points of fascination with Jeff; from his hugely successful academic tome, 'The Shape of Space', which remains relevant today; his engaging, mind-expanding expositions to students; to a career built on fascinating projects of 'beauty' instead of walking a linear, traditional path. Jeff very kindly took time out to speak to us about his experiences in building singularity into the shape of his own life.

From teaching students directly, to writing a much valued academic book, *The Shape of Space*, education is clearly a passion, including reaching the general public. Where does this deep desire to educate come from?

Mostly from my experiences as a learner. A lot of the mathematics that I read was far more difficult than it needed to be. That was my inspiration to try to find simpler, more accessible ways to explain simple—and very beautiful—ideas. In effect, I tried to write the book my "past self" wanted to read, and give the lectures that my "past self" wanted to hear.

What is[=> are] your criteria when deciding which project to pursue next?

1. The beauty of the idea — the "ow wow!" factor.
2. How many people the project might reach.
3. How easy it will be to bring the project to completion.

Regarding that third item, everything turns out to be more difficult than expected. A project that seems easy at the outset always turns out to be of at least moderate difficulty. And a project that seems obviously difficult at the outset will probably prove to be impossible in practice.

Over the coming years, my main project will be to realize various geometrical and topological ideas in AR/VR. The potential is huge. VR connects not only with our conscious minds, but also completely hijacks players' subconscious understanding of their environment, letting them experience curved spaces directly, for example. On the other hand, for mathematical ideas that can be realized in Euclidean space, I prefer AR, because it makes it easier to keep players in touch with the people around them.

I should add that I'm unenthusiastic about the idea of a metaverse. I much prefer to live my life mostly in the real physical universe, in the proximity of other real physical human beings. That said, the potential of AR/VR for teaching and learning geometrical ideas is irresistible.

Having spoken to thousands of students, what have you found are the core ingredients that make an effective, and inspiring, educator?

Whether it's a lecture or a piece of software for home use, I think the essential ingredients for success are:

1. it has to be fun,
2. it has to teach something of real substance.

# SU| GENERALS

continued

If a lecture or app isn't fun, people won't pay attention to the lecture or use the app. On the other hand, if it's a lot of fun but doesn't teach anything of value, people will know they've been cheated.

You talk of a favourite unsuccessful project, collaborating with cosmologists to deduce the topology of the universe from the cosmic microwave background'. Can you tell us what this means, to have a 'favourite unsuccessful project'?

It was a project that needed to be done. It's OK that humanity still doesn't know the topology of our universe, but not to have even looked, when the raw data was available, would have been a crime.

How have you gone about creating a unique career path that is independent, project based with such freedom?

More by good luck than by design. I resigned my teaching position when my son was born, to be an at-home dad. When he started going half-days to nursery school at age 3, and then to regular school at age 5, I got some part-time contracts developing geometry software. As our son got older, those evolved into full-time contracts.

What is your latest view on the shape of the universe today?

Nobody knows. If the universe is finite, it's probably bigger than the part we see within our "horizon sphere", maybe a \*lot\* bigger. At least one research group is still working to detect a finite universe even on that scale, but it's a long shot.

What big question about the cosmos would you like answered?

The relationship between our conscious minds (and other animals' conscious minds) and physical matter.

Which book have you reread most often, and why?

I don't read a lot of books. Professionally, it's all articles and preprints. Recreationally, I end up devoting my free time to outdoor activities (cycling, hiking, cross-country skiing) and learning languages.

What do the words abundance, and scarcity, mean to you?

Abundance means having enough of something: food, shelter, satisfying work.

Scarcity means lacking some ingredient for a happy life.

Once one has enough of something, I see no point in trying to have even more. To the contrary, in practice it seems that people who crave more and more of something — money, fame, or whatever — are less happy than those who content themselves with just enough.

# A MOST SAGACIOUS ANIMAL

Below: curated, alternative sources of education, fellowships, institutions and orthogonal learnings methods, that accelerate innovation, minus the Fordism.

## THIEL FELLOWSHIP | [INFO](#)

\$100,000 of funding, a vision or idea at play or in the works, intensive mentoring and accelerated resource allocation. One condition: drop out of college / university.

## MARGINAL REVOLUTION UNIVERSITY | [INFO](#)

From economists Tyler Cowen and Alex Tabarrock, well...a series of courses on economics. But that's just the beginning. For now let's sum it up as smart people doing notable work.

## WONDRIUM | [INFO](#)

Bringing a new meaning to a 'smart' tv, an intellectual buffet with over 700 teachers sharing their knowledge, served up as an app too, that may in time come in ahead of your Netflix one.

## ROGUE FILM SCHOOL | [INFO](#)

Werner Herzog's inner world could furnish the world over several millennia. For now he's working in the 21st century, bringing grizzlies and meteorites into our collective, catastrophic consciousness. The school is on long-standing pause but the reading and watching list is a beginning and end in itself (#10, #11).

## THE SIX

From storied colleges and universities, to elementary building blocks, these are some of the leading providers of MOOC (mass open online courses).

[Udemy](#), [edX](#), [Code Academy](#), [Khan Academy](#), [Coursera](#), [Udacity](#).

## LEARNING HOW TO LEARN | [INFO](#)

'Learning How to Learn: Powerful Mental Tools to Help you Master Tough Subjects', the fundamentals of how the brain learns, with immediate actionable tips, for any age.

## CENTURY | [INFO](#)

An AI-enabled online home learning platform that tailors study materials to the needs of every child; one teacher, 30 students, is no longer an option for the future.

## KIDE SCIENCE | [INFO](#)

The home is the original laboratory for young minds, according to this Finnish start-up which is bringing the art of STEM to the imaginations of 3-8yr olds the world over.

## CALVERTS

We spoke with Arthur Stitt of [Calverts](#), a design and print coop based in East London, to learn about alternative ways to organise, and run, a business, that creates value and connectedness for employees and partners alike.

# OF CAPITAL AND MEANING

Calverts operates as a coop, can you describe in your own words what this means?

In essence, we're an organised collective of workers. We have no external owners, so all trading surpluses are re-invested to develop the coop, improve wages and conditions, or carry out community benefit projects.

All new workers are invited to become members after an initial probationary period. It's not compulsory to join but I have not known anyone not to. Everyone earns the same, company finances are open, and as well as job-specific roles we all must ensure the smooth running of the operation. This means learning new skills and getting involved in other areas of the business.

How did this organisational structure come to be?

Calverts was set up as a common ownership co-operative in 1977 by production staff from the design and printing arm of IRAT (formerly the Arts Lab), after an industrial dispute which ended in redundancy for all the workers.

The co-op started trading with working capital lent by the founder members, two A4 Gestetner presses and an IBM golfball typesetting machine. Although all of the original members are now retired, the business is held in trust and the employees run the business collectively through democratic consensus decision-making.

Calverts was named after Giles and Elizabeth Calvert, the radical 17th-century publishers and printers. It has a long history of working with movements of social change, such as CND, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and Greenpeace.

What is the driving philosophy of Calverts as a business?

Internally - democratic self-management of our work, decent jobs and self-development.  
Externally - to do work which is both creative in execution and socially progressive in its aims.

How does decision-making regarding the daily, and long term growth, goals, of the company operate in a coop?

Short term goals and decisions are decided collectively at our weekly meeting, longer term at our monthly meetings and yearly at our annual general meeting.

What does being in a coop mean to you?

It's incredibly rewarding to work somewhere where you can feel equal to all colleagues yet also completely in control of one's own job. I love the openness, transparency, flexibility and camaraderie.

What advice can you offer someone who is considering setting up their business as a coop?

Get in touch with your local Co-operative Development Agency if you have one. If not, contact [Co-operatives UK](#)

ON BUILDING WONDER *For grown ups, and cues for grown ups with young minds in their purview*

A SOLUTIONIST MINDSCAPE

LINKS

READ: **The Pleasure of Finding Things Out: The Best Short Works of Richard P. Feynman;** Richard P. Feynman

WATCH: **Pixels in Progress** a real time simulation of fungi growth. One phrase: other-worldly; Adam Heslop

DO: **Geometry Games** from geometrician Jeff Weeks, author of *The Shape of Space* and general topographical wunderkind

CREATE: **Metamorphosis II**; create as M.C. Escher with this virtual online documentary



# FURTHER STIMULI

ON REFRAMING *New ways to see old things, new ways to understand old things*

LINKS

READ: **1491** Atlantic article; '...the Amazon rain forest may be largely a human artifact'; Charles C. Mann

BLOG: **Wait But Why; The Story of Us** Tim Urban sticks his way through the entire human enterprise to date

PAPER: **The Road to Eleusis, Unveiling the Secret of the Mysteries**; why did Greece become the seat of civilisation? By R. Gordon Wasson Albert Hofmann Carl A. P. Ruck

NOTE: **Let's talk about cellular reprogramming**; Dr David Sinclair, co-director of the Paul F. Glenn Center for the Biology of Aging at Harvard Medical School



NEW PARADIGMS *Can someone fill me in?*

WATCH: **Modern Love**, Esther Perel; 'Never have we expected more from our intimate relationships, and never have we crumbled under the weight of so many expectations.'

LISTEN: **The Wonders of Web3 And Much More; from Tim Ferriss**, for those of us feeling somewhat tumbleweed-esque considering meta verses, web3 and bitcoin, some context

LISTEN: **Two Million Years in Two Hours: A Conversation with Yuval Noah Harari**; with Tristan Harris, of The Centre for Humane Technology, discussing dystopias and utopias



CONVERSATIONS *Listening is the new reading, sometimes*

LISTEN: **The Knowledge Podcast** Shane Parish in conversation with Marc Andreessen, co-founder and general partner at the venture-capital firm Andreessen Horowitz

WATCH: **John Danaher: The Path to Mastery in Jiu Jitsu, Grappling, Judo, and MMA**; Lex Fridman in conversation with John Danaher, a philosophy PhD turned BJJ sensei.

LISTEN: **Authority and the Individual**, Bertrand Russell, Reith Lectures 1948; a philosopher, mathematician, and social reformer, Russell goes deep and broad.



PARALLEL LIVES *It's a big world out there*

READ: **The Interpreter**; inside the world of the Pirahã who have 'no numbers, no fixed color terms, no perfect tense, no deep memory, no tradition of art or drawing.'

WATCH: **My Name is Salt**, directed by Farida Pacha; follow one family of thousands that every year, uproots itself to a saline desert, for eight months, to harvest salt.

OBSERVE: **The waggle dance**; a complex communication of movement between bees, to help locate and source nectar, expressing angles, distance and plenitude.



## LINKS

WEBSITE: **EXAMINE** nutrition and supplemental information, delivered independently, without cost

TOOLKIT: **Stanford SPARQ tools**, devised by Dr. Alia Crum, Director of the Stanford Mind & Body Lab, a holistic way to reframe stress to improve quality of life

IG: **Huberman Lab**, from neuroscientist Dr Andrew Huberman, a source of objective, highly researched, science backed information, and immediately actionable tools

STORY: **Hardcore History**, by Dan Carlin; the **Lex Fridman Podcast**; **The Dropout**; some listening for long, meandering walks, HIIT workouts and everything in between



# AND A TOUCH MORE

## CHANGING STATES

Ways to get the most out of our devices, without them getting the most out of us

## LINKS

APP **Freedom** Desirous to switch out the distractions of your device, whilst still getting maximal use? Freedom has some ideas to help

APP: **Reveri** A Stanford psychiatrist and behavioural scientist partners with technologists to unlock the benefits of self-hypnosis on sleep, stress, addiction and pain

LISTEN: **Song of the Antarctic Weddell Seals**; from the McMurdo Oceanographic Observatory, listen to seals chit-chat for two hours; and no, there is no synthesiser

UN-DO: **10 minute yoga nidra practice**; a way to access deep relaxation, at any moment in the day, but it is restful, so choose your timing wisely. Child-friendly



## GUIDANCE

Some, well, guides

GREEN: **A Guide to Greening your School**; from the RHS, can also be applied to other hubs of brick and concrete in need for a bit of GLC (green, loving, care)

ICE: **A Visitor's Key to Iceland**; 'Here a collapsing bridge allowed a murderer to escape - and proved his innocence! In this hot spring a famous outlaw boiled his meat.'

MEDIA: **Samaritans' Media Guidelines**; how to maintain the highest, and most responsible standards in the sharing of sensitive, and distressing information on suicide. Words matter



## GIVING

Organisations for the betterment of others

DATA: **Giving What We Can**; one framework in approaching charity donations

PENS: **Donors Choose**; donors send supplies = teachers accept = children benefit

BLOOD: **Give Blood, NHS**; not for all, but in case it's for you



## ADVISED

Learning from another, is akin to skipping to the last page of a book, with all of the knowledge intact

WATCH: **Virgil Abloh**; in this Q&A with the 2020 winners of the LVMH Prize, Abloh is candid, expansive and utterly practical in his advice to future creators of all types

READ: **On Children**, Kahlil Gibran; parenting, or any kind of guardianship is a high stakes scenario; some words to reframe, and perhaps ease, the burden of responsibility

OBSERVE: **The waggle dance**; a complex communication of movement between bees, to help locate and source nectar, expressing angles, distance and plenitude



# LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

A SOLUTIONIST MINDSCAPE

"Who, though they should adduce no reason, would convince me with their authority alone." — Cicero



Write to us.

Share with us what made sense, what didn't.

Tell us something we could have done better, to make this better, for more individuals.

Tell us ways in which something featured here had an impact on your individual day-to-day, or 50-year view, of life?

What would you like us to make everyone's business in the next edition?

Send in your thank you, to be featured, if you like.

Any other thoughts. Helpful ones, hopefully.

ASK@PERSELONDON

# THE END OF THIS EDITION

we so hope there was something  
of service,  
in here,  
for you.

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THANK YOU

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Everyone's Business is a for-all endeavour  
Hardeep of [perse.london](https://perse.london) oversees this endeavour  
To receive the next Edition directly into your inbox, connect [here](#)

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