



*Strategies for Acceleration, Reinvention and making Magnificent Mistakes*

## Newsletter 1 | March 2017

### Key Points

- **Don't check your inbox right after lunch**
- **Be prepared to reinvent yourself ... repeatedly**
- **Tom Brady can teach you to be a better CEO**
- **Read Sapiens and watch "Zero Days"**

### Thanks in advance ...

... For the gift of your time and attention today. This is my first newsletter and I'll be putting together a summary of what I've been reading, writing and thinking about once a month. If you don't want to receive any future ones, unsubscribe here.

### Acceleration

*Do you check email or voicemail as soon as you get back from lunch? **Don't.*** The best tip I picked up recently was the discipline of avoiding my inbox in the early afternoon. You see, that's my most productive time of the day, and in dipping into the email vortex I was effectively surrendering my attention and letting other people's priorities become *my* priorities. **So reserve your best block of the day for your most important work.** *For more information on this idea, click [here](#):*

### Reinvention

Upon losing the presidency in 2000, Al Gore quipped that the good news was that he now had weekends off; the bad news was that he had his weekdays off, too. However, he used that time away to engineer a post-politics career that won him a Nobel Prize and an Oscar. We may not all have Inconvenient Truths in our future, but we can build "encore moments" and even second (and third) careers - and I believe that **this reinvention ability will be the key 21st century skill set.** *Read more by clicking on this [link](#):*

## Magnificent Mistake Thought of the Month:

“It’s not what we do well that enables us to achieve in the long run. It’s what we do wrong and how we correct it that ensures our long lasting success.”

*(Bernie Marcus, co-Founder of Home Depot)*

## Pop Philosophy | Thinking seriously about not so serious things

### ***What Tom Brady can teach you about Modern Leadership Today***

Tom Brady — not Donald Trump — is the epitome of what a modern leader should be. Believe me, as a Dallas Cowboy fan(atic), it pains me to write that. However, I’ve come to realize that great QBs like Brady combine timeless virtues of sacrifice, courage and leadership by example along with Nate Silver-like data processing skills. To succeed on the football field these days, QBs have to be **one part Achilles and one part algorithm** ... *Read more by clicking on this [link](#):*

## Binge-Worthy

### **[Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind](#) | Yuval Hariri (released 2014)**

This book didn’t pop onto my radar until late last year, but after inhaling it in just a few sittings it’s become my go-to book recommendation. While ostensibly about the history of our species, it actually delivers so much more. Most pop history and anthropology is deadened by too much detail and not enough opinion, but that’s not the case here. Hariri writes with a verve and wry personality that makes the prose - and the subject matter - come alive in his keystrokes. More importantly, he doesn’t sacrifice substance to inject style; from mating to money, **this book will change the way you look at our world**. *If you read one thing this year, this should be it.* [Binge Follow-Up](#): when you want to know Hariri’s thoughts about our future after reading his masterful recap of our past, pair this with his latest blockbuster, [Homo Deus](#) (just out in hardcover).

### **[In the Garden of Beasts](#) | Erik Larson (released 2011)**

I went on an Erik Larson binge this past summer, and I suspect you might as well after reading this book. Larson is the high priest of “narrative non-fiction”, a captivating combination of the storytelling power of biography along with the geopolitical

significance of history. Larson transports you to 1930s era Berlin as you accompany an American academic, recently named as FDR's ambassador to Hitlerian Germany, on an inside-the-room view of rise of Nazism. What makes this story so compelling is the addition of the Ambassador's daughter, who comes along for the ride (so to speak) but also manages to have a couple of affairs with prominent Nazis and was said to have been an object of affection of Hitler himself. **What gives the book its terrifying power though - especially today - are the parallels one can quite easily see between the rise of fascism in Germany then and the embers of authoritarianism glowing red in Trumpland today.** With the prose of fiction but the punch of fact, this book - like [Dead Wake](#), his 2015 tome on the sinking of the Lusitania - will leave you wanting more.

### **[Zero Days](#) (Documentary) | Alex Gibney (released 2016)**

What happens when you cross Jason Bourne with Edward Snowden? You'd get [Zero Days](#), a compelling new documentary from uber-talented [Alex Gibney](#) (the director behind *Going Clear*, *The Armstrong Lie*, *Client 9*, *The Last Gladiators* among others). It's the (almost unbelievable) story of the Stuxnet computer virus, a piece of malware that represents the most significant use of cyber warfare to date. With Russian hacking of the US Elections still firmly in the news, this doc is **must-see TV as a glimpse into the terrifying potential of the weaponization of code** - and our current lack of control in regulating its use in great power geopolitics. **Binge Follow-Up:** if this type of story interests you, cancel your evening plans and grab [Why We Fight](#) off iTunes. The 2005 documentary is a classic of the genre, detailing the rise of the military industrial complex.

### **A Final Thought to make you go “hmmm”**

“The future is already here; it's just not widely distributed yet.” (*William Gibson*)

*If this isn't for you, no worries. Unsubscribe here. **If someone you know might enjoy this monthly newsletter, forward this one or have them sign up at [IonValis.com](#). Thanks!***

*Cheers,*

**Ion**