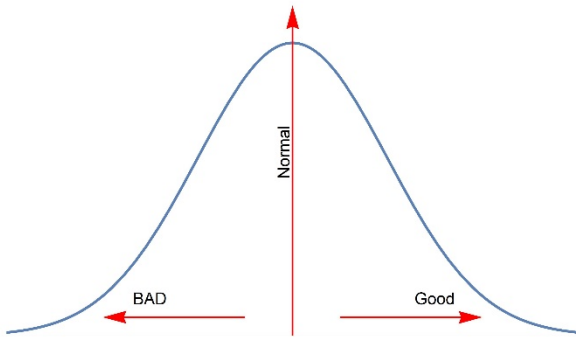


## WHY I SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO WRITE A BLOG

*[The Ides of March 2020 - These thoughts arose from an e-mail exchange with a friend in the UK after her visit to see us was eliminated by the Corona virus pandemoniapocalypse]*

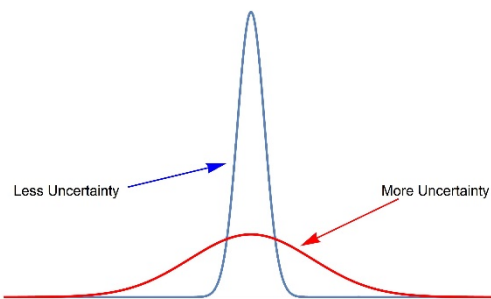
I take a lot of heat over my fascination with mathematics. Perhaps it is time to explain how much comfort I find in it. Case in point: While many are out chasing toilet paper, I am calmly sitting here bloviating in these electronic pages. How does he do it? All America wants to know.

Actually, it helps to have spent years studying the meaning of plots like what you see here. I have become used to thinking of life as a collection of events lined up with “bad” on the left, “good” on the right and those not really either in the middle. There are no politics here. Long before elections, the real number line was ordered by convention from minus infinity on the left to plus infinity on the right. If it were reversed the shape of the graph would not change (just like nothing really ever changes in politics, but that is another story). Back to the plot. In the end (?) it is nice to know that things return to normal. Nature involves powerful forces we mortals do not fully understand designed to “right the ship.” One of these is thinning the herd, a not-so-comforting, yet rational, metaphor that tells us, for all species, it is not only the strong that survive but the weak that must go. Relativity, another mathematical notion, is an imperfect analogy about those who are old but still strong and affects how much takes place beneath those curves at the extremes (where old people like me live today).

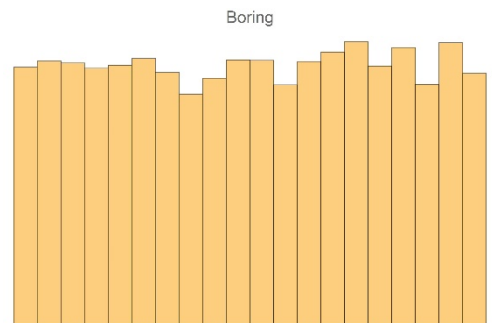


What becomes clear is that one may self-isolate, but one may never break free from the group, be it your genetic makeup, the clan of your neighborhood or the tribe of your belief system. Cosmic reality connects you irrevocably to some destiny which is not yours to change. All organisms compete for scarce resources in the fragile biosphere we occupy, whether they walk erect on two feet or swim in the blood stream. In an odd way, it is actually liberating to know that escaping this equation (which created the plot above) is virtually impossible. Deal with it.

$$\frac{e^{-\frac{x^2}{2}}}{\sqrt{2\pi}}$$

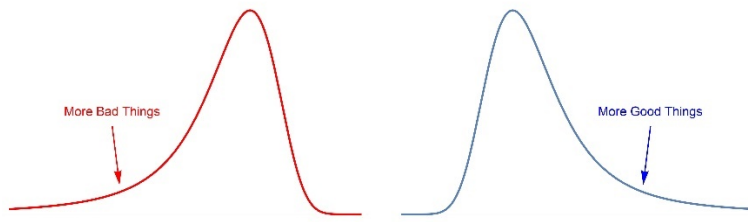


To channel the Chinese Proverb, your attitude toward “living in interesting times” can also be managed by thinking in terms of more or less excitement in the form of variation from our expectation.



Sometimes we get what we want, sometimes we don't. To the left are peace and quiet in blue with upheaval, toil and torment in red. On the other hand, do you really want tedious uniformity as on the right?

Then there are times when one may experience the occasional aggregation of either miseries or joys.



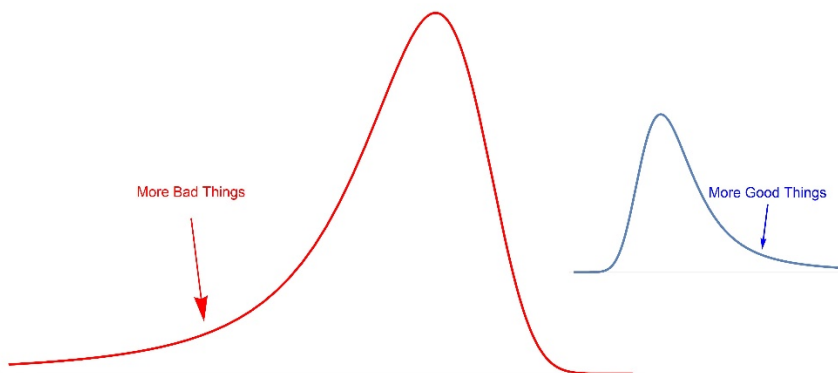
In fact you may work at it. Good luck with that.

But to get that you must put up with more complexity. It takes this equation to produce those two plots:

$$e^{\left[ \begin{array}{l} i t \mu - \sigma \text{Abs}[t] \left(1 + \frac{1}{\pi}\right) \quad \alpha=1 \\ 2 i \beta \text{Log}[\text{Abs}[t \sigma]] \\ \text{Sign}[t] \\ i t \mu - \text{Abs}[t \sigma]^\alpha \left(1 + i \beta \right. \\ \left. (-1 + \text{Abs}[t \sigma]^{1-\alpha}) \right) \\ \text{Sign}[t] \text{Tan}\left[\frac{\pi \alpha}{2}\right] \end{array} \right]} \quad \text{True}$$

It is bad when people get sick or die. It is worse when I get sick and die. But that is part of living. I do not remember the Real Depression or either “World” war but was lucky to have family members I loved and respected who did and who thought enough of me to tell me about those hard times. I remember a misguided war in the 1960s. I remember lines at gas stations in the 1970s. I remember 18% interest rates in the 1980s. I remember when the world ended on Dec 31, 1999 because of Y2K. I remember nearly two years later when the Twin Towers were hit, and our world *did* change forever. I remember exactly where I was when Lehman Brothers collapsed on September 15, 2008. I am not nearly as sure where I will be at the end of this one, but I know that eventually I will miss the end of something.

Along the way we must deal with opportunists. Usually these are charlatan politicians (of every stripe) and their cabal of fawning media types, all supercharged by that wave of Truth and Reason we know as The Internet. Their essential job, each day, during good times and bad, is to gain control over you. Their ONLY goal is to be elected so they may retain the position of power, comfort and luxury they have voted for themselves. So, when they are not trying to scare the living daylight out of you, they go about passing all manner of silly laws in the vain and hopeless attempt to repeal Laws of Nature. They carefully exploit the crisis-de-jour by portraying life like this



Alas, this, too, shall pass. What we are debating is who among us will see it pass and get to wait for the next one.

I also get a lot of grief for being so cheerful.