

Nuts, Nerds, & Savants

Neurodiversity & Creativity

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Dedicated to the Struggle

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BAM!

Existence.

We're pretty sure it's here. We think it's real. Most of us. We can feel something solid under our feet. There is light, sound, a lot of water—that sort of stuff.



Sure, it was dark at first. That's why it's called the dawn of time. But that changed once things started popping. Cosmic dust. Massive bodies. Lots of collisions. Explosions. Fission. Fusion. Kaboom!

It's already infinite *and* it's expanding. Figure that out. It's cold. Absolute cold. Except when it heats up. Then it gets really, really hot.

Sparks fly. Well, *everything* flies in space. Then, before you know it (because you don't exist yet), it settles into a routine. Matter coalesces. Things collide. Other things clog together. Smaller things form big things. Big things get bigger. Get big enough, we call 'em a planet.



And then there's life.

Clearly there is life, or you wouldn't be reading this. We know what it takes. There are the building blocks. Just water (or ammonia) and a bunch of minerals, etc.

But it takes time. A lot of time. Then—eventually—you'll probably get something. Maybe one prokaryotic cell or so.

Conditions have to be right, of course. Perfect, actually. But, given an entire universe as a place and infinity as a time-frame, things will happen—like photosynthesis.

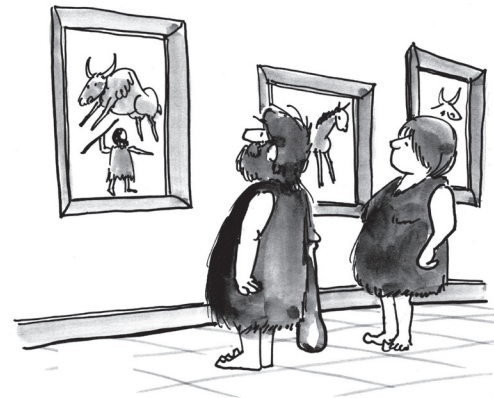
We get it. We don't quite understand it, but we get it.



Intelligence?

That's something else entirely. At a primal level, *something* is telling one cell to divide into two cells, even though that's not really intelligence. But things evolve. Then they crawl out of the ooze and start walking around looking for something to eat. That is problem solving, but not quite what we call thinking.

Yeah, there were a bunch of plants and animals, but let's skip ahead to what we consider to be people. Problem solving. Hunting. Agriculture. Architecture. Language. Travel. Lots of wars. That all comes from the brain. We know that, even though we hardly understand it. There are things going on in there. Neurons, nutrients, electricity, synapses. They do a pretty good job for the most part.



Eventually things got weird. People started coming up with stuff for no clear and practical reason. They liked certain noises, usually with a beat and repetitive melodies. Or, swatches of color that changed ordinary surfaces into images. Some were better at it than others, bringing us art, music, architecture, religion, and poetry.

That's just what brains do. Problem solving is fine as far as it goes, but eventually we start looking for enlightenment, or at the very least, entertainment.



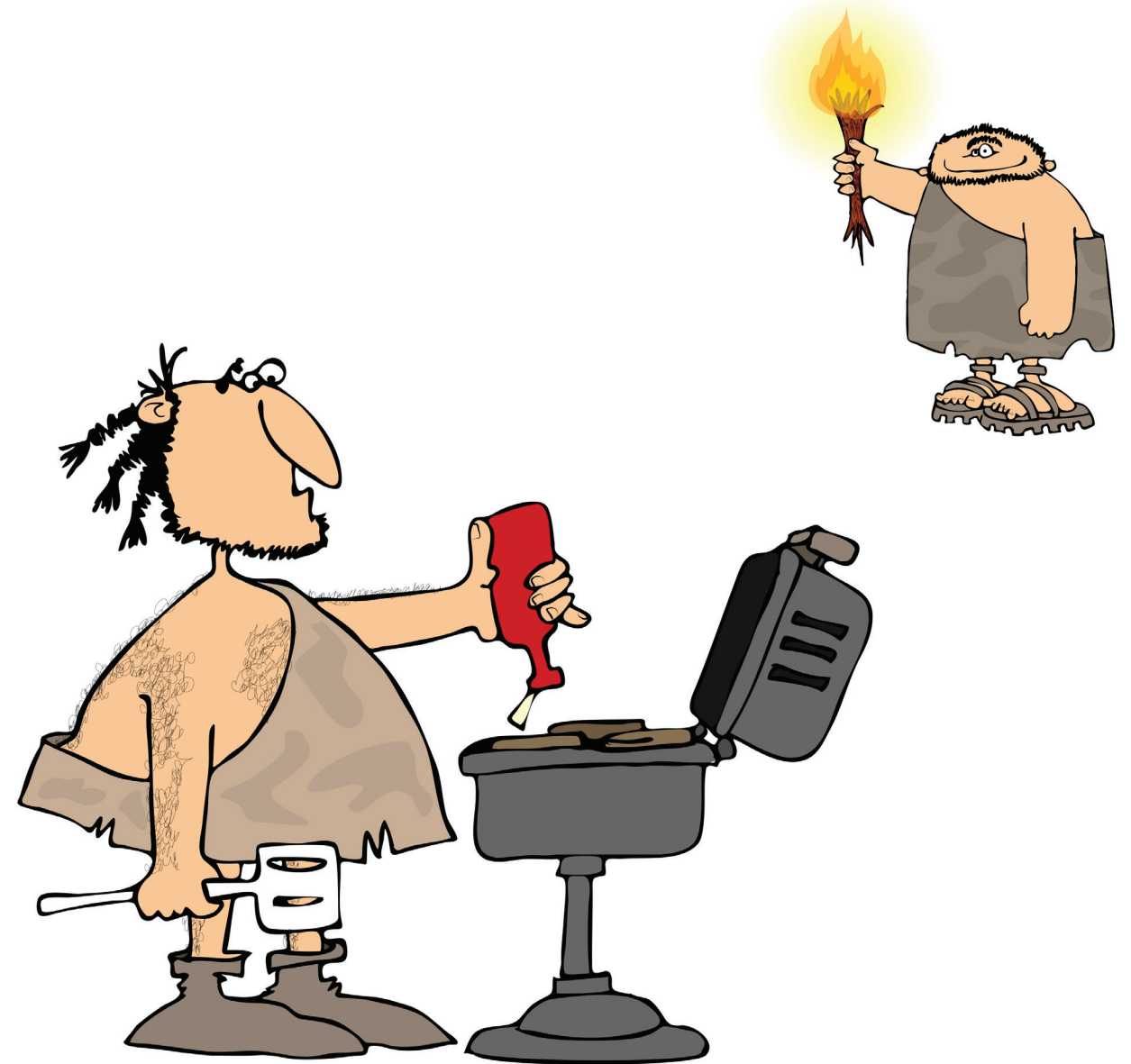
All in all, things started looking pretty good. A good, healthy human brain can do a lot of things, but there are limits.

Going back to page one—"Bam! Existence" for instance—we don't really have a clue. We've mostly just settled on the compromise idea of a Big Bang, with the exception of a few myths about cosmic eggs, sun gods, watery chaos—and Genesis.

We still don't know zip.



Moving on, we'll ignore the baffling, nonsensical concept of pre-existence and work on what we laughingly refer to as reality. That's something we can think about and, little by little, are starting to understand. We've gotten pretty good at a lot of things—feeding ourselves, transportation, medicine, engineering, even some limited space travel.



Along the way, there have been some roadblocks. Limits. Perhaps the first one was darkness. The first solution was to wait until morning. The next step was fire for torchlight, candles, and lanterns. Then eventually electricity. Admittedly there was quite a wait for electricity, but the more things improve, the harder the next stage is.

Electricity? Huh? What does *this* thing do?



Yikes!

When you're dealing with something as strange as electricity, it takes a certain type of mind to figure it out. (More on that later.)



Back to some other fields of interests. Early on, there wasn't much to do after dark, so multitudes of shepherds observed zillions of stars for millennia, but it takes a certain kind of mind to organize them into patterns. Why are they moving?

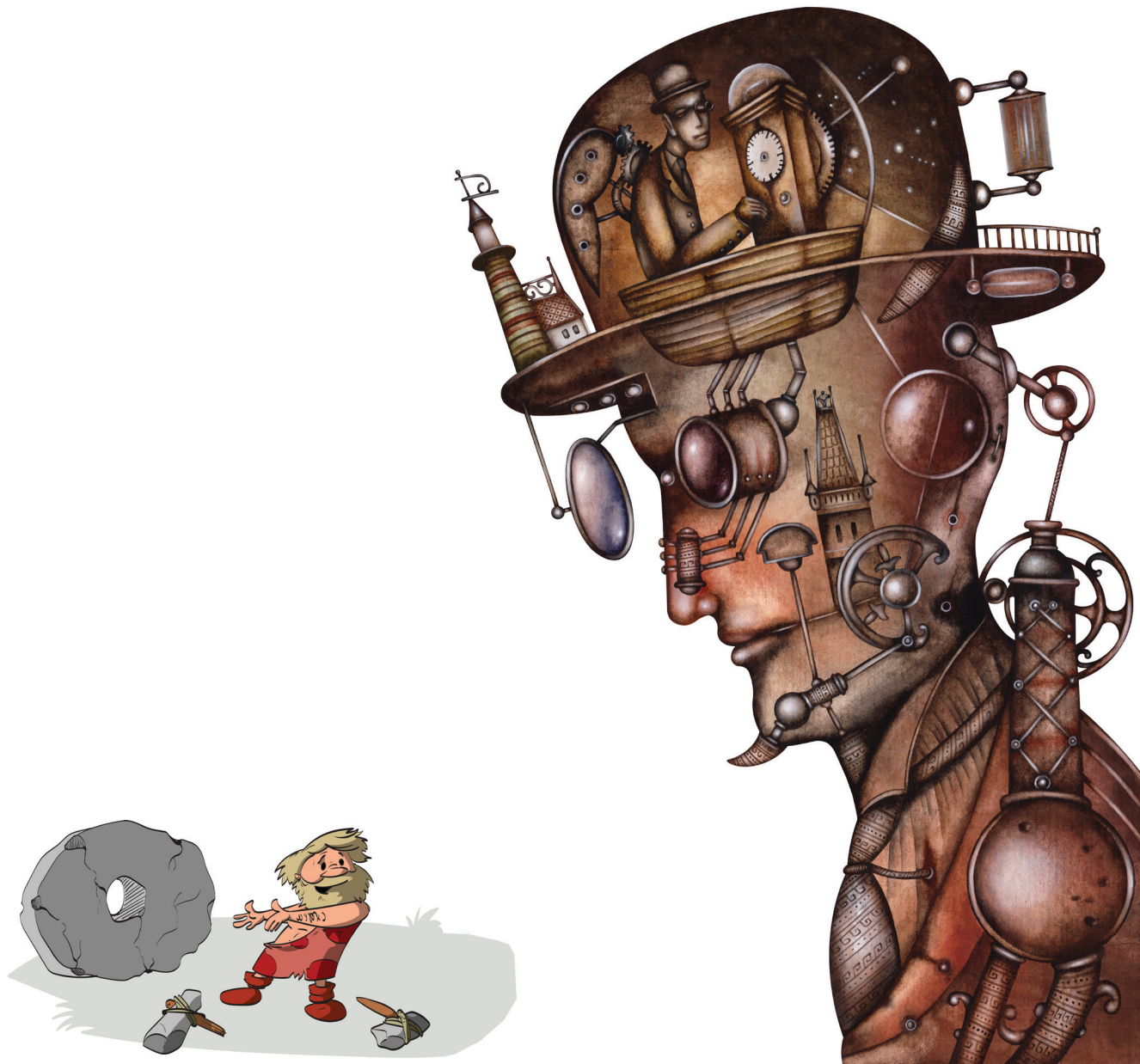
Chatting around the campfire led to philosophy and—somehow—mathematics. So the shepherds were the first astronomers, and somehow physics got involved, and then came astrology and the psychics. Just kidding. Skip them.



Navigation helped a lot, too. Discovering new lands didn't mean much if you couldn't find your way home. Things were different, depending on where you stood on the planet. Things in Africa weren't like they were in the Arctic. As people wandered, they exchanged seeds and spices and other stuff—and ideas.



There were some territorial disagreements along the way. Warfare is generally quite inventive. Some were better at it than others. Some were quite good at it, and they grabbed everything they wanted from everywhere they went, and took it home with them. They called that "trade."



People started making things. Simple and useful things at first. Pots. Candles. Axes. But, in time, there were machines. Actual mechanical devices that could do work.

Eventually there were automobiles. And flight. They figured out a way to walk through the sky. And they made automatic dishwashers, too. And electric toothbrushes.



Jump ahead. Again, the next stage is always much harder. The limits are tougher. The speed of sound. Splitting the atom. Earth orbit. The moon. That may seem like the limit for now, but there are some pretty bright thinkers out there looking at Mars.

So here we are.

We're modern. We're even sort of futuristic. We're pretty smart, in general, but where did these ideas come from? Why did they take so long? When are the next ones coming along?

And, why do only some of us come up with the big ideas?

So that makes us wonder about creativity.



Uhm.... Creativity?

What is Creativity?

Well, there is normal A,B,C... etc., creativity. Or maybe $A+B+C=D$ creativity, but that will *never* get you to $e=mc^2$.

What will? It's not just thinking out of the box—linearly. It's thinking some other way—spatially, laterally, diffusedly, hallucinogenically, or even ecstatically, sometimes all at once. And that brings us to what is now called “neurodiversity.”

Very early on, people noticed that someone was painting on the walls of their caves. And somebody came up with the first spear. Then there was the first person to make fire out of things that were not already hot. As Temple Grandin says, these were not the guys and gals outside the cave, chatting by the campfire.

They were probably ridiculed as the Cave Nerds.