



Non-violent communication; gestalt cycle of experience; fake smiles, the happiness curve #5

How do we respond to change?

Hi, I'm Alex Staniforth; Artist, Coach, Trader. In these bi-monthly letters I'm exploring how our species makes meaning and takes action in the context of an ever evolving dynamic world. I write this as a place to share and collect thoughts as we explore these topics. I hope this blend of information serves to raise some interesting dialogues.

We have a couple of events coming up in March:

- Meditation Circle on Friday 24th April (19:30-21:00) RSVP via email below
- Exeter University Learning Set on Wednesday 25th March (TBC) For more info and RSVP contact via email below

If you haven't yet visited our website, you can visit [here](#).

A wider perspective



Age and subjective well-being in 132 countries seem to follow a U-shape across all five continents, including countries with both high and low life expectancy at birth. Lowest levels of well-being are estimated at 48.2 yrs/o in developing countries and at 47.2 yrs/o in advanced countries. Through a painstaking process of standardising questionnaire inputs, David G. Blanchflower of Dartmouth College finds that while there are differences between samples with and without controls, the happiness curve is everywhere.



While gold acted more as a store-of-value than a negatively correlated asset (a hedge) during the recent sell-off, things are starting to change. Russ Koesterich of BlackRock's Global Allocation Fund shares his three main reasons why gold could continue to act as a hedge against equity market risk.



The latest CO2 concentration (ppm) measurement (as of March 11th, 2020): 414.49 ppm; March, 2019: 412 ppm, 25 years ago: 360 ppm.

Closer to home

 Nonviolent communication is for the privileged. In a reflective and critical piece, Raffi suggests the social quest for nonviolent communication is flawed by design in that it places people of a variety of backgrounds and social contexts into one homogenous block. In doing so, systemic issues, alternative communication styles and culture specific expressions get overlooked. While one might argue violence is intrinsic in nature - a flux that sees chaos take form and vice versa - reference to violence as a social issue seems to miss a crucial point: it's the honesty of communication, not violence, that determines whether violent action follows. Open, critical minds are needed.

 Generating awareness from sensations. The Gestalt Cycle of experience offers a holistic view of how we form an interest, are drawn to it, invest into it and engage with it. While the 'it' may differ for all of us, be it a goal, a state or frame of mind, we will journey through this cycle until completion. The extent to which we complete fully or not is determined at each stage of the process, with most emphasis being on the sensation and awareness stages.

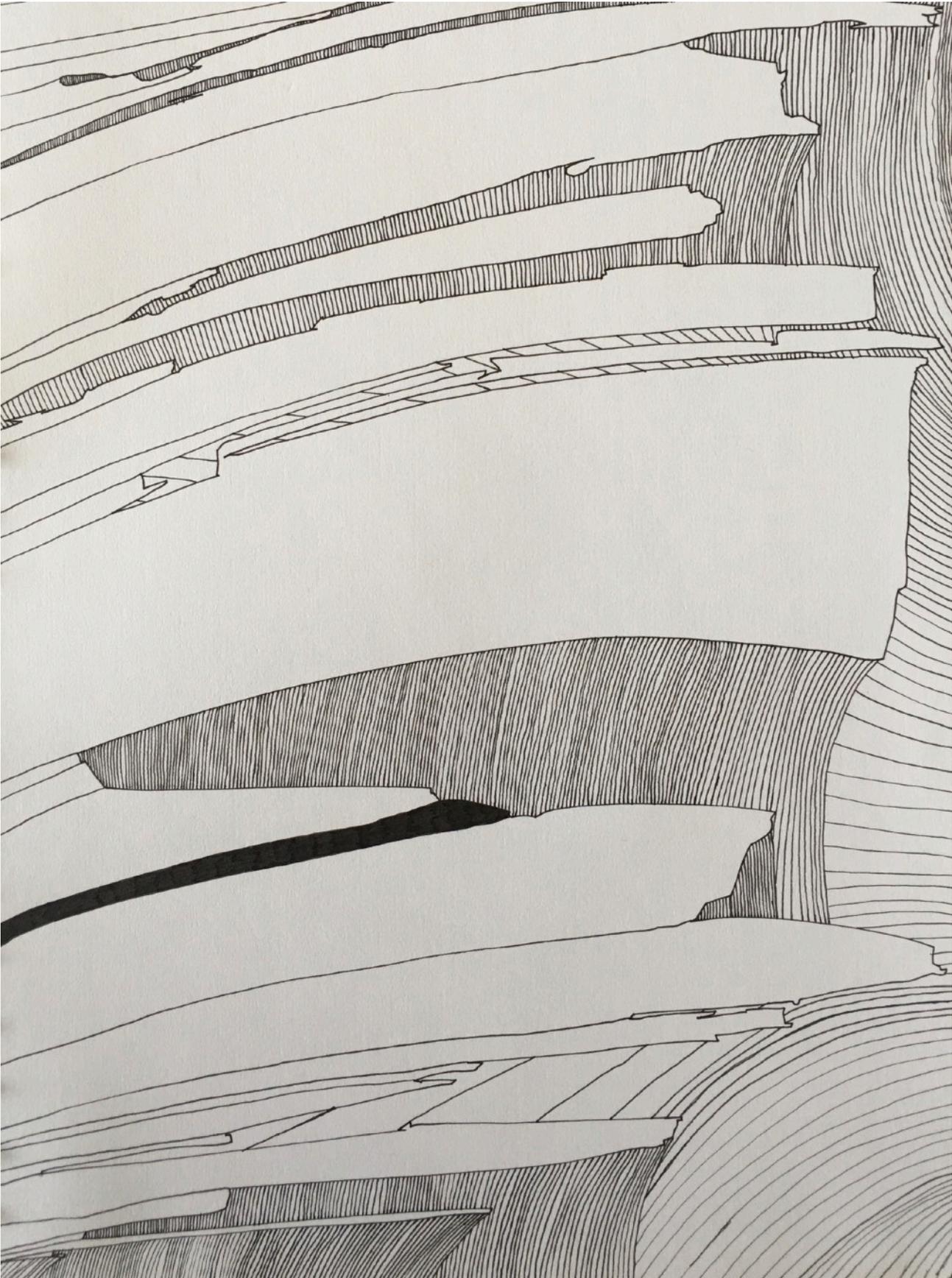
 The awareness stage of the Gestalt Cycle is often times confusing. People can unravel in this process as they detach from past interests and align with new ones. Important for potency at this stage is one's ability to pick out real signals of awareness from distractions. This can not be done by cognition alone - mindfulness meditation is a fab complement.

Notes on compassion

 Brené Brown's definition of authenticity is 'the choice to let our true selves be seen'. By nature, this requires honesty, courage and vulnerability. Therapist and counsellor Jennie Steinberg lays out crucial distinctions between radical honesty and authenticity. Through authenticity, real connection is available - this requires doses of self-ownership.

 Giving fake smiles seems to be part and parcel of our British culture - the attitude of grin and bear it - whatever 'it' is. While it's likely we mostly do this subconsciously as a byproduct of our cultural origin, false signals can have significant damaging effects on mental health. Irfan Khawaja writes on the obligation to smile.

Artistic expression



Cliffs of Cornwall 19/02/2020 @02:34

Poetry Corner

 The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron
feeds.

I come into the peace of the wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Things & Stuff

 Got a smart phone addiction? [Here's](#) how your brain structure may differ.

 Political warfare at the heart of [Russia-Saudi oil pricing mishap](#).

 Coronavirus - [the Black Swan](#) of 2020.

 A [founders guide](#) to taking selective advice.

 Big tech engage in copyright dispute - [Google v. Oracle](#).

I hope you found this collection stimulating and insightful. I love hearing from you so if you've any questions or comments then please email:
aostaniforth@gmail.com.

Stay well, Alex