01
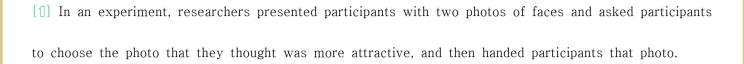
[1] I believe the second decade of this new century is already very different.

[2] There are, of course, still millions of people who equate success with money and power — who are determined to never get off that treadmill despite the cost in terms of their well-being, relationships, and happiness.

[3] There are still millions desperately looking for the next promotion, the next million-dollar payday that they believe will satisfy their longing to feel better about themselves, or silence their dissatisfaction.

[4] But both in the West and in emerging economies, there are more people every day who recognize that these are all dead ends — that they are chasing a broken dream.

[5] That we cannot find the answer in our current definition of success alone because — as Gertrude Stein once said of Oakland — "There is no there there."

02

[1] In an experiment, researchers presented participants with two photos of faces and asked participants to choose the photo that they thought was more attractive, and then handed participants that photo.

[2] Using a clever trick inspired by stage magic, when participants received the photo, it had been switched to the photo not chosen by the participant — the less attractive photo.

[3] Remarkably, most participants accepted this photo as their own choice and then proceeded to give arguments for why they had chosen that face in the first place.

[4] This revealed a striking mismatch between our choices and our ability to rationalize outcomes.

[5] This same finding has since been observed in various domains including taste for jam and financial decisions.

03

[1] All improvement in your life begins with an improvement in your mental pictures.

[2] If you talk to unhappy people and ask them what they think about most of the time, you will find that almost without fail, they think about their problems, their bills, their negative relationships, and all the difficulties in their lives.

[3] But when you talk to successful, happy people, you find that they think and talk most of the time about the things that they want to be, do, and have.

[4] They think and talk about the specific action steps they can take to get them.

[5] They dwell continually on vivid, exciting pictures of what their goals will look like when they are realized, and what their dreams will look like when they come true.

04

[1] To be successful, you need to understand the vital difference between believing you will succeed, and believing you will succeed easily.

[2] Put another way, it's the difference between being a realistic optimist, and an unrealistic optimist.

[3] Realistic optimists believe they will succeed, but also believe they have to make success happen — through things like careful planning and choosing the right strategies.

[4] They recognize the need for giving serious thought to how they will deal with obstacles.

[5] This preparation only increases their confidence in their own ability to get things done.

[6] Unrealistic optimists, on the other hand, believe that success will happen to them — that the universe will reward them for all their positive thinking, or that somehow they will be transformed overnight into the kind of person for whom obstacles don't exist anymore.

05

[1] In a study, psychologist Laurence Steinberg of Temple University and his coauthor, psychologist Margo Gardner divided 306 people into three age groups: young adolescents, with a mean age of 14; older adolescents, with a mean age of 19; and adults, aged 24 and older.

[2] Subjects played a computerized driving game in which the player must avoid crashing into a wall that appears, without warning, on the roadway.

[3] Steinberg and Gardner randomly assigned some participants to play alone or with two same-age peers looking on.

[4] Older adolescents scored about 50 percent higher on an index of risky driving when their peers were in the room — and the driving of early adolescents was fully twice as reckless when other young teens were around.

[5] In contrast, adults behaved in similar ways regardless of whether they were on their own or observed by others.

06

[1] Technological development often forces change, and change is uncomfortable.

[2] This is one of the main reasons why technology is often resisted and why some perceive it as a threat.

[3] It is important to understand our natural hate of being uncomfortable when we consider the impact of technology on our lives.

[4] As a matter of fact, most of us prefer the path of least resistance.

[5] This tendency means that the true potential of new technologies may remain unrealized because, for many, starting something new is just too much of a struggle.

[6] Even our ideas about how new technology can enhance our lives may be limited by this natural desire for comfort.