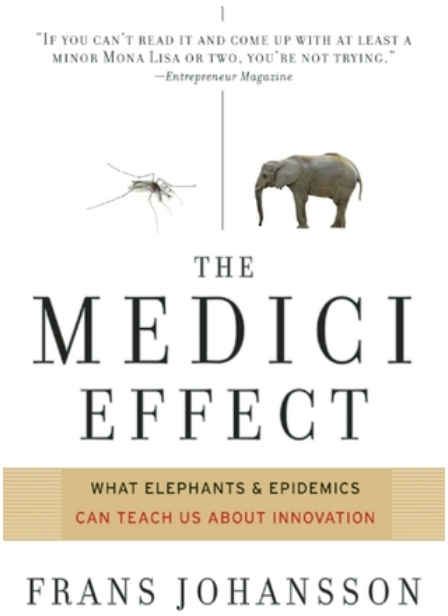

The Medici Effect: What Elephants and Epidemics Can Teach Us about Innovation

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The Medici Effect: What Elephants and Epidemics Can Teach Us about Innovation Frans Johansson Why do so many world-changing insights come from people with little or no related experience? Charles Darwin was a geologist when he proposed the theory of evolution. And it was an astronomer who finally explained what happened to the dinosaurs.

Frans Johansson's The Medici Effect shows how breakthrough ideas most often occur when we bring concepts from one field into a new, unfamiliar territory, and offers examples how we can turn the ideas we discover into path-breaking innovations.

The Medici Effect: What Elephants and Epidemics Can Teach Us about Innovation Details

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From Reader Review The Medici Effect: What Elephants and Epidemics Can Teach Us about Innovation for online ebook

Stacey Slager says

A quick read, pretty accessible. I've seen a lot of the content before in other work.

It gave me lots to think about for sure, especially since I feel like I've been "intersectional" my whole life (I've worked in commercial fishing, public libraries, fast food, a yarn shop, a live music night club, a hospital, and now doing healthcare IT)(and I have lived in four countries).

Ashwin Sundar says

This book is about Peter's Cafe. It is a must read - incredibly enlightening and inspiring.

p. 2: Peter's Cafe is a nexus point in the world, one of the most extreme I have ever seen. There is another place just like Peter's Cafe, but it is not in the Azores. It is in our minds. It is a place where different cultures, domains, and disciplines stream together toward a single point. They connect, allowing for established concepts to clash and combine, ultimately forming a multitude of new, groundbreaking rules. This place, where the different fields meet, is what I call the Intersection. And the explosion of remarkable innovations that you find there is what I call the Medici Effect.

p. 17: Ideas, or memes, compete, in a real sense, for space in our minds. Some memes persist and transform, others die out; the process is similar to that of genetic evolution.

P. 20: This explosion of remarkable ideas is what happened in Florence during the Renaissance, and it suggests something very important. If we can just reach an intersection of disciplines or cultures, we will have a greater chance of innovating, simply because there are so many unusual ideas to go around.

P. 26: New discoveries, world-changing discoveries, will come from the intersections of disciplines, not from within them.

P. 27: Alan Leshner ~ "Disciplinary science has died...Most major advancements involve multiple disciplines. It is rarer and rarer to see single-author papers. And ofthen the multiple authors are from different disciplines."

P. 38: The answer is that Samuelsson has low associative barries. He has an ability to easily connect different concepts across fields. Specifically, he has an ability to find winning combinations of foods from Sweden and the rest of the world. We can all break down our associative barriers like that. In fact, if we wish to find the Intersection, it is a requirement.

P. 40: Researchers have long suspected that these associative barries are responsible for inhibiting creativity. Experiments have been conducted to examine the difference between high and low associative barries. One of the first conclusions made by one of the earliest creativity researchers, J.P. Guilford, is that creative minds tend to make unusual associations because they engage in so-called divergent thinking...Guilford's conclusion was that a person with low associative barriers is more likely to think broadly when responding to a word such as "foot" and is therefore able to come up with more unusual ideas.

P. 47: The mere fact that an individual is different from most people around him promotes more open and divergent, perhaps even rebellious, thinking in that person. Such a person is more prone to question traditions, rules, and boundaries - and to search for answers where others may not think to.

P. 50: But [Maeder] clearly sees [education] as potentially limiting creativity. Why is that? Through school, mentors, and organizational cultures, education tends to focus on what a particular field has seen as valid. If, for instance, you wish to be a great medical doctor, there are rules that must be mastered. A good education will teach you those rules. You learn what past experts and thinkers concluded and use their experiences to build your own expertise.

P. 51 Maeder ~ "Innovators are often self-taught. They tend to be the types that educate themselves intesely, and they often have a broad learning experience, having excelled in one field and learned another." Broad education and self-education, then, appear to be two keys to learning differently.

P. 52: ...younger people are often less constrained by their education within a field since they have not yet had too much of it. It would follow, then, that learning a new field, whether one is young or old, can help break down associative barries.

P. 52: Paul Maeder's second characteristic for success at the Intersection was self-education. By learning fields and disciplines on our own we have a greater chance of approaching them from a different perspective. In fact, formal education often looks like an inverted U when correlated with one's success as a creator. That is, formal education first increases the probability of attaining creative success, but after an optimum point it actually lowers the odds. The point occurs a bit earlier for artistic careers and a bit later for scientific paths
- Didn't ME Coe draw something like this once? That staircase/escalator of improving your career? Move on every 5-7 years?

P. 53: Darwin concluded, "I consider that all that I have learned of any value to be self-taught."

P. 67: ...creativity comes from combining concepts in an unusual fashion.

P. 67: ...it is difficult to trace the origin of an insight.
- So that means, don't worry if you can't figure out why or how you know something. It's fine. Others are like that too, and will understand if you say this quote.

P. 75: If your goal [as a company] is to keep execution at a premium and to innovate in small, directional steps, specialization is the right path. However, if you wish to develop fresh, groundbreaking ideas, highly varied experiences are critical.

P. 76: Orit Gadiesh, chairman of Bain ~ "Some people say that the modern-day Renaissance man is an investment banker who likes to go horseback riding on the weekend he has off, or somethingl ike that...That's not a Renaissance man, that's a man with a hobby. A Renaissance man is someone who can see trends and patterns and integrate what he knows. To me the modern Renaissance man is curious, interested in different things. You have to be willing to 'waste time' on things that are not directly relevant to your work because you are curious. But then you are able to, sometimes unconsciously, integrate them back into your work."

P. 77: Orit Gadiesh ~ "Don't get me wrong. At this point we have experts in just about every business. We

have people who can talk about consumer products and high-tech in their sleep. We have to. That's the easy part. But we don't let somebody just do that for their entire career, all the time. That was why I said we make people switch areas and fields. It is fundamental at Bain, a core resason for our success. You become better at your area of expertise when you actually take a chance and do something else."

P. 77: ...individuals who expect to develop intersectional ideas cannot simply hope that their organization will provide them with occupational diversification. They have to control their own fate. By making sure that we gain exposure to different fields during our career, we set ourselves up for more random concept combinations.

- Speaking of Dune, do you remember that book that you've been trying to remember for more than a decade now, but can't? Your memories of that book are only gonna fade, and you've never been able to find it. You even asked a librarian, but they couldn't think of it either...what if you wrote the book yourself? It was about a boy who encountered a sandstorm and was taken to a completely alternate reality, planet...everything. Taken away from his family, and dropped into a new culture. Almost like Ender's Game.

P. 79: There is little doubt that diverse teams, like the one at Bletchely Park, have a greater chance of coming up with unique ideas. I don't mean diversity only in terms of disciplines, but also in terms of culture, ethnicity, geography, age, and gender. Diversity in teams allows different viewpoints, approaches, and frames of mind to emerge. Diversity is also a proven way to increase the randomness of concept combinations. It is often said that one of the reasons for the United States' unparalleled innovation rate is its very diverse population. People who have experienced the innovative power of diverse teams tend to do everything they can to encourage them.

P. 85: Michael Michalko, whom I mentioned in the last chapter, describes another way of going intersection hunting, something he calls "taking a thought walk."

P. 103: Linus Pauling ~ "The best way to get a good idea is to have a lot of ideas."

P. 106: The funny thing is that we often take a "batch" approach to certain tasks in life. When we boil potatoes, we peel and then cook all of them at the same time. We don't peel and cook them one by one because that obviously would be a complete waste of time and energy. But we often develop ideas this way. If we get an idea that seems promising, we tend to delve deeper into the idea until it either works or it doesn't. If it isn't successful, we start over with another good idea. But this is not the best way to use our time or creative energy. In order to maximize the power of the Intersection, we should generate many ideas before evaluating any one of them.

P. 106: One of the best ways to brainstorm privately is to place the target for the number of ideas that you wish to generate before you start considering whether they are any good.

P. 107: Tom Kelley ~ "The buzz of a good brainstormer can infect a team with optimism and a sense of opportunity that can carry it through the darkest and most pressure-tinged stages of a project."

P. 113: Probably the best insurance against prejudging ideas is to write them down or diagram them when they occur to you. This will allow you to return to the idea at frequent intervals.
- this is kinda what your global mind map was about. Keep building it up. It will pay dividends later.
- Reread Name of the Wind after this book. You will not regret it.

P. 120: Since quantity of ideas leads to quality of ideas, we should pursue many ideas. This, however, leads to the inescapable paradox that in order to be successful at the Intersection, we must have many failures. The solution to this paradox that in order to be successful at the Intersection, we must have many failures. The solution to this paradox is to incorporate failures into our overall execution plan. In other words, we have to

execute past our failures.

P. 125: The more ideas you execute, the greater the chance of realizing something truly groundbreaking. But not every one of your ideas will work out. Innovative people, then, experience more failures than their less creative counterparts because they pursue more ideas. It is thus very difficult - indeed, this book argues practically impossible - to realize ideas at the Intersection by flawlessly executing well-defined actional planes. yet this is how most of use are trained to think about strategy and implementation. We are, in fact, *conditioned* to approach any new challenge with questions such as: What is our goal and how will we get there?

P. 125: The major difference between a directional idea and an intersectional one is that we know where we are going with the former...the Intersection is a place where our understanding of what to do and how to do it is opaque, at best. An intersectional idea can go in any number of directions.

P. 145: ...your network will promote, support, and highlight ideas that are valued within it. And it squashes or removes ideas that are not. This inherent characteristic creates a difficult paradox for anyone pursuing an intersection idea: If we wish to succeed at the intersection of fields, we have to break away from the very networks that made us successful.

P. 152: Both people and firms in a value network will have set up processes and procedures that essentially kill of attempts to break out of it. New ideas that do not correspond to the values of the network have a way of getting eliminated. This is why we must break out of these networks if we want to enter the Intersection with the highest chance of success.

P. 156: "When I started out people thought I was on some fringe. They thought I was certifiably insane." But Chopra was willing to risk his reputation. "It's the prime principle of creativity: You must take risks. All creativity lies in the unknown, not in the known."

P. 157: Take a good look around you and try to break away from the networks. Take a good look around you and try to spot these things that have become critical pieces of your value network over the years. I am not suggesting that you abandon them, but if you wish to enter the Intersection, you must stop depending on them.

P. 159: Torvalds fought against early naysayers, and, later, against corporations such as Microsoft. Although your confrontations may never be this extreme, you must be preparted to fight those that doubt or fear yoru explorations at the Intersection. Otherwise you might as well resign yourself to your established field.

P. 163: The risk people tend to fear most is not financial loss or wasted time. Rather, it is the risk to their pride, status, and prestige, to what their peers will think of them if they fail. In other words, the risk of failure can weigh more heavily than what is at risk.

P. 164: If you take a course of action that is widely seen as correct, your reputation barely suffers if you did not make it all the way. If, on the other hand, you proceed in a way that is less understood and fail, it might be tougher to live down because you will be judged harshly. The stigma of failure can be crushing. The economist and "worldly philosopher" John Maynard Keynes but it succenctly: "[I]t is better to fail conventionally than succeed unconventionally."

P. 165: Howard Berke - "Many people become prisoners of the fear of failure."

P. 166: Howard Berke - "If you identify confluence between two industries it can for the basis for a new

industry, but there are risks with that. The risk is that, yes, you can be right, but you can be early. The danger is that the particular fields intersect, but not for another ten years. You get to this place you call the Intersection, but there is no one else at the party."

P. 166 [Howard Berke] sees little point in creating a company doing something that established businesses already do. Instead, he's drive by the opportunity to innovate. "This way, you at least have a [i] shot[/i] at being a breakthrough company."

P. 168: ...more money leads to greater spending. Having more time means taking more time. Having greater experience or better contacts means relying more on them to get things done.
- In other words, "work fills up the amount of time it is allocated"

P. 169: If you want to create something revolutionary, head toward the Intersection. The Intersection represents the best chance to innovate because of the explosion of unique concept combinations. It offers a great numerical advantage when looking for fresh ideas. In other words, the Intersection is a low-risk proposition for breaking new ground.

P. 176: If you have spent years within a field, that fact alone can convince you to stay put even if it's a lost cause. A friend might complain to you that he no longer likes his job, saying "I've invested so much in this career that it just isn't worth it to break off at this point." Like the fear of loss, this is another risk-related example of an emotional entanglement. If we have invested heavily we figure we should keep on investing. But the truth is that regardless of whether we're talking about time or money, both are sunk costs. Since they cannot be retrieved, only the future matters...simply being aware of it makes it easier to voercome, and helps us choose to move on.

P. 178: The people I have met all managed to do it by shifting their perspective regarding intersectional risks. Howard Berke, for instance, is focused on [i]learning[/i]...Berke wants to understand how new industries work and be at the forefront of new fields...Richard Brandon values the [i]fun[/i] of doing something different. It is his "most important business criterion."...exploring intersectional ideas will always yield downstream benefits - making it a fairly low-risk proposition.

Claudia says

The concept of intersection of ideas is the main teaching of this book. It is full of very illustrative and interesting cases. To warp thing up, I found myself enjoying this book much more than what I was expecting.

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marc Gottesman says

In the middle of reading this, but 20 pages in and I get it already. Do I finish the book?

I get the point. But the writing is pretty uninteresting.

Aaron Edwards says

Sometimes we look for justification to continue to gather knowledge, especially when we are taxed already

with what is on our plates...this book reminds us why it is worth it. I very much enjoyed it.

Andrew Hiller says

One day as my friend and fellow author Henry Sienkiewicz were talking current events, philosophy, and how ideas rub against each other to form knew thoughts, he made a dash to his bookshelf and pulled out this book called the Medici Effect. He thought it would be an interesting fit. He was right.

The Medici effect is about how to spur creativity and innovation. It looks at everyone from the inventor of the card game Magic to the people who developed GPS. Its major premise is that ideas from different and seemingly unrelated disciplines can cause huge jumps/progress. What's more interesting is how Johansson examines this paradigm through a quality/quanity perspective and how he important he thinks failure is... that and leaving yourself enough money to try at least two or three trials, but not so much money or resources that you feel safe and complacent. He also discusses how brainstorming works best and when it fails, the role of fear, risk, and how bunch of other stuff.

It's a cool book and one that skirts the borders of philosophy, management, and self-help. It's written in a very readable/approachable style. I'm not certain if these ideas are considered new anymore, but I certainly have faced the dissonance who resist what Johansson is selling. As a painter, teacher, playwright, engineer, producer, author, etc. I have routinely confused HR. They don't know where to fit me and have often worried that because I have done so many things. I can't tell you how many times I've been asked if a job I applied for would bore me.

In any case, life on the intersection is fraught with possibility and peril. The question of directional progress vs. homeostasis vs. innovation is one that intrigues me and the interviews are interesting, there were some nice laughs in the book, and a few hints.

What the book does not do is layout a blueprint. I suppose since it's about innovation it really can't. After all, how can create something wholly new by following a cookie cutter recipe?

Susan Reed says

Excellent book. Great stories to back up new theory on creativity. Too bad the author limits himself to work and business ideas instead of a life philosophy.

Lídia says

SUMMARY
The book bases on how to create innovation through the asociation of diferent fields. Frans Johansson named the book after a banking family from Florence, Italy who funded creators in the fifteenth-century that had a remarkable brust of creativity when they found each other in the Tuscane city and there they learned frome one another braking barrirers between disciplines and cultures.
The Interection is where different fields meet. Fields are made of concepts, words with sustainable meanings, and as more concepts of a field you undersantd more in deep you will know about the field. Ideas are made of the relation of multiple concepts, there are two types of ideas directional and intesectional. The first ones

are ideas within one field, these are the common ideas that we have, when talking with a person we usually stick to only one field and therefore our mind only relationates concepts within the same field. Intersectional ideas are basicly when we relationate two concepts from different fields: imgagine a plate and a car wheel, both are round, right, so why don't we eat from a car wheel?
Creative ideas are innovation when they are valuable and realized. Intresection is rised by three forces:
1. MovementofPeople,exampleaCherokeewrittenlanguagewascreatedbyoneofhis members who had been in another society and when he came back develop an asociation between silabes sounds and signs.
2. ConvergenceofScience,theycreatedfishingcordbycombingspidersnetandgoatmilk becaus they saw this two ingredients had resistence properties.
3. LeapofComputation:whendreamworksandpixarstartedusingcomputrestoanimate films giving crators more time to develop creative skills rather that coping the same image multiple time, this technology advancement save time and gained creativity in the story and it's pictures motions.
The Medici Effect is created when our asociative barriers fall down. Asociative barriers are the asumptions we make about something because the relation the concepts spoken are within a field. The three keys to make barriers fall are cultural diversity (class, gender, ethnic, profession), learn differently (change the rules of a game, for example in the 'escondite' instead of the one counting need to find the rest, the group counts and one hide and the others when find him need to stay hide with him), and reverse assumptions (restaurants with no menus or a restaurant that does not serve food). To fully understand something needs to be view from at least three different prespectives: 1. Original point of view, 2. Apply the idea to something or someone else, 3. Create constrains.

APROPIATION
The book Fish! is also related, since they intersect the shopping field with playing on the story of the succesful market fish, and how everyone like going shopping there and not only for shopping but just to spend lunch.
The best way to be a Purple Cow is by creating it through the Medici Effect, when you combien the two books, by having an innovative product and also a diferentiative value, you have a bestseller, but it needs to be genuine to work out.
The first step of Design Thinking is listing out passions, problems, and trends, and when we relationate the concepst of each category we are creating ideas, most of them intersectional, but why we can't make the medici effect is that we don't know enough of at least one of the fields to interconnectate them and create innovation.

Yiwen says

Read the first chapter and you will get the gist of the whole book. I appreciate the author's effort to put together all those inspirational stories. However topics like this usually don't age very well.

Scott Schang says

This book opened my eyes to innovation through the intersection of ideas and concepts from outside my specific area of expertise. Understanding that true innovation does not come from what is already known, but from what cannot be known, was something that really made an impact on me. After reading this book, I was compelled to begin looking at the perceived challenges in my own business through from a different perspective. I jumped into other industries and areas that I previously did not think would be relevant. The

more I focused on looking for and appreciating the challenges and solutions of other industries, the easier it was for me to find innovation in my own world.

Marissa says

It was mandatory for me to read this book for a class and a mandatory read is never as good as a read by choice but I was sorely disappointed by this book. Included below is a review I wrote for the class about this book.

Frans Johansson's The Medici Effect attempts to identify the nature of innovation and advise readers on how to innovate. Though I found many faults with this book, I will not argue that this book is not interesting and valuable, because it is both. Johansson attempts to construct an air-tight paradigm. He then tries to translate this paradigm into action, which is commendable. The problem with this book is a deeply-rooted conceptual problem that I did not fully recognize until I read my second book. In The Natural History of Innovation, I saw how artfully its author dealt with this the problem of righting about innovation and it helped me to articulate the issues that irked me throughout Johansson's entire book.
Frans Johansson has a BS in environmental science from Brown University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He was raised in Sweden but currently lives in New York City. He is an author, motivational speaker and entrepreneur. He is the leader of The Medici Group, a consulting firm that operates according to the principles Johansson describes in the book. According to their website, "The Medici Group works with individuals and organizations around the world to generate an incredible number of ideas and turn the best ones into groundbreaking solutions." This book is, not surprisingly, a marketing tool for Johansson and I believe this slant ruined the book for me.
The study of innovation, much like the act of innovation itself, cannot be contained. It cannot be categorized, labeled and put neatly away into a small volume to be shelved for later use. Johansson makes the mistake of structuring his book too strictly. He gives names to concepts that are too fluid to name and structure to concepts that are too fluid to structure. Though his interesting anecdotes and some of his principles still ring true, this mistake devalues much of his personal analysis for me.
I do not presume to know anything about an environmental science degree but I was surprised to learn of Johansson's having earned it. Steven Johnson, for one, is an environmental science enthusiast and it translates into his theories about innovation. I cannot say the same about Frans Johansson. His theories on innovation are seemingly based on the assumption that innovation can be pinned down, cataloged, described and packaged for our consumption. It comes across as quite unnatural as you read the book and I immediately picked up on his attempt at branding his theory. The final part of his book consists of him trying to translate theory into action but he is only partially successful. He has turned innovation into a business and I'm not sure that we, as humans, are able to structure innovation that way.
In chapter one, "The Intervention—Your Best Chance to Innovate," Johansson summarizes his theory about innovation which goes a little something like this: The Medici Effect, for which his book is named, is defined as, "an explosion of extraordinary ideas" done by "bringing together different disciplines and cultures and searching for the places where they connect." These connections between cultures and disciplines are what Johansson calls The Intersection. Intersectional Ideas are cross-disciplinary in nature. All other ideas, generated by the way we are used to thinking within one discipline, are called Directional Ideas.
The next chapter completes part one in this book and it celebrates the rise in intersections promulgated by technological development in recent years. Here Johansson uses amusing examples, such as music artist Sharkira and computer animation company Pixar, to prove this point. This chapter also sets the tone for the remaining two parts of the book. It is replete with interesting, anecdotal information that Johansson uses to sustain his theories. This format is the most enjoyable part of the book and the reader learns much more from them than he or she learns from Johansson's own ideas, I my opinion.

The Intersection is truly the focus of not only part one, but the whole of Johansson's book. The Medici Effect is barely mentioned because it is unnecessary. One may just called it "innovation." I noticed this superficial structure right off the bat. Johansson is sure to give all of these things proper names which he capitalized all throughout the book, as if he has discovered a new species that he has the right to name. In reality, these are catch-phrases that help him market his ideas. I cannot fault him for that professionally, it is quite clever, but it is disappointing to a reader who is expecting an interpretation of innovation from an environmental scientist. I expected the book, and the theories it contains, the take on a much more natural, uncontrolled character.

Part two is made up of chapters three through eight. I expected Johansson to use this part of the book to deepen his theory, to really let them take root in my mind. But to my surprise (but not to my dismay), his words in these chapters leaned more towards action than anything else. Chapter three explains the need for innovators to break down barriers between disciplines. Marcus Samuelsson, a fellow Swede, and an "Intersectional" chef, is the recurring example that Johansson uses in this chapter. Since my husband is a chef and I am admittedly a bit of a foodie, I loved this parallel.

In the next chapter, Johansson goes on to advise his readers how to break down Associative Barriers. These are the artificial barriers we have placed in our brain that mirror the barriers between fields in reality. Though still interesting, some of the examples he uses in this chapter are a little weak. There was one exceptional example, however, that of the RSA cipher. Johansson is trying to describe how reversing our assumptions about things can lead us to innovative solutions to problems we may be having. Experts were trying to find a way to secure Internet transactions. It was assumed that the initiator of the transaction would lock his information using special encoding and only he could distribute the information needed to break the code. This way, only authorized users could have access to his secure information. The problem was finding a way to securely transmit the information that would break the code.

Using their current model, they would need another lock and another key code, and this could go on forever, never truly securing the information. At this point, experts reversed their assumptions that the transaction initiator would hold the locked information and that the authorized users would gain the keys to it. Thus, RSA ciphers were born. The solution called for the initiator to hand out locked information (i.e. the users were in possession of it), and he would keep the key himself, never having to revel it to others, but using it whenever he wished to transmit secure information. The reversal was simple but it because the foundation for all future Internet transactions.

The subsequent three chapters are disappointing in that they all pretty much deal with the same thing: ingenious combinations of ideas and how to get them. The anecdotes that Johansson presents in these chapters are the most interesting and they really bolster his theory about The Intersection. My only complaint is that there were three chapters of it when one longer one would suffice. To me, it was a continuation of his tendency to over-structure everything.

The last chapter in part two is, to me, the closest that Johansson comes to turning his theories into action. It is called, "How to Capture the Explosion" and it describes how one can manage the influx of Intersectional Ideas that result from a true Intersection. This is interesting consider that this is what part three is supposed to do. Part three consists of five chapters that are, according to Johansson, about putting The Medici Effect into action, making it work for you. To me, part three read more like any old business advice column, drawing little from the theories he laid out in part one. Nonetheless, Johansson gave sound advice; he recommends that you move past failure, and don't let it ruin your drive. He also advises readers to leave their professional networks behind. This is perhaps not one of the most common pieces of professional advice but I have heard it before. The problem with this part of Johansson's theory is that he assumes that all networks are self-contained. Perhaps the lease effective networks are, but my idea of an effective network is one that spans fields, which is exactly what Johansson advocates.

However, amidst his fairly ineffectual part three, Johansson hid a gem. I particularly enjoyed chapter fourteen, which was about "adopting a balanced view of risk." Johansson cites risk experiments with interesting implications in order to establish our risk-taking behaviors. He believes they are holding us back from generating innovative ideas. He lists a few risk-related traps that humans tend to fall into and he attempts to persuade his reader to abandon these destructive attitudes about risk. This chapter may not have told us anything more that any expert on risk is able to tell us but it was sure interesting. It is also placed in

the perfect spot in the book, at the end. By this time, the reader is thinking, “what kind of crazy nut has the time, the knowledge, the sheer courage, to do any of these things?” I think Johansson does a good job of answering that question with his second to last chapter.
The Medici Effect was a quick and enjoyable read and I gleaned some insight into innovation that I did not have before.

Kelly Reid says

My disjointed notes from 2 and a half read-throughs.

17: Dawkins - Ideas are genetic. They propagate in the same way.

21: Seemingly unrelated concepts can almost always be combined in unexpected and potentially useful ways. Specialization has led to fragmentation of knowledge but the trend is reversing.

24: Cultural arbitrage an interesting source of inspiration.

26: We know enough about how the world works to transition from "how and why" to "X+Y".\

28: Financial systems run on similar algorithms as predator-prey ecosystems.

38: Low associative barriers, formed by being raised cross-culturally or educated interdisciplinary, are the key to emergent ideas.

39: Mind unravels a chain of associations along the path of least resistance. Creativity comes from low resistance between paths between domains of experience. This leads to exponentially more and different ideas.

47: languages encode information differently, so bilinguality is a massive advantage.

54: Creativity tactic: the assumption reversal. All X do/are/have Y --> All X do not/are not/don't have Y. Restaurants
serve food -> do not serve food, operate BYOB style.
have menus -> the chef just tells you what he's got and you say "make me something with this that and the other"
charge $ for food -> give away the food and charge by the hour

58: You need to see something from 3 POV in order to really understand it.

59: apply the idea to something or someone else. create constraints and try to operate within them.

61: a whole chapter on how Magic got started.

67: people cannot generally recognize the source of a hint, idea of inspiration. it has probably been incubating for some time, and has little to do with the moment in which it strikes.

68: coefficient of novelty - the larger difference between two ideas, the more creative the emergence.

70: take in all information and just let it marinate. be open and hear everything. let the brain smash it together in the subconscious and see what comes out.

76: Be willing to "waste time" on interesting tangential ideas (this is not permission for startup ADHD). They'll sow the seeds for random discoveries.

83: depersonalize conflicts. be willing to test things with data.

84: intentionally seed idea generation with randomness.

91: quantity of ideas = quality of ideas (as long as you throw out the ones that eventually suck). PRODUCE. DO WORK. great artists ship, etc.

112: Time stress destroys creativity at an amazingly rapid rate.

114: How to incubate an idea - pursue it as far as you can, until you meet significant resistance, then walk away for a few days or weeks. do this with everything, always.

126: execution = presuming success and planning for failure.

129: reward success and failure equally, and punish inaction. fire people who can't execute or take initiative.

137: rewards decrease creativity. the reward for a creative project should be naught more than recognition.

155: Deepak Chopra, "Nature in its unbroken wholeness is inherently creative".

172: Book suggestion: Against the Gods, the remarkable story of risk.

180: accepting fear = understand what's truly at stake and admit that you might lose it.