Mastery:
RETHINKING
the paradigm

From hot to not: how the rise and fall of a mobile giant reveals the perils of unyielding mastery.

Mike Lazaridis came out of the womb an electronics wizard. Unsurprisingly, he later went on to invent one of the most groundbreaking devices of my generation—the Blackberry.

I'm sure you're wondering how the Blackberry went from accounting for nearly half the U.S. smartphone market to just 1% in under five years.

Mike fell for the pitfalls of mastery. He refused to see anything other than email and calls as the main features of his device. Indeed, no one wanted a computer chip in their phones. Right? *In comes the iPhone.*

There is a perception that mastery is a finish line. A pinnacle of all the tireless hours worked, training, and education. New achievement unlocked: Skin in the Game.

However, pursuing mastery can create a tunnel vision that prevents you from killing your darlings, developing competence in an evolving industry, or adapting to a new generation entering the workforce. Earning stripes is a never-ending marathon, regardless of experience, tenure, or accolades. Once you stop, you lose momentum.

This world develops exponentially, and you must be careful to embrace new approaches to avoid irrelevance. That doesn't mean you abandon what you've known to work. Reflecting on experience shapes wisdom that inspires a willingness to unlearn and relearn.

And so, instead of mastery in a specific subject matter, become an expert in reflection, rethinking assumptions, and challenging even the most fundamental biases.