

Standing on the shoulders of giants

(Original)

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Every human is born in the hands of mother nature and dies in its soft embrace. In the all engulfing current of time, our little lives are but mere tears in a fierce tempest. In comparison, nature has learned to master this flow and has remained eternal ever since. Like a child drawing wisdom from an elder, we humans have so much to learn and benefit from our mother.

Long before the benefits of imitating nature had become scientifically proven, wise masters like Da Vinci have looked up to the skies for the perfect formula for their artwork as well as contraptions like his flying machine. These formulas can be integrated to human society to significantly improve it. Through eternity and evolution, various aspects of nature have reached the perfect shape and condition. A perfect example of this is the golden ratio, found in shells, pine cones, and also tree branches. Furthermore, there are some very practical formulas that nature found which can be used to improve our society. The study of incorporating ideas from nature into human society is called "biomimicry" and is a quickly expanding market. An example of a product that uses biomimicry is the Japanese bullet train. To reduce the air resistance while going through a tunnel, the train's stream-lined shape was designed similarly to that of the kingfisher's beak, which can plunge into water without much resistance. This clearly shows that we have much to learn from our surroundings. However, most technology that covers us today appears to be mostly cut away and distant from nature. I remember learning that a lot of aspects of western civilization are cut off from nature. Represented by René Descartes' philosophy, western civilization deems nature to be a subject of rule by the humans. As a fact, western still life paintings mostly depict fruits that are cut off from its natural habitat. We have to change our mindset from domineering nature to respecting the awe and superiority of it.

The "butterfly effect" is a theory that a very small disturbance in a certain state causes great ripples in a bigger scale, just like the flapping of a butterfly's wings in Brazil causing great hurricanes in Texas where it got its name. This may seem far-fetched but in actuality,

this theory is true, especially for nature. When water faltered and trees started to weaken in Yellow Stone National Park, wolves were introduced to the park. By doing so, the elk overpopulation problem subsided, ultimately leading to the trees increasing and water quality improving. Not only this, but this small action of adding a few wolves to the ecosystem caused other benefits as well. The beaver population returned to normal states, trees like aspen started to come back, and finally returned sustainability to the ecosystem by completing the previous crooked food cycle. This theory of nature is applicable for humans as well. One small action can potentially lead to unexpected outcomes. It might seem like things of love stories but when one looks back on his life, the truth of it is painfully clear. If I didn't choose to study hard during elementary school, I wouldn't have met any of my friends that I have made during my three years in junior high school. Thinking like this, life truly is very fickle and any small action can permanently alter the course of it. Nature helps to remind us to pay attention to the small details and grab any chances if we want to get the most out of our short lives.

"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants". Newton once used this quote to explain how truth is discovered by building up on previous discoveries. This rings true when thinking about humankind's relationship with nature. Through eternity, nature has gained wisdom that no human can hope to obtain on their own. Right now humans are relying too much on themselves and their frail wisdom that was acquired in the last couple of centuries. We are turning arrogant and running headlong to our doom. Now is the time to stop and think about our decisions, discard our pathetic pride, and consult our mother.