



The Latticework:
On Mitigating Galilean Relativity



What I noted since the really big ideas carry 95% of the freight, it wasn't at all hard for me to pick up all the big ideas from all the big disciplines and make them a standard part of my mental routines. Once you have the ideas, of course, they are no good if you don't practice – if you don't practice you lose it. So, I went through life constantly practicing this model of the multidisciplinary approach. Well, I can't tell you what that's done for me. It's made life more fun, it's made me more constructive, it's made me more helpful to others, it's made me enormously rich, you name it, that attitude really helps...



...It doesn't help you just to know them enough just so you can give them back on an exam and get an A. You have to learn these things in such a way that they're in a mental latticework in your head and you automatically use them for the rest of your life.

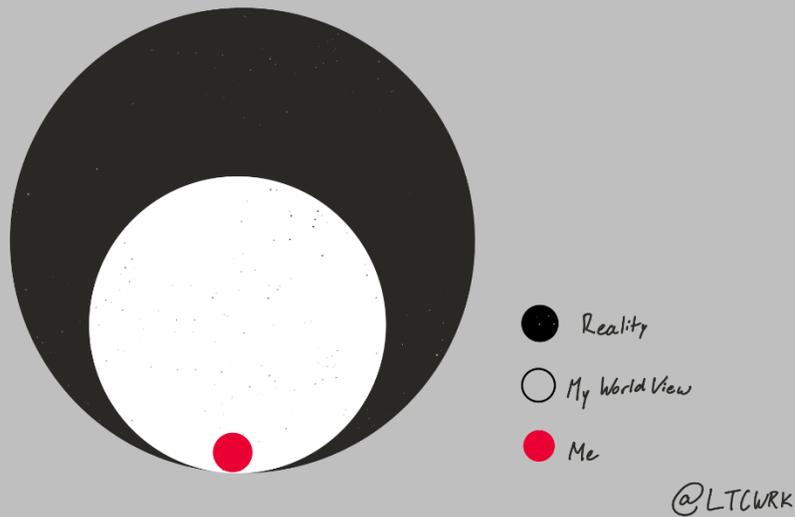
– Charlie Munger,
[2007 USC Gould School of Law Commencement Speech](#)



Galilean Relativity

Galilean Relativity states that we can never fully grasp, define, or understand a system we are part of. This is to say, “distance provides perspective” and wisdom in life is often about perspective.

We can escape Galilean Relativity by stepping out of our system. This “fresh set of eyes” allows us to gain perspective and to see problems for what they are. Theoretically, if we can overcome Galilean Relativity, eliminating our blindspots, we’ll also eliminate our mistakes – as all mistakes come from blindspots.



There is more than one way to look at any situation, namely one where we are NOT the center of the universe – I’m operating on the automatic, unconscious belief that I am the center of the world, and that my immediate needs and feelings are what should determine the world’s priorities. The thing is that, of course, there are totally different ways to think about these kinds of situations. In this traffic, all these vehicles stopped and idling in my way, it’s not impossible that some of these people in SUV’s have been in horrible auto accidents in the past, and now find driving so terrifying that their therapist has all but ordered them to get a huge, heavy SUV so they can feel safe enough to drive. Or that the Hummer that just cut me off is maybe being driven by a father whose little child is hurt or sick in the seat next to him, and he’s trying to get this kid to the hospital, and he’s in a bigger, more legitimate hurry than I am: it is actually I who am in HIS way.

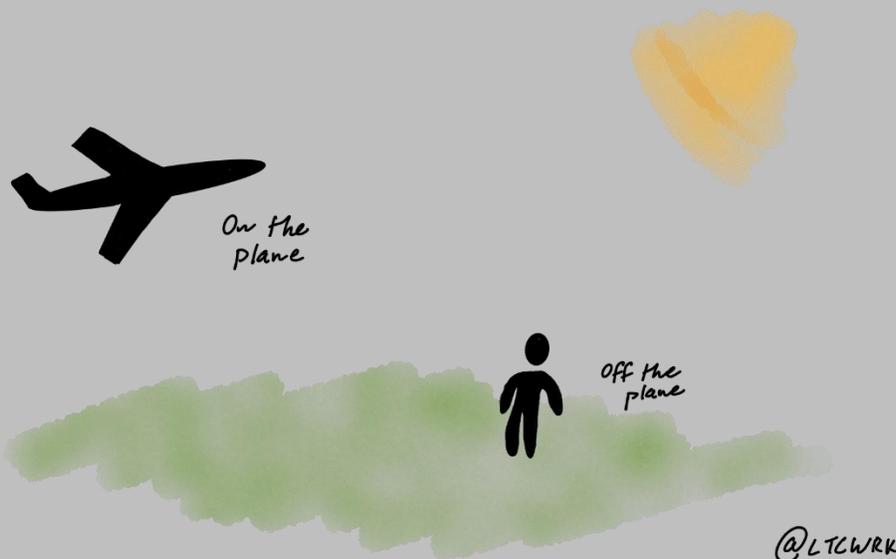
– David Foster Wallace, [This is Water](#)



Galilean Relativity is one of the keystone ideas within The Latticework. Why? Well, all these mental models are tools to help us mitigate our blind spots and Galilean Relativity is the roadmap to help define and mitigate these blind spots.

So, our exercise is now to think through tools, tactics, routines, habits, mindsets, processes that can help us remove blind spots to the extent that it is possible.

What follows are some of these tools in as digestible and condensed a manner as we could manage. We hope they're helpful!





What are the practical ways to mitigate blind spots?

1. Becoming multidisciplinary! The whole point of having a broad array of mental models is so that you have access to the right tool at the right time in the right context. We don't want to be the man with only a hammer and becoming multidisciplinary aids us in this journey. See [The Latticework](#) and [Mental Models](#)
2. [Future authoring](#) / [Understand myself](#) / [The Infinite Game](#) – it is a missed opportunity that formal education doesn't do this type of self-reflection on an annual basis. Imagine how valuable it would be to have students take a day every year to reflect on what they actually want out of life, to define success in their eyes and what pitfalls they might fall into along this journey. It doesn't need to be perfect, it is simply the process of taking time to think and self-reflect that is most helpful. Although school doesn't and probably won't do anything like this, we can take it into our own hands and the links above can help you in this journey.
3. Conduct the “Buried Dreams Exercise” from [The Artist's Way](#). Too often we wait for “later” to do these types of exercises, but later might never come. Prioritize and make the time for these types of pursuits...
 - List 5 hobbies that sound fun
 - List 5 classes that sound fun
 - List 5 things you personally would *never* do that sound fun
 - List 5 skills that would be fun to have
 - List 5 things you used to enjoy doing
 - List 5 silly things you would like to try once
4. [Bezos' Regret Minimization Framework](#) – “I knew that when I was 80 I was not going to regret having tried this. I was not going to regret trying to participate in this thing called the Internet that I thought was going to be a really big deal. I knew that if I failed I wouldn't regret that, but I knew the one thing I might regret



is not ever having tried.” This mindset helps puts things into perspective, helping us step out of our system and make decisions that are optimal in the long-term. They might seem foolish and scary in the moment, but 80-year-old you knows it is the right thing to do.



5. Checklists – Pilots, surgeons, and other jobs that have a lot on the line tend to have checklists to follow. It isn't because these people are forgetful or incompetent, it's because we're human! In high-pressure situations, having a thoughtful, clear, concise, actionable checklist can be lifesaving. Where appropriate, create checklists for yourself to make sure you're covering all your bases, consistently attending to everything you find important, setting healthy routines and habits, etc. See [The Checklist Manifesto](#)
6. Learning From Your Own and Others' Experiences – The beauty of books, podcasts, interviews, and more is that they allow us to learn and benefit from the failures and successes of others. Humans, amazingly, have the capacity to learn from others and, while we should leverage that to the hilt, we need to balance that



with doing and building things ourselves! Naval's interview with [Kapil Gupta](#) is fantastic in this regard.

7. Journaling / Writing – one of the main benefits of journaling is that you get to relive what you were thinking and feeling at a given time. It is harder to rewrite history when you see your own handwriting contradicting your memory! It happens to me embarrassingly often where I recall an event one way but my journal clearly shows me something else. Writing in general has fantastic blind spot mitigating qualities.
8. Teaching others – Take time to write out your thinking, ideas, decisions and then take the time to teach or explain it to others. The best way to learn is to teach. This shines a light on our lack of understanding and forces us to sharpen our thinking. Importantly, we must attempt to explain things in simple words where [insider jargon](#) isn't a requirement. The ideal is using language and concepts that an inquisitive 15-year-old would be able to comprehend. Aim to have a mastermind group that you trust and can turn to when you need to see how well you understand something.
9. Intergenerational learning – a key Galilean Relativity idea is that 40-year-old us can clearly see mistakes that 30-year-old us made but that were not apparent at the time. Through intergenerational learning, we can download the wisdom of those who are older than us, helping us avoid mistakes that they can clearly see we're making but that we're blind to. Frank Shamrock, the famous boxing coach, had a beautiful regiment that tied together several of our concepts. He called it his plus/minus>equals approach. He had each of his boxers train with someone better than him or her (plus), someone worse (minus), and a peer (equals). Seeking something similar in our lives would be time well spent.
10. Through reading – Learning from the success and mistakes of others is one of life's great shortcuts. It helps us see parallels over time, learn how the great thinkers and leaders of history dealt with various situations, giving us various



perspectives and mental tools that are now at our disposal. Life is too short and complex to try to figure everything out on your own – take advantage of the world’s greatest thinkers and the wisdom they’ve built up over the ages.

11. Therapy – Having a trusted therapist is one of the most effective means of mitigating blind spots as they can be dispassionate observers who have perspective that you don’t or can’t have. They can use non-judgmental language to poke and prod, restate what you’ve said so that you can see it in a different light, ask you questions that would be too emotionally explosive if they came from a significant other or family member, and more. The perspective a good therapist can bring is almost impossible to overstate.
12. Newspaper test – Buffett has a wonderful mental trick to see if something is worth doing. He asks himself and others if they would still take the action in question if it were to be reported on the front page of the local newspaper the next day. If they would be embarrassed by this in any way, steer clear. You want to be in the middle of the playing field, giving yourself significant [margins of safety](#) before you get “out of bounds.”
13. The loving “uncle” strategy – aim to have a loving uncle or aunt in your life (whether related by blood or not) who is not afraid to give you some tough love. Somebody who can tell you squarely what you need to do to improve, someone who is willing to unconditionally share what your strengths and flaws are. Don’t ask your parents or significant others – they’ll likely be too nice or give you a list so long that it’s unworkable. The “uncle” or “aunt” is the perfect combination of loving yet tough.
14. Pre-Mortem – working through problems and decisions before they’re made is a fantastic tactic, something businesspeople and militaries use for important decisions. If we can see why something might fail before it actually does, it could help us see the vulnerabilities and flaws before implementing them. It is amazing



how often you can ask the question, “If this were to fail, why did it fail?” and come back with several answers to that question. [Invert](#) the problem.

15. [On Having Opinions](#) – Charlie Munger has an iron rule that he must be able to argue the opposite point of view as clearly as his own. This forces you to change perspective – to see both sides – helping to at least open your mind to other potentialities. This is a tough standard to live up to, but so useful. Like lifting weights and feeling your muscles burn, this process can be painful, but the reward is worthwhile. Coming to love and appreciate this “growing pain” can be a superpower on its own.

One of our key goals at The Latticework is to help you move from theory to practice, helping you better understand how these valuable ideas can enrich your life. In that vein, we hope you find these tactics on mitigating [Galilean Relativity](#) to be useful.



As the African proverb goes, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

[Thank you for choosing to go together.](#)

