10 Great Ideas Someone Should Invent

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This article might change your life or make you rich. It’s time to save the world. There’s a lot of bad news out there. Rising unemployment, soldiers being replaced in their jobs by drones that kill babies, a new housing crisis that will end all housing crises, who is the real father of Kim Kardashian’s child, and on and on.

Meanwhile, many futurists are at work on “what’s new for 2013?” Will Lindsay Lohan play Princess Leia’s daughter in the new Star Wars movies? Will Tiger Woods make a comeback? Will the Middle East “have tension”?

Forget about 2013 and Princess Leia. While the futurists do their thing let’s actually get down to exercising our idea muscles. And no more “little ideas.” I’m guilty of this. Some of my failures: “a dating site for Twitter users,” “crowdsourcing TV ads,” “Myspace for finance,” blah! Some little ideas I’ve heard recently: “search engine for shared economy sites,” “real estate search engine.” Blech!

The idea muscle atrophies, just like any other muscle. I need to exercise mine every day or it starts to not work. It doesn’t matter if you come up with bad ideas or good ideas. There’s no such thing as a bad exercise session.

Let’s come up with some real ideas that can save the world. The only criteria – they have to help a million people. Or, if they don’t work, can be turned into a science-fiction novel that 1 million people would enjoy. Don’t be afraid to come up with bad ideas. Here are mine. Feel free to have idea sex between your ideas and mine so we can come up with even better ideas. This is just practice. Practice makes perfect.

1) I wrote down an idea here but I deleted it. I’m not afraid to admit when ideas are bad. More on this later.

2) Klout as currency. Think about it. It makes sense. If I give $5 to a donut shop that means a lot less than if Barack Obama gives $5 to a donut shop. Then that donut shop is “The Presidential Donut Shop.” B’s $5 was a lot more valuable than my $5. The $5 is just paper after all. It doesn’t matter who holds it.

OPRAH HAS AN INFINITE KLOUT SCORE.

Klout + currrency = value in today’s world. So it makes complete sense that people with higher Klout should be able to buy more things. Because their currency is more valuable than mine. And when they buy things, that infers Klout on the seller, who can now buy more things. The world is heading in this direction anyway. Look at Oprah. Oprah has an infinite Klout score. When Oprah reads a book, that book’s author suddenly gets wealthier. If Oprah bought a pencil from me my Klout score would go up 80 percent, give or take. The middle class is disappearing. The temp staffers pay for goods with scrip and rich people buy Twitter followers. We’re moving towards a Klout-currency world anyway. Now make it happen.

3) Use Global Warming to Solve Global Warming. I don’t know why nobody has thought of this yet. Just look at the words “Global. Warming.” i.e. The surface of the planet is getting hotter. That means it’s giving off energy. Use photovoltaic strips to harness the energy coming off the planet to reduce our need for carbon-based energy. BAM! Problem solved.

The beauty of this is that if there is no global warming then the technique won’t work. No problem! Go back to carbon then until the planet starts heating again. I am all ready to meet Al Gore now.

4) 3D Printing of Humans. “3D Printing” seems to be the latest tech fad. But whatever. I don’t even know what it is. But here’s what “3D Human Printing” is. Let’s say I can’t make a meeting tomorrow that’s in India, 8,000 miles away. But I really want to go. I get in my virtual reality suit at home and turn it on. In the conference room in Bangalore, another suit opens up. It opens its eyes. On the video screen in my suit I see what those eyes see. I move my arms and that suit moves its arms. I talk and that suit talks with my voice. My entire awareness feels like it’s in the room in Bangalore.

Video conferencing can never replace face to face. And even though this is sort of like advanced video conferencing, the minds of the other people in the room are basically psychologically fooled into thinking I am right there with them. It’s just like if you take a robot and give it a human body, many people think it’s almost like an actual human even though it’s just a computer. This is one idea I can invent personally. And I have motivation. I don’t like to travel. I like to sit at home and do nothing. With this invention I can travel all over the world. I can even go to Easter Island. This is sort of like Teleportation 101.

5) Advertising in Houses. This sounds ugly at first. An ad on a wall in your house? Maybe in a frame like a picture. Or a mirror. But here’s the deal: I get the price of my house reduced if I agree to allow advertising all over the house. Like if I’m sitting in the bathroom and I see “daily deals” projected onto the shower curtain. The ad agencies agree to subsidize part of the price of my house. It gets better. As part of this, they have software that listens to all my phone calls. Forget “social media.” Let’s see what I’m interested in when I’m ACTUALLY being social, i.e. talking to people on the phone. If I say on the phone, “I’d really love to go skiing this year but I can’t afford it” I start getting offers on my shower curtain for skiing trips at a discount. It’s win-win-win. I make money while talking to my friends. My house is cheaper. And companies sell more, improving the economy, hiring more people, and life goes from “bad” to “good.”

6) Happiness Hotspots. For 10 years I’ve been getting business proposals like “with our product you will get alerted when your friends are close by.” I actually think now is the time this will actually work because of the rise of phablets like the Galaxy Note II. But forget that. When I want to see my friends, I’m not an idiot. I just call my friends and say, “hey, let’s meet for coffee.”

But let’s make this localization thing really life improving. “Studies show” that it’s better to be around positive people than negative people. Positive people uplift you, negative people bring you down. So let’s do this. Everyone wears an earplug that takes constant scans of your brain activity. The brain scans are matched against a database of 10,000 brain scans labeled “happy” or “sad” and then use standard speech recognition techniques to classify the user brain scan as either “happy” or “sad.”

NOW, on my Google Maps on my phone I can see shades all over the map. The brightest colors denote areas where the happiest people seem to be. The darker colors denote areas where negative people are. So if I’m trying to decide today, “hmmm, uptown or downtown?” I can look at the Happiness Map to see where the happiest areas are and go there. Who cares if my friends are there or not? I’ll make new friends in the happy hotspots!

7) 40 Percent Unemployment. The reality is, most people should not be at work. Why? Because they are bad at it. It’s rare that someone is actually good at what they do. I know maybe 10 people that are good at their jobs. This is not a criticism. It’s just a fact. And basically, robots are better. That’s why Apple is moving production back to the U.S. Because too many Chinese people were killing themselves in their factories. Robots don’t kill themselves and they get the job done faster.

So what society really needs is 40 or 50 percent unemployment. Here’s how you do it. My solution starts off Communist but ends up libertarian. Basically, companies get incentivized to replace all humans with robots. The excess profits you get from firing people get taxed at only half the rate. All of those “robot taxes” get put into a government fund that is used to subsidize the people who are fired (just like farmers are often paid subsidies not to farm). The subsidies, though, run out after three years. So you have three years from the day you are fired to start a new business. Hopefully the business uses robots instead of humans else you won’t be able to compete against your higher-margin competitors. If you can’t start a business then you end up being a temp staffer somewhere. Don’t say this is heartless. This is the way the world is going. That’s why the middle class is disappearing. Robots are the new middle class. And everyone else will either be an entrepreneur or a temp staffer. Don’t shoot the messenger here. It’s already happening. I’m just trying to figure out a way that we can actually accept the 40 percent unemployment or “underemployment” (which is already at 20 percent) which is coming.

8) Brain Dating. This is a slight take on “7” above. No dating service works. The divorce rate is going up. Many people are not happy and end up cheating. For the first time, five-star hotels like the Parker Meridien are charging by the hour because of cheating dating services like AshleyMadison.com.

So let’s solve this and end a lot of misery. Take the brain scans of 1,000 couples who are happily married after 40 years. You know the couples that say, “well, we’ve had our problems but we’ve survived.” Get rid of them. NO PROBLEMS. They are out there. Just a 1,000 couples of the 2 billion couples on the planet. Now average the brain scans together.

When you sign up for the brain dating service, you have to submit your brain scan. It averages your brain scan with the brain scans of all the women in the database. Then it matches the results against the database of 1,000 happily married people. Whichever combination for you results in the closest match to those 1,000 brain scans, you then get set up on date with the woman (or man) behind that brain scan. Price: $10,000. Guarantee: life-long marital bliss or your money back.

9) A “Like” button in my contact lenses. I just read they are making contact lenses that can read SMS texts. That’s nice. I like to be in constant communication with everyone I know all the time. But let’s take it one step further. I meet you, I like you, BAM, I blink twice quickly and my contact lens registers the like. Now you go about your day and other people who meet you can immediately see, “Sharon has 158 Likes today.” And I can also see which of my friends like you.

If you’re having a bad day maybe you have only “5 likes today.” No problem. People will avoid you on those days and give you your space. Life is stressful and maybe you need a break. Tomorrow you might be refreshed and get more likes again. I don’t want just “social media.” I want social LIFE.

Before I get to “10,” I want to explain “1.” The original idea was “Wi-Fi with protein.” When nomad tribes got to a new area 15,000 years ago they would think, “Where’s the food?” Now, in my nomadic wanderings (i.e. NYC Starbucks locations) I think, “where is the Wi-Fi?” Wi-Fi has clearly replaced food in our minds. So Wi-Fi with protein would solve the problem, right? But here’s the issue. For the life of me, I can’t figure out how you would do it. With every idea above I can think of the next step. Ideas are a dime a dozen. It’s all about EXECUTION. I just looked up everything I could about molecular biology on Wikipedia and I simply cannot figure out how to make Wi-Fi with protein. So I deleted that idea. No good. By the way, if you are Ridley Scott please call me about licensing any of these ideas for a science-fiction movie.

10) I don’t have a “10” My brain is hurting. If you can come up with a good “10” to help me round this out into 10 ideas I’d be really grateful. And if I ever make a company out of it that makes a few billion dollars, I’ll give you a small piece of the company and part of my Klout score. Please follow me on Twitter so my Klout score goes up. I love you.

Editor’s note: James Altucher is an investor, programmer, author, and several-times entrepreneur. His latest books are I Was Blind But Now I See and40 Alternatives to College. Please follow him on Twitter @jaltucher.