

1-9-4-BLUE-3-7-2-6-GAMMA-TETRAHEDRON

How to play the futures market.

BY IAN RANDAL STROCK

I always knew I was destined for great things, even as a child. It was only when I started growing up that I learned how the world worked, and realized that great wealth would make those great things much easier to attain. Unfortunately, attaining great wealth wasn't quite so easy.

I didn't find my fortune on Wall Street. My writing career looked to be pleasant, but not blockbuster. Lottery wins were hard to come by. And I didn't even have a big enough stake to take the poker world by storm.

Then, one day, I hit upon the solution. It was so simple I almost laughed with joy at it.

I didn't have to find my fortune all by myself.

As long as the Universe would allow time travel, my future self already knew how I'd made my fortune. With time travel, of course, he'd come back to tell me how to do it, ensuring that he would have that fortune when the time came.

So all I had to do was be prepared for my visit from my future self. Chance favours the prepared mind, and I was going to be prepared. I needed a foolproof way of recognizing my future self, because he might have only a moment to give me what I needed. He might not look like me any more. I needed something. A recognition code. Something I would know, he would remember, and no one else would ever even think of.

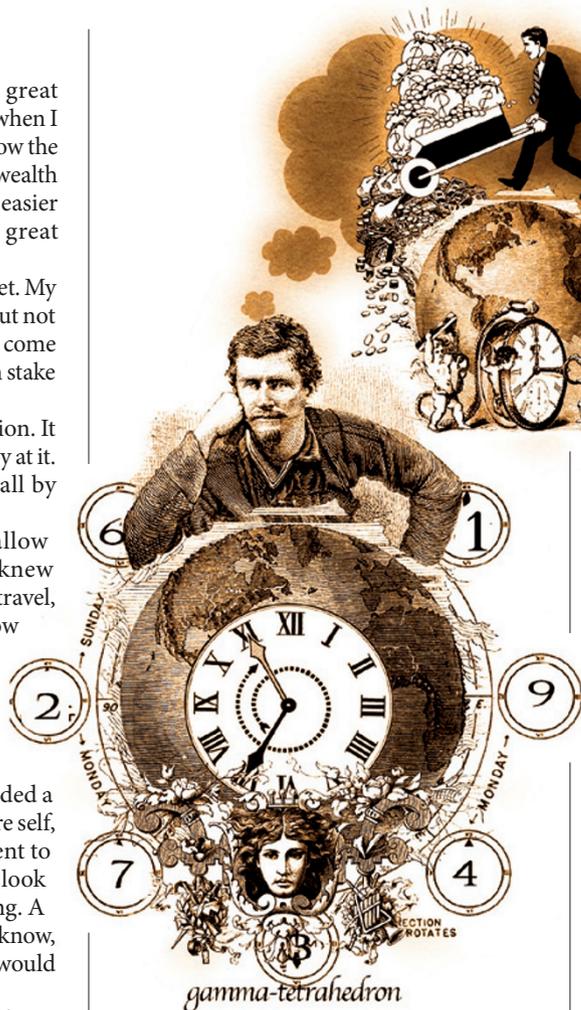
1-9-4-blue-3-7-2-6-gamma-tetrahedron.

A code. A code I repeated to myself nearly constantly at first, until it became ingrained in my brain. And then only regularly, to keep it fresh, so I would recognize it instantly. Who knew? My contact with my future self might be only a few seconds. I would need to be able to hear (or see) that code and know it immediately, so as not to waste whatever brief time interval we might have together.

1-9-4-blue-3-7-2-6-gamma-tetrahedron.

I kept plugging away, trying to write that best-selling novel (no luck yet); on Wall Street, everyone seemed to be making money but me; I hadn't yet hit a winning lottery combination. But I knew my destiny was assured. Somewhere out there was the future me who had the answers; who knew how I would make my fortune. And he'd be back to tell me. After all, he needed to tell me how to do it, so that he would have that fortune.

1-9-4-blue-3-7-2-6-gamma-tetrahedron.



I needed to know, and then I realized it didn't matter. My future self already knew when and where we would meet. After that meeting, I'd know it, too, and then I could remember it for us.

ONE-NINE-FOUR-BLUE-THREE-SEVEN-TWO-SIX-GAMMA-TETRAHEDRON.

It was my code. I never wrote it down; never told it to anyone; never even told anyone my code existed. It was going to work; it had to work.

1-9-4-blue-3-7-2-6-gamma-tetrahedron.

One day, I was sitting in the park, reading a book, taking a break, when someone sat down on the bench beside me. "One-nine-four-blue-three-seven-two-six-gamma-tetrahedron," he said.

I dropped my book. "I've been waiting for you," I said.

"I know," he said, in a voice I'd only heard on tape. "I'm sorry to disappoint you, but we're not going to be rich anytime soon. I need a sample of your blood, to prove I've been here."

"And then what? Will we be rich after that?"

"Doubtful," the future me said. "I'm just a junior member of the team. They only chose me for the trip because I'm expendable, and because I told them I had a foolproof way of finding my earlier self. But the fabric of the Universe won't allow more than three or four trips, so this is a proof-of-concept trip that will probably never be repeated."

"But what about the stock market, or the lottery, or —"

"I'm not rich in my time, so I can't help you, there. But can I have a sample of your blood?"

I sat there, stunned, while he drew a sample. Then he walked away. I didn't even pay attention.

8-5-omega-0-3-3-orange. 8-5-omega-0-3-3-orange.

There must be an alternate universe, one in which I find my fortune, and can travel between universes to tell myself how to do it... ■

I went to work for an Internet start-up company, but it didn't make it out of the gate. I tried my hand at poker, but was only a fair player, and without a large enough bankroll, the big-money tournaments were well out of my reach. I even started several businesses, on my own and with friends, but they all came to nought.

1-9-4-blue-3-7-2-6-gamma-tetrahedron.

There were times when I was depressed, thinking it was all a cosmic joke on me, that of course there was no way my future self would be able to tell me anything. But at my core, I held fast to that feeling; it felt so right, it made the Universe make sense. It had to be. My future self would tell me how to do it.

1-9-4-blue-3-7-2-6-gamma-tetrahedron.

I tried to imagine what would be the best place, the right time for my future self to visit, to share the words or data

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