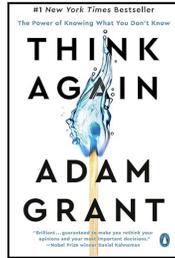


Your Kindle Notes For:



Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know

Adam Grant

131 Highlight(s) | 0 Note(s)

Location: 106

Yet in a turbulent world, there's another set of cognitive skills that might matter more: the ability to rethink and unlearn.

Location: 129

We favor the comfort of conviction over the discomfort of doubt, and we let our beliefs get brittle long before our bones. We laugh at people who still use Windows 95, yet we still cling to opinions that we formed in 1995.

Location: 131

We listen to views that make us feel good, instead of ideas that make us think hard.

Location: 202

Since then, rethinking has become central to my sense of self. I'm a psychologist but I'm not a fan of Freud, I don't have a couch in my office, and I don't do therapy. As an organizational psychologist at Wharton, I've spent the past fifteen years researching and teaching evidence-based management. As an entrepreneur of data and ideas, I've been called by organizations like Google, Pixar, the NBA, and the Gates Foundation to help them reexamine how they design meaningful jobs, build creative teams, and shape collaborative cultures. My job is to think again about how we work, lead, and live—and enable others to do the same.

Location: 221

Even our great governing document, the U.S. Constitution, allows for amendments. What if we were quicker to make amendments to our own mental constitutions?

Location: 230

The third section is about how we can create communities of lifelong learners.

Location: 245

This book is an invitation to let go of knowledge and opinions that are no longer serving you well, and to anchor your sense of self in flexibility rather than consistency.

Location: 257

Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. —George Bernard Shaw

Location: 294

We're swift to recognize when other people need to think again. We question the judgment of experts whenever we seek out a second opinion on a medical diagnosis. Unfortunately, when it comes to our own knowledge and opinions, we often favor feeling right over being right.

Location: 322

If you're a scientist by trade, rethinking is fundamental to your profession. You're paid to be constantly aware of the limits of your understanding.

Location: 326

But being a scientist is not just a profession. It's a frame of mind—a mode of thinking that differs from preaching, prosecuting, and politicking. We move into scientist mode when we're searching for the truth: we run experiments to test hypotheses and discover knowledge.

Location: 395

The brighter you are, the harder it can be to see your own limitations. Being good at thinking can make you worse at rethinking.

Blue highlight | Location: 396

When we're in scientist mode, we refuse to let our ideas become ideologies. We don't start with answers or solutions; we lead with questions and puzzles. We don't preach from intuition; we teach from evidence. We don't just have healthy skepticism about other people's arguments; we dare to disagree with our own arguments.

Location: 409

After all, the purpose of learning isn't to affirm our beliefs; it's to evolve our beliefs.

Location: 427

Recognizing our shortcomings opens the door to doubt. As we question our current understanding, we become curious about what information we're missing. That search leads us to new discoveries, which in turn maintain our humility by reinforcing how much we still have to learn. If knowledge is power, knowing what we don't know is wisdom.

Location: 443

Like a politician who campaigns only to his base, he focused on the keyboard taste of millions of existing users, neglecting the appeal of a touchscreen to billions of potential users.

Location: 610

When we lack the knowledge and skills to achieve excellence, we sometimes lack the knowledge and skills to judge excellence. This insight should immediately put your favorite confident ignoramuses in their place.

Location: 624

Unfortunately, as they gain experience, their confidence climbs faster than their competence, and confidence remains higher than competence from that point on.

Location: 636

What he lacked is a crucial nutrient for the mind: humility. The antidote to getting stuck on Mount Stupid is taking a regular dose of it. "Arrogance is ignorance plus conviction," blogger Tim Urban explains. "While humility is a permeable filter that absorbs life experience and converts it into knowledge and wisdom, arrogance is a rubber shield that life experience simply bounces off of."

Location: 646

Confidence is a measure of how much you believe in yourself. Evidence shows that's distinct from how much you believe in your methods. You can be confident in your ability to achieve a goal in the future while maintaining the humility to question whether you have the right tools in the present. That's the sweet spot of confidence.

Location: 704

I've found that confidence can make us complacent. If we never worry about letting other people down, we're more likely to actually do so. When we feel like impostors, we think we have something to prove. Impostors may be the last to jump in, but they may also be the last to bail out. Second, impostor thoughts can motivate us to work smarter. When we don't believe we're going to win, we have nothing to lose by rethinking our strategy.

Location: 710

Third, feeling like an impostor can make us better learners. Having some doubts about our knowledge and skills takes us off a pedestal, encouraging us to seek out insights from others.

Location: 733

Although she doubted her tools, she had confidence in herself as a learner.

Location: 734

She understood that knowledge is best sought from experts, but creativity and wisdom can come from anywhere.

Location: 740

Great thinkers don't harbor doubts because they're impostors. They maintain doubts because they know we're all partially blind and they're committed to improving their sight. They don't boast about how much they know; they marvel at how little they understand. They're aware that each answer raises new questions, and the quest for knowledge is never finished. A mark of lifelong learners is recognizing that they can learn something from everyone they meet.

Location: 743

Arrogance leaves us blind to our weaknesses. Humility is a reflective lens: it helps us see them clearly. Confident humility is a corrective lens: it enables us to overcome those weaknesses.

Location: 840

Later, I sat down with Danny for lunch and asked him about his reaction. It looked a lot to me like the joy of being wrong—his eyes twinkled as if he was having fun. He

Location: 848

He's a scientist devoted to the truth. When I asked him how he stays in that mode, he said he refuses to let his beliefs become part of his identity. "I change my mind at a speed that drives my collaborators crazy," he explained. "My attachment to my ideas is provisional. There's no unconditional love for them." Attachment. That's what keeps us from recognizing when our opinions are off the mark and rethinking them.

Location: 869

Who you are should be a question of what you value, not what you believe. Values are your core principles in life—they might be excellence and generosity, freedom and fairness, or security and integrity. Basing your identity on these kinds of principles enables you to remain open-minded about the best ways to advance them.

Location: 905

more attention to factors that were hard to measure and overlooked. For Trump, those included “Mastery at manipulating the media; Name recognition; and A winning issue (i.e., immigration and ‘the wall’).”

Location: 907

My colleague Phil Tetlock finds that forecasting skill is less a matter of what we know than of how we think.

Location: 911

The best forecasters went through more rethinking cycles. They had the confident humility to doubt their judgments and the curiosity to discover new information that led them to revise their predictions.

Location: 922

On Seinfeld, George Costanza famously said, “It’s not a lie if you believe it.” I might add that it doesn’t become the truth just because you believe it. It’s a sign of wisdom to avoid believing every thought that enters your mind. It’s a mark of emotional intelligence to avoid internalizing every feeling that enters your heart.

Location: 939

If you want to be a better forecaster today, it helps to let go of your commitment to the opinions you held yesterday.

Location: 963

forecaster, he made the rookie mistake of falling victim to desirability bias, allowing his preference to cloud his judgment.

Location: 976

The fear of missing the mark next year is a powerful motivator to get a crystal-clear view of last year’s mistakes. “People who are right a lot listen a lot, and they change their mind a lot,” Jeff Bezos says. “If you don’t change your mind frequently, you’re going to be wrong a lot.”

Location: 981

What forecasters do in tournaments is good practice in life. When you form an opinion, ask yourself what would have to happen to prove it false. Then keep track of your views so you can see when you were right, when you were wrong, and how your thinking has evolved. “I started out just wanting to prove myself,” Jean-Pierre says. “Now I want to improve myself—to see how good I can get.”

Location: 999

If we choose to express them out loud, though, I think it's our responsibility to ground them in logic and facts, share our reasoning with others, and change our minds when better evidence emerges.

Location: 1,154

I've learned that it's important to consider their values along with their personalities—I'm looking for disagreeable people who are givers, not takers. Disagreeable givers often make the best critics: their intent is to elevate the work, not feed their own egos. They don't criticize because they're insecure; they challenge because they care. They dish out tough love.*

Blue highlight | Location: 1,188

Agreeableness is about seeking social harmony, not cognitive consensus. It's possible to disagree without being disagreeable. Although I'm terrified of hurting other people's feelings, when it comes to challenging their thoughts, I have no fear. In fact, when I argue with someone, it's not a display of disrespect—it's a sign of respect. It means I value their views enough to contest them. If their opinions didn't matter to me, I wouldn't bother. I know I have chemistry with someone when we find it delightful to prove each other wrong.

Location: 1,220

The Wright brothers were masters at having intense task conflict without relationship conflict. When they raised their voices, it reflected intensity rather than hostility. As their mechanic marveled, "I don't think they really got mad, but they sure got awfully hot."

Location: 1,232

When they argued about the propeller, the Wright brothers were making a common mistake. Each was preaching about why he was right and why the other was wrong. When we argue about why, we run the risk of becoming emotionally attached to our positions and dismissive of the other side's. We're more likely to have a good fight if we argue about how.

Location: 1,336

Note to self: on my next trip to the top of Mount Stupid, remember to take a selfie.

Location: 1,400

We won't have much luck changing other people's minds if we refuse to change ours.

Location: 1,458

A single line of argument feels like a conversation; multiple lines of argument can become an onslaught. The audience tuned out the preacher and summoned their best defense attorney to refute the prosecutor.

Location: 1,468

Psychologists have long found that the person most likely to persuade you to change your mind is you. You get to pick the reasons you find most compelling, and you come away with a real sense of ownership over them.

Location: 1,564

they were looking to hire a human being with the motivation and ability to learn. Michele knew what she didn't know and had the confidence to admit it, which sent a clear signal that she could learn what she needed to know.

Location: 1,659

This phenomenon is called group polarization, and it's been demonstrated in hundreds of experiments.

Location: 1,783

In psychology, counterfactual thinking involves imagining how the circumstances of our lives could have unfolded differently.

Location: 1,815

More than a quarter of the company signed up to participate. Afterward, one of the participants wrote that "the biggest takeaway from this chat is the importance of 'unlearning' things to avoid being ignorant."

Location: 1,826

Sometimes letting go of stereotypes means realizing that many members of a hated group aren't so terrible after all. And that's more likely to happen when we actually come face-to-face with them.

Pink highlight | Location: 1,828

In a meta-analysis of over five hundred studies with over 250,000 participants, interacting with members of another group reduced prejudice in 94 percent of the cases.

Location: 1,850

As we work toward systemic change, Daryl urges us not to overlook the power of conversation. When we choose not to engage with people because of their stereotypes or prejudice, we give up on opening their minds. "We are living in space-age times, yet there are still so many of us thinking with stone-age minds," he reflects. "Our ideology needs to catch up to our technology."

Location: 1,915

Together, they developed the core principles of a practice called motivational interviewing. The central premise is that we can rarely motivate someone else to change.

Location: 1,916

We're better off helping them find their own motivation to change.

Location: 1,933

Our role is to hold up a mirror so they can see themselves more clearly, and then empower them to examine their beliefs and behaviors. That can activate a rethinking cycle, in which people approach their own views more scientifically. They develop more humility about their knowledge, doubt in their convictions, and curiosity about alternative points of view. The process of motivational interviewing involves three key techniques: Asking open-ended questions
Engaging in reflective listening
Affirming the person's desire and ability to change

Location: 1,983

Yet the most effective way to help others open their minds is often to listen.

Location: 2,003

That was a turning point. In motivational interviewing, there's a distinction between sustain talk and change talk. Sustain talk is commentary about maintaining the status quo. Change talk is referencing a desire, ability, need, or commitment to make adjustments. When contemplating a change, many people are ambivalent—they have some reasons to consider it but also some reasons to stay the course. Miller and Rollnick suggest asking about and listening for change talk, and then posing some questions about why and how they might change.

Location: 2,021

There's a fourth technique of motivational interviewing, which is often recommended for the end of a conversation and for transition points: summarizing. The idea is to explain your understanding of other people's reasons for change, to check on whether you've missed or misrepresented anything, and to inquire about their plans and possible next steps.

Location: 2,041

Motivational interviewing requires a genuine desire to help people reach their goals.

Location: 2,058

We can all get better at asking "truly curious questions that don't have the hidden agenda of fixing, saving, advising, convincing or correcting," journalist Kate Murphy writes, and helping to "facilitate the clear expression of another person's thoughts."*

Location: 2,064

A skilled motivational interviewer resists the righting reflex—although people want a doctor to fix their broken bones, when it comes to the problems in their heads, they often want sympathy rather than solutions.

Location: 2,086

Many communicators try to make themselves look smart. Great listeners are more interested in making their audiences feel smart. They help people approach their own views with more humility, doubt, and curiosity.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,088

As the writer E. M. Forster put it, “How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?” That understanding made Forster an unusually dedicated listener. In the words of one biographer, “To speak with him was to be seduced by an inverse charisma, a sense of being listened to with such intensity that you had to be your most honest, sharpest, and best self.” Inverse charisma. What a wonderful turn of phrase to capture the magnetic quality of a great listener.

Location: 2,116

But it’s worth remembering that the means are a measure of our character. When we succeed in changing someone’s mind, we shouldn’t only ask whether we’re proud of what we’ve achieved. We should also ask whether we’re proud of how we’ve achieved it.

Location: 2,154

Presenting two extremes isn’t the solution; it’s part of the polarization problem. Psychologists have a name for this: binary bias. It’s a basic human tendency to seek clarity and closure by simplifying a complex continuum into two categories.

Location: 2,156

humorist Robert Benchley, there are two kinds of people: those who divide the world into two kinds of people, and those who don’t. An antidote to this proclivity is complexifying: showcasing the range of perspectives on a given topic.

Location: 2,230

When the middle of the spectrum is invisible, the majority’s will to act vanishes with it. If other people aren’t going to do anything about it, why should I bother? When they become aware of just how many people are concerned about climate change, they’re more prepared to do something about it.

Location: 2,242

It’s true that complexity doesn’t always make for good sound bites, but it does seed great conversations. And some journalists have found clever ways to capture it in few words.

Location: 2,249

A more accurate headline needed just twelve words to serve up a jolt of instant complexity:

Location: 2,251

Imagine if even this kind of minimal nod to complexity appeared in articles on climate change. Scientists overwhelmingly agree about its human causes, but even they have a range of views on the actual effects—and the potential remedies. It's possible to be alarmed about the situation while recognizing the variety of ways to improve it.*

Location: 2,279

Acknowledging complexity doesn't make speakers and writers less convincing; it makes them more credible. It doesn't lose viewers and readers; it maintains their engagement while stoking their curiosity.

Location: 2,286

Research suggests that many writers fall into the same trap, caught up in trying to “maintain a consistent narrative rather than an accurate record.”

Location: 2,315

Some teachers are determined to tailor their instruction accordingly despite decades of evidence that although students might enjoy listening, reading, or doing, they don't actually learn better that way. In psychology, I've inadvertently offended members of idea cults when I've shared evidence that meditation isn't the only way to prevent stress or promote mindfulness;

Location: 2,335

The greater the distance between us and an adversary, the more likely we are to oversimplify their actual motives and invent explanations that stray far from their reality. What works is not perspective-taking but perspective-seeking: actually talking to people to gain insight into the nuances of their views.

Location: 2,341

It turns out that even if we disagree strongly with someone on a social issue, when we discover that she cares deeply about the issue, we trust her more. We might still dislike her, but we see her passion for a principle as a sign of integrity. We reject the belief but grow to respect the person behind it.

Location: 2,356

What stands in the way of rethinking isn't the expression of emotion; it's a restricted range of emotion. So how do we infuse our charged conversations with greater emotional variety—and thereby greater potential for mutual understanding and rethinking?

Location: 2,376

Humans, like polarizing issues, rarely come in binaries.

Location: 2,385

It shouldn't be up to the victim to inject complexity into a difficult conversation. Rethinking should start with the offender. If the woman had taken responsibility for reevaluating her beliefs and behaviors, she might have become an example to others who recognized a bit of themselves in her reaction.

Location: 2,389

Charged conversations cry out for nuance. When we're preaching, prosecuting, or politicking, the complexity of reality can seem like an inconvenient truth. In scientist mode, it can be an invigorating truth—it means there are new opportunities for understanding and for progress.

Location: 2,439

Sure, I knew that many earlier generations of humans had gotten it wrong, but there's a huge difference between learning about other people's false beliefs and actually learning to unbelieve things ourselves.

Location: 2,447

That's what kids really need: frequent practice at unlearning, especially when it comes to the mechanisms of how cause and effect work.

Location: 2,452

The focus is less on being right, and more on building the skills to consider different views and argue productively about them.

Location: 2,455

This is part of a broader movement to teach kids to think like fact-checkers: the guidelines include (1) "interrogate information instead of simply consuming it," (2) "reject rank and popularity as a proxy for reliability," and (3) "understand that the sender of information is often not its source."

Location: 2,458

These principles are valuable beyond the classroom. At our family dinner table, we sometimes hold myth-busting discussions. My wife and I have shared how we learned in school that Pluto was a planet (not true anymore) and Columbus discovered America (never true).

Location: 2,461

Rethinking needs to become a regular habit. Unfortunately, traditional methods of education don't always allow students to form that habit.

Location: 2,481

Despite enjoying the lectures more, they actually gained more knowledge and skill from the active-learning session. It required more mental effort, which made it less fun but led to deeper understanding.

Location: 2,495

Social scientists have called this phenomenon the awestruck effect, but I think it's better described as the dumbstruck effect.

Pink highlight | Location: 2,496

The sage-on-the-stage often preaches new thoughts, but rarely teaches us how to think for ourselves.

Location: 2,499

We should be persuaded by the substance of an argument, not the shiny package in which it's wrapped.

Location: 2,507

If you spend all of your school years being fed information and are never given the opportunity to question it, you won't develop the tools for rethinking that you need in life.

Location: 2,530

Their charge was to question a popular practice, to champion an idea that went against the grain of conventional wisdom, or to challenge principles covered in class.

Location: 2,532

It turns out that although perfectionists are more likely than their peers to ace school, they don't perform any better than their colleagues at work. This tracks with evidence that, across a wide range of industries, grades are not a strong predictor of job performance.

Location: 2,534

Achieving excellence in school often requires mastering old ways of thinking. Building an influential career demands new ways of thinking. In a classic study of highly accomplished architects, the most creative ones graduated with a B average. Their straight-A counterparts were so determined to be right that they often failed to take the risk of rethinking the orthodoxy.

Location: 2,541

I had changed the rules: now they were being rewarded for rethinking instead of regurgitating.

Location: 2,578

He began the school year by presenting them with “grapples”—problems to work through in phases. The approach was think-pair-share: the kids started individually, updated their ideas in small groups, and then presented their thoughts to the rest of the class, arriving at solutions together.

Location: 2,633

I believe that good teachers introduce new thoughts, but great teachers introduce new ways of thinking. Collecting a teacher’s knowledge may help us solve the challenges of the day, but understanding how a teacher thinks can help us navigate the challenges of a lifetime. Ultimately, education is more than the information we accumulate in our heads. It’s the habits we develop as we keep revising our drafts and the skills we build to keep learning.

Location: 2,685

In learning cultures, the norm is for people to know what they don’t know, doubt their existing practices, and stay curious about new routines to try out. Evidence shows that in learning cultures, organizations innovate more and make fewer mistakes. After studying and advising change initiatives at NASA and the Gates Foundation, I’ve learned that learning cultures thrive under a particular combination of psychological safety and accountability.

Location: 2,700

When I was involved in a study at Google to identify the factors that distinguish teams with high performance and well-being, the most important differentiator wasn’t who was on the team or even how meaningful their work was. What mattered most was psychological safety.

Location: 2,705

It’s fostering a climate of respect, trust, and openness in which people can raise concerns and suggestions without fear of reprisal. It’s the foundation of a learning culture.

Location: 2,735

How do you know? It's a question we need to ask more often, both of ourselves and of others. The power lies in its frankness. It's nonjudgmental—a straightforward expression of doubt and curiosity that doesn't put people on the defensive.

Location: 2,749

It starts with modeling the values we want to promote, identifying and praising others who exemplify them, and building a coalition of colleagues who are committed to making the change.

Location: 2,792

It takes confident humility to admit that we're a work in progress. It shows that we care more about improving ourselves than proving ourselves.

Location: 2,816

Along with outcome accountability, we can create process accountability by evaluating how carefully different options are considered as people make decisions.

Location: 2,820

Process accountability might sound like the opposite of psychological safety, but they're actually independent. Amy Edmondson finds that when psychological safety exists without accountability, people tend to stay within their comfort zone, and when there's accountability but not safety, people tend to stay silent in an anxiety zone. When we combine the two, we create a learning zone. People feel free to experiment—and to poke holes in one another's experiments in service of making them better. They become a challenge network.

Location: 2,838

Requiring proof is an enemy of progress. This is why companies like Amazon use a principle of disagree and commit. As Jeff Bezos explained it in an annual shareholder letter, instead of demanding convincing results, experiments start with asking people to make bets. "Look, I know we disagree on this but will you gamble with me on it?"

Location: 2,937

Instead, we tend to double down and sink more resources in the plan. This pattern is called escalation of commitment. Evidence

Location: 2,944

Grit is the combination of passion and perseverance, and research shows that it can play an important role in motivating us to accomplish long-term goals.

Location: 2,953

what do you want to be when you grow up? Pondering that question can foster a fixed mindset about work and self. “I think it’s one of the most useless questions an adult can ask a child,” Michelle Obama writes. “What do you want to be when you grow up? As if growing up is finite.

Location: 2,962

Kids might be better off learning about careers as actions to take rather than as identities to claim. When they see work as what they do rather than who they are, they become more open to exploring different possibilities.

Location: 2,967

When second and third graders learned about “doing science” rather than “being scientists,” they were more excited about pursuing science.

Location: 2,969

Even prekindergarten students express more interest in science when it’s presented as something we do rather than someone we are.

Location: 2,999

I encourage them to put a reminder in their calendars to ask some key questions twice a year. When did you form the aspirations you’re currently pursuing, and how have you changed since then? Have you reached a learning plateau in your role or your workplace, and is it time to consider a pivot?

Location: 3,049

A second likely culprit is that we spend too much time striving for peak happiness, overlooking the fact that happiness depends more on the frequency of positive emotions than their intensity.

Location: 3,070

In a series of studies, students who changed their environments by adjusting their living arrangements or course schedules quickly returned to their baseline levels of happiness. As Ernest Hemingway wrote, “You can’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another.” Meanwhile, students who changed their actions by joining a new club, adjusting their study habits, or starting a new project experienced lasting gains in happiness.

Location: 3,074

are. It’s our actions—not our surroundings—that bring us meaning and belonging.

Location: 3,083

Still, when it comes to careers, instead of searching for the job where we'll be happiest, we might be better off pursuing the job where we expect to learn and contribute the most.

Location: 3,084

Psychologists find that passions are often developed, not discovered. In a study of entrepreneurs, the more effort they put into their startups, the more their enthusiasm about their businesses climbed each week. Their passion grew as they gained momentum and mastery. Interest doesn't always lead to effort and skill; sometimes it follows them.

Location: 3,096

It's left me thinking about happiness less as a goal and more as a by-product of mastery and meaning.

Location: 3,109

To adapt an analogy from E. L. Doctorow, writing out a plan for your life "is like driving at night in the fog. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way."

Location: 3,138

"What I believe" is a process rather than a finality.

Location: 3,145

That's an inherent challenge for Think Again. I don't want the conclusion to bring closure. I want my thinking to keep evolving. To symbolize that openness, I decided to make the epilogue a blank page.

Location: 3,217

Bold, persistent experimentation might be our best tool for rethinking.

Location: 3,228

See yourself as someone who values curiosity, learning, mental flexibility, and searching for knowledge.

Location: 3,238

You can have confidence in your capacity to learn while questioning your current solution to a problem. Knowing what you don't know is often the first step toward developing expertise.

Location: 3,253

Practice the art of persuasive listening. When we're trying to open other people's minds, we can frequently accomplish more by listening than by talking.

Location: 3,255

A good way to start is to increase your question-to-statement ratio.

Location: 3,259

12. Ask "What evidence would change your mind?" You can't bully someone into agreeing with you.

Location: 3,269

16. Reinforce freedom of choice. Sometimes people resist not because they're dismissing the argument but because they're rejecting the feeling of their behavior being controlled. It helps to respect their autonomy by reminding them that it's up to them to choose what they believe.

Blue highlight | Location: 3,290

23. Stop asking kids what they want to be when they grow up. They don't have to define themselves in terms of a career. A single identity can close the door to alternatives. Instead of trying to narrow their options, help them broaden their possibilities. They don't have to be one thing—they can do many things.

Location: 3,298

26. Keep a rethinking scorecard. Don't evaluate decisions based only on the results; track how thoroughly different options are considered in the process. A bad process with a good outcome is luck. A good process with a bad outcome might be a smart experiment.