Table of Contents

Seminar Session 1: Checking In
Tuesday, July 28

Page 1
- Oriah Mountain Dreamer, “The Invitation”
- Rainer Maria Rilke, “Widening Circles”

Seminar Session 2: Collaborative Leadership
Wednesday, July 29

Page 5
- Tony Hoagland, “The Hero’s Journey”
- Susan Cain, “When Collaboration Kills Creativity”
- Edith Hamilton, “Xenophon”

Seminar Session 3: Our Collective Impact
Thursday, July 30

Page 23
- Walter Isaacson, selections from “The Innovators”
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”

Seminar Session 4: Call to Action
Friday, July 31

Page 45
- David Brooks, “The Moral Bucket List”
- W.H. Murray, “Commitment”
THE INVITATION
BY: ORIAH MOUNTAIN DREAMER

It doesn’t interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for and if you dare to
dream of meeting your heart’s longing.

It doesn’t interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for
your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn’t interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the
centre of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life’s betrayals or have become shrivelled
and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it, or fade it, or fix
it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own; if you can dance with wildness and let the
ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, be realistic,
remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn’t interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint
another to be true to yourself. If you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own
soul. If you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty even when it is not pretty every day. And if you can source
your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand at the edge of the lake and
shout to the silver of the full moon, ‘Yes.’

It doesn’t interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you
can get up after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone and do what needs to
be done to feed the children.

It doesn’t interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in
the centre of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn’t interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains
you from the inside when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the
empty moments.
I live my life in widening circles
that reach out across the world.
I may not complete this last one
but I give myself to it.

I circle around God, around the primordial tower.
I’ve been circling for thousands of years
and I still don’t know: am I a falcon,
a storm, or a great song?

*Book of Hours, I 2*
WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

“COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP”
I remember the first time I looked at the spotless marble floor
of a giant hotel lobby
and understood that someone had waxed and polished it all night

and that someone else had pushed his cart of cleaning supplies
down the long air-conditioned corridors
of the Steinberg Building across the street

and emptied all two hundred and forty-three wastebaskets
stopping now and then to scrape up chewing gum
with a special flat-bladed tool
he keeps in his back pocket.

It tempered my enthusiasm for “The Collected Sonnets of Hugh
Pembley-Witherton”
and for Kurt von Heinzelman’s “Epic of the Seekers for the Grail,”

Chapter 5, “The Trial,” in which he describes how the
“tall and fair-complexioned” knight, Gawain,
makes camp one night beside a windblown cemetery

but cannot sleep for all the voices
rising up from underground—

Let him stay out there a hundred nights, the little wonder boy,
with his thin blanket and his cold armor and his
useless sword,
until he understands exactly how
the glory of the protagonist is always paid for
by a lot of secondary characters.

In the morning he will wake and gallop back to safety;
he will hear his name embroidered into toasts and songs.
But now he knows there is a country he had not accounted for,
   and that country has its citizens:

the one-armed baker sweeping out his shop at 4 A.M.;

soldiers fitting every horse in Prague with diapers
   before the emperor’s arrival;

and that woman in the nursing home,
   who has worked there for a thousand years,

taking away the bedpans,
   lifting up and wiping off the soft heroic buttocks of Odysseus.
I am a horse for a single harness, not cut out for tandem or teamwork ... for well I know that in order to attain any definite goal, it is imperative that one person do the thinking and the commanding. —Albert Einstein

March 5, 1975. A cold and drizzly evening in Menlo Park, California. Thirty unprepossessing-looking engineers gather in the garage of an unemployed colleague named Gordon French. They call themselves the Homebrew Computer Club, and this is their first meeting. Their mission: to make computers accessible to regular people—no small task at a time when most computers are temperamental SUV-sized machines that only universities and corporations can afford.

The garage is drafty, but the engineers leave the doors open to the damp night air so people can wander inside. In walks an uncertain young man of twenty-four, a calculator designer for Hewlett-Packard. Serious and bespectacled, he has shoulder-length hair and a brown beard. He takes a chair and listens quietly as the others marvel over a new build-it-yourself computer called the Altair 8800, which recently made the cover of Popular Electronics. The Altair isn’t a true personal computer; it’s hard to use, and appeals only to the type of person who shows up at a garage on a rainy Wednesday night to talk about microchips. But it’s an important first step.

The young man, whose name is Stephen Wozniak, is thrilled to hear of the Altair. He’s been obsessed with electronics since the age of three. When he was eleven he came across a magazine article about the first computer, the ENIAC, or Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer, and ever since, his dream has been to build a machine so small and easy to use that you could keep it at home. And now, inside this garage, here is news that The Dream—he thinks of it with capital letters—might one day materialize.

As he’ll later recall in his memoir, iWoz, where most of this story appears, Wozniak is also excited to be surrounded by kindred spirits. To the Homebrew crowd, computers are a tool for social justice, and he feels the same way. Not that he talks to anyone at this first meeting—he’s way too shy for that. But that night he goes home and sketches his first design for a personal computer, with a keyboard and a screen just like the kind we use today. Three months later he builds a prototype of that machine. And ten months after that, he and Steve Jobs cofound Apple Computer.

Today Steve Wozniak is a revered figure in Silicon Valley—there’s a street in San Jose, California, named Woz’s Way—and is sometimes called the nerd soul of Apple. He has learned over time to open up and speak publicly, even appearing as a contestant on Dancing with the Stars, where he displayed an endearing mixture of stiffness and good cheer. I once saw Wozniak speak at a bookstore in New York City. A standing-room-only crowd showed up bearing their 1970s Apple operating manuals, in honor of all that he had done for them.
But the credit is not Wozniak’s alone; it also belongs to Homebrew. Wozniak identifies that first meeting as the beginning of the computer revolution and one of the most important nights of his life. So if you wanted to replicate the conditions that made Woz so productive, you might point to Homebrew, with its collection of like-minded souls. You might decide that Wozniak’s achievement was a shining example of the collaborative approach to creativity. You might conclude that people who hope to be innovative should work in highly social workplaces.

And you might be wrong.

Consider what Wozniak did right after the meeting in Menlo Park. Did he huddle with fellow club members to work on computer design? No. (Although he did keep attending the meetings, every other Wednesday.) Did he seek out a big, open office space full of cheerful pandemonium in which ideas would cross-pollinate? No. When you read his account of his work process on that first PC, the most striking thing is that he was always by himself.

Wozniak did most of the work inside his cubicle at Hewlett-Packard. He’d arrive around 6:30 a.m. and, alone in the early morning, read engineering magazines, study chip manuals, and prepare designs in his head. After work, he’d go home, make a quick spaghetti or TV dinner, then drive back to the office and work late into the night. He describes this period of quiet midnights and solitary sunrises as “the biggest high ever.” His efforts paid off on the night of June 29, 1975, at around 10:00 p.m., when Woz finished building a prototype of his machine. He hit a few keys on the keyboard—and letters appeared on the screen in front of him. It was the sort of breakthrough moment that most of us can only dream of. And he was alone when it happened.

Intentionally so. In his memoir, he offers this advice to kids who aspire to great creativity:

Most inventors and engineers I’ve met are like me—they’re shy and they live in their heads. They’re almost like artists. In fact, the very best of them are artists. And artists work best alone where they can control an invention’s design without a lot of other people designing it for marketing or some other committee. I don’t believe anything really revolutionary has been invented by committee. If you’re that rare engineer who’s an inventor and also an artist, I’m going to give you some advice that might be hard to take. That advice is: Work alone. You’re going to be best able to design revolutionary products and features if you’re working on your own. Not on a committee. Not on a team.

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...But there’s a less obvious yet surprisingly powerful explanation for introverts’ creative advantage—an explanation that everyone can learn from: introverts prefer to work independently, and solitude can be a catalyst to innovation. As the influential psychologist Hans Eysenck once observed, introversion “concentrates the mind on the tasks in hand, and prevents the dissipation of energy on social and sexual matters unrelated to work.” In other words, if you’re in the backyard sitting under a tree while everyone else is clinking glasses on the patio, you’re more likely to have an apple fall on your head.
(Newton was one of the world’s great introverts. William Wordsworth described him as “A mind forever / Voyaging through strange seas of Thought alone.”)

If this is true—if solitude is an important key to creativity—then we might all want to develop a taste for it. We’d want to teach our kids to work independently. We’d want to give employees plenty of privacy and autonomy. Yet increasingly we do just the opposite.

We like to believe that we live in a grand age of creative individualism. We look back at the midcentury era in which the Berkeley researchers conducted their creativity studies, and feel superior. Unlike the starched-shirted conformists of the 1950s, we hang posters of Einstein on our walls, his tongue stuck out iconoclastically. We consume indie music and films, and generate our own online content. We “think different” (even if we got the idea from Apple Computer’s famous ad campaign).

But the way we organize many of our most important institutions—our schools and our workplaces—tells a very different story. It’s the story of a contemporary phenomenon that I call the New Groupthink—a phenomenon that has the potential to stifle productivity at work and to deprive schoolchildren of the skills they’ll need to achieve excellence in an increasingly competitive world.

The New Groupthink elevates teamwork above all else. It insists that creativity and intellectual achievement come from a gregarious place. It has many powerful advocates. “Innovation—the heart of the knowledge economy—is fundamentally social,” writes the prominent journalist Malcolm Gladwell. “None of us is as smart as all of us,” declares the organizational consultant Warren Bennis, in his book Organizing Genius, whose opening chapter heralds the rise of the “Great Group” and “The End of the Great Man.” “Many jobs that we regard as the province of a single mind actually require a crowd,” muses Clay Shirky in his influential book Here Comes Everybody. Even “Michelangelo had assistants paint part of the Sistine Chapel ceiling.” (Never mind that the assistants were likely interchangeable, while Michelangelo was not.)

The New Groupthink is embraced by many corporations, which increasingly organize workforces into teams, a practice that gained popularity in the early 1990s. By 2000 an estimated half of all U.S. organizations used teams, and today virtually all of them do, according to the management professor Frederick Morgeson. A recent survey found that 91 percent of high-level managers believe that teams are the key to success. The consultant Stephen Harvill told me that of the thirty major organizations he worked with in 2010, including J.C. Penney, Wells Fargo, Dell Computers, and Prudential, he couldn’t think of a single one that didn’t use teams.

Some of these teams are virtual, working together from remote locations, but others demand a tremendous amount of face-to-face interaction, in the form of team-building exercises and retreats, shared online calendars that announce employees’ availability for meetings, and physical workplaces that afford little privacy. Today’s employees inhabit open office plans, in which no one has a room of his or her own, the only walls are the ones holding up the building, and senior executives operate from the center of the boundary-less floor along with everyone else. In fact, over 70 percent of today’s employees work in an open plan; companies using them include Procter & Gamble, Ernst & Young, GlaxoSmithKline, Alcoa, and H.J. Heinz.
The amount of space per employee shrank from 500 square feet in the 1970s to 200 square feet in 2010, according to Peter Miscovich, a managing director at the real estate brokerage firm Jones Lang LaSalle. “There has been a shift from ‘I’ to ‘we’ work,” Steelcase CEO James Hackett told Fast Company magazine in 2005. “Employees used to work alone in ‘I’ settings. Today, working in teams and groups is highly valued. We are designing products to facilitate that.” Rival office manufacturer Herman Miller, Inc., has not only introduced new furniture designed to accommodate “the move toward collaboration and teaming in the workplace” but also moved its own top executives from private offices to an open space. In 2006, the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan demolished a classroom building in part because it wasn’t set up for maximum group interaction.

The New Groupthink is also practiced in our schools, via an increasingly popular method of instruction called “cooperative” or “small group” learning. In many elementary schools, the traditional rows of seats facing the teacher have been replaced with “pods” of four or more desks pushed together to facilitate countless group learning activities. Even subjects like math and creative writing, which would seem to depend on solo flights of thought, are often taught as group projects. In one fourth-grade classroom I visited, a big sign announced the “Rules for Group Work,” including, YOU CAN’T ASK A TEACHER FOR HELP UNLESS EVERYONE IN YOUR GROUP HAS THE SAME QUESTION.

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What’s so magical about solitude? In many fields, Ericsson told me, it’s only when you’re alone that you can engage in Deliberate Practice, which he has identified as the key to exceptional achievement. When you practice deliberately, you identify the tasks or knowledge that are just out of your reach, strive to upgrade your performance, monitor your progress, and revise accordingly. Practice sessions that fall short of this standard are not only less useful—they’re counterproductive. They reinforce existing cognitive mechanisms instead of improving them.

Deliberate Practice is best conducted alone for several reasons. It takes intense concentration, and other people can be distracting. It requires deep motivation, often self-generated. But most important, it involves working on the task that’s most challenging to you personally. Only when you’re alone, Ericsson told me, can you “go directly to the part that’s challenging to you. If you want to improve what you’re doing, you have to be the one who generates the move. Imagine a group class—you’re the one generating the move only a small percentage of the time.”

To see Deliberate Practice in action, we need look no further than the story of Stephen Wozniak. The Homebrew meeting was the catalyst that inspired him to build that first PC, but the knowledge base and work habits that made it possible came from another place entirely: Woz had deliberately practiced engineering ever since he was a little kid. (Ericsson says that it takes approximately ten thousand hours of Deliberate Practice to gain true expertise, so it helps to start young.)

In iWoz, Wozniak describes his childhood passion for electronics, and unintentionally recounts all the elements of Deliberate Practice that Ericsson emphasizes. First, he was motivated: his father, a Lockheed engineer, had taught Woz that engineers could change people’s lives and were “among the key people in the world.” Second, he built his expertise step by painstaking step. Because he entered countless science fairs, he says,
I acquired a central ability that was to help me through my entire career: patience. I’m serious. Patience is usually so underrated. I mean, for all those projects, from third grade all the way to eighth grade, I just learned things gradually, figuring out how to put electronic devices together without so much as cracking a book…. I learned to not worry so much about the outcome, but to concentrate on the step I was on and to try to do it as perfectly as I could when I was doing it.

Third, Woz often worked alone.

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Open-plan offices have been found to reduce productivity and impair memory. They’re associated with high staff turnover. They make people sick, hostile, unmotivated, and insecure. Open-plan workers are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure and elevated stress levels and to get the flu; they argue more with their colleagues; they worry about coworkers eavesdropping on their phone calls and spying on their computer screens. They have fewer personal and confidential conversations with colleagues. They’re often subject to loud and uncontrollable noise, which raises heart rates; releases cortisol, the body’s fight-or-flight “stress” hormone; and makes people socially distant, quick to anger, aggressive, and slow to help others.

Indeed, excessive stimulation seems to impede learning: a recent study found that people learn better after a quiet stroll through the woods than after a noisy walk down a city street. Another study, of 38,000 knowledge workers across different sectors, found that the simple act of being interrupted is one of the biggest barriers to productivity. Even multitasking, that prized feat of modern-day office warriors, turns out to be a myth. Scientists now know that the brain is incapable of paying attention to two things at the same time. What looks like multitasking is really switching back and forth between multiple tasks, which reduces productivity and increases mistakes by up to 50 percent.

Many introverts seem to know these things instinctively, and resist being herded together. Backbone Entertainment, a video game design company in Oakland, California, initially used an open office plan but found that their game developers, many of whom were introverts, were unhappy. “It was one big warehouse space, with just tables, no walls, and everyone could see each other,” recalls Mike Mika, the former creative director. “We switched over to cubicles and were worried about it—you’d think in a creative environment that people would hate that. But it turns out they prefer having nooks and crannies they can hide away in and just be away from everybody.”

Something similar happened at Reebok International when, in 2000, the company consolidated 1,250 employees in their new headquarters in Canton, Massachusetts. The managers assumed that their shoe designers would want office space with plenty of access to each other so they could brainstorm (an idea they probably picked up when they were getting their MBAs). Luckily, they consulted first with the shoe designers themselves, who told them that actually what they needed was peace and quiet so they could concentrate.

This would not have come as news to Jason Fried, cofounder of the web application company 37signals. For ten years, beginning in 2000, Fried asked hundreds of people (mostly designers,
programmers, and writers) where they liked to work when they needed to get something done. He found that they went anywhere but their offices, which were too noisy and full of interruptions. That’s why, of Fried’s sixteen employees, only eight live in Chicago, where 37signals is based, and even they are not required to show up for work, even for meetings. Especially not for meetings, which Fried views as “toxic.” Fried is not anti-collaboration—37signals’ home page touts its products’ ability to make collaboration productive and pleasant. But he prefers passive forms of collaboration like e-mail, instant messaging, and online chat tools. His advice for other employers? “Cancel your next meeting,” he advises. “Don’t reschedule it. Erase it from memory.” He also suggests “No-Talk Thursdays,” one day a week in which employees aren’t allowed to speak to each other.

The people Fried interviewed were saying out loud what creative people have always known. Kafka, for example, couldn’t bear to be near even his adoring fiancée while he worked:

You once said that you would like to sit beside me while I write. Listen, in that case I could not write at all. For writing means revealing oneself to excess; that utmost of self-revelation and surrender, in which a human being, when involved with others, would feel he was losing himself, and from which, therefore, he will always shrink as long as he is in his right mind.... That is why one can never be alone enough when one writes, why there can never be enough silence around one when one writes, why even night is not night enough.

Even the considerably more cheerful Theodor Geisel (otherwise known as Dr. Seuss) spent his workdays ensconced in his private studio, the walls lined with sketches and drawings, in a bell-tower outside his La Jolla, California, house. Geisel was a much more quiet man than his jocular rhymes suggest. He rarely ventured out in public to meet his young readership, fretting that kids would expect a merry, outspoken, Cat in the Hat–like figure, and would be disappointed with his reserved personality. “In mass, [children] terrify me,” he admitted.

Since then, some forty years of research has reached the same startling conclusion. Studies have shown that performance gets worse as group size increases: groups of nine generate fewer and poorer ideas compared to groups of six, which do worse than groups of four. The “evidence from science suggests that business people must be insane to use brainstorming groups,” writes the organizational psychologist Adrian Furnham. “If you have talented and motivated people, they should be encouraged to work alone when creativity or efficiency is the highest priority...

Psychologists usually offer three explanations for the failure of group brainstorming. The first is social loafing: in a group, some individuals tend to sit back and let others do the work. The second is production blocking: only one person can talk or produce an idea at once, while the other group members are forced to sit passively. And the third is evaluation apprehension, meaning the fear of looking stupid in front of one’s peers...
CHAPTER 10
XENOPHON: THE ORDINARY ATHENIAN GENTLEMAN

... [Xenophon’s] best book, however, the book he really lives by, is on war. It is, of course, the Anabasis, the “Retreat of the Ten Thousand,” a great story, and of great importance for our knowledge of the Greeks. No other piece of writing gives so clear a picture of Greek individualism, that instinct which was supremely characteristic of ancient Greece and decided the course of the Greek achievement. It was the cause, or the result, as one chooses to look at it, of the Greek love for freedom. A Greek had a passion for being left free to live his life in his own way. He wanted to act by himself and think for himself. It did not come natural to him to turn to others for direction; he depended upon his own sense of what was right and true. Indeed, there was no generally acknowledged source of direction anywhere in Greece except the oracles, difficult to reach and still more difficult to understand. Athens had no authoritarian church, or state either, to formulate what a man should believe and to regulate the details of how he should live. There was no agency or institution to oppose his thinking in any way he chose on anything whatsoever. As for the state, it never entered an Athenian’s head that it could interfere with his private life: that it could see, for instance, that his children were taught to be patriotic, or limit the amount of liquor he could buy, or compel him to save for his old age. Everything like that a citizen of Athens had to decide himself and take full responsibility for.

The basis of the Athenian democracy was the conviction of all democracies—that the average man can be depended upon to do his duty and to use good sense in doing it. Trust the individual was the avowed doctrine in Athens, and expressed or unexpressed it was common to Greece. Sparta we know as the exception, and

The Greek Way

did not care to lose its liberty to any alien prince. Therefore, all Greeks believed, they conquered the slave-subjects of the Persian

There was no change in the Greek way. The very name of it is so beautiful.” In Æschylus’ play about the defeat of the

The epic of the Retreat begins in a camp beside a little town in Asia not far from Babylon. There, more than ten thousand Greeks were gathered. They had come from different places: one of the leaders was from Thessaly; another from Boeotia; the commander-in-chief was a Spartan; on his staff was a young civilian from Athens named Xenophon. They were soldiers of fortune, a typical army of mercenaries who had gone abroad because there was no hope of employment at home. Greece was not at war for the moment. A Spartan peace was over the land. It was the summer of 401, three years after the fall of Athens.

Persia, however, was a hotbed of plots and counterplots that were bringing a revolution near. The late king’s two sons were enemies, and the younger planned to take the throne from his brother. This young man was Cyrus, named for the great Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon a hundred and fifty years earlier. His namesake is famous for one reason only: because when he marched into Persia Xenophon joined his army. If that had not happened he would be lost in the endless list of little Asiatic royalties forever fighting for no purpose of the slightest importance to the world. As it is, he lives in Xenophon’s pages, gay and gallant and generous; careful for his soldiers’ welfare; sharing their hardships; always first in the fighting; a great leader.

The Ten Thousand had enlisted under his banner with no clear idea of what they were to do beyond the matter of real importance, get regular pay and enough food. They earned their share of both in the next few months. They marched from the Mediterranean through sandy deserts far into Asia Minor living on the country, which generally meant a minimum of food and occasionally none at all. There was a large Asiatic contingent, a hundred thousand strong at the least, but they play very little part in the Anabasis. The Greeks are the real army Cyrus depends upon. As Xenophon tells the story they won the day for him when he met the king’s forces. The battle of Cunaxa was a decisive victory for Cyrus. Only, he himself was dead, killed in the fighting as he struck at his brother and wounded him. With his
death the reason for the expedition ceased to exist. The Asiatic forces melted away. The little Greek army was alone in the heart of Asia, in an unknown country swarming with hostile troops, with no food, no ammunition, and no notion how to get back. Soon there were no leaders either. The chief officers went to a conference with the Persians under a safe-conduct. Their return, eagerly awaited, was alarmingly delayed; and all eyes were watching for them when in the distance a man, one man all alone, was seen advancing very slowly, a Greek by his dress. They ran to meet him and caught him as he fell dying, terribly wounded. He could just gasp out that all the others were dead, assassinated by the Persians.

That was a terrible night. The Persian plan was clear. In their experience leaderless men were helpless. Kill the officers and the army would be a lot of sheep waiting to be slaughtered. The only thing wrong with the idea was that this was a Greek army.

Xenophon, all his friends dead, wandered away from the horrified camp, found a quiet spot and fell asleep. He dreamed a dream. He saw the thunderbolt of Zeus fall on his home and a great light shine forth, and he awoke with the absolute conviction that Zeus had chosen him to save the army. On fire with enthusiasm, he called a council of the under officers who had not gone to the conference. There, young and a civilian, he stood up and addressed them, hardened veterans all. He told them to throw off despair and “show some superiority to misfortune.” He reminded them that they were Greeks, not to be cowed by mere Asiatics. Something of his own fire was communicated to them. He even got them laughing. One man who stubbornly objected to everything and would talk only of their desperate case, Xenophon advised reducing to the ranks and using to carry baggage; he would make an excellent mule, he told his appreciative audience. They elected him unanimously to lead the rear, and then had the general assembly sounded so that he could address the soldiers. He gave them a rousing talk. Things were black and might seem hopeless to others, but they were Greeks, free men, living in free states, born of free ancestors. The enemy they had to face were slaves, ruled by despots, ignorant of the very idea of freedom. “They think we are defeated because our officers are dead and our good old general Clearchus. But we will show them that they have turned us all into generals. Instead of one Clearchus they have ten thousand Clearchuses against them.” He won them over and that very morning the ten thousand generals started the march back.

They had only enemies around them, not one man they could trust as a guide, and there were no maps in those days and no compasses. One thing only they were sure of: they could not go back by the way they had come. Wherever they had passed the food was exhausted. They were forced to turn northward and follow the course of the rivers up to the mountains where the Tigris and the Euphrates rise, through what is to-day the wilds of Kurdistan and the highlands of Georgia and Armenia, all inhabited by savage mountain tribes. These were their only source of provisions. If they could not conquer their strongholds and get at their stores they would starve. Mountain warfare of the most desperate character awaited them, waged by an enemy who knew every foot of the country, who watched for them...
on the heights above narrow valleys and rolled masses of rocks down on them, whose sharpshooters attacked them hidden in thickets on the opposite bank of some torrential icy river while the Greeks searched desperately for a ford. As they advanced ever higher into the hills, they found bitter cold and deep snow, and their equipment was designed for the Arabian desert.

Probably anyone to-day considering their plight would conclude that their only chance of safety would lie in maintaining strict discipline, abiding by their excellent military tradition, and obeying their leaders implicitly. The chief leaders, however, were dead; mountain fighting against savages was not a part of their military tradition; above all, being Greeks, they did not incline to blind obedience in desperate circumstances. In point of fact, the situation which confronted them could be met only by throwing away the rules and regulations that had been drilled into them. What they needed was to draw upon all the intelligence and power of initiative every man of them possessed.

They were merely a band of mercenaries, but they were Greek mercenaries and the average of intelligence was high. The question of discipline among ten thousand generals would otherwise certainly have been serious and might well have proved fatal, but, no less than our westward-faring pioneer ancestors who resembled them, they understood the necessity of acting together. Not a soldier but knew what it would mean to have disorder added to the perils they faced. Their discipline was a voluntary product, but it worked. When the covered wagons made their way across America any leader that arose did so by virtue of superior ability, which men in danger always follow willingly. The leaders of the Ten Thousand got their posts in the same way. The army was keen to perceive a man’s quality and before long the young civilian Xenophon was practically in command.

Each man, however, had a share in the responsibility. Once when Xenophon sent out a reconnoitering force to find a pass through the mountains, he told them, “Every one of you is the leader.” At any crisis an assembly was held, the situation explained and full discussion invited. “Whoever has a better plan, let him speak. Our aim is the safety of all and that is the concern of all.” The case was argued back and forth, then put to the vote and the majority decided. Incompetent leaders were brought to trial. The whole army sat as judges and acquitted or punished. It reads like a caricature, but there has never been a better vindication of the average man when he is up against it. The ten thousand judges, which the ten thousand generals turned into on occasion, never, so far as Xenophon’s record goes, passed an unjust sentence. On one occasion Xenophon was called to account for striking a soldier. “I own that I did so,” he said. ‘I told him to carry to camp a wounded man, but I found him burying him still alive. I have struck others, too, half-frozen men who were sinking down in the snow to die, worn-out men lagging behind where the enemy might catch them. A blow would often make them get up and hasten. Those I have given offense to now accuse me. But those I have helped, in battle, on the march, in cold, in sickness, none of them speak up. They do not remember. And yet surely it is better—and happier, too—to remember a man’s good deeds than
his evil deeds.’ Upon this,” the narrative goes on, “the assembly, calling the past
to mind, rose up and Xenophon was acquitted.”

This completely disarming speech for the defense shows how well Xenophon
knew the way to manage men. There is wounded feeling in his words, but no anger,
no resentment, above all, no self-righteousness. Those listening were convinced
by his frankness of his honesty; reminded, without a suggestion of boasting, how
great his services had been; and given to understand that far from claiming to be
faultless, he appealed to them only to remember his deserts as well as his mistakes.
He understood his audience and the qualities a leader must have, at least any leader
who would lead Greeks. In a book he wrote on the education of the great Cyrus
he draws a picture of the ideal general which, absurd as it is when applied to an
Oriental monarch, shows to perfection the Greek idea of the one method that will
make men who are worth anything independent, self-reliant men, willing to follow
another man. “The leader,” he writes, “must himself believe that willing obedience
always beats forced obedience, and that he can get this only by really knowing what
should be done. Thus he can secure obedience from his men because he can
convince them that he knows best, precisely as a good doctor makes his patients
obey him. Also he must be ready to suffer more hardships than he asks of his
soldiers, more fatigue, greater extremes of heat and cold. ‘No one,’ Cyrus always
said, ‘can be a good officer who does not undergo more than those he commands.’”

However that may be, it is certain that the inexperienced civilian Xenophon
was could have won over the Ten Thousand in no other way. He was able to
convince them that he knew best and they gave up their own ideas and followed
him willingly.

He showed them too that even if they made him their leader, it was share and
share alike between him and the army. On one occasion when he was riding up
from his post in the rear to consult with the van, and the snow was deep and the
marching hard, a soldier cried to him, “Oh, it’s easy enough for you on horseback.”
Xenophon leaped from his horse, flung the man aside and marched in his place.

Always, no matter how desperate things seemed, the initiative which only free
men can be counted on to develop got them through. They abandoned their
baggage by common consent and threw away their loot. “We will make the enemy
carry our baggage for us,” they said. “When we have conquered them we can take
what we want.” Early in the march they were terribly harassed by the Persian
cavalry because they had none of their own. The men of Rhodes could throw with
their slings twice as far as the Persians. They set them on baggage mules, directed
them to aim at the riders, but spare their mounts and bring them back, and from
that time on the Persians kept them in horses. If they needed ammunition they sent
bowmen who could shoot farther than the foe to draw down showers of arrows that
fell short and could be easily collected. One way or another they forced the Persians
into service. When they got to the hills they discarded the tactics they had been
trained in. They gave up the solid line, the only formation they knew, and the army
advanced by columns, sometimes far apart. It was merely common sense in the
rough broken country, but that virtue belongs peculiarly to men acting for themselves. The disciplined military mind has never been distinguished for it. 

So, always cold and sometimes freezing, always hungry and sometimes starving, and always, always fighting, they held their own. No one by now had any clear idea where in the world they were. One day, Xenophon, riding in the rear, putting his horse up a steep hill, heard a great noise in front. A tumult was carried back to him by the wind, loud cries and shouting. An ambush, he thought, and calling to the others to follow at full speed, he drove his horse forward. No enemy was on the hilltop; only the Greeks. They were standing, all faced the same way, with tears running down their faces, their arms stretched out to what they saw before them. The shouting swelled into a great roar, “The sea! The sea!”

They were home at last. The sea was home to a Greek. It was the middle of January. They had left Cunaxa on the seventh of September. In four months they had marched well on to two thousand miles in circumstances never surpassed before or since for hardship and danger.

The Anabasis is the story of the Greeks in miniature. Ten thousand men, fiercely independent by nature, in a situation where they were a law unto themselves, showed that they were pre-eminently able to work together and proved what miracles of achievement willing co-operation can bring to pass. The Greek state, at any rate the Athenian state, which we know best, showed the same. What brought the Greeks safely back from Asia was precisely what made Athens great. The Athenian was a law unto himself, but his dominant instinct to standalone was counterbalanced by his sense of overwhelming obligation to serve the state. This was his own spontaneous reaction to the facts of his life, nothing imposed upon him from outside. The city was his defense in a hostile world, his security, his pride, too, the guarantee to all of his worth as an Athenian.

Plato said that men could find their true moral development only in service to the city. The Athenian was saved from looking at his life as a private affair. Our word “idiot” comes from the Greek name for the man who took no share in public matters. Pericles in the funeral oration reported by Thucydides says:

We are a free democracy, but we are obedient. We obey the laws, more especially those which protect the oppressed, and the unwritten laws whose transgression brings acknowledged shame. We do not allow absorption in our own affairs to interfere with participation in the city’s. We differ from other States in regarding the man who holds aloof from public life as useless, yet we yield to none in independence of spirit and complete self-reliance.

This happy balance was maintained for a very brief period. No doubt at its best it was as imperfect as the working out of every lofty idea in human terms is bound to be. Even so, it was the foundation of the Greek achievement. The creed of democracy, spiritual and political liberty for all, and each man a willing servant of the state, was the conception which underlay the highest reach of Greek genius.
It was fatally weakened by the race for money and power in the Periclean age; the Peloponnesian War destroyed it and Greece lost it forever. Nevertheless, the ideal of free individuals unified by a spontaneous service to the common life was left as a possession to the world, never to be forgotten.
THURSDAY, JULY 30

“OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT”
SOME LESSONS FROM THE JOURNEY

Like all historical narratives, the story of the innovations that created the digital age has many strands. So what lessons, in addition to the power of human-machine symbiosis just discussed, might be drawn from the tale?

First and foremost is that creativity is a collaborative process. Innovation comes from teams more often than from the lightbulb moments of lone geniuses. This was true of every era of creative ferment. The Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution all had their institutions for collaborative work and their networks for sharing ideas. But to an even greater extent, this has been true of the digital age. As brilliant as the many inventors of the Internet and computer were, they achieved most of their advances through teamwork. Like Robert Noyce, some of the best of them tended to resemble Congregational ministers rather than lonely prophets, madrigal singers rather than soloists.

Twitter, for example, was invented by a team of people who were collaborative but also quite contentious. When one of the cofounders, Jack Dorsey, started taking a lot of the credit in media interviews, another cofounder, Evan Williams, a serial entrepreneur who had previously created Blogger, told him to chill out, according to Nick Bilton of the *New York Times*. “But I invented Twitter,” Dorsey said.
“No, you didn’t invent Twitter,” Williams replied. “I didn’t invent Twitter either. Neither did Biz [Stone, another cofounder]. People don’t invent things on the Internet. They simply expand on an idea that already exists.”

Therein lies another lesson: the digital age may seem revolutionary, but it was based on expanding the ideas handed down from previous generations. The collaboration was not merely among contemporaries, but also between generations. The best innovators were those who understood the trajectory of technological change and took the baton from innovators who preceded them. Steve Jobs built on the work of Alan Kay, who built on Doug Engelbart, who built on J. C. R. Licklider and Vannevar Bush. When Howard Aiken was devising his digital computer at Harvard, he was inspired by a fragment of Charles Babbage’s Difference Engine that he found, and he made his crew members read Ada Lovelace’s “Notes.”

The most productive teams were those that brought together people with a wide array of specialties. Bell Labs was a classic example. In its long corridors in suburban New Jersey, there were theoretical physicists, experimentalists, material scientists, engineers, a few businessmen, and even some telephone-pole climbers with grease under their fingernails. Walter Brattain, an experimentalist, and John Bardeen, a theorist, shared a workspace, like a librettist and a composer sharing a piano bench, so they could perform a call-and-response all day about how to make what became the first transistor.

Even though the Internet provided a tool for virtual and distant collaborations, another lesson of digital-age innovation is that, now as in the past, physical proximity is beneficial. There is something special, as evidenced at Bell Labs, about meetings in the flesh, which cannot be replicated digitally. The founders of Intel created a sprawling, team-oriented open workspace where employees from Noyce on down all rubbed against one another. It was a model that became common in Silicon Valley. Predictions that digital tools would allow workers to telecommute were never fully realized. One of Marissa Mayer’s first acts as CEO of Yahoo! was to discourage the practice of working from home, rightly pointing out that “people are more collaborative and innovative when they’re together.” When Steve
Jobs designed a new headquarters for Pixar, he obsessed over ways to structure the atrium, and even where to locate the bathrooms, so that serendipitous personal encounters would occur. Among his last creations was the plan for Apple’s new signature headquarters, a circle with rings of open workspaces surrounding a central courtyard.

Throughout history the best leadership has come from teams that combined people with complementary styles. That was the case with the founding of the United States. The leaders included an icon of rectitude, George Washington; brilliant thinkers such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison; men of vision and passion, including Samuel and John Adams; and a sage conciliator, Benjamin Franklin. Likewise, the founders of the ARPANET included visionaries such as Licklider, crisp decision-making engineers such as Larry Roberts, politically adroit people handlers such as Bob Taylor, and collaborative oarsmen such as Steve Crocker and Vint Cerf.

Another key to fielding a great team is pairing visionaries, who can generate ideas, with operating managers, who can execute them. Visions without execution are hallucinations. Robert Noyce and Gordon Moore were both visionaries, which is why it was important that their first hire at Intel was Andy Grove, who knew how to impose crisp management procedures, force people to focus, and get things done.

Visionaries who lack such teams around them often go down in history as merely footnotes. There is a lingering historical debate over who most deserves to be dubbed the inventor of the electronic digital computer: John Atanasoff, a professor who worked almost alone at Iowa State, or the team led by John Mauchly and Presper Eckert at the University of Pennsylvania. In this book I give more credit to members of the latter group, partly because they were able to get their machine, ENIAC, up and running and solving problems. They did so with the help of dozens of engineers and mechanics plus a cadre of women who handled programming duties. Atanasoff’s machine, by contrast, never fully worked, partly because there was no team to help him figure out how to make his punch-card burner operate. It ended up being consigned to a basement, then discarded when no one could remember exactly what it was.
Like the computer, the ARPANET and Internet were designed by collaborative teams. Decisions were made through a process, begun by a deferential graduate student, of sending around proposals as “Requests for Comments.” That led to a weblke packet-switched network, with no central authority or hubs, in which power was fully distributed to every one of the nodes, each having the ability to create and share content and route around attempts to impose controls. A collaborative process thus produced a system designed to facilitate collaboration. The Internet was imprinted with the DNA of its creators.

The Internet facilitated collaboration not only within teams but also among crowds of people who didn't know each other. This is the advance that is closest to being revolutionary. Networks for collaboration have existed ever since the Persians and Assyrians invented postal systems. But never before has it been easy to solicit and collate contributions from thousands or millions of unknown collaborators. This led to innovative systems—Google page ranks, Wikipedia entries, the Firefox browser, the GNU/Linux software—based on the collective wisdom of crowds.

There were three ways that teams were put together in the digital age. The first was through government funding and coordination. That's how the groups that built the original computers (Colossus, ENIAC) and networks (ARPANET) were organized. This reflected the consensus, which was stronger back in the 1950s under President Eisenhower, that the government should undertake projects, such as the space program and interstate highway system, that benefited the common good. It often did so in collaboration with universities and private contractors as part of a government-academic-industrial triangle that Vannevar Bush and others fostered. Talented federal bureaucrats (not always an oxymoron), such as Licklider, Taylor, and Roberts, oversaw the programs and allocated public funds.

Private enterprise was another way that collaborative teams were formed. This happened at the research centers of big companies, such as Bell Labs and Xerox PARC, and at entrepreneurial new companies, such as Texas Instruments and Intel, Atari and Google, Microsoft and
Apple. A key driver was profits, both as a reward for the players and as a way to attract investors. That required a proprietary attitude to innovation that led to patents and intellectual property protections. Digital theorists and hackers often disparaged this approach, but a private enterprise system that financially rewarded invention was a component of a system that led to breathtaking innovation in transistors, chips, computers, phones, devices, and Web services.

Throughout history, there has been a third way, in addition to government and private enterprises, that collaborative creativity has been organized: through peers freely sharing ideas and making contributions as part of a voluntary common endeavor. Many of the advances that created the Internet and its services occurred in this fashion, which the Harvard scholar Yochai Benkler has labeled “commons-based peer production.” The Internet allowed this form of collaboration to be practiced on a much larger scale than before. The building of Wikipedia and the Web were good examples, along with the creation of free and open-source software such as Linux and GNU, OpenOffice and Firefox. As the technology journalist Steven Johnson has noted, “their open architecture allows others to build more easily on top of existing ideas, just as Berners-Lee built the Web on top of the Internet.” This commons-based production by peer networks was driven not by financial incentives but by other forms of reward and satisfaction.

The values of commons-based sharing and of private enterprise often conflict, most notably over the extent to which innovations should be patent-protected. The commons crowd had its roots in the hacker ethic that emanated from the MIT Tech Model Railroad Club and the Homebrew Computer Club. Steve Wozniak was an exemplar. He went to Homebrew meetings to show off the computer circuit he built, and he handed out freely the schematics so that others could use and improve it. But his neighborhood pal Steve Jobs, who began accompanying him to the meetings, convinced him that they should quit sharing the invention and instead build and sell it. Thus Apple was born, and for the subsequent forty years it has been at the forefront of aggressively patenting and profiting from its innovations. The instincts of both Steves were useful in creating the digital
age. Innovation is most vibrant in the realms where open-source systems compete with proprietary ones.

Sometimes people advocate one of these modes of production over the others based on ideological sentiments. They prefer a greater government role, or exalt private enterprise, or romanticize peer sharing. In the 2012 election, President Barack Obama stirred up controversy by saying to people who owned businesses, “You didn’t build that.” His critics saw it as a denigration of the role of private enterprise. Obama’s point was that any business benefits from government and peer-based community support: “If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you some help. There was a great teacher somewhere in your life. Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges.” It was not the most elegant way for him to dispel the fantasy that he was a closet socialist, but it did point to a lesson of modern economics that applies to digital-age innovation: that a combination of all of these ways of organizing production—governmental, market, and peer sharing—is stronger than favoring any one of them.

None of this is new. Babbage got most of his funding from the British government, which was generous in financing research that could strengthen its economy and empire. He adopted ideas from private industry, most notably the punch cards that had been developed by the textile firms for automated looms. He and his friends were founders of a handful of new peer-network clubs, including the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and though it may seem a stretch to view that august group as a fancy-dress forerunner to the Homebrew Computer Club, both existed to facilitate commons-based peer collaboration and the sharing of ideas.

The most successful endeavors in the digital age were those run by leaders who fostered collaboration while also providing a clear vision. Too often these are seen as conflicting traits: a leader is either very inclusive or a passionate visionary. But the best leaders could be both. Robert Noyce was a good example. He and Gordon Moore drove Intel forward based on a sharp vision of where semiconductor tech-
nology was heading, and they both were collegial and nonauthoritarian to a fault. Even Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, with all of their prickly intensity, knew how to build strong teams around them and inspire loyalty.

Brilliant individuals who could not collaborate tended to fail. Shockley Semiconductor disintegrated. Similarly, collaborative groups that lacked passionate and willful visionaries also failed. After inventing the transistor, Bell Labs went adrift. So did Apple after Jobs was ousted in 1985.

Most of the successful innovators and entrepreneurs in this book had one thing in common: they were product people. They cared about, and deeply understood, the engineering and design. They were not primarily marketers or salesmen or financial types; when such folks took over companies, it was often to the detriment of sustained innovation. “When the sales guys run the company, the product guys don’t matter so much, and a lot of them just turn off,” Jobs said. Larry Page felt the same: “The best leaders are those with the deepest understanding of the engineering and product design.”

Another lesson of the digital age is as old as Aristotle: “Man is a social animal.” What else could explain CB and ham radios or their successors, such as WhatsApp and Twitter? Almost every digital tool, whether designed for it or not, was commandeered by humans for a social purpose: to create communities, facilitate communication, collaborate on projects, and enable social networking. Even the personal computer, which was originally embraced as a tool for individual creativity, inevitably led to the rise of modems, online services, and eventually Facebook, Flickr, and Foursquare.

Machines, by contrast, are not social animals. They don’t join Facebook of their own volition nor seek companionship for its own sake. When Alan Turing asserted that machines would someday behave like humans, his critics countered that they would never be able to show affection or crave intimacy. To indulge Turing, perhaps we could program a machine to feign affection and pretend to seek intimacy, just as humans sometimes do. But Turing, more than almost anyone, would probably know the difference.

According to the second part of Aristotle’s quote, the nonsocial
nature of computers suggests that they are “either a beast or a god.” Actually, they are neither. Despite all of the proclamations of artificial intelligence engineers and Internet sociologists, digital tools have no personalities, intentions, or desires. They are what we make of them.

ADA’S LASTING LESSON: POETICAL SCIENCE

That leads to a final lesson, one that takes us back to Ada Lovelace. As she pointed out, in our symbiosis with machines we humans have brought one crucial element to the partnership: creativity. The history of the digital age—from Bush to Licklider to Engelbart to Jobs, from SAGE to Google to Wikipedia to Watson—has reinforced this idea. And as long as we remain a creative species, this is likely to hold true. “The machines will be more rational and analytic,” IBM’s research director John Kelly says. “People will provide judgment, intuition, empathy, a moral compass, and human creativity.”

We humans can remain relevant in an era of cognitive computing because we are able to think different, something that an algorithm, almost by definition, can’t master. We possess an imagination that, as Ada said, “brings together things, facts, ideas, conceptions in new, original, endless, ever-varying combinations.” We discern patterns and appreciate their beauty. We weave information into narratives. We are storytelling as well as social animals.

Human creativity involves values, intentions, aesthetic judgments, emotions, personal consciousness, and a moral sense. These are what the arts and humanities teach us—and why those realms are as valuable a part of education as science, technology, engineering, and math. If we mortals are to uphold our end of the human–computer symbiosis, if we are to retain a role as the creative partners of our machines, we must continue to nurture the wellsprings of our imagination and originality and humanity. That is what we bring to the party.

At his product launches, Steve Jobs would conclude with a slide, projected on the screen behind him, of street signs showing the intersection of the Liberal Arts and Technology. At his last such appearance, for the iPad 2 in 2011, he stood in front of that image and declared, “It’s in Apple’s DNA that technology alone is not enough—
that it’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the result that makes our heart sing.” That’s what made him the most creative technology innovator of our era.

The converse to this paean to the humanities, however, is also true. People who love the arts and humanities should endeavor to appreciate the beauties of math and physics, just as Ada did. Otherwise, they will be left as bystanders at the intersection of arts and science, where most digital-age creativity will occur. They will surrender control of that territory to the engineers.

Many people who celebrate the arts and the humanities, who applaud vigorously the tributes to their importance in our schools, will proclaim without shame (and sometimes even joke) that they don’t understand math or physics. They extoll the virtues of learning Latin, but they are clueless about how to write an algorithm or tell BASIC from C++, Python from Pascal. They consider people who don’t know *Hamlet* from *Macbeth* to be Philistines, yet they might merrily admit that they don’t know the difference between a gene and a chromosome, or a transistor and a capacitor, or an integral and a differential equation. These concepts may seem difficult. Yes, but so, too, is *Hamlet*. And like *Hamlet*, each of these concepts is beautiful. Like an elegant mathematical equation, they are expressions of the glories of the universe.

C. P. Snow was right about the need to respect both of “the two cultures,” science and the humanities. But even more important today is understanding how they intersect. Those who helped lead the technology revolution were people in the tradition of Ada, who could combine science and the humanities. From her father came a poetic streak and from her mother a mathematical one, and it instilled in her a love for what she called “poetical science.” Her father defended the Luddites who smashed mechanical looms, but Ada loved how punch cards instructed those looms to weave beautiful patterns, and she envisioned how this wondrous combination of art and technology could be manifest in computers.

The next phase of the Digital Revolution will bring even more new methods of marrying technology with the creative industries, such as media, fashion, music, entertainment, education, literature,
and the arts. Much of the first round of innovation involved pouring old wine—books, newspapers, opinion pieces, journals, songs, television shows, movies—into new digital bottles. But new platforms, services, and social networks are increasingly enabling fresh opportunities for individual imagination and collaborative creativity. Role-playing games and interactive plays are merging with collaborative forms of storytelling and augmented realities. This interplay between technology and the arts will eventually result in completely new forms of expression and formats of media.

This innovation will come from people who are able to link beauty to engineering, humanity to technology, and poetry to processors. In other words, it will come from the spiritual heirs of Ada Lovelace, creators who can flourish where the arts intersect with the sciences and who have a rebellious sense of wonder that opens them to the beauty of both.
I’ve Been To The Mountain Top
by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
April 3, 1968

Thank you very kindly, my friends. As I listened to Ralph Abernathy and his eloquent and generous introduction and then thought about myself, I wondered who he was talking about. It's always good to have your closest friend and associate to say something good about you. And Ralph Abernathy is the best friend that I have in the world. I'm delighted to see each of you here tonight in spite of a storm warning. You reveal that you are determined to go on anyhow.

Something is happening in Memphis; something is happening in our world. And you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of taking a kind of general and panoramic view of the whole of human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" I would take my mental flight by Egypt and I would watch God's children in their magnificent trek from the dark dungeons of Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land. And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there.

I would move on by Greece and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon. And I would watch them around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would go on, even to the great heyday of the Roman Empire. And I would see developments around there, through various emperors and leaders. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even come up to the day of the Renaissance, and get a quick picture of all that the Renaissance did for the cultural and aesthetic life of man. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even go by the way that the man for whom I am named had his habitat. And I would watch Martin Luther as he tacked his ninety-five theses on the door at the church of Wittenberg. But I wouldn't stop there.
I've Been To The Mountain Top

I would come on up even to 1863, and watch a vacillating President by the name of Abraham Lincoln finally come to the conclusion that he had to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even come up to the early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that we have nothing to fear but “fear itself.” But I wouldn't stop there.

Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the 20th century, I will be happy."
Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding.

Something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee -- the cry is always the same: "We want to be free."

And another reason that I'm happy to live in this period is that we have been forced to a point where we are going to have to grapple with the problems that men have been trying to grapple with through history, but the demands didn't force them to do it. Survival demands that we grapple with them. Men, for years now, have been talking about war and peace. But now, no longer can they just talk about it. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world; it's nonviolence or nonexistence. That is where we are today.

And also in the human rights revolution, if something isn't done, and done in a hurry, to bring the colored peoples of the world out of their long years of poverty, their long years of hurt and neglect, the whole world is doomed. Now, I'm just happy that God has allowed me to live in this period to see what is unfolding. And I'm happy that He's allowed me to be in Memphis.

I can remember -- I can remember when Negroes were just going around as Ralph has said, so often, scratching where they didn't itch, and laughing when they were not tickled. But that day is all over. We mean business now, and we are determined to gain our rightful place in God's world.
And that's all this whole thing is about. We aren't engaged in any negative protest and in any negative arguments with anybody. We are saying that we are determined to be men. We are determined to be people. We are saying -- We are saying that we are God's children. And that we are God's children, we don't have to live like we are forced to live.

Now, what does all of this mean in this great period of history? It means that we've got to stay together. We've got to stay together and maintain unity. You know, whenever Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite, favorite formula for doing it. What was that? He kept the slaves fighting among themselves. But whenever the slaves get together, something happens in Pharaoh's court, and he cannot hold the slaves in slavery. When the slaves get together, that's the beginning of getting out of slavery. Now let us maintain unity.

Secondly, let us keep the issues where they are. The issue is injustice. The issue is the refusal of Memphis to be fair and honest in its dealings with its public servants, who happen to be sanitation workers. Now, we've got to keep attention on that. That's always the problem with a little violence. You know what happened the other day, and the press dealt only with the window-breaking. I read the articles. They very seldom got around to mentioning the fact that one thousand, three hundred sanitation workers are on strike, and that Memphis is not being fair to them, and that Mayor Loeb is in dire need of a doctor. They didn't get around to that.

Now we're going to march again, and we've got to march again, in order to put the issue where it is supposed to be -- and force everybody to see that there are thirteen hundred of God's children here suffering, sometimes going hungry, going through dark and dreary nights wondering how this thing is going to come out. That's the issue. And we've got to say to the nation: We know how it's coming out. For when people get caught up with that which is right and they are willing to sacrifice for it, there is no stopping point short of victory.

We aren't going to let any mace stop us. We are masters in our nonviolent movement in disarming police forces; they don't know what to do. I've seen them so often. I remember in Birmingham, Alabama, when we were in that majestic struggle there, we would move out of the 16th Street Baptist Church day after day; by the hundreds we would move out. And Bull Connor would tell them to send the dogs forth, and they did come; but we just went before the dogs singing, "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around."
Bull Connor next would say, "Turn the fire hoses on." And as I said to you the other night, Bull Connor didn't know history. He knew a kind of physics that somehow didn't relate to the transphysics that we knew about. And that was the fact that there was a certain kind of fire that no water could put out. And we went before the fire hoses; we had known water. If we were Baptist or some other denominations, we had been immersed. If we were Methodist, and some others, we had been sprinkled, but we knew water. That couldn't stop us.

And we just went on before the dogs and we would look at them; and we'd go on before the water hoses and we would look at it, and we'd just go on singing "Over my head I see freedom in the air." And then we would be thrown in the paddy wagons, and sometimes we were stacked in there like sardines in a can. And they would throw us in, and old Bull would say, "Take 'em off," and they did; and we would just go in the paddy wagon singing, "We Shall Overcome." And every now and then we'd get in jail, and we'd see the jailers looking through the windows being moved by our prayers, and being moved by our words and our songs. And there was a power there, which Bull Connor couldn't adjust to; and so we ended up transforming Bull into a steer, and we won our struggle in Birmingham. Now we've got to go on in Memphis just like that. I call upon you to be with us when we go out Monday.

Now about injunctions: We have an injunction and we're going into court tomorrow morning to fight this illegal, unconstitutional injunction. All we say to America is, "Be true to what you said on paper." If I lived in China or even Russia, or any totalitarian country, maybe I could understand some of these illegal injunctions. Maybe I could understand the denial of certain basic First Amendment privileges, because they hadn't committed themselves to that over there. But somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for right. And so just as I say, we aren't going to let dogs or water hoses turn us around, we aren't going to let any injunction turn us around. We are going on.

We need all of you. And you know what's beautiful to me is to see all of these ministers of the Gospel. It's a marvelous picture. Who is it that is supposed to articulate the longings and aspirations of the people more than the preacher? Somehow the preacher must have a kind of fire shut up in his bones. And whenever injustice is around he tell it. Somehow the preacher must be an Amos, and saith, "When God speaks who can but prophesy?" Again with Amos, "Let
justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Somehow the preacher must say with Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me," and he's anointed me to deal with the problems of the poor." And I want to commend the preachers, under the leadership of these noble men: James Lawson, one who has been in this struggle for many years; he's been to jail for struggling; he's been kicked out of Vanderbilt University for this struggle, but he's still going on, fighting for the rights of his people. Reverend Ralph Jackson, Billy Kiles; I could just go right on down the list, but time will not permit. But I want to thank all of them. And I want you to thank them, because so often, preachers aren't concerned about anything but themselves. And I'm always happy to see a relevant ministry.

It's all right to talk about "long white robes over yonder," in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here! It's all right to talk about "streets flowing with milk and honey," but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day. It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do.

Now the other thing we'll have to do is this: Always anchor our external direct action with the power of economic withdrawal. Now, we are poor people. Individually, we are poor when you compare us with white society in America. We are poor. Never stop and forget that collectively -- that means all of us together -- collectively we are richer than all the nations in the world, with the exception of nine. Did you ever think about that? After you leave the United States, Soviet Russia, Great Britain, West Germany, France, and I could name the others, the American Negro collectively is richer than most nations of the world. We have an annual income of more than thirty billion dollars a year, which is more than all of the exports of the United States, and more than the national budget of Canada. Did you know that? That's power right there, if we know how to pool it.

We don't have to argue with anybody. We don't have to curse and go around acting bad with our words. We don't need any bricks and bottles. We don't need any Molotov cocktails. We just need to go around to these stores, and to these massive industries in our country, and say, "God sent us by here, to say to you that you're not treating his children right. And we've come by here to ask you to make the first item on your agenda fair treatment, where God's children are concerned. Now, if
you are not prepared to do that, we do have an agenda that we must follow. And our agenda calls for withdrawing economic support from you."

And so, as a result of this, we are asking you tonight, to go out and tell your neighbors not to buy Coca-Cola in Memphis. Go by and tell them not to buy Sealtest milk. Tell them not to buy -- what is the other bread? -- Wonder Bread. And what is the other bread company, Jesse? Tell them not to buy Hart's bread. As Jesse Jackson has said, up to now, only the garbage men have been feeling pain; now we must kind of redistribute the pain. We are choosing these companies because they haven't been fair in their hiring policies; and we are choosing them because they can begin the process of saying they are going to support the needs and the rights of these men who are on strike. And then they can move on town -- downtown and tell Mayor Loeb to do what is right.

But not only that, we've got to strengthen black institutions. I call upon you to take your money out of the banks downtown and deposit your money in Tri-State Bank. We want a "bank-in" movement in Memphis. Go by the savings and loan association. I'm not asking you something that we don't do ourselves at SCLC. Judge Hooks and others will tell you that we have an account here in the savings and loan association from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. We are telling you to follow what we are doing. Put your money there. You have six or seven black insurance companies here in the city of Memphis. Take out your insurance there. We want to have an "insurance-in."

Now these are some practical things that we can do. We begin the process of building a greater economic base. And at the same time, we are putting pressure where it really hurts. I ask you to follow through here.

Now, let me say as I move to my conclusion that we've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We've got to see it through. And when we have our march, you need to be there. If it means leaving work, if it means leaving school -- be there. Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike. But either we go up together, or we go down together.

Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness. One day a man came to Jesus, and he wanted to raise some questions about some vital matters of life. At points he wanted to trick Jesus, and show him that he knew a little more than Jesus knew and throw him off base....
Now that question could have easily ended up in a philosophical and theological debate. But Jesus immediately pulled that question from mid-air, and placed it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho. And he talked about a certain man, who fell among thieves. You remember that a Levite and a priest passed by on the other side. They didn't stop to help him. And finally a man of another race came by. He got down from his beast, decided not to be compassionate by proxy. But he got down with him, administered first aid, and helped the man in need. Jesus ended up saying, this was the good man, this was the great man, because he had the capacity to project the "I" into the "thou," and to be concerned about his brother.

Now you know, we use our imagination a great deal to try to determine why the priest and the Levite didn't stop. At times we say they were busy going to a church meeting, an ecclesiastical gathering, and they had to get on down to Jerusalem so they wouldn't be late for their meeting. At other times we would speculate that there was a religious law that "One who was engaged in religious ceremonials was not to touch a human body twenty-four hours before the ceremony." And every now and then we begin to wonder whether maybe they were not going down to Jerusalem -- or down to Jericho, rather to organize a "Jericho Road Improvement Association." That's a possibility. Maybe they felt that it was better to deal with the problem from the causal root, rather than to get bogged down with an individual effect.

But I'm going to tell you what my imagination tells me. It's possible that those men were afraid. You see, the Jericho road is a dangerous road. I remember when Mrs. King and I were first in Jerusalem. We rented a car and drove from Jerusalem down to Jericho. And as soon as we got on that road, I said to my wife, "I can see why Jesus used this as the setting for his parable." It's a winding, meandering road. It's really conducive for ambushing. You start out in Jerusalem, which is about 1200 miles -- or rather 1200 feet above sea level. And by the time you get down to Jericho, fifteen or twenty minutes later, you're about 2200 feet below sea level. That's a dangerous road. In the days of Jesus it came to be known as the "Bloody Pass." And you know, it's possible that the priest and the Levite looked over that man on the ground and wondered if the robbers were still around. Or it's possible that they felt that the man on the ground was merely faking. And he was acting like he had been robbed and hurt, in order to seize them over there, lure them there for quick and easy seizure. And so the first question that the priest asked -- the first question that the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But then the Good Samaritan came by. And he reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"
That's the question before you tonight. Not, "If I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to my job." Not, "If I stop to help the sanitation workers what will happen to all of the hours that I usually spend in my office every day and every week as a pastor?" The question is not, "If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?" The question is, "If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?" That's the question.

Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation. And I want to thank God, once more, for allowing me to be here with you.

You know, several years ago, I was in New York City autographing the first book that I had written. And while sitting there autographing books, a demented black woman came up. The only question I heard from her was, "Are you Martin Luther King?" And I was looking down writing, and I said, "Yes." And the next minute I felt something beating on my chest. Before I knew it I had been stabbed by this demented woman. I was rushed to Harlem Hospital. It was a dark Saturday afternoon. And that blade had gone through, and the X-rays revealed that the tip of the blade was on the edge of my aorta, the main artery. And once that's punctured, your drowned in your own blood -- that's the end of you.

It came out in the New York Times the next morning, that if I had merely sneezed, I would have died. Well, about four days later, they allowed me, after the operation, after my chest had been opened, and the blade had been taken out, to move around in the wheel chair in the hospital. They allowed me to read some of the mail that came in, and from all over the states and the world, kind letters came in. I read a few, but one of them I will never forget. I had received one from the President and the Vice-President. I've forgotten what those telegrams said. I'd received a visit and a letter from the Governor of New York, but I've forgotten what that letter said. But there was another letter that came from a little girl, a young girl who was a student at the White Plains High School. And I looked at that letter, and I'll never forget it. It said simply,

\textit{Dear Dr. King,}

\textit{I am a ninth-grade student at the White Plains High School.}"

And she said,
While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I'm a white girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. And I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy that you didn't sneeze.

And I want to say tonight -- I want to say tonight that I too am happy that I didn't sneeze. Because if I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1960, when students all over the South started sitting-in at lunch counters. And I knew that as they were sitting in, they were really standing up for the best in the American dream, and taking the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1961, when we decided to take a ride for freedom and ended segregation in inter-state travel.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1962, when Negroes in Albany, Georgia, decided to straighten their backs up. And whenever men and women straighten their backs up, they are going somewhere, because a man can't ride your back unless it is bent.

If I had sneezed -- If I had sneezed I wouldn't have been here in 1963, when the black people of Birmingham, Alabama, aroused the conscience of this nation, and brought into being the Civil Rights Bill.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have had a chance later that year, in August, to try to tell America about a dream that I had had.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been down in Selma, Alabama, to see the great Movement there.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been in Memphis to see a community rally around those brothers and sisters who are suffering.

I'm so happy that I didn't sneeze.

And they were telling me -- Now, it doesn't matter, now. It really doesn't matter what happens now. I left Atlanta this morning, and as we got started on the plane, there were six of us. The pilot said over the public address system, "We are sorry
for the delay, but we have Dr. Martin Luther King on the plane. And to be sure that all of the bags were checked, and to be sure that nothing would be wrong with on the plane, we had to check out everything carefully. And we've had the plane protected and guarded all night."

And then I got into Memphis. And some began to say the threats, or talk about the threats that were out. What would happen to me from some of our sick white brothers?

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!

And so I'm happy, tonight.

I'm not worried about anything.

I do not fear any man!

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!!
FRIDAY, JULY 31

“CALL TO ACTION”
ABOUT once a month I run across a person who radiates an inner light. These people can be in any walk of life. They seem deeply good. They listen well. They make you feel funny and valued. You often catch them looking after other people and as they do so their laugh is musical and their manner is infused with gratitude. They are not thinking about what wonderful work they are doing. They are not thinking about themselves at all.

When I meet such a person it brightens my whole day. But I confess I often have a sadder thought: It occurs to me that I’ve achieved a decent level of career success, but I have not achieved that. I have not achieved that generosity of spirit, or that depth of character.

A few years ago I realized that I wanted to be a bit more like those people. I realized that if I wanted to do that I was going to have to work harder to save my own soul. I was going to have to have the sort of moral adventures that produce that kind of goodness. I was going to have to be better at balancing my life.

It occurred to me that there were two sets of virtues, the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the skills you bring to the marketplace. The eulogy virtues are the ones that are talked about at your funeral — whether you were kind, brave, honest or faithful. Were you capable of deep love?

We all know that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé ones. But our culture and our educational systems spend more time teaching the skills and strategies you need for career success than the qualities you need to radiate that sort of inner light. Many of us are clearer on how to build an external career than on how to build inner character.

But if you live for external achievement, years pass and the deepest parts of you go unexplored and unstructured. You lack a moral vocabulary. It is easy to slip into a self-satisfied moral mediocrity. You grade yourself on a forgiving curve. You figure as long as you are not obviously hurting anybody and people seem to like you, you must be O.K. But you live with an unconscious boredom, separated from the deepest meaning of life and the highest moral joys. Gradually, a humiliating gap opens between your actual self and your desired self, between you and those incandescent souls you sometimes meet.

So a few years ago I set out to discover how those deeply good people got that way. I didn’t know if I could follow their road to character (I’m a pundit, more or less paid to appear smarter and better than I really am). But I at least wanted to know what the road looked like.

I came to the conclusion that wonderful people are made, not born — that the people I admired had achieved an unfakeable inner virtue, built slowly from specific moral and spiritual accomplishments.
If we wanted to be gimmicky, we could say these accomplishments amounted to a moral bucket list, the experiences one should have on the way toward the richest possible inner life. Here, quickly, are some of them:

**THE HUMILITY SHIFT** We live in the culture of the Big Me. The meritocracy wants you to promote yourself. Social media wants you to broadcast a highlight reel of your life. Your parents and teachers were always telling you how wonderful you were.

But all the people I’ve ever deeply admired are profoundly honest about their own weaknesses. They have identified their core sin, whether it is selfishness, the desperate need for approval, cowardice, hardheartedness or whatever. They have traced how that core sin leads to the behavior that makes them feel ashamed. They have achieved a profound humility, which has best been defined as an intense self-awareness from a position of other-centeredness.

**SELF-DEFEAT** External success is achieved through competition with others. But character is built during the confrontation with your own weakness. Dwight Eisenhower, for example, realized early on that his core sin was his temper. He developed a moderate, cheerful exterior because he knew he needed to project optimism and confidence to lead. He did silly things to tame his anger. He took the names of the people he hated, wrote them down on slips of paper and tore them up and threw them in the garbage. Over a lifetime of self-confrontation, he developed a mature temperament. He made himself strong in his weakest places.

**THE DEPENDENCY LEAP** Many people give away the book “Oh, the Places You’ll Go!” as a graduation gift. This book suggests that life is an autonomous journey. We master certain skills and experience adventures and certain challenges on our way to individual success. This individualist worldview suggests that character is this little iron figure of willpower inside. But people on the road to character understand that no person can achieve self-mastery on his or her own. Individual will, reason and compassion are not strong enough to consistently defeat selfishness, pride and self-deception. We all need redemptive assistance from outside.

People on this road see life as a process of commitment making. Character is defined by how deeply rooted you are. Have you developed deep connections that hold you up in times of challenge and push you toward the good? In the realm of the intellect, a person of character has achieved a settled philosophy about fundamental things. In the realm of emotion, she is embedded in a web of unconditional loves. In the realm of action, she is committed to tasks that can’t be completed in a single lifetime.

**ENERGIZING LOVE** Dorothy Day led a disorganized life when she was young: drinking, carousing, a suicide attempt or two, following her desires, unable to find direction. But the birth of her daughter changed her. She wrote of that birth, “If I had written the greatest book, composed the greatest symphony, painted the most beautiful painting or carved the most exquisite figure I could not have felt the more exalted creator than I did when they placed my child in my arms.”

That kind of love decenters the self. It reminds you that your true riches are in another. Most of all, this love electrifies. It puts you in a state of need and makes it delightful to serve what you love. Day’s love for her daughter spilled outward and upward. As she wrote, “No human creature could receive or contain so vast a flood of love and joy as I often felt after the birth of my child. With this came the need to worship, to adore.”
She made unshakable commitments in all directions. She became a Catholic, started a radical newspaper, opened settlement houses for the poor and lived among the poor, embracing shared poverty as a way to build community, to not only do good, but be good. This gift of love overcame, sometimes, the natural self-centeredness all of us feel.

**THE CALL WITHIN THE CALL** We all go into professions for many reasons: money, status, security. But some people have experiences that turn a career into a calling. These experiences quiet the self. All that matters is living up to the standard of excellence inherent in their craft.

Frances Perkins was a young woman who was an activist for progressive causes at the start of the 20th century. She was polite and a bit genteel. But one day she stumbled across the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire, and watched dozens of garment workers hurl themselves to their deaths rather than be burned alive. That experience shamed her moral sense and purified her ambition. It was her call within a call.

After that, she turned herself into an instrument for the cause of workers’ rights. She was willing to work with anybody, compromise with anybody, push through hesitation. She even changed her appearance so she could become a more effective instrument for the movement. She became the first woman in a United States cabinet, under Franklin D. Roosevelt, and emerged as one of the great civic figures of the 20th century.

**THE CONSCIENCE LEAP** In most lives there’s a moment when people strip away all the branding and status symbols, all the prestige that goes with having gone to a certain school or been born into a certain family. They leap out beyond the utilitarian logic and crash through the barriers of their fears.

The novelist George Eliot (her real name was Mary Ann Evans) was a mess as a young woman, emotionally needy, falling for every man she met and being rejected. Finally, in her mid-30s she met a guy named George Lewes. Lewes was estranged from his wife, but legally he was married. If Eliot went with Lewes she would be labeled an adulterer by society. She’d lose her friends, be cut off by her family. It took her a week to decide, but she went with Lewes. “Light and easily broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with such ties do not act as I have done,” she wrote.

She chose well. Her character stabilized. Her capacity for empathetic understanding expanded. She lived in a state of steady, devoted love with Lewes, the kind of second love that comes after a person is older, scarred a bit and enmeshed in responsibilities. He served her and helped her become one of the greatest novelists of any age. Together they turned neediness into constancy.

Commencement speakers are always telling young people to follow their passions. Be true to yourself. This is a vision of life that begins with self and ends with self. But people on the road to inner light do not find their vocations by asking, what do I want from life? They ask, what is life asking of me? How can I match my intrinsic talent with one of the world’s deep needs?

Their lives often follow a pattern of defeat, recognition, redemption. They have moments of pain and suffering. But they turn those moments into occasions of radical self-understanding — by keeping a journal or making art. As Paul Tillich put it, suffering introduces you to yourself and reminds you that you are not the person you thought you were.
The people on this road see the moments of suffering as pieces of a larger narrative. They are not really living for happiness, as it is conventionally defined. They see life as a moral drama and feel fulfilled only when they are enmeshed in a struggle on behalf of some ideal.

This is a philosophy for stumblers. The stumbler scuffs through life, a little off balance. But the stumbler faces her imperfect nature with unvarnished honesty, with the opposite of squeamishness. Recognizing her limitations, the stumbler at least has a serious foe to overcome and transcend. The stumbler has an outstretched arm, ready to receive and offer assistance. Her friends are there for deep conversation, comfort and advice.

External ambitions are never satisfied because there’s always something more to achieve. But the stumblers occasionally experience moments of joy. There’s joy in freely chosen obedience to organizations, ideas and people. There’s joy in mutual stumbling. There’s an aesthetic joy we feel when we see morally good action, when we run across someone who is quiet and humble and good, when we see that however old we are, there’s lots to do ahead.

The stumbler doesn’t build her life by being better than others, but by being better than she used to be. Unexpectedly, there are transcendent moments of deep tranquility. For most of their lives their inner and outer ambitions are strong and in balance. But eventually, at moments of rare joy, career ambitions pause, the ego rests, the stumbler looks out at a picnic or dinner or a valley and is overwhelmed by a feeling of limitless gratitude, and an acceptance of the fact that life has treated her much better than she deserves.

Those are the people we want to be.
Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would otherwise never have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in ones favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe’s couplets:

“Whatever you can do, or dream you can ... begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.”

W.H. Murray was a Scottish mountaineer and a former prisoner of war in World War II.