

Twitter Thread by Andrew Duggan



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15 Powerful Lessons from the book "Antifragile"

by Nassim Nicholas Taleb

| Thread

1. The book is about decision-making under uncertainty/volatility.

- EVERYTHING either benefits or is harmed by volatility
- The FRAGILE is harmed (think a glass)
- The ROBUST is unchanged (think The Phoenix)
- The ANTIFRAGILE gets better (think The Hydra)

2.

- There is no way to accurately predict WHICH events will occur
- We CAN measure how fragile we are to events
- We CAN take steps to robustify ourselves
- When shit hits the fan, the fragile breaks
- This applies to the economy, politics, health, etc

3. Naive Interventionism

- Systems are COMPLEX
- Most are beyond our understanding

- When we intervene, we introduce potential harm
- These 2nd and 3rd order effects introduce MORE volatility into the system
- This makes systems even less predictable
- STAY in YOUR lane

4. Via Negativa: Removing is superior to Adding

- Less can be More
- Don't add, subtract
- Eliminate the Artificial
- Eliminate the Unnatural
- Eliminate the Unnecessary

Apply these in all areas of your life. When in doubt, SUBTRACT

5. "Absence of evidence is NOT evidence of absence"

Just because...

- you can't see something doesn't mean it's not there
- something is unintelligible doesn't mean it's unintelligent
- you can't explain something doesn't mean it's not important

-->Have HUMILITY

6. The SILVER RULE is superior to the GOLDEN RULE

- "Don't do to others what you don't want done to you"
- We often don't know how we want to be treated
- We always know how we DON'T want to be treated
- "Right" can be relative, "wrong" is almost always wrong

7 If you have more than one reason to do something, just don't do it.

It does not mean that one reason is better than two, just that by invoking more than one reason you are trying to convince

yourself to do something.

Obvious decisions require no more than a single reason.

8. We need randomness, mess, adventures, uncertainty, self-discovery, near-traumatic episodes, all those things that make life worth living, compared to the structured, fake, and ineffective life of an empty-suit CEO with a preset schedule and an alarm clock.

9. Wind extinguishes a candle and energizes fire.

Likewise with randomness, uncertainty, chaos: you want to use them, not hide from them.

You want to be the fire and wish for the wind.

10. Technology is the result of antifragility, exploited by risk-takers in the form of tinkering and trial and error, with nerd-driven design confined to the backstage.

11. The irony of the process of thought control: the more energy you put into trying to control your ideas and what you think about, the more your ideas end up controlling you.

12. It is as if the mission of modernity was to squeeze every drop of variability and randomness out of life— with the ironic result of making the world a lot more unpredictable, as if the goddesses of chance wanted to have the last word.

13. Tragedy of modernity: as with neurotically overprotective parents, those trying to help are often hurting us the most.

14. My characterization of a loser is someone who, after making a mistake, doesn't introspect, doesn't exploit it, feels embarrassed & defensive rather than enriched with a new piece of information.

These types often consider themselves the "victims" of some large plot.

15. Never ask the doctor what you should do. Ask him what he would do if he were in your place. You would be surprised at the difference.

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