Thoughts on Quality vs Quantity

**Quote**

**A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds**, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day. — 'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.' — Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Ralph_Waldo_Emerson)

[*Self Reliance*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-Reliance) (1841).

Ways that Quantity is Emphasized:

* Number of Facebook/Twitter/Instagram followers you have
* Number of likes, comments, affirmations.
* Tinder as a way to connect with high quantity but low quality
* Weight, blood pressure, fitbit, calories eaten, calories burned
* Revenue

Striving beyond quantity to get to quality.

“It’s a numbers game” = Quantity is more important than Quality

Quantity is the language of comparison, quality is the language of interpretation.

Why do we compare? From a survival basis, it is an evolutionary trait to simplify thinking to categories. This is a left-brain activity for converting a large group to a symbol or a quantity or a characteristic.

Examples:

* Us vs Them
* Republican & Democrat
* My company, it’s competitors
* Male and female

This simplifies our thinking and saves time and energy. When you consider that the brain burns 20% of our calories despite being 3% of our mass, optimizations make sense for a hominid roaming the prairies and trying to eat, communicate, and survive long enough to pass on their genes. Today, is very different. We are no longer scraping for survival. Based on obesity rates, developed countries have more food than they need. And, our societies, infrastructures, and systems have become vastly more complex. Try to have any expert explain to you in black and white terms even the basics of their industry and you’ll get hit with either a dramatic oversimplification (elevator pitch) or the statement “Well… that depends.” And that brings me to a very important point: Context is Key in Quality

Examples of where Quality fails on Quantity:

* The myth that all calories are created equal. You can control your weight by simply measuring Calories In & Calories Out.
* Salary indicates wealth. Especially true in areas where displays of materialism are meant to demonstrate social status.
* People with more friends are more socially fulfilled.
* Even in science and statistics, numbers are commonly taken out of context or the basis of the methods are not high quality. The China Study is a great example of a book that reached mass appeal summarizing and popularizing findings that animal protein caused a higher incidence in cancer. In fact, the quantities were tabulated by a person with a bias toward a vegan agenda. And

It is our gift as humans to have a vastly complex and evolved frontal lobe that can take disparate points of knowledge and tie them together. To turn off the brain’s power saving optimizations of quantification, we exercise what makes us uniquely human and progress our evolution as sentient beings.