

the Proposition



the Proposition

outcomengenuity

helping those who build a better world

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.



God gives us "free will." Thomas Jefferson, in penning the Declaration of Independence, argues that no government, created by men, should take that away. It is the most fundamental design specification for a collection of human beings. With rights that come from the divine, we set out to pursue our happiness, to live the American dream. Three hundred million Americans on a mission to be happy.

Life, however, is complex. To advance, we realize that we must work together as an interconnected group. Thomas Jefferson's next words in the Declaration reflect that reality:

“ — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

Government. The principal tool for social advancement, the tool that allows a mere collection of human beings to work together as a society, to bring about law and order, to protect our values in ways unachievable on our own.

What can we achieve as a society? What can industries, businesses, communities, neighborhood clubs, and individual families achieve as an interconnected group of human beings? Clearly, we can do a lot. The last 100 years alone have produced an impressive increase in life expectancy, put a man on the moon, and a smart phone in millions of our hands. We say to ourselves that there is nothing we cannot do.

Sometimes, however, we don't achieve the results we intend. An automobile accident, a life-ending surgical mistake in a hospital, a child addicted to drugs, a neighbor the victim of spousal abuse, a massive financial collapse, war. Today, 27 million people are enslaved, more than at any other time in human history. In Haiti, one in 10 children will not make it to 15 years old. In many parts of Africa, more than one in five children will not make it to 15 years of age. One hundred million people are homeless in the world, one in seven go to sleep hungry. Yes, sometimes it can be mother nature: a devastating hurricane or a debilitating disease. Often, however, it's us - our collective inability to produce as a group of human beings the outcomes we really want. For a million different reasons, sometimes life does not turn out with the splendor envisioned by Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the Declaration of Independence.

We submit to you that things can be different. On the following pages, we write about our ability as individuals, and as a collection of people, to create the outcomes we desire in life. We write as socio-technical engineers, as economists, to create a proposition that we can indeed produce better outcomes.

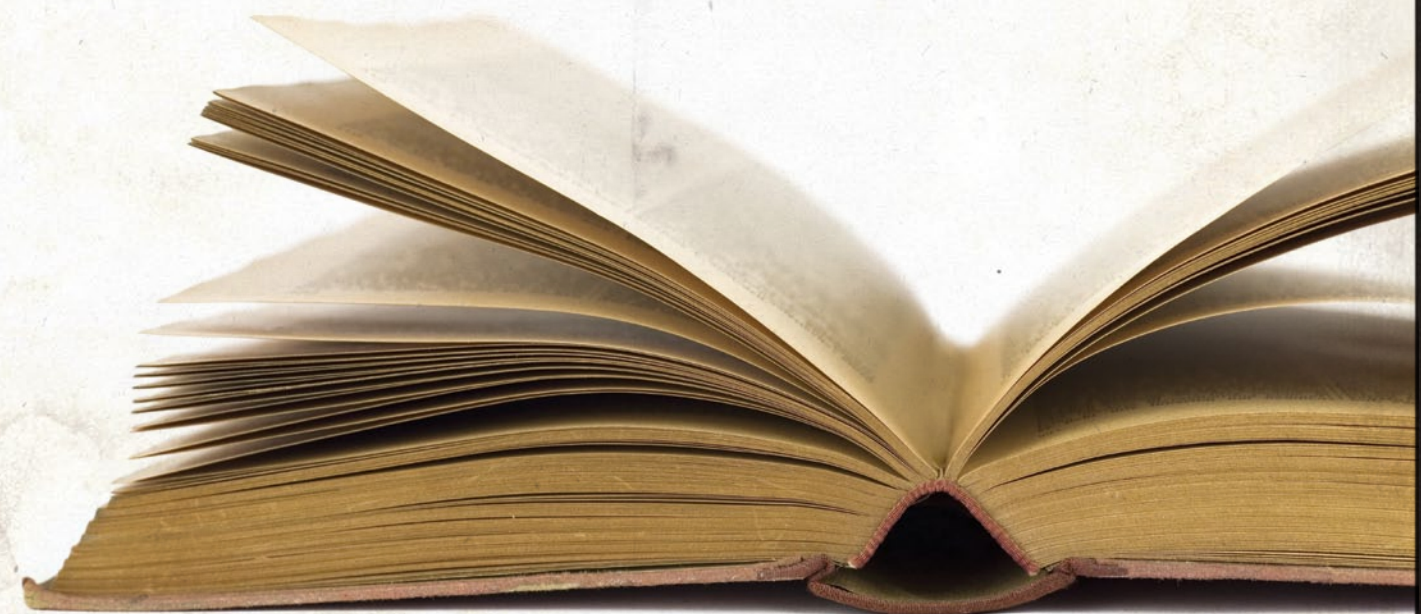


The Proposition is this:

Framed by the right systems of learning, the right systems of justice, we can design systems, and help humans make choices in those systems, to produce better outcomes, at the individual, local, and societal level.

As engineers, we're taught about the physical laws of the world around us. Sir Isaac Newton proposed the formula $f=ma$. Force equals the product of mass and acceleration. This formula instructed engineers how to think about the physical properties of the world around them. The human world is not so simply explained. From Aristotle to Socrates, from Hobbes to Rousseau, our many theories of human behavior have not translated well into the realities of our organizations, our governments, or our homes.

Sixteen laws. This is what we present. Sixteen laws of human nature, sixteen laws of socio-technical physics, if you will. Sixteen laws that, if we follow their guidance, give us the opportunity to indeed produce better outcomes. Sixteen laws that on our best days, we acknowledge. Sixteen laws that, on our worst days, we ignore. It starts with Act 1 – the Setting.



Act

ACT ONE

the Setting



Three hundred million Americans. Seven billion people around the world. What do we know about human beings that should guide our design of social systems? We present three important laws.

Law One

Pursuit of individual happiness drives the human condition; it is the mission.



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Thomas Jefferson calls it the “pursuit of happiness.” We are programmed to follow our dreams, doing the things that make us happy. Finding a mate, having children, participating in a sport, reading a book with coffee in hand, socializing with friends... there are many things that lead to happiness. Living in an economically advanced society affords its members a wide array of choices; there are as many paths to happiness as there are individuals.

Here we present a practical maxim about the mission of the individual. It is their own personal happiness that is the mission. It becomes the starting point for all we do in the design of social systems. It is our belief that human beings set out to maximize their own happiness. It might seem simple, yet it will have a profound impact on how employers and governments conduct themselves.

Law Two

We are endowed by our creator with a free will to pursue our individual happiness.



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It is a necessary precondition to our pursuit of happiness; it implies that, yes, we do have free will to create the most satisfying life within the realm of our possibilities. Without free will, we are just another living organism following our programmed genetic instincts. With it, we are now endowed with that thing called "choice," choices propelled largely by the pursuit of our own happiness.

Toddlers learn to exert their free will at about the age of two, as every parent knows. And parental or social controls notwithstanding, we never stop exerting it in the pursuit of our own happiness. We might tell a human being to refrain from texting while driving, but we must remember that they have free will to choose to comply or not. Human beings enjoy exercising their own free will, even in the presence of a "rule" commanding otherwise – even if that rule was made with their express consent, and for their own benefit.

Law Three

We pursue our happiness as inescapably fallible creatures. We will do things that, in hindsight, we never intended to do.



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All of us have been there, going about our daily lives, seeking our happiness, guided by our own free will, when we are suddenly and unexpectedly confronted with that other aspect of humanness: fallibility. We all make mistakes, we all have accidents. We opened the wrong package, we misunderstood the directions, we somehow thought the other driver was going to turn instead of going straight.

We are inescapably fallible human beings. It's in our DNA. We are dependent on our five senses, any one of which can misguide us at any time. Our brains can mis-perceive, mis-interpret, mis-calculate, and mis-command our physical actions. Slips, lapses, and mistakes. We don't intend them. Most often we wish they hadn't happened. We immediately chastise ourselves - "I can't believe I just did that." And yet accidents can and do occur, despite what we intended the outcome to be.



1 IN 5
CHILDREN
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
WON'T LIVE PAST AGE FIFTEEN

IMPOVERISHED

Act 2

ACT TWO

the Conflict



We set out to pursue our happiness, thankfully armed with our free will, yet undeniably cursed by our human fallibility. It seems simple: inescapably fallible human beings with free will setting out to pursue their own happiness – until – we add in a second person.

Now we will explore the inevitable conflict that appears when two human beings come into contact with each other. Just two people sharing the same space creates a new dynamic.

Law Four

We live in a world of limited resources. This, in part, drives the competitive nature of the human condition.

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Someone else getting that last piece of pie, two toddlers arguing over a toy, another driver darting into the parking space you were about to take. Once there is another person competing for the thing you want, that thing that will cause you to be happy, there is competition, and sometimes, conflict. There are only so many slices of the pie, so many toys, and so many parking spaces.



Law Five

While happiness is the mission, it is life, liberty, and property that are the three primary values – these are the things we strive to protect against outside intrusion.

Life is given to us, yet it can be taken away, by our own or others' fallibility, or by the many hazards and diseases mother nature has put in our paths. We strive to protect our lives.

Liberty is the flip side of the same coin of free will. Free will is our capacity to make choices in pursuit of our own happiness; liberty is our freedom from intrusion by others. Liberty, as a practical matter, most generally means freedom from governmental intrusion. It is not an absolute liberty as we will see that a restriction on liberty is one thing we ask governments to impose upon us as individuals. The liberty to drink and drive might be restricted in order to protect the welfare of others.

We live our lives collecting things, and protecting what we collect. Property is that which we strive to protect, in the broadest sense of the word. We collect physical things (a house, a car, money) as well as less tangible but no less important things (our families, our friends, our reputations).

We pursue our happiness, yet remain on constant guard to see that our life, our liberty, and our property are not infringed.

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ENSLAVED

27
MILLION
PEOPLE

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Law Six

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It represents the core conflict. Doesn't a desire to text message while driving conflict with someone else's happiness, or more to the point, their life? My baseball team and your baseball team can't both win the same game. Just the law of physics means that two people cannot occupy the same space at the same time, so one of us gets to go first, in the grocery line, through the car wash, down the slide. We might live in nirvana but for this inevitable conflict.

Our choices in pursuit of our own happiness might very well make another person miserable. If your definition of happiness is listening to loud music in the office, you might be infringing on others' desire to have some peace and quiet in which to do their work. You hate to stop at that particular intersection, but know that many schoolchildren walk this route. You may even have entertained thoughts of robbing your local bank and retiring on the French Riviera. We are all pursuing our individual happiness, yet we are interconnected as a society. Conflict is inevitable.



Law Seven

When faced with a dilemma between service to self and service to others, humans will often choose self over others. Altruism is a deliberate task requiring hard work.

Self-interest is like a magnet, continuously pulling us toward the choices in life that maximize our own happiness. Although we know we must live together in a certain degree of harmony and therefore deny ourselves total satisfaction of our wants, we can't help but put our interests ahead of others. To some extent, we know that we cannot deprive others of their lives, their health, their livelihood. But within the parameters of right and wrong, we strive, we compete, we elbow aside those we perceive as encroaching on our own territory or possessions, or happiness. We take what we feel is our due, what we have worked for, and for what we may have sacrificed.

Our parents can imprint an altruistic spirit within us; we can train ourselves to find value in service to others. We might even find as we age that service to others is satisfying to self. Giving might actually become more satisfying than receiving. Cynics may even argue that altruism does not exist, that any gesture to help the less fortunate is self-serving. Either way, it is a practical maxim for design of social systems to believe that humans will be guided by self-interest.

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Law Eight

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Add but one more person, to make three, and the social dynamic becomes yet more complex. Coalitions form. Just ask any 10-year-old what happens when three friends go out to play. Two will form an alliance to dictate what game will be played. It may be in our nature as social animals to band together for camaraderie. More likely, it is another way that we ensure an advantage; gathering together into a larger group to fend off intruders or to work cooperatively to produce more and assist each member. Studies on group dynamics show that human beings identify with subgroups, to the exclusion of other individuals from rival or competing groups. Neighborhood gangs, rival schools, cliques, nationalities – we all want to feel a part of something, to belong to something larger than ourselves yet something that is familiar, with people whom we have much in common. But if you belong to one gang, you can't belong to another one, so you shun – or demonize – the ones that are “different” from you.



Act 3

ACT THREE

the Resolution



There they are: eight socio-technical laws of the physical world. These are the design constraints. If we ignore them, we do so at our own peril. To believe that human beings will always try to do the right thing is being idealistic and potentially dangerous. To believe that human beings can be infallible is being unrealistic. The principles that we've learned in our design of high reliability systems have application across all walks of life, and in all values, from the protection of life as a system outcome, to simply maximizing our collective happiness. The concepts are the same: at home, at work, at play, from the family unit to society as a whole. In Act 3, we leave the realm of the laws of human nature, and move into the world of design features, how we should think about the design of social systems.

What We Do - Organizing Ourselves as Groups



Humans design and organize systems to maximize individual and collective happiness. It is through systems that we get the most out of limited resources and our inherent self-interest.

Our proposition is about system design, socio-technical system design to be exact. In the 70's, we might have referred to this as "social engineering." It is a term that left a bad taste for many of us as those "intellectuals" increasingly encroached on our liberties in what appeared to be their zealous pursuit of a better world - as they the social engineers defined it. If we can get over the baggage attached to "social engineering," we can confront the reality that this is what we are all doing when we manipulate incentives and disincentives to influence the free will of others, whether we be parents, employers, or politicians. We are all system designers; it is just that the system components are human beings. Done well, as we suggest, we can design better systems for our individual and collective happiness.



Law Nine

Collective happiness is important to our individual happiness.

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A world of self interest and coalitions. It does not speak highly of the human species. Yet we manage to somehow work together toward the common good. It is fortunate that like-minded people can take the oars and make their way toward a specific destination, all the while feeling they are pursuing their own individual happiness.

Researchers have tried to define collective happiness: they study groups of people; they study large collections of people; they study entire countries. Bhutan has claim to being one of the happiest countries in the world, despite low life expectancy, high illiteracy and other factors we in the developed world would consider depressing. They, however, have established a Gross National Happiness index based on four pillars: sustainable development, promotion of cultural values, conservation of the environment and overriding it all, good governance. The symbiotic relationship of governed and governing has seemingly increased each individual's degree of happiness.

Perhaps, then, we can define collective happiness as a group of individuals – team members, employees, constituents, citizens – as all having a high level of individual happiness. How successful we are in achieving our collective happiness will largely influence our individual happiness.



Because we humans are imperfect and resources are limited, systems are necessarily imperfect.

We set out to design systems to create better outcomes for our collective happiness and, as a result, our individual happiness. The constraints identified earlier, our inescapable fallibility and our ever-present limitations on resources, mean that the systems we design will necessarily be imperfect. We simply cannot design aircraft never to crash; we cannot be perfect parents creating perfect children. At every level of system design, all the way from the family to a worldwide scale, we are going to create undesired outcomes. The question is not a matter of "if," but only a matter of "when." It is the rate of undesired outcome we can control. Perfection, at the individual level and at the system level, is not in the cards. If you've had perfection thus far in one particular endeavor of life, consider it a good run. Every system is destined to fail.

Law Ten

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MISDIAGNOSED

195
THOUSAND
IN AMERICA

die every year from medical errors



Law Eleven

All systems suffer from the design trades – maximizing performance toward one value will ultimately hurt another value, or the mission itself. The closer we get to perfection toward any one value, the higher the costs to other values.

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It's often a zero-sum game. Push on one side of a balloon and you will notice a bulge on the other side. Pulling the covers over your head leaves your feet sticking out. Budget managers know this all too well – designating X amount here leaves the same amount shortfall in another area. Systems engineers also know this – they call it the design trades. For the CEO, safety, profitability, and customer satisfaction might very well be at odds with each other. If I want to make a process safer, I might have to slow it down. If I want to improve customer satisfaction, I might not make as much profit. Even at the family level, if I want to be a better father or mother, my career might take a hit. It will pose the ever-present dilemma – that to do better in one area of life may in fact require sacrifices in another area.



Law Twelve

Societies can advance across all values only when human productivity gains provide more resources to a world of still limited resources.

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Rising water lifts all boats; as we produce more we gain the ability to apply those gains to a larger variety of people, needs and gaps. In other words, with each increment of gain, we expand outward from our essential and core needs to reach more people and improve their lives. Bill Gates, that icon we attach to the personal computer, might very well be proof of this rule. As one of the richest men in the world, he has established a foundation to funnel some of his wealth to deserving projects, to aid in the advance of society as a whole. If we as a society can improve our capacity, we can create discretionary funds to apply across otherwise competing values.

To advance the life expectancy of a group of people, say Zambians, our best strategy is to grow their economy, grow their ability to produce. A safety campaign to wear bicycle helmets may be worthwhile to influence public health in a state that has already addressed basic health needs. But it will not have the same impact in Zambia where children are dying of HIV, pneumonia, malaria, even diarrhea, at some of the world's highest rates. Nor will it have any effect on increasing productivity, allowing resources to become available to address basic public health issues. The 25 years we added to our life expectancy in the United States over the last 100 years is due largely to our increase in productivity. Put another way, enlarging the pie gives everybody a bigger slice.



Law Thirteen

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We are all the product of millennia of trial and error, and of handing down the wisdom of the ages through the generations. This is what makes human beings unique as a species, and how we have been able to utilize the knowledge of our forebears, by being able to record and communicate what has previously been discovered. We don't have to reinvent the wheel each time. We can build on the knowledge we have been given, each time pushing ourselves further and further along the path of development.

Learning can be a very deliberate activity. While we can design great systems on the front end, we will always fail to anticipate some of the hurdles ahead. Learning from adverse events, and more importantly, learning from our near misses, is essential to our ability to maximize the outcomes we can achieve across competing values, and in the face of very limited resources. Good stewardship requires a good ability to learn.

Act 4

ACT FOUR

the Imposition

Imposers. People who are imposed upon. Justice. It's the last act. It's the social construct that lets us move forward with systems, and human beings as components within those systems.

Imposers are essential to our shared happiness. We create imposers to promote happiness by protecting the life and property of others, and sometimes, of ourselves. Imposers often use restraints on our liberty as the principal tool to exercise their control. The penalties for nonconformance involve restrictions on property, liberty, and sometimes life.

The terminology is admittedly – and deliberately – unusual. Imposers are nothing but those groups that we create for our collective benefit: governments, homeowners' associations, clubs, gangs, corporations. It's that collection of human beings who create social order through the imposition of rules, and sanctions for when we humans do not follow the rules. It is the counter balance to our free will and self interest. It is the creation of a system of incentives and disincentives calculated to guide our choices in life. I won't speed because I don't want a ticket, I will not surf the internet because I want to retain my job, I choose to listen to my parents because I want the privilege of playing with friends.



Law Fourteen

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We humans are system components. We exist in systems with notions of duty guiding our paths. Duties come from the imposers, guided by deity-based notions of right and wrong.

This law is really about duty. We human beings live within a system of duties and responsibilities. We are the components of a large complex system. We are endowed with free will, driven by self-interest to pursue our own happiness. Duty is what sometimes stands in the way. It is the counter force to the magnetic pull of self-interest.

From where does duty spring? For many, it is our concept of God creating the most fundamental set of expectations for how we get along with each other, what we owe each other, a map of morality, and a guide to how we should live our lives and relate to each other. Duty is how we define the expectation owed another person, or society as a whole.



Law Fifteen

We humans are system components. We exist in systems with notions of duty guiding our paths. Duties come from the imposers, often guided by deity-based notions of right and wrong.

Justice is the glue that holds social systems together. Justice is the mechanism for responding to breaches of duty, for holding each other to account for our roles as societal components.

Justice is the glue that holds the system together. Justice is what binds us together as human beings, making us more than merely a collection of autonomous agents. Children are very sensitive to justice and look to see that their siblings are held to account for their choices, that there is equity and fairness in the world. Very little evokes more outrage than injustice. That someone is harmed saddens, that someone got away with the harm unsettles. Without a well-formed system of justice, a social system will have a very limited life span. Our fallibility, our propensity to choose self over others, ultimately leads us to judge one another. How we do that makes a difference in the outcomes a social subgroup or society can achieve.



Law Sixteen

Justice is the glue that holds social systems together. Justice is the mechanism for responding to breaches of duty, for holding each other to account for our roles as societal components.

643 THOUSAND PEOPLE

in America are homeless
on any given night

HOMELESS



Sixteen laws governing the design of socio-technical systems. Sixteen design laws that will have a profound impact on the proposition, our ability to produce better outcomes.

Law 1

Pursuit of individual happiness drives the human condition; it is the mission.

Law 2

We are endowed with a **free will** to pursue our individual happiness.

Law 3

We pursue our happiness as **inescapably fallible** creatures. We will do things that, in hindsight, we never intended to do.

Law 4

We live in **a world of limited resources**. This, in part, drives the competitive nature of the human condition.

Law 5

While happiness is the mission, it is **life, liberty, and property** that are the three primary values – these are the things we strive to protect against outside intrusion.

Law 6

One person's pursuit of happiness will **inevitably conflict** with someone else's pursuit of happiness.

Law 7

When faced with a dilemma between service to self and service to others, humans will often choose self over others. **Altruism is a deliberate task** requiring hard work.

Law 8

When more than two humans exist, **coalitions will inevitably form** to work to the benefit of the subgroup.

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Collective happiness is important to our individual happiness.

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Because we humans are imperfect and resources are limited, **systems are necessarily imperfect**.

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All systems suffer from the design trades – maximizing performance toward one value will ultimately harm another value, or the mission itself. The closer we get to perfection toward any one value, the higher the costs to other values.

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Societies can **advance across all values** only when human productivity gains provide more resources to a world of still limited resources.

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Feedback (learning) systems are essential in our stewardship of limited resources, whether it be for our personal or collective happiness.

Law 14

Imposers are essential to our shared happiness. We create imposers to promote collective happiness by protecting the life and property of individuals. Most often, imposers use restraints on our liberty as the principal tool to exercise their control. The penalties for nonconformance involve restrictions on property, liberty, and sometimes life.

Law 15

We humans are system components. We exist in systems with notions of **duty guiding our paths**. Duties come from the imposers, often guided by deity-based notions of right and wrong.

Law 16

Justice is the glue that holds social systems together. Justice is the mechanism for responding to breaches of duty, for holding each other to account for our roles as societal components.

Sixteen laws that serve as constraints to the proposition. We are sure there are more. That said, it is on these 16 laws that we put our focus.

*Sixteen laws that serve as constraints to the proposition.
We are sure there are more.*

That said, it is on these 16 laws that we put our focus.

The Proposition Again:

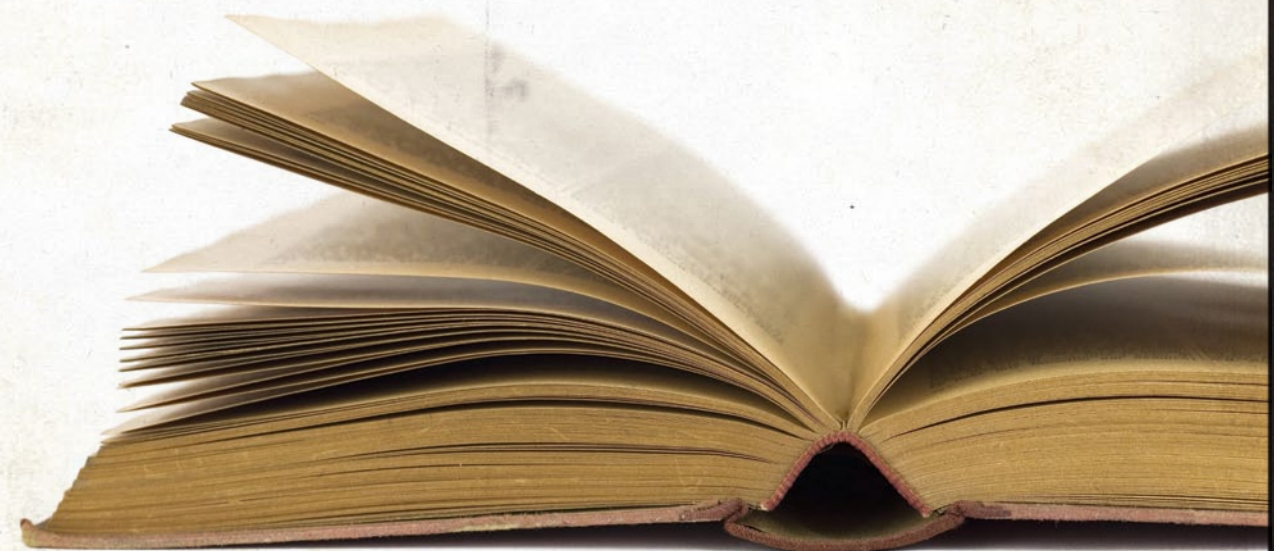
Framed by the right systems of learning, the right systems of justice, we can design systems, and help humans make choices in those systems, to produce better outcomes, at the individual, local, and societal level.

It's why we exist as a company, to teach the world that there is a better way. We believe that:

Framed by the right systems of learning, the right systems of justice, we can design systems and help humans make the choices in those systems that produce better outcomes, at the individual, local, and societal level.

We're breaking the code to human behavior. That's the easy part. It is the choices we must make amongst competing societal values where the task gets difficult. It is having the intellectual honesty to recognize that one value must often be sacrificed for others. It is having the intellectual honesty to recognize that self-interest will often trump harm to others. With intellectual honesty about who we are and how we act comes a renewed ability to produce even better outcomes as a society. That's the proposition.

Now on to the five skills that we must learn to be prepared to achieve the outcomes we desire.



Sports players are evaluated on five core skills (or tools): In baseball, a five-tool player is one who excels at hitting for average, hitting for power, base running skills and speed, throwing ability, and fielding abilities. Willie Mays, Ken Griffey, Jr., Roberto Clemente are among a few major leaguers to have had all five tools.

As a company, we're continuously developing and honing our skills around five elements: **1) Values and Expectations**, **2) System Design**, **3) Behavioral Choices**, **4) Learning Systems**, and **5) Justice and Accountability**. We have spent our careers developing skills in these five areas, building methods and tools that are among the best in the world in each element. With recognition of the 16 design laws, we set out to develop proficiency in these five elements and to teach the world how to do each well.



Aligning Values and Expectations

We model the mission of every individual to be that of personal happiness. It's our practical maxim for the design of social systems. When brought together as a group, the notion of a "mission" is wide open. A corporate enterprise might have the maximization of profits as its simple mission. A cancer research institute might have finding a cure as its mission. A professional football team might have winning the Superbowl as its mission. All of these missions are fine, they just serve to describe why this group of people have come together to act as a group.

Along the way, groups of individuals will identify what they do not want to forsake in pursuit of their mission. The football coach might value academics and safety of the players. The hospital might value the safety and privacy of its patients. Every human endeavor, driven by a mission, will have exposure to harm along the way. An organization must identify what it values and determine, in a world of competing values, what reasonable expectations it can set for each value. Within the design constraints of the 16 design rules, what can and should a group of human beings achieve?

Skill #1 - knowing how to set expectations. It's the starting point for the design of a socio-technical system.



2 Designing Better Systems

Design can and should be deliberate. We cannot afford for systems to naturally evolve. We must think like systems engineers - being deliberate about the capability of systems to fulfill our mission and to protect those values we strive to protect.

Barriers, recovery, and redundancy. They are among the concepts of design engineers. We can use barriers to prevent specific human errors, recovery to catch failures downstream, and redundancy to provide multiple channels to success. We can manage system performance shaping factors that influence how humans make choices and how humans will make inadvertent errors. Individuals can even manage their own personal performance shaping factors to reduce their own rate of error, from education to a good diet and exercise.

Most of us do not think of ourselves as systems designers. But we are - we are all systems designers. We design a system for waking up in the morning, a system for loading the dishwasher, a system for getting our teenagers to do what we ask them. Learning to be a good system designer, as a parent, a corporate manager, or a lawmaker is essential to producing better outcomes. System design - skill #2.



3 Making Better Behavioral Choices

All we have are our choices. It is the expression of our free will. We do not choose, in our vernacular, to make mistakes. We do, however, make choices that put ourselves, and others, in harm's way. We may choose to text when we drive, using our free will to pursue our happiness, but put others in harm's way in the process.

As individuals, we must assess our own behavioral choices. A bad choice is not validated simply because we did not experience an undesired outcome. Likewise, a good choice is not invalidated because we did indeed experience a bad outcome. Across multiple competing values, we are faced with the simple question of what it is to do the right thing.

As social engineers (e.g., parents, managers, lawmakers) we strive to influence the choices of others, to help them do what we desire them to do. How can I get my teenager to make his bed? How can I get my doctor to wash his hands? It is not an easy task, given we are not the only ones vying for their attention.

This is the hardest of the skills to acquire - that Tom Sawyer-like skill to influence other human beings to make the choices that you hope they will make. Skill #3 is the management of behavioral choices.



4

Learning to Systematically Learn

You're going to make mistakes in life – learn from them. We've all heard something to this effect – from a parent, a coach, a manager, a priest. Our ability to learn, not *after* someone has been harmed, but to learn from the precursors to harm, is a skill we all need. How can I see hazards in the world around me? How could we have seen the precursors to a financial meltdown, and acted upon them, in advance of the meltdown?

There are a number of facets to learning. How do we get humans to report what they might otherwise be compelled to hide? How do we get humans to be truthful in a world that shames those who are less than perfect? How do we help humans spot the behavioral precursors to harm, when they themselves do not see the risk, or mistakenly believe the risky choice is justified? How do we set up audit systems – from within a family or organization, and out to the regulatory imposer? How do we see common threads across events – to be good stewards of the limited resources we are given to intervene against potential harm across multiple competing values? How do we prospectively learn, to predict hazards and risks at the design stage, not waiting for a reactive learning system to catch a fatal flaw?

The ability to design and implement a real learning system – this is skill #4.



5

Finding Justice

Justice. We say in design rule #16 that justice is the glue that holds social systems together.

Yet, today, in many ways, we have a seriously flawed justice system. In the past 200 years, we have seen the rise of two counterproductive trends. First, we have begun to hold people accountable to a standard of perfection, even through our criminal law. Second, we have collectively bought into the idea of “no harm, no foul.” Each of these trends has been counterproductive to our search for better outcomes.

Humans will make mistakes, they will drift into risky behavioral choices while believing they are doing the right thing, and they will occasionally choose themselves, their own pursuit of happiness, over the life or liberty of another. Human error, at-risk behavior, and reckless behavior. Today, it's punish them all, but only when a bad outcome has occurred. A better justice system sees the differences in these three behaviors. Console the human error, coach the at-risk behavior, and punish the reckless behavior, all independent of the actual outcome.

Holding people accountable for their societal contribution, in ways that protect our learning systems, and in ways that effectively influence behavioral choices – skill #5.



The 16 laws...

The Five Skills...

a belief we can do better..

A dirt road winds through a vast, golden field of tall grasses. The sky is filled with large, dramatic clouds, with sunlight breaking through on the right side, creating a warm, golden glow. The road leads towards a distant treeline and hills.

It's in our collective hands.
We can build a better world.

What world do you see ahead?

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helping those who build a better world

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