

10x

Think Big.

Dear friend,

A thought inspired by Peter Thiel:

Let us avoid incremental gains (5-10% gains). Instead-- let us seek to make 10x improvements (making something 10x better than the competition, or making something totally new).

I love innovation. I love the new, I love new technologies which make life more meaningful, productive, and easier for us (freeing up our cognitive/physical energy- - in order to do and create what we truly desire).

Probably one of the biggest entrepreneurial concepts I learned from Peter Thiel is "10x thinking". The basic idea is this:

To innovate and to succeed, it is best to create new things which are at least 10x better than things which already exist.

Generally, to make a 10x improvement means to do something that hasn't ever done before. Or, having 10x more hustle and drive from anyone else, or by doing something 10x better than anyone. Or the thought like my buddy Stotycho introduced to me:

*Make your thing 10x **simpler** than anyone else.*

10x Simpler

I think the reason why Steve Jobs x Jony Ive was able to succeed so much with Apple is this:

Apple computers were 10x simpler to use than any other computers during the time.

Steve Jobs introduced the modern GUI on a mass-scale, which made a 'desktop interface' simple to use for non-nerdy computer users. I still remember when I was in the 2nd grade, having to learn how to "cd" (change directory) in MS-DOS in the green-black interface. Being able to use a mouse on a "desktop interface" totally changed everything.

Even with the iPhone camera-- it has made photography 10x simpler than any other modern camera. Literally all you have to do is point and click.

Why are modern cameras so complicated?

I look at all the modern "stand-alone" digital cameras-- and unfortunately, almost all of them are still too complicated and complex to use.

My ideal stand-alone camera:

A pure "point and shoot" camera -- with no superfluous buttons, menu items, or dials.

I'm currently shooting with a Lumix G9 camera, and the best feature I've been using is the "iA" (intelligent auto) mode. I literally just point and click -- with autofocus, auto-ISO, and the only thing I adjust is the exposure-compensation (to darken or lighten the photos). This is good because I think less about the technical settings, and I focus more on what is truly important: framing, composition, timing, shooting photos of what is meaningful to me.

Shooting in "iA" mode has simplified my life. But what do I dislike about the Lumix G9 camera? Too big and heavy. Difficult to carry with me everywhere I go.

The camera I really love is the Ricoh GR camera. Small, compact, pocketable-- and I just shoot it in "P" (program) mode, with ISO 1600, JPEG Positive Film (for Color), or RAW + ERIC KIM Monochrome 1600 preset (for black and white). But

unfortunately, the RICOH still has too many superfluous buttons, functions, levers-
- something that confuses and befuddles beginner photographers.

My ideal camera:

A mix between a RICOH GR camera, and an iPhone.

The ultimate simple "stand-alone" digital camera.

Why 10x?

Sorry -- getting off-topic.

Let us go back to the topic at hand-- *why* make 10x improvements?

To me, **to be human is too innovate.**

Innovation is doing more with less. Creating more, producing more, or doing things simpler-- with less physical or brainpower.

We can innovate in so many ways (not just technology). We can innovate ideas (political, social, economic), we can innovate how we talk and interact with others, we can innovate how we live our everyday lives.

Personally, I love innovation because:

1. It makes life more fun! It gives me a reason to wake up in the morning, knowing that today (or the future) is going to be brighter-- more hopeful, and more optimistic!
2. It empowers me to try new things-- which gives me a direction or a purpose in life. **I think there are still a trillion things we have not yet created, discovered, or made** -- which gives us (the individual entrepreneurs and innovators) unlimited upside. No downside in modern society-- we will not starve to death, die or thirst, or die from the cold.
3. Innovation drives the human race forward. I care more about humanity (as a

whole) than my own individual life. This gives me purpose-- knowing that I am contributing a small honey-drop to the hive of humanity. Obviously after I die, there is no way I can reap the benefits of my contributions to humanity. But while I am still alive-- **knowing that I am doing something magnanimous and great for the future generations of humanity gives me hope, optimism and deep joy.**

Incremental gains are boring

The reason we loved Steve Jobs so much:

Whenever he unveiled a new Apple product-- we were all excited-- for something TOTALLY NEW, something TOTALLY REVOLUTIONARY, and something TOTALLY MAGICAL!

Whenever we see the new iPhone with incremental 5-10% gains-- we are bored. We love massive revolutionary new ideas -- because **psychologically, we spurn small gains**. I think ultimately this is a good thing, because it pushes us to create massive new innovations in the world.

10x gains in technology

I had the epiphany a few days ago:

Avoid buying new shit that only gives you incremental gains. Only buy new things which give you a 10x gain or improvement.

For example, upgrading your 1-2 year old iPhone or smartphone to the newest smartphone will probably only be a 5-20% gain. My suggestion:

Procrastinate on upgrading your devices as long as possible-- until you perceive that the upgrade is at least "10x" (something totally brand-brand-new -- a game-changer).

For example, when my RICOH GR II broke when I was abroad in Japan, I didn't buy another RICOH. Why? I wanted something 10x better. I ended up buying a Lumix G9, because I perceived that the 4k (24fps) video functionality was at least a "10x upgrade".

Cindy and I currently share an older Samsung Galaxy smartphone. I was thinking about buying a new iPhone-- yet, I hesitated. Why? Even though the newest iPhone is awesome, I perceived the upgrade to only be around 10-20% "better". Not good enough for me to drop \$1,000+ on a new iPhone.

Even with any digital cameras today-- I only see incremental upgrades. The only truly innovative camera I think I see is the new Fujifilm digital-medium-format camera, but everything else in the market seems to only be incremental gains. I quite like the new Ricoh GR III camera that will come out in the near future (they simplified the camera more, with fewer buttons and functions)-- but still -- I am craving for that 10x improvement.

10x thinking is very hard.

It is difficult to think 10x. Even nowadays, I probably spend 90% of my day just thinking. Trying to think of new innovative ideas, trying to think of deeper philosophical truths, and trying to also simplify my thinking 10x.

I still love trying to solve difficult problems. To me, **hard is fun**. The more difficult a problem, the more fun and challenging it is to trying to figure out how to solve it.

Conclusion

To conclude:

Avoid incremental thinking-- aim big-- very big: 10x!

THINK BIG. ERIC