

THERE IS A CONTRADICTION IN WANTING TO BE PERFECTLY SECURE IN A UNIVERSE WHOSE VERY NATURE IS MOMENTARINESS AND FLUIDITY. BUT THE CONTRADICTION LIES A LITTLE DEEPER THAN THE MERE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE DESIRE FOR SECURITY AND THE FACT OF CHANGE. IF I WANT TO BE SECURE, THAT IS, PROTECTED FROM THE FLUX OF LIFE, I AM WANTING TO BE SEPARATE FROM LIFE. YET IT IS THIS VERY SENSE OF SEPARATENESS WHICH MAKES ME FEEL INSECURE. TO BE SECURE MEANS TO ISOLATE AND FORTIFY THE “I,” BUT IT IS JUST THE FEELING OF BEING AN ISOLATED “I” WHICH MAKES ME FEEL LONELY AND AFRAID. IN OTHER WORDS, THE MORE SECURITY I CAN GET, THE MORE I SHALL WANT.

TO PUT IT STILL MORE PLAINLY: THE DESIRE FOR SECURITY AND THE FEELING OF INSECURITY ARE THE SAME THING. TO HOLD YOUR BREATH IS TO LOSE YOUR BREATH. A SOCIETY BASED ON THE QUEST FOR SECURITY IS NOTHING BUT A BREATH-RETENTION CONTEST IN WHICH EVERYONE IS AS TAUT AS A DRUM AND AS PURPLE AS A BEET.

-ALAN WATTS

ORIGINALITY

The starting point [of originality] is curiosity: pondering why the default exists in the first place. We're driven to question defaults when we experience *vuja de*, the opposite of *déjà vu*.

Déjà vu occurs when we encounter something new, but it feels as if we've seen it before. *Vuja de* is the reverse — we face something familiar, but we see it with a fresh perspective that enables us to gain new insights into old problems. When we become curious about the dissatisfying defaults in our world, we begin to recognize that most of them have social origins: Rules and systems were created by people. And that awareness gives us the courage to contemplate how we can change them.

-Adam Grant

Bruce Lee:

We can see through others only when we see through ourselves. Lack of self-awareness renders us transparent; a soul that knows itself is opaque. To become different from what we are, we must have some awareness of what we are... Yet it is remarkable that the very people who are most self-dissatisfied and crave most for a new identity have the least self-awareness. They have turned away from an unwanted self and hence never had a good look at it. The result is that those most dissatisfied can neither dissimulate nor attain a real change of heart. They are transparent, and their unwanted qualities persist through all attempts at self-dramatization and self-transformation.

Looked at from the perspective of the everyday world of appearances, the everywhere of the thinking ego-summoning into its presence whatever it pleases from any distance in time or space, which thought traverses with a velocity greater than light's – is a nowhere. And since this nowhere is by no means identical with the twofold nowhere from which we suddenly appear at birth and into which almost as suddenly we disappear in death, it might be conceived only as the Void. And the absolute void can be a limiting boundary concept; though not inconceivable, it is unthinkable. Obviously, if there is absolutely nothing, there can be nothing to think about. That we are in possession of these limiting boundary concepts enclosing our thought within (insurmountable) walls – and the notion of an absolute beginning or an absolute end is among them – does not tell us more than that we are indeed finite beings.

Hannah Arendt

ALICE WALKER

“When I was three or four, I broke a jar, and given that I had siblings I could have said that they had broken it, or I could have said that it had slipped. I remember that he asked me if I had done it, and I looked at him and I thought, gee, this is a person I really love and he would be happy if I hadn’t broken this thing. On the other hand he was looking at me with such expectancy that I found myself coming up to meet his expectancy with a real need to express the truth, because that’s the most wonderful feeling there is. So I said, “Yes, I broke the jar.” His response was not to fuss and not to spank me or anything but rather to beam this incredible love in my direction, and that was his way of teaching me about telling the truth and what is possible. It is possible that if you tell the truth not only will you be delivered yourself from the prison of untruth, but the person who hears the truth will also be opened and can be delighted.”