Simply locate yourself

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Imagine I offer you the following bet: I'll roll a fair ten-sided die. If it comes up 1-9, you win a million dollars. If it comes up 0, you lose $10,000. (If you're significantly richer or poorer than the median person, adjust the numbers up or down accordingly, such that winning is very great and losing hurts a lot, but is manageable.) Imagine that you take the bet, because those odds are ridiculously in your favor. Now imagine that I roll the die, and you watch it rolling, and rolling, and rolling, until it starts to settle, and then it settles... on 0.

Imagine the sinking feeling you might get, as you see the zero, and realize that you have to give me ten thousand dollars. Maybe you suddenly feel uncomfortable. Maybe you're unwilling to meet my gaze. Maybe you're angry, or slightly sick to your stomach. Maybe some part of you is pushing against reality, trying to deny it, willing the past to *change.*

Now imagine a second bet. This time, imagine a world that has figured out cloning and cryonics and space travel. The bet works as follows: I put you to sleep, and then I separate you into ten identical copies (none of which have any more claim to being the original than any other), and then I put them all into stasis. Your possessions are replicated ten ways, and the ten yous are put on ten ships to ten different

(already-colonized) planets. On nine of those planets, the local you will be placed in a room with blue walls, and given your possessions along with a million extra dollars. On one of those planets, the local you will be placed in a room with red walls, and will have $10,000 removed from their possessions. Then all ten yous will be awoken. Thus, nine copies of you will gain a million dollars, and one copy of you will lose ten thousand dollars.

Imagine that you understand this procedure, and consent to it. You're put to sleep, and split into ten copies, put into stasis, sent to ten planets, and revived from stasis. You wake slowly, and haven't opened your eyes yet. You know that nine yous will wake in a blue room and find themselves rich, and one you will wake in a red room and find themselves poor, and you don't know which you you are. You open your eyes, and the walls are... red.

In one sense, you've lost exactly the same sort of bet as the first bet. But there's a very different way that you might be feeling. In the second bet, instead of feeling a sinking feeling and a desire to push against reality, you may simply nod, and say "ah, I'm the me in the red room."

Instead of treating the red walls as an unwelcome message about reality failing to go the way you wanted, you might treat them as a simple indicator of *where you ended up.* Instead of feeling despair, you may simply feel like you've figured out which you you are.

Most people seem to treat most of their observations as Bet 1 type observations: they treat their observations as information about how the universe *turned out to be,* which may be quite a bit worse than they were hoping it would turn out. They feel despair, or resistance, or victimized by an unfair universe. Part of them tries to tolerify, some part of them flinches away from facing reality, and so on.

There's another way to treat your observations. It's the Bet 2 way: treat them simply as information about *where you ended up.*

Imagine, on the one hand, Bet 1 as described above. Now imagine the same bet, but with a special die that generates ten copies of you (in different branches of the multiverse that are identical except for the number this die shows, separated such that the universes within them can never interact), such that nine of them will win a million dollars and one will lose ten thousand dollars.

Notice how someone who loses the former bet may try to push against reality, while someone who loses the latter bet has a much easier time simply saying "Huh, I guess I'm the one in the 0 branch. Such was the price for nine out of ten multiverse branches to have rich versions of me, and now I will pay it."

But these are, more or less, the same bet. Why do they feel so different?

I say, *always* treat your bets like the latter sort of bet. Stop struggling against the bad news. Treat it not as bad news about how reality went, but rather treat it as you would treat information about *where in the multiverse you ended up.* Try being a new homunculus. Look around you and figure out where you just landed, regardless of where past you thought they should have landed. Often, the place will be in worse shape than past-you was expecting, but that has little bearing on what you do next (aside from updating your current anticipations such that future-you is less wrong).

Imagine you're a new homunculus that has just landed in a branch of the multiverse where things were going poorly— maybe you recently lost social status, or made a choice that had worse effects than you expected, just before the new homunculus teleported in. This is an uncomfortable place to find yourself in! What do you do next?

Would you immediately throw a fit? What's the point of that? You just teleported into this part of the multiverse; how is struggling against the past supposed to help you? This is part of what detaching the grim-o-meter is all about: if you found yourself in a grim part of the multiverse, what would you do? Would you go around frowning and being dour all day? No? Because that sounds silly? Then there's no need to do that here!

Your observations are not messages that the world is full of terrible unfair luck. Your observations are simply indicators as to *where you are.* They're the data that you need to locate yourself.

Spoiler alert, you're currently located in a fairly precarious portion of the multiverse, where sentient beings are suffering and dying, and the future is hanging by a thread. It's worth cleaning this place up a bit, I think. But don't suffer about the poor state of affairs! Consider: if you *were* teleported to a precarious branch of the multiverse, what would you do upon arriving? Would you make sure to have a good time anyway? Would you do whatever you could to help out? Well then you're in luck! You *did* just arrive at a precarious part of the multiverse, and those are both things that you can do here.

When you get bad news, don't suffer over it. It's not unfair, it's not passing judgement, it's not a signal that everything sucks, it's not making the future worse. It's just telling you where you live.

And recently, you've ended up in the same part of the multiverse as I have. It is fairly nice, as parts of the multiverse go: it supports life, and things are better now than they were in many of the past points along our timeline. Nevertheless, it does look a bit precarious, and it sure does need some tidying up.

So, let's get to work!