

Leap

jump or spring a long way, to a great height, or with great force.

The connotation of something that takes a lot of effort and has a risk associated with it makes me think optimistically. A leap of faith is almost always talked about in a way that it was worth it. Either the risk resulted in reward or resulted in a valuable lesson. A leap feels unfinished - whether it's scary or not depends on your perspective. It's active. There will be a result. Any ambiguity will be resolved soon.

Constraint

a limitation or restriction.

It's something to work within. There are boundaries that tell you what is possible and what not to even worry about. It reigns in an overactive mind. It could be limiting or a reason to be creative. It appears negative but just wants to tell you what will work and what will not. There's power in knowing your constraints.

Savior

a person who saves someone or something (especially a country or cause) from danger, and who is regarded with the veneration of a religious figure.

A loaded word that could rescue you or make you loathe its self-importance. Did that someone/something need to be saved? Or just listened to, or given the resources for creating success on its/their own, or left to perish because it didn't need to exist? Being a savior is a lot of responsibility and endows someone/something with power that could go unchallenged for flimsy reasons. A savior could be created by happenstance, by misinformation, by controversial beliefs. Being saved could put you in the debt of your savior, and is that existence better than having been saved?

Survival

the state or fact of continuing to live or exist, typically in spite of an accident, ordeal, or difficult circumstances.

Survival requires persistence; maybe that persistence is active or passive, but it's still an accomplishment. The way it feels positive but "spite" is at its core is interesting. Survival is a true fact, but whether something deserves to survive is subjective. Survival means something has been overcome. Survival is a battle, so the survivor is the winner and that means something else has to be a loser.

Culture

the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.

Such a catch-all term that deserves specificity when it gets used. At work we talk about “cultural truths” which feels like shorthand that might be necessary because people are used to seeing and hearing it, but I want to think more about what culture finds that statement to be true. So many projects where we decide the “cultural” truth and the “audience” truth are just the same. Is that right? This definition of culture is tough because it feels like the museum version of the word. But it’s fun to think of what pieces or ideas I would put in a museum when I’m doing research to understand the cultural context around a certain audience or problem for a brief. In general, culture is something you can participate in or observe. You can appropriate it or appreciate it. Culture can be very serious or worth making fun of.

Possibilities

a thing that may happen or be the case.

Imagine the possibilities. Possibilities precede probabilities. A familiar word for a brain that feels a need to run every scenario before feeling prepared or confident. Connotes an outcome that can be predicted or that can be a blind spot. Exciting, or stressful. Forcing you to live in uncertainty, testing your improvisation skills.

Indignation

anger or annoyance provoked by what is perceived as unfair treatment.

Some people need to live in indignation, feeling most comfortable living in opposition to something else. Indignation can be justified. It can also be futile. It focuses energy and can spark productive and necessary movements against injustice. Or it can trap you in a cage of your own creation if you hand over the power of your own anger to the thing that caused your indignation.

Taste

the ability to discern what is of good quality or of a high aesthetic standard.

Can be a skill. Can be refined. Can be innate. Can be arbitrated. It sets standards and can be used to put down the preferences of people who may have come by those preferences honestly. But it can also be used as a shortcut for people who want their preferences to be refined but don’t have the time, energy, wherewithal to develop preferences for themselves. Adopting the taste of someone you admire can make you feel more put together and like you know what you’re doing in life. Taste is a shortcut to knowing what you find acceptable and what you don’t.

Mental

relating to the mind.

Context matters: is this word being used as a pejorative? A compliment? A qualifier? Is it something that's not talked about enough and not well understood or is it a way to classify the problems of someone whose actions or words you don't understand? The brain is so hard to understand. Anything "mental" is hard to grasp; you can only understand the mind as far as your own mind has developed.

Deluge

inundate with a great quantity of something.

When it rains, it pours. A deluge is overwhelming. A deluge of blessings can feel like too much the same way a deluge of curses can. A deluge might take some time to emerge out from under it. It's a volume that is powerful.