

Behavioural reactions to stimuli; -40\$ oil; anti-fragile; connection in adversity; space to breathe #8

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:

- Free Online Meditation Circle on Fridays from 19:30-21:00
- Online Exeter University Learning Set on Wednesdays (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

 Behavioural reasons why we fail to prepare for disasters. The boast of Donald Trump, March 9, according to which there had only been 22 deaths in the United States, was badly judged in the light of what we know about exponential growth, but he is hardly the only one not to have seized this point. In 1975, psychologists William Wagenaar and Sabato Sagaria discovered that when asked to predict an exponential process, people were often underestimated by a factor of 10. Amie Gordon Ph.D explores the biases we hold that lead us to over and under react.

 WTI sold at -\$40 per barrel on 20th April 2020 as U.S. storage for oil hit maximum land capacity in the wider context of price war between Saudi and Russia. If the Saudis can maintain prices firmly negative, it will absolutely crush many of the world's energy producers - a move that would see Riyadh gain the ability to raise prices with little competition in years to come. Given the crucial nature of oil to Russia, Venezuela, Iraq, Congo, and others, these countries all face increasing risk of soaring unemployment and loss in Government revenue as a direct result. Trump shoots his money gun to protect workers in the oil sector.

🔥 The latest CO2 concentration (ppm) measurement (as of April 22nd, 2020): 415.49 ppm; April, 2019: 414 ppm, 25 years ago: 360 ppm.

Closer to home

💠 In a world where we've a tendency to model and feel in control, we're increasingly losing touch with the randomness that provides our species and systems the stressors required to evolve our anti-fragility. Anti-fragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the anti-fragile gets better. From financial products, to organic regulating systems, in his book 'Antifragile', Nassim Taleb guides us into the world of non-predictive decision making and being with uncertainty.

🔬 Perspective shifting is all about how we relate to both our internal and external worlds as they develop and change. Do we see what we want to see instead of what is really in front of us? How we experience our reality has a lot to do with our relationship with self - and is ultimately informed by the depth of self knowledge we have. After all, our self is the only reference point we have through which we experience life - if this relationship is weak, how sure can we be of the mutuality of our experience? Austin Powers shows perspective is everything.

🌿 A local leading transition town in Devon, Totnes, is showing how connected a community can be in the face of threat that has seen us isolate. From quarantined Italians singing from balconies, mutual aid groups aiding those who are losing income, a strong online mental health network and a wave of petitions to support the vulnerable, Totnes is showing us the benefits of a connected community in times of fragility.

Notes on compassion

🚗 Disruption distorts our everyday functioning selves from normal operating behaviour. This is as true in the home as it is in successful startups. When systems have been built on the back of disruptive productivity, there are usually many gaping holes left to attend to long after the dash to survive is over. Going over these holes is likely to be painful and so trust in this process is key. An excerpt on trust and culture change work at Uber.

🏠 Your quality of life is based on how you are in your space, not the size of it. Architect Sarah Susanka on the curation of space.

Artistic expression



19/04/2020 @16:17 playing with light

Poetry Corner

 My House is the Red Earth by Joy Harjo

My house is the red earth;
it could be the centre of the world.
I've heard New York, Paris, or Tokyo called the centre of the world,
but I say it is magnificently humble.
You could drive by and miss it.
Radio waves can obscure it.
Words cannot construct it,
for there are some sounds left to sacred wordless form.
For instance, that fool crow, picking through trash near the corral,
understands the centre of the world as greasy strips of fat.
Just ask him.
He doesn't have to say that the earth has turned scarlet through fierce belief,
after centuries of heartbreak and laughter
he perches on the blue bowl of the sky,
and laughs.

Things & Stuff

 Responding to natural disasters during a pandemic.

 Experiments in open source democracy.

 The lung meridian - an insight into need for systemic humility?

 Inner child vs Ego.

 The vitality of mountains.

If you've found anything here stimulating and want to chat, then get in touch via my email: aostaniforth@gmail.com.

Stay well, Alex