

Never fill your bowl to the brim or it will spill. Keep sharpening your knife and it will blunt.

-Wu Wei



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## Nothing is Perfect



This is the final *Athenaeum* that I will be writing. This newsletter was a hermetic experiment that I allowed to take form in my self now for over three years. The content has been myriad. The above quote is relevant in so many ways and continuing to write places me in jeopardy of not heeding the inherent warning. I guess I shouldn't say it is final, but that I wish to allow it to take a different form.

*Learn:* *A Project* has always been simple, "Whatever you think you can do, or believe you can do, begin it; for action has magic and grace in it." As I have soared through many riddlers, fiddlers, philosophers, holy fools, intellectuals, and FCPL patrons, I have reflected upon what it is that I have learned. I wish to close this farewell with a paean to intention; for it is this magic that assists us in whatever we decide to pursue. It is something that I learned from my mother, though convinced is universal to all mothers, "Just do your best. That is all you can do." Simple words to protect us from the dis-ease of perfectionism.

The statement, to be honest, meant very little to me during my childhood, even through adolescence into my adult years, but falls upon me now, with some life experience, as wisdom worth noting. I suppose the reason was that it is one of those statements that is so obvious our mind says there must be some deeper logic, though in the end it seems that our glory is simply that we tried.


I have learned that we all have talents, skills, and these, though universal, are interpreted by each of us in unique ways. I suppose that this implies there is fashion, even in discipline, in vocation. I have learned that impracticality is the doorway to practicality. I can hear the distant echo, "Here we go with one last paradox." Things only appear impractical as we expand out objectively in search, though in time we return with the magic we sought.

This leads me to the last andragogic lesson that is by far likely the most valuable lesson that can be learned, nothing is perfect. Do not get stuck in the delusion that perfect exists. Perfect is subjective. What is your perfect? It will guide you, just you, to begin, edit, revise, edit, and revise again whatever it is that you set to do, or become. The result won't be perfect, it will just be you; a transitional expression of your own unique quest to become.

I have observed in many individuals a cessation in movement, not due to, though manifesting as, lethargy. We do not begin because things aren't perfect, or we believe we don't know the "right" way to do them. Nothing will ever be perfect and there is no right way to do anything. There wasn't as a child and there isn't as an adult, so just begin, "for action has both magic and grace in it."



# Nothing is Finished



In everything I have done in life, I have acquired a skill to take to the next season. In saying farewell to *Athenaeum*, I asked myself what skill it was that I acquired whilst writing this rather obscure newsletter. With each new issue there was some occult that I would be grasping for, both in the pictures I would choose and the content, but until recently I was unable to define exactly what that tension was. After looking through all of them again, I was able to see more clear. Some I was proud of and some I didn't feel fully touched upon the truth I was attempting to unveil, but then it came to me, as all of the newsletter have, the one, the monism, the seed... wabi sabi.

Wabi sabi is a phenomenon that I have yet to speak to, but informs much of my becoming and work. Wabi sabi is often referred to as "the Japanese concept for a perfectly imperfect life." In literacy this is something, or rather isn't something, I encounter very much, but in developed individuals I find it is wabi sabi that is the occultic force driving their work. I believe this concept is the seed of this project, as well the key to learning the language of patience. I also found wabi sabi cloaked in a darkness, not easy to grasp.

Wabi sabi is both an aesthetic and philosophy of life. "Wabi" is said to be defined as "the elegant beauty of humble simplicity" with a focus on a less-is-more mentality. "Sabi" is translated "taking pleasure in the imperfect, or finding beauty in how time ages." This understanding encourages us to focus on the blessings hiding in our daily lives, and relating to the way things are, rather than how we think they should be. It is the ability to see the imperfect as part of perfection.

Wabi sabi's criterion for beauty is marked by imperfection and incompleteness. A long while back I was in college and would struggle to finish any project. A wise teacher of mine, upon divining gracefully my stress, told me, "Tim, nothing is ever done, it is just due." This taught me the value of subjectively defining a metric to my work, or at least drawing a line in the sand and keeping my hands to the plough, trusting that an "end" would appear to me during the process. You see, nothing is perfect, nor is ever really done, including us, so we just do our best, for that is wabi sabi.

