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For the weekend...

from Douglas E. Welch

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Entropy and Putting Things Back Together

In physics, entropy is the movement of systems from a state of high order into a state of chaos. This concept can also be used more generally. One of the best descriptions I have ever discovered is that everything -- from careers to relationships to houses to cars to businesses to investments -- tends to fall apart. The door in the house that sticks now. The handle that came off the fridge. I can sure you can find even more examples of entropy in your own life.

What because even more obvious and important, though, is that if everything is destined to descend into chaos eventually, everything we care about also requires an investment of time and energy to put it back together before it goes too far. Nothing escapes entropy, but "a penny saved is a penny earned" as Poor Richard once said.

I was thinking about this week because we have spent the last several months heavily invested in some major entropy-fighting projects. We had a new roof put on the house with new gutters to match. I moved some retirement investments around to gain a better return. We had a new garage door installed to replace one that had probably been there since the house was built in 1943. Slowly, but surely, I could see entropy being reduced, energy being put back into the system before it decayed completely. We still have some additional repairs to be made to woodwork and stucco on the house, but we are now in a pretty good position as we start to see retirement waaaaay off on the horizon.

Heck, I even spent an hour cleaning up some errors that had crept into my website over the years. Everything in your life can use a little reorganization and the time invested is well spent in most cases.



Photo by [Galen Crout](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A Neverending Story

Even with all these accomplishments, though, I know that entropy is still trying to tear things down minute by minute and day by day. There is no escaping it.

Unfortunately, though, entropy is often too slow that we can easily ignore it in our daily progress. That backup hard drive that is acting oddly today is an annoyance that we let pass until it fails completely and causes possibly dramatic consequences. If only we had put a little energy back into the system and repaired it or replaced it.

I am as good as anyone else at ignoring entropy in some ways, but other aspects of my personality often serve me better. I have a notorious sense of smell that won't rest until I discover the source of some new unpleasant order in the house or garden -- even with my fellow inhabitants detect nothing. We once had a fan suddenly fail, but I noticed the obvious smell of overheating and dashed about the house trying to figure out what it was. Thank goodness for that or it might have turned into a much larger problem when it started to smoke or burn. I am the one who notices when appliances start to make new noises -- especially if they are repetitive. I can hear the water running when there is even the smallest leak, merely from the cavitation in the pipes. I once noticed a water main break a quarter mile up the street because I could hear it in our pipes.

If you have similar talents -- even if you don't -- there is one rule you can apply. When you DO notice something "falling apart" address it immediately. Don't let yourself ignore the annoyance, but rather do something about it. Even the simple act of adding it to a To-Do list can start the process of protecting yourself against entropy. Note those things that need attention and then keep that list in a prominent spot -- either on paper or in your digital systems. You can even make it as a reminder so that if you don't forget, you'll get a nudge from your "off-board brain" to check back in.

Off-Board Brain

I use just such a reminder system to help keep me on the straight and narrow with both life and work items. Which part of the garden needs to be watered today? Which video clip am I supposed to post for Rosanne on Tuesdays? When do I need to follow up on that rebate, bill payment, or doctor's appointment? I know of few people who can keep everything in their heads all the time. I learned years ago that without a useful To-Do list and reminders I would let things go until a major failure occurred. That's no way to go through life and only guarantees more troubles than are absolutely necessary. Don't make your life any more difficult than it needs to be.

So, what signs of entropy are you seeing in your life? Look for the annoyances as well as the critical issues, note them in your reminder system, and then start knocking them off one by one -- TODAY! Despite the work required to address these issues, you'll end up making your overall life easier, more pleasant, and certainly less stressful. Remember, your To-Do list isn't there to make your life more stressful, but rather to give you peace of mind that everything will -- eventually -- be addressed and not haunt you forever at the edge of your mind.

***Want to know more about how I arrange and manage my "off-board brain?"
Drop me a line and I'll show you around.***

4 Interesting Links

Here are 4 Interesting links for your weekend reading and watching



#Caravaggio has left a secret seat for you at the table with a hidden message... 🤪
#arthistory #learnontiktok



The False Theory of Idea Scarcity

by Phil McKinney.

I have been listening to Phil McKinney for years via his Killer Innovations podcast and he never fails to illuminate creativity topics. — Douglas

“The world has a limited amount of resources.”

While there are many resources that are finite, some believe there is a finite number of ideas. But, in reality, this theory of idea

scarcity is a myth. When an idea creates the spark that leads to something new being created, it takes the place of something old and the creative cycle starts again with a new idea. The only way to run out of ideas is to stop creating.

Ideas are the most valuable thing in existence. Some say ideas are worth more than money, land, or even oil and coal because they can create something new from nothing! Ideas give life and meaning where there was none before the idea came along.

The creative process can be long and difficult, but it's always rewarding. But there are roadblocks that can impede the creative cycle.

These roadblocks fall into two categories: internal and external. Internal roadblocks are self-imposed or self-inflicted because of fear and pressure while external ones come in different forms such as burnout, criticism, rejection, negativity, etc...

Let's look at the two most common roadblocks.

Read

[Help Atlas Obscura](#) [Explore the British](#) [Museum's Newly Digital](#) [Collection](#)



I LOVE digital access to museums and archives, even outside of the current lockdown climate. I am always amazed — and a little saddened — by how much of a museum's collection is never seen by the public. Digital access is a great way of showing off the more esoteric or fragile pieces in a collection instead of letting them fade away in a dark warehouse out of sight and out of mind. — Douglas

OVER ITS CENTURIES OF DOMINATION

and expansion, the British Empire collected its fair—make that unfair—share of stuff, much of which now resides in the British Museum. Of course, like most other museums in countries heavily affected by the coronavirus pandemic, the British Museum is presently shuttered. But that doesn't mean you can't examine its holdings.

Last week the museum opened up about half of the objects in its collections—meaning an astonishing 1.9 million items

—for public perusal online. While it's in the public domain (as the [Smithsonian's collection](#) is), the British Museum's trove will operate under a non-commercial CC-BY-4.0 license, which allows the public to view the images and share them with friends.

Read

Design Tip: Never Use Black

by [Ian Storm Taylor](#)



One of the most important color tricks I've ever learned was to avoid using the color black in my work. Mrs. Zamula, my childhood art teacher, first warned me about black when I was in middle school. And I heard the same again multiple times at RISD. It sounds weird at first, but it's good advice.

Problem is, we see **dark** things and assume they are **black** things. When, in reality, it's very hard to find something that is pure black. Roads aren't black. Your office chair isn't black. The sidebar in Sparrow isn't black. Words on web pages aren't black.

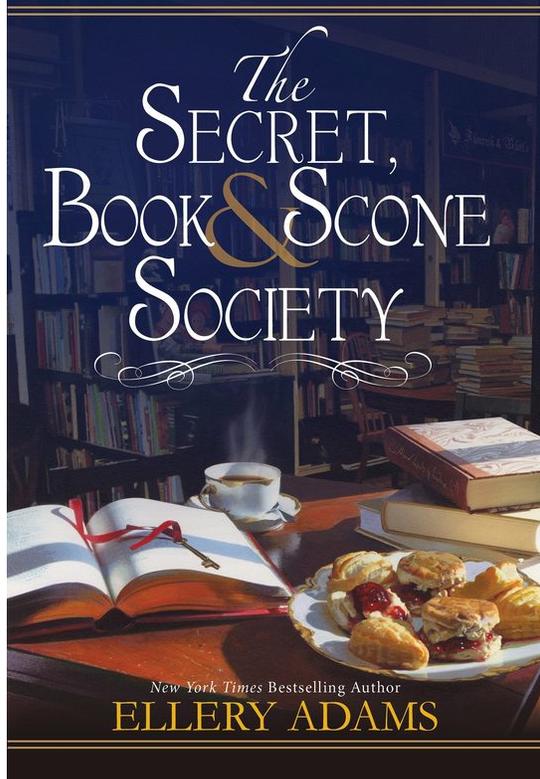
Learn More

The Secret, Book & Scone Society (A Secret, Book, and Scone Society Novel 1)

by Ellery Adams

Another series I have found enjoyable. It is quite "cozy" for a murder mystery with some magical realism added in for spice.
— Douglas

A quirky club in small-town North Carolina holds the keys to health, happiness, friendship—and even solving a murder—all to be found within the pages of the right book...



Strangers flock to Miracle Springs hoping the natural hot springs, five-star cuisine, and renowned spa can cure their ills. If none of that works, they often find their way to Miracle Books, where, over a fresh-baked “comfort” scone, they exchange their stories with owner Nora Pennington in return for a carefully chosen book. That’s Nora’s special talent—prescribing the perfect novel to ease a person’s deepest pain. So when a visiting businessman reaches out for guidance, Nora knows exactly how to help. But before he can keep their appointment, he’s found dead on the train tracks.

Stunned, Nora forms the Secret, Book, and Scone Society, a group of damaged souls yearning to earn redemption by helping others. To join, members must divulge their darkest secret—the terrible truth that brought each of them to Miracle Springs in the first place. Now, determined to uncover the truth behind the businessman’s demise, the women meet in Nora’s cozy bookstore. And as they untangle a web of corruption, they also discover their own courage, purpose, and a sisterhood that will carry them through every challenge—proving it’s never too late to turn the page and start over...

[Amazon](#)

[Check it out from the LA Public Library](#)



Winter Color, Douglas E. Welch

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