



01

[1] If creators knew when they were on their way to fashioning a masterpiece, their work would progress only forward: they would halt their idea-generation efforts as they struck gold.

[2] But in fact, they backtrack, returning to versions that they had earlier discarded as inadequate.

[3] In Beethoven's most celebrated work, the Fifth Symphony, he scrapped the conclusion of the first movement because it felt too short, only to come back to it later.

[4] Had Beethoven been able to distinguish an extraordinary from an ordinary work, he would have accepted his composition immediately as a hit.

[5] When Picasso was painting his famous Guernica in protest of fascism, he produced 79 different drawings.

[6] Many of the images in the painting were based on his early sketches, not the later variations.

[7] If Picasso could judge his creations as he produced them, he would get consistently "warmer" and use the later drawings.

[8] But in reality, it was just as common that he got "colder."



02

- [1] Firms in almost every industry tend to be clustered.
- [2] Suppose you threw darts at random on a map of the United States.
- [3] You'd find the holes left by the darts to be more or less evenly distributed across the map.
- [4] But the real map of any given industry looks nothing like that; it looks more as if someone had thrown all the darts in the same place.
- [5] This is probably in part because of reputation; buyers may be suspicious of a software firm in the middle of the cornfields.
- [6] It would also be hard to recruit workers if every time you needed a new employee you had to persuade someone to move across the country, rather than just poach one from your neighbor.
- [7] There are also regulatory reasons: zoning laws often try to concentrate dirty industries in one place and restaurants and bars in another.
- [8] Finally, people in the same industry often have similar preferences (computer engineers like coffee, financiers show off with expensive bottles of wine).
- [9] Concentration makes it easier to provide the amenities they like.



03

[1] When we are emotionally charged, we often use anger to hide our more primary and deeper emotions, such as sadness and fear, which doesn't allow for true resolution to occur.

[2] Separating yourself from an emotionally upsetting situation gives you the space you need to better understand what you are truly feeling so you can more clearly articulate your emotions in a logical and less emotional way.

[3] A timeout also helps spare innocent bystanders.

[4] When confronted with situations that don't allow us to deal with our emotions or that cause us to suppress them, we may transfer those feelings to other people or situations at a later point.

[5] For instance, if you had a bad day at work, you may suppress your feelings at the office, only to find that you release them by getting into a fight with your kids or spouse when you get home later that evening.

[6] Clearly, your anger didn't originate at home, but you released it there.

[7] When you take the appropriate time to digest and analyze your feelings, you can mitigate hurting or upsetting other people who have nothing to do with the situation.



04

- [1] In the West, an individual composer writes the music long before it is performed.
- [2] The patterns and melodies we hear are pre-planned and intended.
- [3] Some African tribal music, however, results from collaboration by the players on the spur of the moment.
- [4] The patterns heard, whether they are the silences when all players rest on a beat or the accented beats when all play together, are not planned but serendipitous.
- [5] When an overall silence appears on beats 4 and 13, it is not because each musician is thinking, "On beats 4 and 13, I will rest."
- [6] Rather, it occurs randomly as the patterns of all the players converge upon a simultaneous rest.
- [7] The musicians are probably as surprised as their listeners to hear the silences at beats 4 and 13.
- [8] Surely that surprise is one of the joys tribal musicians experience in making their music.



05

[1] Some researchers at Sheffield University recruited 129 hobbyists to look at how the time spent on their hobbies shaped their work life.

[2] To begin with, the team measured the seriousness of each participant's hobby, asking them to rate their agreement with statements like "I regularly train for this activity," and also assessed how similar the demands of their job and hobby were.

[3] Then, each month for seven months, participants recorded how many hours they had dedicated to their activity, and completed a scale measuring their belief in their ability to effectively do their job, or their "self-efficacy."

[4] The researchers found that when participants spent longer than normal doing their leisure activity, their belief in their ability to perform their job increased.

[5] But this was only the case when they had a serious hobby that was dissimilar to their job.

[6] When their hobby was both serious and similar to their job, then spending more time on it actually decreased their self-efficacy.



06

[1] Spine-tingling ghost stories are fun to tell if they are really scary, and even more so if you claim that they are true.

[2] People get a thrill from passing on those stories.

[3] The same applies to miracle stories.

[4] If a rumor of a miracle gets written down in a book, the rumor becomes hard to challenge, especially if the book is ancient.

[5] If a rumor is old enough, it starts to be called a "tradition" instead, and then people believe it all the more.

[6] This is rather odd because you might think they would realize that older rumors have had more time to get distorted than younger rumors that are close in time to the alleged events themselves.

[7] Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson lived too recently for traditions to have grown up, so not many people believe stories like "Elvis seen on Mars."