Brett Rabbiner
Professor Leamen
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Balancing Around the Bends

A group of friends sit mesmerized around a coffee table littered with nefarious items. In the background, David Attenborough's gentle words infest their collective mind, mirroring the actions of the queen, while the foreground holds their gaze, displaying what the voice describes: a mound of ants floating atop an Amazonian river. From themselves, from within their collective consciousness, a colony comes together to face the issue at hand: The rainy season. Beneath the surface, fish begin racing for the meal which basically cooked itself, while birds begin to circle above. Many will die in their efforts to keep the queen alive and the colony full, though their labor bears sweet fruit. Ants are more than a self-organizing system who subconsciously and collectively understand to put the cemetery and the dump as far away from each other and the living spaces as possible. Ants create solutions to the problems they encounter. They have conquered the world, even ransacking human homes as they see fit. Small in size, yet an estimated twenty quadrillion strong in number. Like the nodes of a Large Language Model (LLM), they are fragile and simple alone, however, string them together and Ants are a genius, powerful system which continues to evolve itself.

Humans, like our ant colleagues, understand the power of a well-run collective, though each of our nodes has the power to—and often only does—think for itself. We have evolved based on the problems each generation has had to face, although at its core, it is predictive. Survival of the fittest is the result of our genetic coding banking on a necessary edit—a resulting genetic mutation—for the next generation to, hopefully, not only survive, but adapt and thrive. As with our own creations, we make assumptions in order to ideate on solutions, building on them to grow our knowledge base. The predictive nature of artificial intelligence, in its efforts to answer our questions, is rooted in collective human knowledge put together in an attempt to solve problems more quickly and efficiently. Always, the problem has been speed, while the solution remains the same. For years now, the next theorized step in computing has been quantum. Current computers are constructed of bits, what are essentially enormous sets of ones and zeros, allowing for yes or no style structuring. Quantum computing permits for a superposition of both states. In other words, a bit can only present as a one or a zero, while a qubit can be either or both at the same time; an infinite number of possibilities. During superposition, the wave function of the quantum particle determines where it might be, however, the position itself relies on the act of observation to be known. Still, the position is random and non-algorithmic. This is known as the collapse of the wave function due to observation.

Free will is wonderful in theory, still, I wonder if we might ever confirm or deny its validity. Technology continues advancing, and our understanding of the universe along with it. Physicists like

Michio Kaku and CPU creator Federico Faggin point to this requirement of observation for the position of the electron to push arguments in favor of free will. Faggin simplifies what he means, providing an example similar to someone analyzing a sample in a microscope. For those few moments, while one eye sits closed, the other experiences and attempts to understand this microscopic world; this is your world, the one which you are experiencing. It is not until someone pops a balloon behind your head, and you are ripped back into this other world, that it exists again. Though slightly morbid, it illuminates a positive outlook on death, insisting, death is the balloon pop and the other world is whatever our conscious wakes up to.

Marcus Aurelius meditated much on the idea of "dust to dust." From where we come, we return, and in that, the cycle begins again. His meditations reveal his belief, like mine, in the infinite cycle of the universe. Energy, neither created nor destroyed, means we have been here, now, before, and we shall find ourselves here again, forever. We never disappear, quite the opposite; we start anew. Many Greeks spoke to soulmates and the notion of them being the two faces of one being. As we endure life, often love is the driving force. In every life, we are said to forever look for our other half. The way we view love is often parallel to how we view the world and those around us. Though, while we may fortify our minds and ignore our hearts as the stoics might hope, our human hearts, no bigger than one of our fists balled up, are frighteningly fragile. Love can be damning, sometimes pushing us to hate. And so, it remains that there are two sides to every story; to know true love, one must possess a parallel understanding of hate.

In scholarly fashion, my pursuit of knowledge has revealed the precise placement of negatives opposite positives in order to balance across an axis. Often overlooked are not the instances of math in life, rather, the existence of life in math. Life is simple, in my opinion. Life's purpose is not to find one, it is to live. We can directly derive this from the word, as we can its visual representation numerically, finding our ups and downs—natural opposites—to be oddly reminiscent of sine curves. Appearing as polar opposites, like a binary bit, they will forever remain spectrally connected, such with the qubit. The curve itself, representative of life's path, is unable to exist without either.

While my eyes were closed, I opened my mind. Through my own meditations, I have focused my thinking enough to bring it some measure of clarity. This effort is what has taught me the delicate need for ebbs and flows in life as we balance atop our own axial pursuits. My eyes view good and bad as soulmates destined to search for each other into eternity, bound to one being we denote as life. Both are intrinsic to a balanced life, as is surfing their rise and fall. Life is the tsunami triggered following an earthquake. There will be weeks of devastation, and months yet to pass rebuilding, but the tears will dry, and the ocean will recede home; they have to. Space for new life, and enticing post-storm surf swells will be left behind in its wake, but so will a choice.

Conscious and free-willed, I feel you are the sole determinate of your sine curve; you are its function's sole variable. How high you soar, and how low you fall, are a product of your response to

life's natural disasters; the wave function only collapses when you decide to pay attention. Choose to ignore the things out of your control, and allow yourself to be consumed by the microscopic world of that which you can. One day the balloon will pop, and you will spring anew, accruing these inherent tools to balance life once more. There is something to say, too, in walking life's highline steadily. It stretches beyond a willingness; you must pursue it with passion. It is one thing to passively experience and feel, it is another to vehemently learn and grow. With failures as our best teachers, and wins as our best friends, we have only one sinusoidal path to steer. Fortunately, our gas and brakes still rest under our feet, and if we learn how to use them properly, it might not be such a bumpy ride.