Lecture 10W

Today: **THE LAST LECTURE:**
A dozen suggestions
you probably don’t want to hear

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Part 1:

Awards Ceremony

1. BCS 2024 [Beautiful Cheat Sheet] Prize
   Meigan.  Honorable mention: Veronica, Anonymous

2. PNA [Prettiest Notes Award] 2024
   Kylie & Mira [tie]

3. Unsolicited Artwork Award
   Anonymous

4. Distinguished Contributions in Cryptography  Cartography  Calligraphy
   Hannah

5. Perfect Attendance Prize
   Self-identified

6. Serial Victim Idemnification Protocol
   Self-identified
Part 2: The dozen suggestions

(1) Speak your mind.

A prerequisite:
   Know your mind

Don’t assume that I do all these things so well. I don’t!
(2) It’s not okay just because it’s routine.
(3) Don’t buy the whole “technology will solve it” narrative.

The “Standard Technological Narrative” (STN)

1. Technology is a tool. It is apolitical and ethically neutral.
2. Due to technology, things are great and getting better.
3. Better technology will fix what inferior technology broke.
4. We will overcome the climate/environmental challenges.
5. Tech is driven by brilliant individuals, advanced by the marketplace.
6. We have risen far above animals, are creating a technological utopia.

My problem with the STN:

It’s just a story … and not a very good one.
(4) Don’t be so damn optimistic.

Excessive optimism — not pessimism — undermines social progress. It obviates
• the need for broad thinking
• the recognition of emergency
• the basis for social-change movements

(5) Don’t lie—to yourself or to others—about where we are at.

In dark times, it does no good to pretend that you are not living in dark times.

Ira Glass, This American Life, episode 781, Watching the Watchers, Oct. 7, 2022
Language designed to deceive or distort its actual meaning, normally for the benefit of those in power

(6) Don’t be taken in by all the CS doublespeak

Algorithm  (a) A program to compute some unknown function.  (b) An opinion rendered in code.

Cloud computing  Putting your data on somebody else’s servers so that it can be stored in an unknown jurisdiction and mined by unknown parties for unknown ends. But at least it sounds fluffy and cool.

Crypto  Used to mean cryptography — the art and science of secure communication. Now it refers to a massive Ponzi scheme wrapped in technobabble. (P. Klugerman, 5/21/2020)

Deep learning  Learning devoid of depth due to an absence of foundations and domain expertise and sociopolitical thinking.

Smartphone  A phone that is not smart and that pushes its users to be just as stupid. Also, the device should barely function as an actual phone.

Social media  Systems designed to sunder social interactions.
(7) In choosing a job, focus on your prospective employer’s societal role.
(8) Don’t respect authority that doesn’t deserve respect.
(9) Don’t buy an expensive home.

Cruz Reynoso
1931 – 2021
(10) Travel.

A dozen suggestions
(11) Don’t forget your body.

Healthy eating + Exercise

A dozen suggestions
12. No need to be entirely happy and well adjusted.

*It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.*
Summary
The Dozen Suggestions

1. Speak your mind.
2. It’s not okay just because it’s routine.
3. Don’t buy into the whole “technology will solve it” narrative.
4. Don’t be so damn optimistic.
5. Don’t lie—to yourself or to others—about where we are at.
6. Don’t be taken in by all the CS doublespeak.
7. In choosing a job, focus on your prospective employer’s societal role.
8. Don’t respect authority that doesn’t deserve that respect.
9. Don’t buy an expensive home.
10. Travel.
11. Don’t forget your body.
12. No need to be entirely happy and well adjusted.