



01

[1] For creatures like us, evolution smiled upon those with a strong need to belong.

[2] Survival and reproduction are the criteria of success by natural selection, and forming relationships with other people can be useful for both survival and reproduction.

[3] Groups can share resources, care for sick members, scare off predators, fight together against enemies, divide tasks so as to improve efficiency, and contribute to survival in many other ways.

[4] In particular, if an individual and a group want the same resource, the group will generally prevail, so competition for resources would especially favor a need to belong.

[5] Belongingness will likewise promote reproduction, such as by bringing potential mates into contact with each other, and in particular by keeping parents together to care for their children, who are much more likely to survive if they have more than one caregiver.



02

[1] We worry that the robots are taking our jobs, but just as common a problem is that the robots are taking our judgment.

[2] In the large warehouses so common behind the scenes of today's economy, human 'pickers' hurry around grabbing products off shelves and moving them to where they can be packed and dispatched.

[3] In their ears are headpieces: the voice of 'Jennifer', a piece of software, tells them where to go and what to do, controlling the smallest details of their movements.

[4] Jennifer breaks down instructions into tiny chunks, to minimise error and maximise productivity — for example, rather than picking eighteen copies of a book off a shelf, the human worker would be politely instructed to pick five.

[5] Then another five.

[6] Then yet another five.

[7] Then another three.

[8] Working in such conditions reduces people to machines made of flesh.

[9] Rather than asking us to think or adapt, the Jennifer unit takes over the thought process and treats workers as an inexpensive source of some visual processing and a pair of opposable thumbs.



03

[1] The demand for freshness can have hidden environmental costs.

[2] While freshness is now being used as a term in food marketing as part of a return to nature, the demand for year-round supplies of fresh produce such as soft fruit and exotic vegetables has led to the widespread use of hot houses in cold climates and increasing reliance on total quality control — management by temperature control, use of pesticides and computer/satellite-based logistics.

[3] The demand for freshness has also contributed to concerns about food wastage.

[4] Use of 'best before', 'sell by' and 'eat by' labels has legally allowed institutional waste.

[5] Campaigners have exposed the scandal of over-production and waste.

[6] Tristram Stuart, one of the global band of anti-waste campaigners, argues that, with freshly made sandwiches, over-ordering is standard practice across the retail sector to avoid the appearance of empty shelf space, leading to high volumes of waste when supply regularly exceeds demand.



04

[1] We often associate the concept of temperature with how hot or cold an object feels when we touch it.

[2] In this way, our senses provide us with a qualitative indication of temperature.

[3] Our senses, however, are unreliable and often mislead us.

[4] For example, if you stand in bare feet with one foot on carpet and the other on a tile floor, the tile feels colder than the carpet even though both are at the same temperature.

[5] The two objects feel different because tile transfers energy by heat at a higher rate than carpet does.

[6] Your skin "measures" the rate of energy transfer by heat rather than the actual temperature.

[7] What we need is a reliable and reproducible method for measuring the relative hotness or coldness of objects rather than the rate of energy transfer.

[8] Scientists have developed a variety of thermometers for making such quantitative measurements.



05

[1] My colleagues and I ran an experiment testing two different messages meant to convince thousands of resistant alumni to make a donation.

[2] One message emphasized the opportunity to do good: donating would benefit students, faculty, and staff.

[3] The other emphasized the opportunity to feel good: donors would enjoy the warm glow of giving.

[4] The two messages were equally effective: in both cases, 6.5 percent of the unwilling alumni ended up donating.

[5] Then we combined them, because two reasons are better than one.

[6] Except they weren't.

[7] When we put the two reasons together, the giving rate dropped below 3 percent.

[8] Each reason alone was more than twice as effective as the two combined.

[9] The audience was already skeptical.

[10] When we gave them different kinds of reasons to donate, we triggered their awareness that someone was trying to persuade them — and they shielded themselves against it.



06

[1] It is widely believed that certain herbs somehow magically improve the work of certain organs, and "cure" specific diseases as a result.

[2] Such statements are unscientific and groundless.

[3] Sometimes herbs appear to work, since they tend to increase your blood circulation in an aggressive attempt by your body to eliminate them from your system.

[4] That can create a temporary feeling of a high, which makes it seem as if your health condition has improved.

[5] Also, herbs can have a placebo effect, just like any other method, thus helping you feel better.

[6] Whatever the case, it is your body that has the intelligence to regain health, and not the herbs.

[7] How can herbs have the intelligence needed to direct your body into getting healthier?

[8] That is impossible.

[9] Try to imagine how herbs might come into your body and intelligently fix your problems.

[10] If you try to do that, you will see how impossible it seems.

[11] Otherwise, it would mean that herbs are more intelligent than the human body, which is truly hard to believe.