

PROJECT G

Same fire, shorter time.

A deck for the dark stretches,
the fog, and the gaps
between people.

21 cards

ThinkDeep333

THE DARK

1

It starts black

The dark part is the
beginning of the work, not
proof you failed.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

THE DARK

2

If it never goes black

Nothing that never went
dark ever changed.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

THE DARK

3

Ordinary material

What you start from is close
by, cheap, and easy to
despise.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

THE WORK

4

Separate

Sort the feeling from the
story you're telling about it.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

THE WORK

5

An easy fire first

Start gentle. Heat comes
later, once you can take it.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

if it be not black, proceed no further, for it is unrecoverable

Aurifontina Chymica, London · 1680

A hard stretch you refuse to enter tends to wait for you.

The beginning of our work is the Black Raven, which, like all things that are to grow and receive life, must first putrefy.

Attributed to Edward Kelly · printed 1676

Every account of the work starts here. Nobody skipped it.

Draw one when you are stuck, or deal the fog cards before a decision that smells urgent.

The words of the person who wrote it, their date, and what it means now. Cards marked *Our reading* are ours, not theirs.

The alchemists were mostly doing chemistry. Reading their work as a map of the inner life mostly begins in 1850. We borrow it anyway, and say so.

claude.ai/code/artifact/49c976f2-53f0-47db-9cfb-c393c6af0009

as the Infant in the beginning is nourished with light meats, but the bones being strengthened with stronger: so this mastery also, first it must have an easy fire

Attributed to Roger Bacon, English edition · 1597

Most people try to fix everything at once, and burn the batch.

Seperate thou ye earth from ye fire, ye subtile from the gross sweetly wth great indoustry.

The Emerald Tablet, translated by Isaac Newton · c. 1680

Sweetly. It's sorting, not scouring.

It is familiar to all men, both young and old, is found in the country, in the village, in the town, in all things created by God; yet it is despised by all.

Gloria Mundi, dated in the text · 1526

You don't need better raw material than the life you already have.

Haste ruins it

If you can't wait, don't start.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

One hour

Don't let one bad hour throw away months of work.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

Don't hand it the hatchet

Keep the feeling. Don't give it your hands.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

Same fire, shorter time

The second time through the same trouble is quicker than the first.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

The first round is the hard one

It gets easier. It does not start easy.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

Back through the black

Shorter isn't the same as skipped.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

THE DARK

8

*In my fury I tooke a Hatchet in
my hand, And brake all my
Worke ... The Crowes head
began to appeare as black as Iett*

Thomas Charnock · 1557

Nine months of work, smashed in
a rage at the moment it began to
turn. The war was out of his
hands; the hatchet was in them.

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Source before 1800

THE WORK

7

*it would be foolish to let one
hour rob you of the fruits of all
your labour.*

Eirenaeus Philalethes, written · 1645

Send it tomorrow. Say it
tomorrow. It keeps.

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Source before 1800

THE WORK

6

*he who has no patience, let him
refrain his hands from the work*

Rosarium philosophorum · 1550

Urgency is the most reliable sign
that someone is being worked on
— including by yourself.

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Source before 1800

THE CYCLES

11

*The Crows head will be blacker,
the Dragons Blood redder, the
Lac virginis whiter*

J. R. Glauber, English edition · 1689

Each round goes through the dark
again, sometimes darker. It just
takes less time.

Project G

Source before 1800

THE CYCLES

10

*In this first section of our work,
nothing is to be done without
hard and persevering toil*

Eirenaeus Philalethes, written · 1645

Later rounds were called child's
play by people who had done the
first.

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Source before 1800

THE CYCLES

9

*The Second work is concocted as
the First, in the same or a like
Vessel, the same Furnace, and by
the same degrees of fire, but is
perfected in a shorter time.*

Jean d'Espagnet · 1623

He meant a chemical process, not
a life. We're borrowing it — and it
holds up.

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Source before 1800

Count the days

Mark the day it starts and the day it lifts. That number is the thing you're shortening.

OUR READING

Deceived by the deceived

The person pushing it was usually fooled first.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

Greed is the handle

What they hook is something you already wanted.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

Name your evidence first

Decide what would change your mind before you're in the room.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

Sleep on it

Anything sold as urgent that can wait an hour can wait a night.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

Ask, don't imagine

Picturing their side doesn't work. Asking does.

MODERN RESEARCH

THE FOG

14

*To the Covetous, an easie way
without Expençe: To the Hasty,
Rash and Unstable, multiplicity
of Distillations.*

A Short Enquiry concerning the Hermetic Art,
London · 1714

The adepts wrote traps for greedy
readers on purpose. Ask what
want of yours is being used.

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Source before 1800

THE FOG

13

*Take heed that you be not
deceived by them that are
deceived.*

Henry Cornelius Agrippa, in a letter of · 1527

Most manipulation is second-
hand. That makes it no less
expensive.

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Source before 1800

THE CYCLES

12

Our reading, not a source

You can't shorten a cycle you have
never measured. One mark a day
is enough: in it, turning, clear.

Project G

Our reading

WITH OTHERS

17

*getting another person's
perspective directly, through
conversation, increased accuracy
but ... perspective taking did not*

Eyal, Steffel & Epley, 25 experiments · 2018

Then write down what they said,
in their words, not your summary
of it.

Project G

Modern research

THE FOG

16

*The World hath been much
abused by the Opinion of
Making of Gold ... the Meanes
(hitherto propounded) ... full of
Errour and Imposture*

Francis Bacon, Sylva Sylvarum · 1627

Tomorrow you'll read the same
offer with different eyes.

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Source before 1800

THE FOG

15

*compassing almost the whole
world, met with none but
impostors, false deceivers, and no
philosophers ... at length I found
the truth*

John Pontanus · 1600

He also admitted erring two
hundred times. Doubt plus
persistence, not cynicism.

Project G

Source before 1800

The gap is smaller

They dislike you about half as much as you think.

MODERN RESEARCH

The lamp ahead

Somebody went first with a light you couldn't see. Later that's you.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

The vessel before the fire

If the extremes run hot fast, build the container first: sleep, ground, people, help.

SOURCE BEFORE 1800

The aim of moral discipline is to purify the heart from the rust of passion and resentment, till, like a clear mirror, it reflects the light of God.

al-Ghazali, *The Alchemy of Happiness* · c. 1105

Not killing the passion. Cleaning the rust off it. If the dark is too much right now, tell someone today — in the US, call or text 988.

In all thy wandering in Darkness, the lamp of the Kerux went before thee, though it was not seen by thine eyes.

Golden Dawn, *Neophyte ceremony* · c. 1888

The Kerux is the one who carries the lamp. It is a job, not a rank.

think that the levels of prejudice ... held by the outgroup party are approximately twice as strong as actually reported

Moore-Berg et al., *PNAS* · 2020

And when people are shown the real figure, they judge the other side less harshly.