

Poor Economics

Ellen Langer

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This is a very generic introduction. It was very informative for me at 19-20 years old. Now it seems almost childish. Lots of good anecdotes, wisdom, and advice. One wouldn't go wrong following this book's advice.

Lots of name dropping.

Page 31. Practicing patients.

Lengthen your line- this is something running teaches, or I learned running at least.

Spending vs wasting time- comes off pretentious, but yes.

Active Inactivity- boarding nonsense. I get the take away. But Kaiser answered the phone. That was something. I think it is good to schedule in the absence of things. No phones, no people, no devices, no comforts, etc.

These demonstrations and displays for audiences I see as magic shows. It's cool. But I know there's a trick to the illusions.

Ki is a supernatural belief. Placebo effect is an effect.

Zen Breathing- great practice, probably didn't save his life. Statistics.

Page 74, "Water does..." water isn't an agent. Personification.

Page 92, mushin/mind flow is a result of practicing. Do any elite fighters practice Zen as a martial art? If not, that might prove my skepticism. I assume many have practiced Zen for psychological purposes.

Page 99, "To know and to act are one and the same."

Page 106, "If I had told it to you, you would never have understood."

Healing. Expectations matter. Mind can increase healing.

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BRENDAN'S NOTES

P10: de-emphasizing intellect to find "intuitive action"

Does it help to remove a deadline, and just do? I think sometimes it absolutely does. It takes as long as it will take!

They say you should focus on your strengths, not your weaknesses. That seems like what he means in focusing on your capabilities, not where you used to be or different. What are you now, in this moment, and how are you capable?

Always seek a master! Consider Talmud: "Make yourself a teacher..." See below, and it seems to fit a lot of his gist ... humility to learn from a teacher, means you have to ACTIVELY make a teacher teach and learn from them ...

... "The phrasing around finding teacher is fascinating. It does not merely say "find" a teacher, but make, appoint, create. In order to make a teacher, we have to acknowledge that we can learn and that someone else can teach. We need humility to understand the things that we do not know. We must recognize our own imperfections and desire to remedy them. In finding a teacher this way, we are not looking for someone who will simply say we are great, but rather someone who will challenge us, push us, help us grow."
(<https://www.torahminhamayim.com/2020/12/pirkei-avot-16-make-yourself-teacher.html>)

His final example, at the end of a book, is staying centered, safe, and waiting to let an "enemy's energy" dissipate ... I get in so few conflicts, does it work? I can say, me and others, people's complaints and anger are ephemeral, they come and go, so waiting does dissipate energy ...

"Anger doesn't demand action." Right on.

"Think twice more ... think more, react less." Right on.

Focus on The One Thing You Are Doing. FOCUS. It is hard to maintain this concentration, but I think he's probably right, the more you practice focus, the more you are able to keep other things out of mind as you do The One Thing. But what does that feel like, look like, and does it create success?

"Self-consciousness must be subordinated to concentration."

"You stopped caring whether you hit it or not." That's Stoic: ignoring the results of your arrow's flight, and spending time before practicing, planning, preparing your materials and equipment ... I think this makes sense! It's like before a performance I do, you have to let a lot of worry go ...

Fears: "Sometimes I win and sometimes I lose. But I am no longer afraid because they [the things you imagine and fear] are familiar to me." Does this work, too?

"Mind like still water [miso no koro]" ... this resonated a lot for martial arts and productivity guy David Allen

"Vanity is the only obstacle to life." I think there is wisdom in this. The ephemeral things, the dust, the wind, they float away in the grand scheme of things ... we worry about things we cannot control and do not matter in a mortal life ...

Zen master quoted in Needleman money book seems to agree. Pp.85-86