01

[1] Before the modern scientific era, creativity was attributed to a superhuman force; all novel ideas originated with the gods.

[2] After all, how could a person create something that did not exist before the divine act of creation?

[3] In fact, the Latin meaning of the verb "inspire" is "to breathe into," reflecting the belief that creative inspiration was similar to the moment in creation when God first breathed life into man.

[4] Plato argued that the poet was possessed by divine inspiration, and Plotin wrote that art could only be beautiful if it descended from God.

[5] The artist's job was not to imitate nature but rather to reveal the sacred and transcendent qualities of nature.

[6] Art could only be a pale imitation of the perfection of the world of ideas.

[7] Greek artists did not blindly imitate what they saw in reality; instead they tried to represent the pure, true forms underlying reality, resulting in a sort of compromise between abstraction and accuracy.

02

[1] Our brains have evolved to remember unexpected events because basic survival depends on the ability to perceive causes and predict effects.

[2] If the brain predicts one event and experiences another, the unusualness will be especially interesting and will be encoded accordingly.

[3] Neurologist and classroom teacher Judith Willis has claimed that surprise in the classroom is one of the most effective ways of teaching with brain stimulation in mind.

[4] If students are exposed to new experiences via demonstrations or through the unexpected enthusiasm of their teachers or peers, they will be much more likely to connect with the information that follows.

[5] Willis has written that encouraging active discovery in the classroom allows students to interact with new information, moving it beyond working memory to be processed in the frontal lobe, which is devoted to advanced cognitive functioning.

[6] Preference for novelty sets us up for learning by directing attention, providing stimulation to developing perceptual systems, and feeding curious and exploratory behavior.

03

[1] Psychological research has shown that people naturally divide up cognitive labor, often without thinking about it.

[2] Imagine you're cooking up a special dinner with a friend.

[3] You're a great cook, but your friend is the wine expert, an amateur sommelier.

[4] A neighbor drops by and starts telling you both about the terrific new wines being sold at the liquor store just down the street.

[5] There are many new wines, so there's a lot to remember.

[6] How hard are you going to try to remember what the neighbor has to say about which wines to buy?

[7] Why bother when the information would be better retained by the wine expert sitting next to you?

[8] If your friend wasn't around, you might try harder.

[9] After all, it would be good to know what a good wine would be for the evening's festivities.

[10] But your friend, the wine expert, is likely to remember the information without even trying.

04

[1] Everyone automatically categorizes and generalizes all the time.

[2] Unconsciously.

[3] It is not a question of being prejudiced or enlightened.

[4] Categories are absolutely necessary for us to function.

[5] They give structure to our thoughts.

[6] Imagine if we saw every item and every scenario as truly unique — we would not even have a language to describe the world around us.

[7] But the necessary and useful instinct to generalize can distort our world view.

[8] It can make us mistakenly group together things, or people, or countries that are actually very different.

[9] It can make us assume everything or everyone in one category is similar.

[10] And, maybe, most unfortunate of all, it can make us jump to conclusions about a whole category based on a few, or even just one, unusual example.

05

[1] At the University of Iowa, students were briefly shown numbers that they had to memorize.

[2] Then they were offered the choice of either a fruit salad or a chocolate cake.

[3] When the number the students memorized was seven digits long, 63% of them chose the cake.

[4] When the number they were asked to remember had just two digits, however, 59% opted for the fruit salad.

[5] Our reflective brains know that the fruit salad is better for our health, but our reflexive brains desire that soft, fattening chocolate cake.

[6] If the reflective brain is busy figuring something else out – like trying to remember a seven-digit number – then impulse can easily win.

[7] On the other hand, if we're not thinking too hard about something else (with only a minor distraction like memorizing two digits), then the reflective system can deny the emotional impulse of the reflexive side.

06

[1] While reflecting on the needs of organizations, leaders, and families today, we realize that one of the unique characteristics is inclusivity.

[2] Why?

[3] Because inclusivity supports what everyone ultimately wants from their relationships: collaboration.

[4] Yet the majority of leaders, organizations, and families are still using the language of the old paradigm in which one person —typically the oldest, most educated, and/or wealthiest —makes all the decisions, and their decisions rule with little discussion or inclusion of others, resulting in exclusivity.

[5] Today, this person could be a director, CEO, or other senior leader of an organization.

[6] There is no need for others to present their ideas because they are considered inadequate.

[7] Yet research shows that exclusivity in problem solving, even with a genius, is not as effective as inclusivity, where everyone's ideas are heard and a solution is developed through collaboration.