



01

- [1] You can be perfect, but you need to change the way you think about it.
- [2] Perfection actually is possible if you delete "perfect" and insert "complete."
- [3] Imagine a basketball player taking a fifteen-foot shot and the ball going through the net, never touching the rim.
- [4] Someone is likely to exclaim, "That was a perfect shot!"
- [5] And it was perfect.
- [6] The scoreboard reflects an increase of two points.
- [7] Now again imagine that same player a few minutes later taking another fifteen-foot shot.
- [8] But this time the ball hits one side of the rim, rolls around and stands still for half a second, and it finally falls through the net.
- [9] An announcer might comment on what an ugly shot that was, and she would be right.
- [10] But basketball games are not won on such criteria as pretty or ugly.
- [11] In this instance the ball went through the net and the scoreboard increased by two points.
- [12] In that sense, the second shot was as perfect as the first.



02

[1] Psychologists Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter, and sociologist Kurt Back began to wonder how friendships form.

[2] Why do some strangers build lasting friendships, while others struggle to get past basic platitudes?

[3] Some experts explained that friendship formation could be traced to infancy, where children acquired the values, beliefs, and attitudes that would bind or separate them later in life.

[4] But Festinger, Schachter, and Back pursued a different theory.

[5] The researchers believed that physical space was the key to friendship formation; that "friendships are likely to develop on the basis of brief and passive contacts made going to and from home or walking about the neighborhood."

[6] In their view, it wasn't so much that people with similar attitudes became friends, but rather that people who passed each other during the day tended to become friends and so came to adopt similar attitudes over time.



03

[1] At the pharmaceutical giant Merck, CEO Kenneth Frazier decided to motivate his executives to take a more active role in leading innovation and change.

[2] He asked them to do something radical: generate ideas that would put Merck out of business.

[3] For the next two hours, the executives worked in groups, pretending to be one of Merck's top competitors.

[4] Energy soared as they developed ideas for drugs that would crush theirs and key markets they had missed.

[5] Then, their challenge was to reverse their roles and figure out how to defend against these threats.

[6] This "kill the company" exercise is powerful because it reframes a gain-framed activity in terms of losses.

[7] When deliberating about innovation opportunities, the leaders weren't inclined to take risks.

[8] When they considered how their competitors could put them out of business, they realized that it was a risk not to innovate.

[9] The urgency of innovation was apparent.



04

[1] Brain research provides a framework for understanding how the brain processes and internalizes athletic skills.

[2] In practicing a complex movement such as a golf swing, we experiment with different grips, positions and swing movements, analyzing each in terms of the results it yields.

[3] This is a conscious, left-brain process.

[4] Once we identify those elements of the swing that produce the desired results, we rehearse them over and over again in an attempt to record them permanently in "muscle memory."

[5] In this way, we internalize the swing as a kinesthetic feeling that we trust to recreate the desired swing on demand.

[6] This internalization transfers the swing from a consciously controlled left-brain function to a more intuitive or automatic right-brain function.

[7] This description, despite being an oversimplification of the actual processes involved, serves as a model for the interaction between conscious and unconscious actions in the brain, as it learns to perfect an athletic skill.



05

- [1] You are in a train, standing at a station next to another train.
- [2] Suddenly you seem to start moving.
- [3] But then you realize that you aren't actually moving at all.
- [4] It is the second train that is moving in the opposite direction.
- [5] The illusion of relative movement works the other way, too.
- [6] You think the other train has moved, only to discover that it is your own train that is moving.
- [7] It can be hard to tell the difference between apparent movement and real movement.
- [8] It's easy if your train starts with a jolt, of course, but not if your train moves very smoothly.
- [9] When your train overtakes a slightly slower train, you can sometimes fool yourself into thinking your train is still and the other train is moving slowly backwards.



06

[1] Our culture is biased toward the fine arts – those creative products that have no function other than pleasure.

[2] Craft objects are less worthy; because they serve an everyday function, they're not purely creative.

[3] But this division is culturally and historically relative.

[4] Most contemporary high art began as some sort of craft.

[5] The composition and performance of what we now call "classical music" began as a form of craft music satisfying required functions in the Catholic mass, or the specific entertainment needs of royal patrons.

[6] For example, chamber music really was designed to be performed in chambers – small intimate rooms in wealthy homes – often as background music.

[7] The dances composed by famous composers from Bach to Chopin originally did indeed accompany dancing.

[8] But today, with the contexts and functions they were composed for gone, we listen to these works as fine art.