



it may be my nature as a contrary sonofabitch, but the more convinced someone seems to be of their own ideas, the more i question their intelligence, or at least their motives.

see, there are a lot of things i don't know, and the more i try and learn the more ignorant i feel. its like digging in dry sand - advancing in depth just widens the scope, i find two new questions for each answer. but these millions of questions (and their answers) start to form a picture, the asking makes us prioritize, makes us look for connections, draw lines and shades of influence. it allows us to create a budget of sort, to learn balance and pressure, growth and sacrifice. we learn to own the causes and the effects, and to explore all the things we don't know.

not knowing. accepting that you don't know. having a little fucking humility. not much gets my hackles up more than the dishonesty in the health and fitness community. 5 point lists and miracle cures - goddamned snake oil. some people are simply not cynical enough - its easy to forget that news is business and business exists to make a profit. not evil - just profit driven. understanding the motives behind those providing you information is vital - it gives you a filter to understand why they see the world the way they do - it allows you to take their opinion with the appropriate grain(s) of salt. a yoga instructor will tell you that flexibility will help you run faster, a strength coach will probably tell you it is gym work that is the key, and nutritionists will wonder about your macro consumption. one of my favorite quotes is "if all you have is a hammer, every problem starts to look like a nail" - it is useful to try and identify and prepare for your biases - and when someone asks for your advice just fucking own them. save us all some time and be upfront - and if someone is not clear with their biases i assume they either are treating me like i am stupid enough not to see it, or worse yet - they don't see it themselves.

i trust the careful, the honest, the interested. i trust the weary, the curious, the reflective. i am heartened by hearing uncertainty in someones voice - it means they haven't made up their minds, that they are willing to embrace that things may not be as they imagine. ignorance is the starting point - accepting that there are more unknowns than knowns can keep us from from being trapped by sensationalism. it keeps us skeptical of people selling solutions, because i don't trust guarantees. the only guarantee is that on a long enough time line the survival rate drops to zero - the only constant is change and the only certainty lies in hindsight (and even that is arguable). we have an idea, a picture of what happened, but only theories of why. change is complicated and messy and by nature unpredictable.

surety is most often a sign of having not considered the problem long enough. either that or

deliberate dishonesty. plans are easy to sell, we all want to believe that a few simple steps will get us to - wherever. and at the beginning it may even be true. but answers need to breed more questions, plans need to evolve, be living breathing things - any anyone who claims to be able to fix all your problems with their "plan" is probably mostly interested in helping themselves. they may have useful information but they also have an agenda. Be weary.

the difficult part is that almost anything works under certain circumstances. diet and exercise are messy sciences - there are so many variables, so many pathways for improvement - is someone faster because they built their aerobic base using long, slow distance work? or maybe it is because they have developed stronger legs? or maybe it's because of the structural work that allows them to have better posture, and through that more efficient breathing? have they just become mentally tougher and are now willing to endure more discomfort? or is it because of an improvement of technique? the answer is yes. probably. whatever was the weakest link has improved. now, when someone is a beginner and all the above attributes are lacking, anything will work. it is the accumulation of all that builds the end result, separate revenue streams - multiple stocks in the same portfolio. having everything at 30% will yield the same results as having a couple topped out and a couple ignored - but the "plan" for those two individuals would look totally different. it is why we assess. why we think critically. we are always trying to identify the limiting factor - why didn't I do better? what broke first - because that is what needs to be addressed. test drive - then tune up.

knowing all this still doesn't help if you don't know yourself. know where you are and where you want to go. know the requirements of success. know what you are good at, what you are bad at, and the cost of changing. some problems need a sledge hammer and some, a scalpel. generally speaking, the further from the goal the less specific a plan needs to be. it's like carving stone - it starts with big hits and blunt tools, finer shapes beg for more precision, specific tools and more meticulous planning. geometric progression, ever smaller gains at ever increasing cost. time and energy are limited resources - understand which metrics are goals and which are simply shadows, steps along the way. give a thing the attention necessary - not less, but not more. and try to be honest - remember that most of us never need true refinement and will not benefit significantly from anything past the roughest of tools.

true plans are expensive because they have to take all of this into account. they have to be fed and nurtured with constant attention and new information. it is hard to pass on the promise of simple fixes, the idea that drinking coffee with butter in it or cutting out gluten will solve your life problems - we hear the stories of magical transformation and long for that simple answer - we may even convince ourselves that we too are afflicted, and can repent and be saved just as easily.

so don't feed that part of yourself. protect your growth - recognize that everyone has an objective - and not all of them are benign. listen, learn, and filter. ask questions. a lot of questions. hard and unflattering questions. make art with science - shape yourself with that blend of curiosity and determination. pay attention to the true movers in your life, the factors that hold you back and launch you forward. trim and nurture in equal measure - it is your life, why would you not want to be in control? because that's what it boils down to. control. responsibility to ones self. cynical may not be the right word. critical. pragmatic. utilitarian. have an objective - mind your costs and find a way to balance your budget...

gather the right information, cultivate the proper attitude.

the rest is easy.

to work.

-the station.



how long will it be before we realize that all the weight in the world is made up of “just another drop in the bucket”