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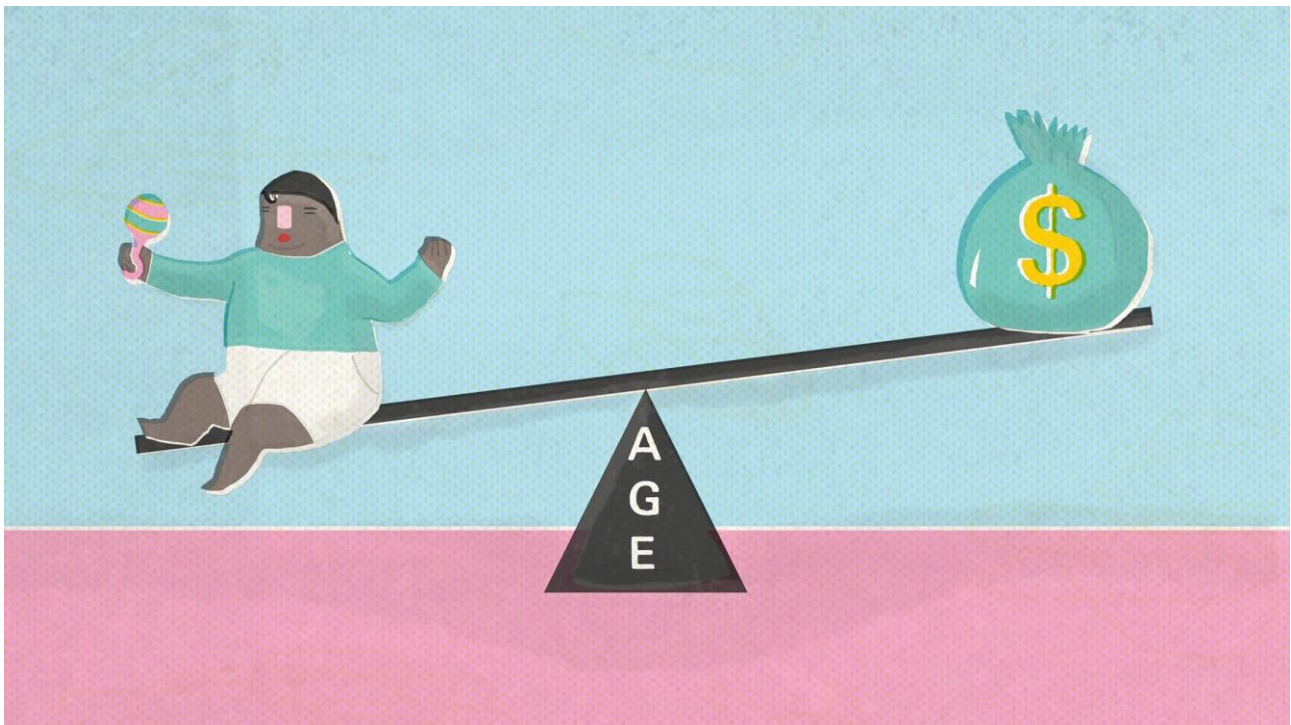


1843 magazine

Oct 6th 2017 | 617words | ★★☆☆☆ >

What's the best age to have a baby?

To maximise their lifetime earnings, women should aim to have their first child between the age of 31 and 34



Babies are expensive – for women more than for men. The combination of maternity leave and childcare responsibilities, the burden of which, fairly or not, tends to fall on the mother, makes the career ladder dangerously greasy. A study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that while the difference in wages between men and women was a mere crack in their 20s, it widened to a chasm in their 30s. Twelve years after their first child was born, British women are paid on average 33% less than men of the same age.

But while women may feel powerless to change childcare policy and entrenched social norms, they might be able to boost their earnings by waiting to conceive until they are more

established in their careers. A study published in 2016 based on data from Denmark found that although all mothers experienced a short-term loss in earnings when they had a child, women who were 31 or older when they had their first baby had a higher lifetime income than women who had a baby before the age of 31. In fact, the study concluded that women who waited until 31 to have a child earned more over their entire careers than women without children.

The study's authors suggest that older women, who tend to be more highly skilled, are harder to replace in the workplace – so companies may bend over backwards to support them. Older women may also be more attached to their careers, and less willing to give them up. And they tend to earn more so are better placed financially to offload their children on other people during the day.

Yet according to this study, there's not much to be gained financially from delaying having children until after the age of 34. College-educated women who have their first child between the ages of 31 and 34 earn on average 13% more than women without children. However, women who have their first child between the ages of 34 and 37 earn only 2% more than women without children.

So, setting aside a couple of caveats – the researchers looked only at women with one child, and Denmark has generous childcare policies – the study implies that the best time, career-wise, to have your first child is between the ages of 31 and 34. Having a child before the age of 25 is particularly impoverishing: the study found that it reduces lifetime income by two years' worth of earnings. The reason, the researchers suggest, is that people's earnings these days are determined largely by their human capital, which accumulates at a higher rate when people are younger. So taking time off work in your 20s will have a bigger impact on earnings than taking time off in your 30s. That chimes with the researchers' finding that college-educated women suffer the biggest disadvantage: they have the highest potential earnings, so their incomes are hit hardest by taking time off to have a baby in their 20s.

Given that female fertility is already declining by the age of 30 and the risk of conceiving a child with Down's syndrome is rising, 31-34 seems the optimal age for a woman to produce

her first child. But she should also consider the age of her partner. A recent study by Harvard Medical School found that there was a 62% drop in sperm supply between men in their early 30s and those in their early 40s, making conception harder. The reasons for the drop are not yet known, but it does suggest the pulling power of sugar daddies may be on the wane. ■



Health & Fitness

14 August 2022 | 546 words | ★★☆☆☆ >

How to Exercise When It's Really Hot Outside

As a heatwave is under way in the UK, we look at precautions to take when running in harsh sunlight and high temperatures



You need to adjust your workouts in extreme temperatures

Although exercising in the fresh air might seem like a good idea, we all need to take extra care when working out al fresco during a heatwave.

With the UK set to see more hot weather this weekend, we've outlined some tips and tricks to bear in mind during your workouts in the summer sunshine.

According to personal trainer Matt Roberts, who has worked with David and Samantha Cameron: “Regardless of how fit you are, exercising outside for longer than 45 minutes to an hour will pose a significant threat to your body when it’s hot outside.

“Taking on fluid is probably the most fundamental part of exercising in the sun,” says Matt. “As well as starting off hydrated, within the first half an hour you need to drink about half a litre of water and thereafter keep topping yourself up. If you’re cycling, take a large bottle of water with you and plan a route where you know you’ll be able to top up your bottle. If you’re running, take enough water with you and don’t run in remote areas where you’ll be unable to top up.”

Shane Collins, founder of Circuit Society, agrees about being cautious with your outdoor workouts. “With Friday’s temperatures set to skyrocket to 30 degrees, your immediate thought would be to take your usual indoor workout, outdoors to make the most of the rays, right? However, generally, when the heat index is over 32 degrees, you should use extreme caution when heading outdoors for activity or intense exercise.”

He goes on to say that “when temperatures are at a high, there’s an increased risk of serious heart-related illnesses” – as well as the possibility of experiencing nausea, vomiting, weakness, headache, fainting, sweating and cold, clammy skin. Plus, heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke.

Dr Andrew Murray, a brand ambassador for Merrell who has won races in the Sahara Desert and the Gobi Desert (and became the first to run across the Namib desert in the Namibian summer), says you should be hydrated prior to starting exercise (aim for clear or straw coloured urine), and drink cold fluid during your run or cycle if you are thirsty. Fluid that has electrolytes and carbohydrates are ideal.

“Don’t overdress,” says Dr Murray. “I wear light coloured loose fitting clothing. I will also wear sunscreen, and a buff around my wrist, to wipe excess sweat away. Don't think about

personal bests and I also try and run on the shady side of the road if there is one.”

Roberts says exercising first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening is also a good idea: “That’s not to say you can’t run in the midday sun if you want to, or if that’s where your lunch hour falls, but you’ll wear out and dehydrate much faster in direct, harsh sunlight.”

Overall, the experts say the key to exercising during a heatwave is to dress appropriately, drink plenty, avoid overheating and listen to your body. “Regulate heat by running slower; you control the heat you generate,” says Prof Andy Lane, professor of sport and learning at the University of Wolverhampton, who has run 15 marathons. “You will be breathing harder, and your heart rate will be higher for a similar speed in cooler conditions.” ■



United States

Aug 18th 2022 | 660 words | ★★☆☆☆ >

Animal welfare

If pigs could fly

Lobbying and litigation frustrate moves to give farm animals more space



Meat production in America can be a controversial topic. The country has one of the highest meat-consumption rates per person in the world. For many the availability of cheap ribs, steaks and bacon is almost a basic right. But unease over the cramped conditions of many farm animals has grown. A legal row in Massachusetts shows the deep difficulty of reform.

In 2016 voters in the Bay State backed a ballot initiative to overhaul farm-animal welfare. The “Massachusetts Minimum Size Requirements for Farm Animal Containment”, also known as Question 3, banned the “cruel” confinement of chickens, pigs and calves, defined as housing that “prevents the animal from lying down, standing up, fully extending the

animal's limbs or turning around freely". The measure passed with 78% support, and on August 15th the new pork rules were due to come into force. But a last-minute delay stopped them, perhaps indefinitely.

A tangled web of lobbying, litigation and amendments around Question 3 has been spinning for nearly six years. Last December Governor Charlie Baker signed a bill which expanded the regulations for chickens to cover all egg products but also reduced the space requirement, from 1.5 square feet (0.14 square metres) per hen to just 1 square foot, provided the animals had access to "vertical" space. Some animal-rights groups praised its broadened scope, but Bradley Miller of the Humane Farming Association noted that the new space requirement enabled egg producers to "crowd 50% more hens into egg factories than current law".

The outlook looks bleaker for the state's pigs. The new rules were set to ban the sale of pork products within Massachusetts from animals "confined in a cruel manner". This would in effect ban the use of "gestation crates", where pigs are unable to turn round (the European Union banned these in 2013). In December, in the same bill that amended the rules for chicken, these pork regulations were delayed until August, ostensibly to stave off potential supply shortages.

But the Supreme Court has meanwhile taken up a challenge to a similar law in California, "Proposition 12", from the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC). The space restrictions in both California and Massachusetts apply not just to in-state pork production but to the sale of pork from other states. The NPPC argues that this violates the Dormant Commerce Clause by excessively restricting interstate commerce, and that voters in California are unfairly imposing pork conditions on other states, hindering billions of dollars of trade. On August 11th a district judge in Massachusetts agreed with a coalition of restaurant associations and the NPPC to delay implementation of Question 3's pig-housing rules until 30 days after the Supreme Court decides on the Proposition 12 case.

Mr Miller calls these delays "deeply troubling". But Terry Wolters, president of the NPPC,

welcomed the “push to preserve the rights of America’s pig farmers to raise hogs in the way that is best for their animals and maintains a reliable supply of pork for consumers”.

In regulating not just local farm conditions but including sales from other states, have Proposition 12 and Question 3 crossed a constitutional line? The out-of-state impact would certainly be large. Iowa, America’s leading pork producer, holds more than 200 times as many pigs as Massachusetts and California combined. The Supreme Court will start grappling with the thorny question in October.

The law may be murky, but one thing is clear: many voters are uncomfortable with the idea of pigs unable to move around or chickens pressed together in small cages. In probably the first poll of its kind, in 2019 a majority of respondents nationwide supported greater oversight of industrial animal farms, and 43% favoured a ban on new “concentrated animal feeding operations”, where the animals have no space to turn. Despite that, only eight states, containing just less than 3% of the national pig population, have banned the use of gestation crates. Solving this discrepancy democratically and constitutionally is proving a frustratingly difficult task. ■



Family

AUGUST 18, 2022 | 921 words | ★★★★★ >

Disagreement Can Be an Act of Love

Sharing hard truths might be uncomfortable, but it's a surer route to happiness than hiding them.



Think of an opinion that people around you don't know you hold. Now think about what keeps you from sharing it.

Perhaps you fear offending others. You wouldn't be alone here: According to a recent survey from the Cato Institute, most Americans—62 percent—say that the political climate these days prevents them from “saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.” Research shows that people display significantly more silence when they believe their opinions represent the minority view.

There are a lot of good and logical reasons not to say what you think, especially when others disagree. Offending people isn't nice, and it can lead to professional or social consequences. Nodding along might seem practical or charitable, despite the fact that you are screaming dissent on the inside. Just maybe, however, the true act of charity is to be courageous, and to say what you really think. Your honesty can be an act of love, and committing to radical honesty might just make you happier in the end.

One of my friends—who, like me, has a public-facing job—believes this, and takes honesty to the extreme. He regularly disagrees with me on controversial topics, but more impressive, he has a policy to always tell the truth in front of audiences. If he pretends to agree with something just because he's in front of an audience, he told me recently, "I'm not truly being loving to myself or you." He calls talks with others that get to the complete truth of things, even difficult admissions and big differences in views, "love conversations." Once two people have such a conversation, his theory goes, they can understand each other and act accordingly. And amazingly to me, he extends this love to strangers, who make up the majority of his audiences when he is on stage. This requires significant courage. But is it wise and prudent—and does it make him happier?

As a philosophical matter, my friend's doctrine of "love conversations" is Kantian. The 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant argued that lying is always morally wrong. "By a lie a human being throws away and, as it were, annihilates his dignity," he wrote. Lying to others, Kant wrote, prevents them from making choices based on the truth, which is incompatible with friendship and love.

Offering love to others, as I have written before, is one of the greatest secrets to happiness. Thus, if my friend (and Kant) are right that honesty enables love, complete truthfulness—though not easy—might be a key to a better life. In the 1990s, the writer and psychotherapist Brad Blanton argued just that in his book *Radical Honesty*. When the truth is hard to accept, telling it can have costs, including social disapproval and frayed relationships. But Blanton argued that complete honesty—no white lies, no exceptions—is

worth the consequences because it can reduce stress, deepen connections with others, and reduce emotional reactivity. If this argument is correct, then most of us have been screwing up our whole lives. We lie all the time—precisely because we want more love and happiness. We lie to impress others, garner sympathy, protect people’s feelings, and avoid conflict.

Both sides can’t be right here. Either Kant, Blanton, and my friend are embracing a faulty theory, or our society is missing a big opportunity for moral growth and higher well-being.

In 2008, a pair of psychologists grouped lies into three broad categories: self-centered lies to influence others or make a good impression (“Joe Biden asked me to be his vice president, but I turned him down”), other-oriented lies to protect the feelings of the person you’re fibbing to (“You haven’t aged a day”), and altruistic lies to protect a third party (“She was with me all night, officer”). With close friends and romantic partners, we are most likely to tell other-oriented and altruistic lies and least likely to tell self-centered lies. With strangers, we do the opposite.

And then there’s sheer laziness. When the waiter asks, “How’s your lunch?” you might not have the energy to explain that it is too salty. As one team of evolutionary psychologists theorized in 2014, these kinds of “white lies” could prove useful by “smoothing the flow of interactions” within a community, making it easier to communicate without undue conflict. You might say that little white lies are a societal lubricant. They can even seem virtuous. After telling a white lie, I sometimes pat myself on the back for my sensitivity and tact, turning my vice into a virtue inside my own head.

Some lies might make life easier, but they don’t necessarily make life happier. When it’s discovered, lying generally makes you less likable, which harms relationships and thus lowers happiness. I believe even little white lies can do this. I wouldn’t want my wife to tell me what she thinks I want to hear, as if we were strangers avoiding conflict, and finding out that she had done so would make me feel distrusted and therefore hurt our relationship. For me, closeness beats harmony, every day of the week. For that matter, I don’t want a stranger to tell me she likes my writing if she doesn’t, because inauthentic compliments

make me suspicious.

On balance, I believe the evidence favors Kant, not social convention. The point of complete honesty is having enough love for yourself to be precisely who you are, and to love others enough to give them complete transparency, even if that is difficult for both of you. ■



Leaders

Aug 18th 2022 | 662 words | ★★☆☆☆ >

Stockmarkets

Beware bear traps

American markets are staging a recovery. Can it last?



How sweet it is to forget. Just months ago financial markets were being pummelled by war, inflation and the prospect of rapidly rising interest rates. January to June this year were the worst first half for American shares in more than five decades. The S&P 500, America's leading index of stocks, slumped by 21%; the tech-heavy NASDAQ shed 32%. Yet since the middle of June the market has staged a remarkable comeback. The NASDAQ has climbed by more than 20% from its low, officially entering a bull market; the S&P 500, up by 17%, is verging on bull territory of its own. Apple is now just 7% shy of being valued at \$3trn, as it was, briefly, on January 3rd. Can the turnaround continue?

The good news is that the rally is underpinned by, well, good news. As companies' earnings releases over recent weeks have shown, American consumers still went shopping in the second quarter. On August 16th Walmart reported that households' spending grew strongly, helping its revenue climb by 8.4% on the year. Gauges of consumer sentiment are picking up. America added a whopping 530,000 jobs in July and, more hearteningly still, consumer prices did not rise compared with a month earlier. The market rout of the first half of 2022 has also yet to expose lurking dangers in the financial system. Aside from blow-ups in dodgier corners of the crypto-sphere, American finance has so far proved resilient.



The Economist

The bullish interpretation is to assume that a soft landing is under way. In this world inflation will drift down without derailing economic growth, and the Federal Reserve may not even need to raise interest rates quite so quickly. Consumers' expectations of inflation, even for the year ahead, have fallen sharply. Market pricing suggests that the Fed will probably increase rates at a gentler pace than had been expected earlier in the summer, before it begins cutting them as

soon as May. Investment bankers on Wall Street expect companies to escape relatively unscathed, without a meaningful slowdown in earnings this year.

Yet it is too soon to breathe a sigh of relief. For a start, inflation is far from being vanquished. The monthly rate did not rise in July mainly because of a fall in energy costs, including for petrol. That in turn offset stickier inflation in other components, like rents. Core inflation, excluding food and energy, was an annualised 3.7% in July—far above the Fed's target range. Moreover, the impressive jobs numbers were accompanied by rapid wage growth, indicating that underlying price pressures may not abate so easily. Having been late to react to the inflation surge, the Fed is unlikely to turn on a dime.

Companies' earnings, meanwhile, have not all been rosy. Although investors embraced

news of strong earnings from lots of firms, they have also overlooked mediocrity. Alphabet, for instance, reported revenues and earnings that were a little lower than analysts' expectations. Its share price nonetheless jumped by nearly 8% on the news. And threats to earnings loom ahead. The Fed's interest-rate rises are yet to have their full effect. Even as American shoppers have so far been unfazed, the rest of the world has faltered. China's recovery from its covid-19 lockdowns has been lacklustre; growth in both retail sales and industrial production fell short of economists' forecasts in July. Europe remains in the throes of an energy crisis.

Sauter pour mieux reculer

History offers a final note of caution. As battle-weary short investors on Wall Street are quick to point out, most past market downturns included plenty of breathtaking "bear market" rallies before stock prices resumed their downwards march. In the dotcom bust, the NASDAQ shed a third of its value between March and April 2000 before surging by more than 20%, entering a fresh bull market. The index did not reach its bottom for another two years. This time could, of course, be different. But for that to happen, the good news must keep rolling in. ■



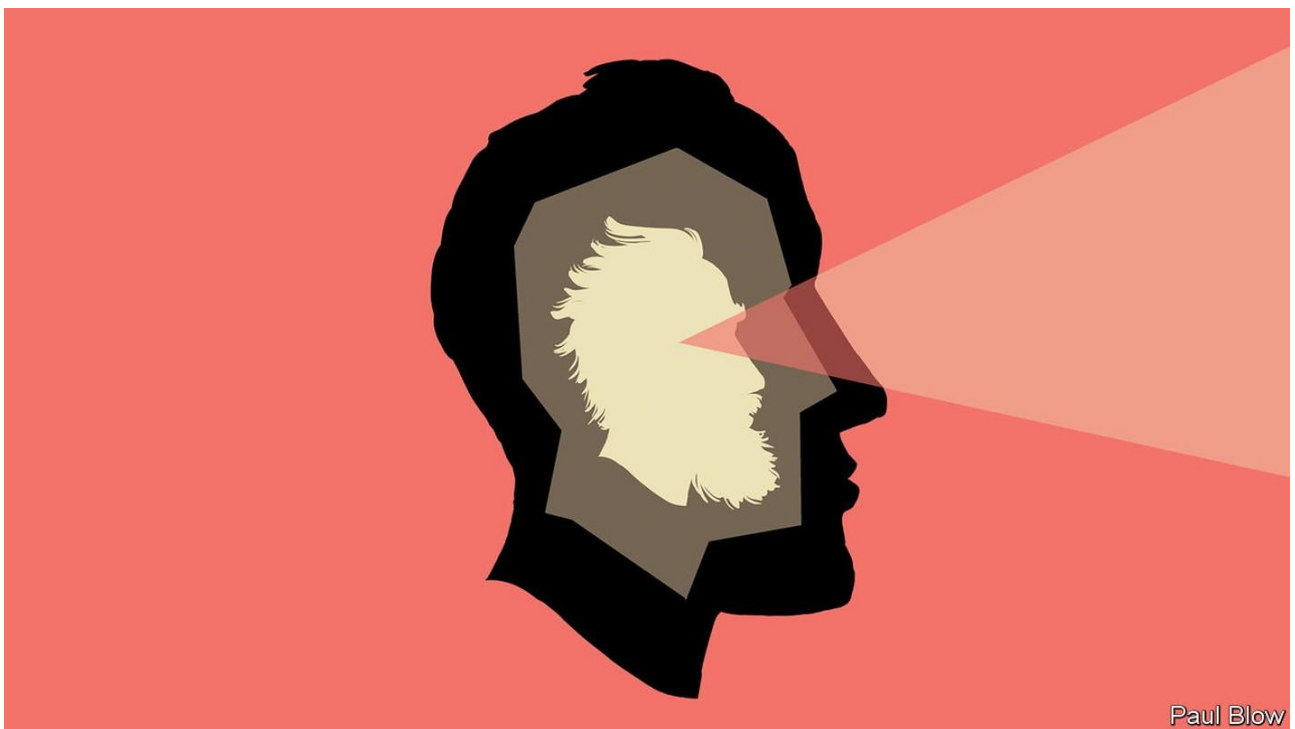
Business

Aug 18th 2022 | 729 words | ★★★★★ >

Bartleby

When to trust your gut

Deliberation is not always the best option



Paul Blow

Humans have been honed over millions of years of evolution to respond to certain situations without thinking too hard. If your ancestors spotted movement in the undergrowth, they would run first and grunt questions later. At the same time, the capacity to analyse and to plan is part of what distinguishes people from other animals. The question of when to trust your gut and when to test your assumptions—whether to think fast or slow, in the language of Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist—matters in the office as much as in the savannah.

Deliberative thinking is the hallmark of a well-managed workplace. Strategic overhauls and budget discussions are built on rounds of meetings, memos, formulas and presentations. Processes are increasingly designed to stamp out instinctive responses. From blind screening of job applicants to using “red-teaming” techniques to pick apart a firm’s plans, rigour trumps reflex.

Yet instinct also has its place. Some decisions are more connected to emotional responses and inherently less tractable to analysis. Does a marketing campaign capture the essence of your company, say, or would this person work well with other people in a team? In sticky customer-service situations, intuition is often a better guide to how to behave than a script.

Gut instincts can also be improved (call it “probiotic management”). Plenty of research has shown that intuition becomes more unerring with experience. In one well-known experiment, conducted in 2012, volunteers were asked to assess whether a selection of designer handbags were counterfeit or real. Some were instructed to operate on instinct and others to deliberate over their decision. Intuition worked better for those who owned at least three designer handbags; indeed, it outperformed analysis. The more expert you become, the better your instincts tend to be.

However, the real reason to embrace fast thinking is that it is, well, fast. Instinctive decision-making is often the only way to get through the day. Researchers at Cornell University once estimated that people make over 200 decisions a day about food alone. The workplace is nothing but a succession of choices, a few big and many small: what to prioritise, when to intervene, whom to avoid in the lifts and, now, where to work each day.

To take one example, when your inbox brims with new emails at the start of a new day, there is absolutely no way to read them all carefully. Intuition is what helps you decide which ones to answer and which to delete or leave unopened. Emails that are part of existing threads: open. Messages from people directly above and below you: open. Reminders from the chief information officer that cyber-security really, really matters: delete.

Instinct is also at work on those occasions when people have completely zoned out. They might be working on something else during a Zoom call, or playing chess on their phones, or simply admiring the ceiling pattern. Suddenly they are aware of a silence, and realise that they have been asked something or are expected to make a contribution. This is the office equivalent of coming face to face with a lion. Those who are fit to survive will say something plausible like “I’d like to understand how we are measuring success,” prompting murmurs of agreement from everyone else who hasn’t been paying attention but senses this might be a good answer.

Fast thinking is not just about self-preservation. It can help the entire organisation. The value of many managerial decisions lies in the simple fact that they have been made at all. Yet as data gushes from every pore of the modern organisation, the temptation to ask for one more bit of analysis has become much harder to resist. A well-established psychological phenomenon known as “verbal overshadowing” captures the danger of overthinking things: people are more likely to misidentify someone in a line-up if they have spent time writing a description of their faces. Managers often suffer from analytical overshadowing, mulling a simple problem until it turns into a complex one.

When to use intuition in the workplace rests on its own form of pattern recognition. Does the decision-maker have real expertise in this area? Is this a domain in which emotion matters more than reasoning? Above all, is it worth delaying the decision? Slow thinking is needed to get the big calls right. But fast thinking is the way to stop deliberation turning to dither. ■

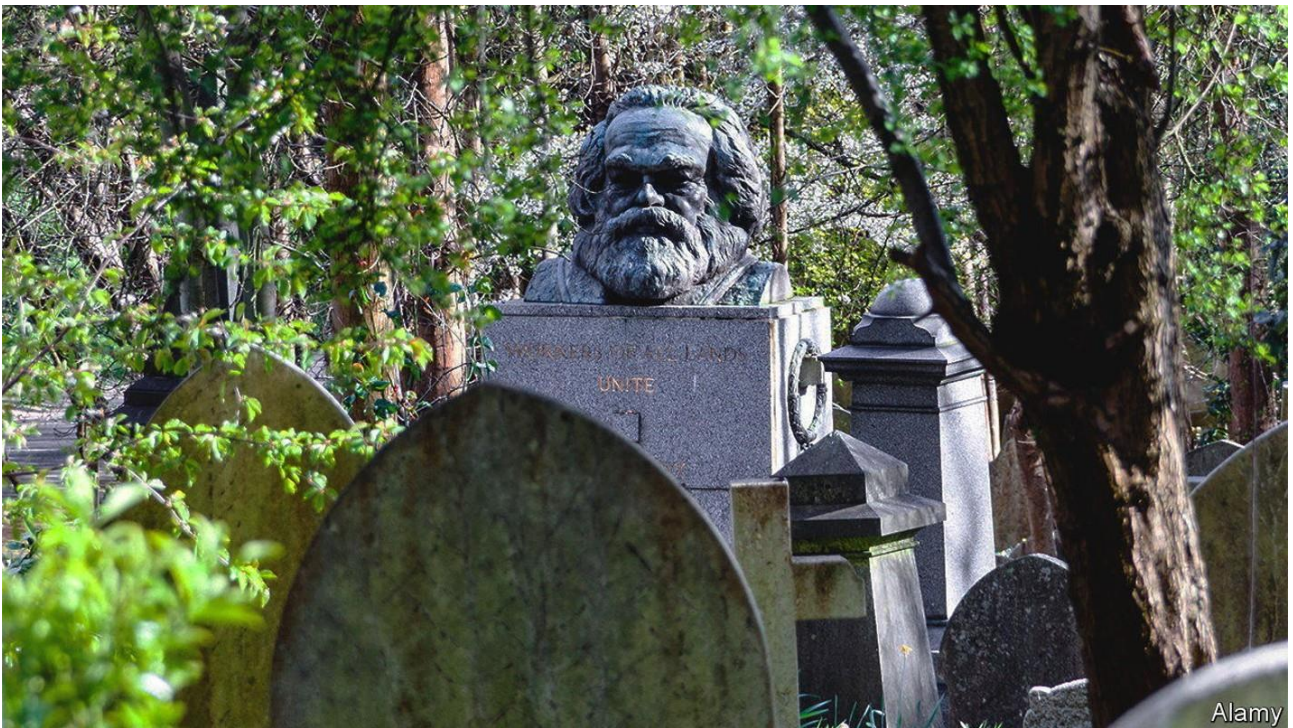
Britain

Aug 18th 2022 | 666 words | ★★☆☆☆ >

Death

A grave shortage

London's cemeteries are selling second-hand graves. They need to



Alamy

At two metres long and under a metre wide, the plot of land is bijou even by London standards. But plot 18946 is also scenic: like all the graves in Highgate Cemetery it offers an Edgar Allan Poe-ish, urns-and-ivy, discerning sort of resting place. Even more desirable are the neighbours, for just opposite is plot 24748: the original grave of one Karl Marx. Ian Dungavell, head of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust, thinks that plot 18946 could command a premium price. For graves, as for grander residences, says Mr Dungavell, “it’s about location, location, location.”

“The bourgeoisie produces...its own gravediggers,” wrote Marx in “The Communist Manifesto”. He underestimated his enemy. The bourgeoisie also produces its own grave-entrepreneurs, grave-sellers and, now, grave-recyclers. In the quiet of London’s cemeteries, plots that have lain untouched for a century or so are starting to be opened; fresh inhabitants are being planted on top; and a desirable rate is being charged for doing so.

This spring, an act of Parliament, rich in phrases about “human remains”, was passed that allows Highgate to reuse graves. Other London graveyards have been doing this for a few years. The stipulations are numerous. To be reused, a grave’s last burial must have been at least 75 years before; advance warning of each potential reuse must be given to the public on cemetery notices and in newspapers. Previous inhabitants are either left where they are, interred deeper (“lift and deepen”) or moved elsewhere (“lift and shift”). But for many, the prospect of shared accommodation is worth it. A fresh burial plot in the capital might cost you £10,000-23,000 (\$12,040-27,700). A “heritage” grave can be had for thousands of pounds less.

Reusing graves is not merely economical but essential. London’s living residents grumble that there is not enough space for them in the city. It is far worse for the dead ones. Part-metropolis, part-necropolis, London is well-known for having been built on bones (and squashier things). Victorian parish graveyards oozed “human putrescence”; mourners at funerals stood on boards to protect their feet from decomposing body parts.

A shortage of grave space is a nationwide problem, but it is particularly acute in the capital. A 2011 audit found that, although some London boroughs had enough capacity for 20 more years of burials, others were already full.

Other solutions to underground congestion exist. Large suburban cemeteries have been built. Cremation has been championed, successfully: 78% of Britons now choose this option. But even suburban cemeteries are now filling up, and many have profound religious objections to cremation.

Grave reuse might sound startling, but it revives a long tradition. Few British bodies have rested in as much peace as sentimental grave inscriptions might imply; for centuries, many graves have been less freehold than leasehold properties. When Samuel Pepys, a 17th-century diarist, went to choose a grave for his brother, the gravedigger offered, for sixpence, to “jostle” along other corpses “that are not quite rotten, to make room for him”. It is better to think of churchyards less as elegiac dormitories for the dead (if they had been, they would have had to be much bigger) than as a sort of subterranean bone broth that was occasionally stirred, and then garnished with gravestones.

Reuse fell out of fashion after a series of crises (notably cholera) led to a change in the law in 1832 that was designed to prevent overcrowding. London’s “magnificent seven” private cemeteries, Highgate among them, appeared. The great Victorian graveyard boom began; a market for meticulously numbered plots started up. Soon the invisible hand put paid to the presence of visible ones in London cemeteries.

As soon as next year, however, some Highgate graves will start to be reused. A premium will be probably paid for prime spots. It’s enough to make Marx turn in his grave. Though not literally. If there is one thing the bourgeoisie understands, it’s the importance of heritage. Graves of historical significance such as Marx’s, says Mr Dungavell, will not be disturbed. ■