



01

[1] The often-used phrase "pay attention" is insightful:

[2] you dispose of a limited budget of attention that you can allocate to activities, and if you try to go beyond your budget, you will fail.

[3] It is the mark of effortful activities that they interfere with each other, which is why it is difficult or impossible to conduct several at once.

[4] You could not compute the product of 17×24 while making a left turn into dense traffic, and you certainly should not try.

[5] You can do several things at once, but only if they are easy and undemanding.

[6] You are probably safe carrying on a conversation with a passenger while driving on an empty highway, and many parents have discovered, perhaps with some guilt, that they can read a story to a child while thinking of something else.



02

[1] The acceleration of human migration toward the shores is a contemporary phenomenon, but the knowledge and understanding of the potential risks regarding coastal living are not.

[2] Indeed, even at a time when human-induced greenhouse-gas emissions were not exponentially altering the climate, warming the oceans, and leading to rising seas, our ancestors knew how to better listen to and respect the many movements and warnings of the seas, thus settling farther inland.

[3] For instance, along Japan's coast, hundreds of so-called tsunami stones, some more than six centuries old, were put in place to warn people not to build homes below a certain point.

[4] Over the world, moon and tides, winds, rains and hurricanes were naturally guiding humans' settlement choice.



03

[1] We like to make a show of how much our decisions are based on rational considerations, but the truth is that we are largely governed by our emotions, which continually influence our perceptions.

[2] What this means is that the people around you, constantly under the pull of their emotions, change their ideas by the day or by the hour, depending on their mood.

[3] You must never assume that what people say or do in a particular moment is a statement of their permanent desires.

[4] Yesterday they were in love with your idea; today they seem cold.

[5] This will confuse you and if you are not careful, you will waste valuable mental space trying to figure out their real feelings, their mood of the moment, and their fleeting motivations.

[6] It is best to cultivate both distance and a degree of detachment from their shifting emotions so that you are not caught up in the process.



04

[1] When we set a plan, we are very excited about it.

[2] In this stage, we can even imagine ourselves victoriously dancing on the top of that mountain, feeling successful and ultimately happy.

[3] However, when you start putting the plan into practice to achieve your goal, the happiness, excitement, and a lot of fuel suddenly disappear.

[4] That is because the road to your goal, the implementation of the plan is not as appealing as the plan.

[5] You can easily lose motivation when you face the plain reality of the road to success.

[6] The road is paved with grey stones and offers less intense emotions than those imagined at the beginning.

[7] When you reach the end and look back at the road, however, you'll realize how much more valuable, colorful, and meaningful it was than you anticipated it to be in the moment.



05

[1] If you want to modify people's behavior, is it better to highlight the benefits of changing or the costs of not changing?

[2] According to Peter Salovey, one of the originators of the concept of emotional intelligence, it depends on whether they perceive the new behavior as safe or risky.

[3] If they think the behavior is safe, we should emphasize all the good things that will happen if they do it — they'll want to act immediately to obtain those certain gains.

[4] But when people believe a behavior is risky, that approach doesn't work.

[5] They're already comfortable with the status quo, so the benefits of change aren't attractive, and the stop system kicks in.

[6] Instead, we need to destabilize the status quo and emphasize the bad things that will happen if they don't change.

[7] Taking a risk is more appealing when they're faced with a guaranteed loss if they don't.

[8] The prospect of a certain loss brings the go system online.



06

[1] Everyone knows a young person who is impressively "street smart" but does poorly in school.

[2] We think it is a waste that one who is so intelligent about so many things in life seems unable to apply that intelligence to academic work.

[3] What we don't realize is that schools and colleges might be at fault for missing the opportunity to draw such street smarts and guide them toward good academic work.

[4] Nor do we consider one of the major reasons why schools and colleges overlook the intellectual potential of street smarts: the fact that we associate those street smarts with anti-intellectual concerns.

[5] We associate the educated life, the life of the mind, too narrowly with subjects and texts that we consider inherently weighty and academic.