

# Highs

and

# Lows

Direct experience comes from nature and man interacting with each other. In this interaction, human energy gathers, is released, dammed up, frustrated and victorious.

There are rhythmic beats of want and fulfillment, pulses of doing and being withheld from doing.

*In a world of mere flux, change would not be cumulative; it would not move toward a close. Stability and rest would have no being. Equally it is true, however, that a world that is finished, ended, would have no traits of suspense and crisis, and would offer no opportunity for resolution.*

*In one wholly perturbed, conditions could not even be struggled with. In a world made after the pattern of ours, moments of fulfillment punctuate experience with rhythmically enjoyed intervals.*

*All interactions that effect stability and order in the whirling flux of change are rhythms. There is ebb and flow, systole and diastole ordered change... Contrast of lack and fullness, of struggle and achievement, of adjustment after consummated irregularity, form the drama in which action, feeling, and meaning are one. The outcome is balance and counterbalance.*

*Where everything is already complete, there is no fulfillment... The live being recurrently loses and reestablishes equilibrium with his surroundings. The moment of passage from disturbance into harmony is that of intensest life. In a finished world, sleep and waking could not be distinguished.*

# Originality

## PAIN

The way to make use of physical pain. When suffering no matter what degree of pain, when almost the entire soul is inwardly crying "Make it stop, I can bear no more," a part of the soul, even though it be an infinitesimally small part, should say: "I consent that this should continue throughout the whole of time, if the divine wisdom so ordains." The soul is then split in two, for the physically sensitive part of the soul is — at least sometimes — unable to consent to pain. This splitting in two of the soul is even sharper than the physical pain that causes it.

— Simone Weil

Originality involves introducing and advancing an idea that's relatively unusual within a particular domain, and that has the potential to improve it. Originality itself starts with creativity generating a concept that is both novel and useful. But it doesn't stop there. Originalists are people who take the initiative to make their vision a reality. The hallmark of originality is rejecting the default or exploring whether a better option exists.

The starting point (of originality) is curiosity: pondering why the default exists in the first place. We're driven to question defaults when our experiences vary, the opposite of *diff-er-ence*. *Diff-er-ence* occurs when we encounter something new, but it feels as if we've seen it before. *Waj-ide* is the reverse — we face something familiar, but we see it with a fresh perspective that enables us to gain new insights into a old problem.

[...]

When we become curious about the dissatisfying defaults in our world, we begin to recognize that most of them have social origins: habits and systems were created by people. And that awareness gives us the courage to contemplate how we can change them. Although child prodigies are often rich in both talent and ambition, what holds them back from moving the world forward is that they don't learn to be original. As they grow up in Carnegie Hall, win the science Olympics, and become chess champions, something tragic happens: practice makes perfect, but it doesn't make new. The gifted learn to play magnificent Mozart melodies and beautiful Beethoven symphonies but never compose their own original notes.

Adam Grant

# Balance

**L**ife grows when a temporary falling out is a transition to a more extensive balance of the energies of the organism with those of the conditions under which it lives. These biological commonplaces are something more than that; they reach to the roots of the esthetic in experience. The world is full of things that are indifferent and even hostile to life; the very processes by which life is maintained tend to throw it out of gear with its surrounding.

**N**evertheless, if life continues and if in continuing it expands, there is an overcoming of factors of opposition and conflict; there is a transformation of them into differentiated aspects of a higher power and more significant life... Here in germ are balance and harmony attained through rhythm. Equilibrium comes about not mechanically and inertly but out of, and because of, tension... changes interlock and sustain one another. Wherever there is this coherence there is endurance.

John Dewey

