



CV SPOTLIGHT

(Process)

Release #104

OBSERVING AND SEEING THE INPUT REVOLUTION: PART #3

ENGINEERING UNCOMMON INPUTS

October 9, 2023

“a space for uncommon inputs and uncommon processing”

FOCUS QUOTE:

*“It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see...”
...Henry David Thoreau*

I love this quote just above.

I love that it distinguishes “looking” from “seeing”.

I think of the varying depths of what we humans can “see”. I think of the varying depths of what we humans can “understand”.

I love even the idea that we can never possibly “see” everything and that we can never “understand” everything. I think “student-mindedness” is about truly excitedly cherishing the limitlessness of seeing and understanding. Many people, I realize, would think this very thing is... horrible.

...yet without the limitlessness of seeing and understanding, the reason we gather as active investors and business creators would be impossible. The markets would actually be truly efficient already, as opposed to being a reflection of our human foibles and self-injurious constraints! And all the next great stuff businesses create would have already been brought to market! 😊

“SO WHAT???”

...Engineering Deeper Seeing, in itself, is Uncommon Input...

“SO WHAT???”

The problem with the wonderful quote from Henry David Thoreau above – and similar quotes – is that it does not offer an instruction manual to “see” more, and an implicit “Just Do It” doesn’t seem to do the trick. “Just Do It” lacks “Know-How”.

So today I will offer a few pathways toward perhaps “seeing” more.

CATEGORY #1: SLOWING DOWN

I think many of the very biggest mistakes I have made in life can be linked back to me going too fast. Period. I could write a book. When I slow down, I see so much more as if I am living in a different world. A friend from early in my investment career once attempted to help me: “Pip... I... wish... you... would... just... slow... down...”. I didn’t hear him well enough. After beating back the demons that lure me to go faster and faster, well, I don’t think I have ever regretted slowing down. Much more advance ahead.

CATEGORY #2: EMPLOYING LENSES

Lenses are very specifically used as tools to overcome the limits of my built-in worldview, so as to see something impossible to see otherwise. The more lenses the better. Lenses help us cope with the “too muchness” of the world so we can geo-locate. To adopt lenses, we have to embrace that our worldview is so limited. Humbling. The risk of lenses: if we simply adopt just one new “perfect” lens and think it, alone, actually does explain everything.

CATEGORY #3: SURPRISE

I am very grateful to have so many bright, passionate friends. I find one way of “seeing” more is to ask them about what is surprising to them. Odds are high if it was surprising to them, it is a brand new “seeing” for me!! Here is one of many “surprise” variants: *“What has significantly surprised you during the past 12 months in your business or industry or a business or industry you deeply study that you think will continue to surprise you and perhaps many others during the next 12-18 months?”*

CATEGORY #4: AVOIDING OVERUSED WORDS AND GETTING UNDER CLICHE

Slowing down into over-used words typically provides a treasure-trove of new "seeing". It rarely comes up empty. If – for instance -- I hear something like: "Well, I think it can all be explained in that humans are hard-wired to want genuine experiences" I will aim to get under the words "hard-wired", "genuine" and "experiences". What do we truly mean with those three words? These are phrases that are so over-used that oftentimes no one really knows precisely what they are actually saying. "What do we really mean by 'genuine'?" These searches almost always uncover far greater depth, because the initial use of the word did, indeed, capture something very very important but we quickly forgot what it was! **To do this well, it is important to grow exceptionally comfortable in digging into words that we all use but rarely slow down to think about.**

CATEGORY #5: MULTIPLE READINGS

I have read a number of especially powerful books 3-4 times. I do so often across a period of ten years. Not rushing. More accurately, I read some books and then I slowly study them a few more times with a self-imposed maximum of perhaps 2-3 pages a day. I find I "see" so much more with each read. And as I grow, I am in a position to get a message or teaching I just wasn't previously ready for. There is so much great thinking in the world. I simply can't see it all in a first shot. I think "multiple exposures" is a great mode for internalizing many types of content, not simply books... an intriguing article, video, podcast. **In order to do "multiple exposures", it is vital that I re-frame "productivity" from a deeply ingrained "books read" production orientation toward "insights developed".**

CATEGORY #6: UNLOCKING QUESTIONS PART A

There are so many great questions available in this infinite world. Unfortunately, we humans tend to default to (1) "checklist" mode (even in specific situations where checklists are highly inappropriate) or to (2) "professionalism" mode (questions that sound "professional" but are in no fashion advancing). **It is powerful to re-train in wider question-asking. I don't think** suddenly routinely asking "unlocking questions" **will "just happen"**. It strikes me as much more of a developed discipline. And it is important to experience the massive benefit of unlocking questions and the positive energy released, while also coming to consider that there is very little downside in asking an "outside-the-box" question.

CATEGORY #7: UNLOCKING QUESTIONS PART B. ("STOP AND DROP")

Many great interviewers share a common trait: when they hear something intriguing, they interrupt the expected "flow" and ask something as simple as "Before we move forward, would you please just drop in to explain what you just said much more?" There is a pattern of human conversation. Unfortunately, often we become prisoners to the "script" and we don't "stop" and "drop" into what will prove an amazingly interesting and massively revealing tripwire. **To do this one well, it would be vital to overcome the initial social awkwardness of straying from the normalized pattern of conversation.**

CATEGORY #8: USING SYSTEMS-LEVEL THINKING

In 50 years' time, I suspect complex systems-level thinking will have displaced linear thinking. But here in the year 2023, it is very helpful to realize that most all of us humans were soaked in "stand-alone linear thinking" and to counteract the major limitations of that common upbringing, we might develop a habit of asking **"If I looked at this situation as if it was a system, what else might I then see?"**

CATEGORY #9: INJECTING DISTINCT DISCIPLINES (META LENSES)

There are many disciplines of study that operate as meta-lenses: for instance... biology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, economics, just to get matters started. **Importantly, I find it helpful to call in a friend with these distinct skills to "have a look", to override my temptation to think I really know what I am talking about instead of realizing my rank-amateur status.**

CATEGORY #10: A MODEL FOR DATA ABSORPTION

A number of years ago, J.P. Rangaswami shared a model with us called the "Four Stages of Data Development":

STAGE #1: OBSERVE

STAGE #2: DIAGNOSE

STAGE #3: PREDICT

STAGE #4: PRESCRIBE

We immediately noticed how (1) we race past "observe" so quickly, (2) do surface-level diagnosis, use pedestrian misplaced surface-level insight-barren diagnosis, and (3) race and stumble to create a real-time prescription. If "presented" well, the scurried thinking might even fool ourselves and others into confusing it with wisdom!!!

And the original problem circles and spirals and grows on and on...

We started to see how mediocre we were at merely observing. We wanted to jump straight to wisdom-based prescriptions, without doing the needed work.

Recognizing the four-stage distinct and progression-based model for arriving at "seeing/understanding", **JP helps me slow down and realize that great observing is the foundation of it all, otherwise, I fall prey to garbage in, garbage out.**

OVERCOMING CULTURAL NORMS

Focusing on just observing can be painfully counter-cultural. It is notable that humans consider some things as exceptionally easy and as having been easily already conquered, which are more accurately depicted as extremely difficult and where we have barely scratched the surface.

WILDCARD COMMENT: From Irwin Kula

This is a protocol for the evolution of consciousness.

The too-muchness of life - let alone the quantum flow of information and connection - is too hot to handle even with whatever skillful means, theories, and wise processes we possess.

We make sense of reality by filtering, curating, and cutting life down to knowable bits — creating illusions of predictability. (PIP ADD: But suffering massive tracking error in the process)

Whatever we initially "choose" to see, however accurate, is always also an unconscious way to protect and defend ourselves against our anxieties, fears, shame, desires, and disappointments.

So, mastering these pathways lies in learning to taste our feelings, stay with our states, dance with our polarities, digest uncertainty, process experience, and tolerate our psyches and the impacts we have on each other.

...Irwin

"You can observe a lot by just watching..."

...Yogi Berra

