

Difficult Problems

GO HARD.

Dear friend,

Basic idea: perhaps our best use of our human mind, resources, and intelligence is to solve difficult problems (that can help our fellow humans) -- things which algorithms, games, machines, and AI cannot (yet) do!

Why play GO?

It was once believed that the game of GO could never be mastered by a machine, an AI, or an algorithm. But AlphaGO proved that wrong-- this AI (efficiently) crushed all of its opponents.

Which made me wonder,

What is the point of playing GO, when a machine can play it better than us?

Of course we needed humans to program the algorithm which powers AlphaGO, and we also needed the humans to program the machine to learn from all the (human) GO players from all over the world.

Yet, now what is the point of humans (still) playing GO?

Well, perhaps the first argument can be that humans can maybe find (one day, with the assistance of AI), new ways of playing GO which can (one day) beat algorithms like AlphaGo. Perhaps if we take on a 'centaur' concept (humans combined with AI) will be stronger than pure AI. This is what Elon Musk believes with Neuralink -- augmenting human intelligence with AI will perhaps make us smarter.

Humans have played GO for thousands of years because it was a very difficult problem, and a very difficult challenge. And it is of my belief that to constantly challenge ourselves, and to solve (very difficult) problems is what makes us

human!

A life in which we had no challenges, no difficulty, no stress, and no over-coming would be a life NOT worth living.

In other words,

To thrive as a human, we need challenge, very hard difficulty, and extreme new challenges to solve and overcome!

Why bomb buildings?

The Unabomber (Ted K.) wrote a manifesto, pretty much saying this:

Humanity is suffering because all of the difficult problems have already been solved. To re-spark the ambition of humans, we must destroy all (existing) infrastructure, so humans can have new challenges to overcome.

I obviously think that his idea was very misguided-- especially because he ended up killing human lives.

What I think is this:

There are still many many difficult problems and challenges (still) waiting for us to be solved. And perhaps the best use of our lives, energy, and attention is to solve these problems.

Which problems can only you solve?

When I think about myself (ERIC KIM), I know that my biggest strength is my willingness to challenge conventions, to challenge pre-existing thoughts and philosophies, and to perhaps offer practical ideas and thoughts which can

empower others. I am not good at math, computer programming, etc. Yet, I still can grasp the general concepts pretty well; and perhaps it is my skill of 'cross-pollinating' everything I learn is what makes me intelligent.

I often wonder this for myself:

What problems can only I solve?

In other words,

*What can **only** ERIC KIM do which nobody else can do?*

Perhaps my #1 skill is philosophy-art.

I know a lot of people who are very intelligent and skilled computer programmers, yet they don't really know what they want in life (philosophy). I know philosophers who are very intelligent, yet they lack any practical-common-sense or human skills. I know artists who lack common sense, practical skills, and lack a guiding philosophy.

What I mean to say is this:

Acknowledge your unique sub-set or inter-section of skills, and exploit/leverage those set of skills to your personal maximum.

How to supersede your personal maximum

I believe that all of us have the ability to meet our personal maximum-- with enough hard work, hustle, dedication, and focus.

Yet this is what interests me more:

*How can we **OVERCOME** our personal maximum-- or how can we set new 'personal records'?*

For example, in the past, my personal record for deadlift was around 415 pounds (my past personal maximum). But now, I'm starting to wonder: "Can I deadlift *MORE* than my personal maximum-- can I *supersede* this limit, by perhaps deadlifting 500 pounds one day?)

Eddie Hall, the world's strongest deadlifter, was one of the few people to ever deadlift 1,000+ pounds. He then set a new world record. Then, when he was king of the whole world for deadlift, he continued to train-- and then ever superseded his own record, by deadlifting more than 500kg!!! It was once believed that humans could never deadlift more than 500kg, but Eddie Hall did it! He set a new 'precedent' -- and proved that human beings were indeed capable of new personal maximum limits.

This is the problem with modern humans:

We use the past as a benchmark for the future.

For example, in the past when we only had horses on the roads of Manhattan -- nobody could have ever imagined that one day (all roads) would *ONLY* have automobiles.

Henry Ford had enough imagination, hustle, and belief in his own ideas that he was able to *CREATE* his own vision for the future-- a future which had (*NOT*) yet been created (a world where all Americans could have automobiles). Now I believe that average American house-hold has 2.5 cars.

Elon Musk has a similar vision-- the day that the whole world runs only on electric cars, trucks, and vehicles.

Yet as innovators, it is difficult for us to believe in a future which does not (yet) exist. And this is the strength of human intelligence-- we have the ability to dream of the future that doesn't yet exist. We have the ability to imbue our human-ness and our own set of human ethics for a (human) future.

My personal dreams

One of my biggest goals in life was to discover a philosophy which allowed (any) photographer to become empowered through photography. And in 2018, I think we have achieved this.

In 2018, we have phenomenal digital cameras and tools for creation. Our phone cameras have now hit the "80% good enough" bench-mark (satisficing). For the most part, I don't think we really "need" better image quality. We already have good enough tools to make phenomenal pictures-- just consider the strength of the RICOH GR (Version 1 or 2), which can be purchased for less than \$600 USD, and can produce phenomenal-image quality pictures. You can shoot RICOH GR in RAW, then download free Eric Kim PRESETS and use them to produce beautiful monochrome pictures. And for nice color pictures, just shoot RICOH GR in JPEG and 'positive film' preset.

Even with the new iPhone Xs-- honestly, I think most of us photographers no longer need "better" image quality in our mobile devices, phones, or "stand-alone" digital cameras.

The next frontier for photography

So where does that leave us photographers?

I think this:

Us future photographers must discover and create new compositions, new ways of seeing, and pursue new photography-projects which haven't been attempted, tried, or done before!

That means this:

1. First of all, achieve your personal maximum by setting the bar high for your own photography. Pursue projects you are passionate about, and pursue your photography with any tool you're interested in shooting with. Then when you think you've hit a plateau; recognize that you must SUPER-SEDE the plateau.

- You must create new levels for yourself! It is like if you are playing a video game and you are already maxed-out at level 99, you need to build your own new video game to level-up to level 220 (like Pokemon's "MISSING NO" hack)!
2. Keep setting new bench-marks for yourself, and going above your own personal maximum.
-

Conclusion

My apologies for getting off-topic.

To take it back, let me distill what I mean to say:

1. Solve difficult problems-- pursue problems that cannot be solved by robots, AI, or algorithms. This means ask yourself: "What makes human intelligence so good?"
2. What are problems that only you can solve? What is your unique sub-set of skills which nobody else can emulate?
3. What are your (big) dreams for the future-- in which you can empower the future of humanity?

GO HARD, ERIC