

3 Things Crypto Can Teach You About Resilience and Transitions

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Summary

Discover three powerful learnings on resilience and change from the turbulent cryptocurrency world. These same patterns exist in any industry going through disruption. When we pay attention to them, we can get past the noise and find the legitimate opportunities. This unconventional talk will also leverage 50+ years of brain science to help you best navigate what can be stormy waters.

Theory

Every time innovations and disruptions happen, there are three core learnings that can best guide professionals.

1. Scams
2. Noise
3. Decision-Making and the Brain

Humans tend to forget that we have already been through many major market transitions in our lifetime. When these disruptors first occurred, we often shun them. In fact, our very brain make-up, through our RAS (reticular activating system) is designed to do just this rejection of change. This is an ancient program to preserve our species.

However, many of these disruptors quickly become every-day conveniences that we can completely forget were controversial in our not-so-distant past.

Recent examples of recent disruptors, that we may now consider to “always have been this way,” include:

- 1948 – The Bar code is introduced
- 1958 – first commercial flights across the Atlantic by Pan Am via Jet engines.
- 1960 – The first oral contraceptive is approved by the USFDA.
- 1971 – first email sent on Arpanet
- 1971 – Starbucks is launched
- 1972 – Atari releases Pong
- 1976 – JVC introduces the VCR
- 1977 – Perrier launches \$5M marketing campaign for bottled water in the US
- 1978 – 401k created in the US
- 1978 – Outsourcing starts to go big. Delphi auto opens first plant in Mexico (now fifty plants).
- 1980 – CNN creates first 24-hour news channel
- 1987 – PowerPoint is created
- 1989 – www is created by Sir Tim Berners-Lee and CERN

1991 – Linux introduced. Operating Systems are now free.
1995 – eBay creates a global flea market
1998 – Google search engine
2000 – Human genome is decoded
2004 – Facebook is formed
2007 – Apple introduces the iPhone

In all these notable cases, there were scams, noise, and our decision-making chemistry was invoked in our brains. Those who could successfully get through this may have identified opportunities that others missed. Those in vehement denial often suffered the consequences of change happening whether they wanted it to or not.

Observations

Considerable brain research, over the past 50+ years, has discovered how our brains truly work and how to best leverage all our resources. However, most of us fail to leverage this strength.

The flow, for all humans, goes like this:

- A sensation, from one of our senses, fires an electrical impulse on a nerve
- All these impulses land in our brain stem
- The brain stem (and friends) filters out fight/flight/freeze events
- The RAS packages message that makes it to the limbic system
- The limbic system (where no language exists) makes decisions
- If it makes it through the limbic system, our cerebral cortex is engaged, and the powers of creation, imagination, art, logic, problem-solving and collaboration are engaged.

The core learning here is that you don't get to skip to the end. You must go through the stages, and if one gets stuck along the way, the full potential to understand, interpret, create, and act is not engaged. The opportunity may well be lost.

Novel Information

In the crypto world, there is the potential for massive disruption of financial markets. Long-standing players such as major banks, federal reserve banks, and stock markets could feel threatened. There's an opportunity for a different pattern that may not want them in the middle anymore. This "attack" may trigger a fight/flight/freeze response. Latest news articles targeting "issues" with crypto play on and reflect these fears. This can strengthen a message in the RAS such as "crypto is too risky" or "crypto is bad" or "crypto is a scam." Note none of these messages are engaging the cerebral cortex, and only emotional decision making is available. This is one side of the noise.

Now, there are clearly scams in the crypto world, as there are with anything new (and old). That's part of the territory. What's amazing is people will forget their smarts with what they do with non-legitimate paper mail, email, and calls, and not make great decisions when an ill-player

approaches. Sometimes the “get rich quick” story gets engaged in our brains and we think we can beat the system.

As with all decisions, what helps us engage our powerful cerebral cortex is empathy, validation, and finding calm. What’s interesting is that this disrupts our RAS, which seeks to use as little energy as possible (change is bad), and can take some self-convincing that this is in our best interest. Of course, we can wait until the market is more mature to engage, but then the larger upside opportunities are already gone.

Smart, thoughtful, innovative decision making, during disruption, is best categorized as:

1. Scams – beware and avoid them, and resist the temptation to create them
2. Noise – expect a lot of this, and know a good decision is more than a short news story, social media post, or sound bite.
3. Know the Brain – you may be stuck in fight/flight/freeze, no matter your position, finding calm and engaging your cerebral cortex will guide your best outcomes

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We are honored to be on the planet with pioneers who truly think different, such as Satoshi Nakamoto who created bitcoin and Sir Timothy John Berners-Lee who created the worldwide web.

References

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