

# Regional Advantage Leads a Strong Set on Networks, Emotion, and Product Judgment

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

2026-06-24

## Regional Advantage Leads a Strong Set on Networks, Emotion, and Product Judgment

*By Recommended Reading from Tech Founders • June 24, 2026*

Today's organic recommendations centered on how better judgment gets formed: AnnaLee Saxenian on innovation networks, Antonio Damasio on emotion as the basis of decision-making, and a Josh Elman article Sarah Guo says founders will learn from.

### What stood out

Three recommendations passed the authenticity filter today, and they fit together well. Each is about how better judgment gets formed: through open networks, through emotional clarity, and through practical lessons on consumer products and investing.

### Most compelling recommendation

#### *Regional Advantage*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** AnnaLee Saxenian [1]
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Who recommended it:** John Lilly, in conversation with Reid Hoffman [1]
- **Key takeaway:** Lilly recommended the book for its explanation of why Silicon Valley benefited from intense intermixing while Boston's Route 128 companies were more insular, with people eating and staying inside their own firms rather than mixing more broadly [1]
- **Why it matters:** This was the strongest pick because it came with a concrete mechanism for how ecosystems either accelerate or limit innovation



[1] Reid Hoffman x John Lilly on why AI won't replace your network (12:14)

## Two more worth saving

### *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Antonio Damasio [2]
- **Link/URL:** <https://www.amazon.com/Descartes-Error-Emotion-Reason-Human/dp/014303622X> [2]
- **Who recommended it:** Joe Hudson, as cited in *Lenny's Newsletter*
- **Key takeaway:** The recommendation was tied to a specific neuroscience claim: our choices are fundamentally emotional, and feelings act as the “context-setters” on which rational thinking operates; when emotional states are avoided or unclear, the set of visible solutions narrows [2]
- **Why it matters:** The surrounding discussion connects this directly to AI-era decision-making: models can advise, but they cannot feel the subtle tension in a room or register when something feels off [2]

“our choices are fundamentally emotional.” [2]

### Article by Josh Elman (*title not provided in the source notes*)

- **Content type:** Article
- **Author/creator:** Josh Elman [3]
- **Link/URL:** <http://x.com/i/article/2069415679493840896> [4]
- **Who recommended it:** Sarah Guo [3]

- **Key takeaway:** Guo said she learned a lot from Elman about consumer products and investing, and that founders will too [3]
  - **Why it matters:** The endorsement was unusually direct and specific, tying the piece to two core startup topics rather than offering a generic share [3]
- “Josh was a great partner to me and I learned a lot from him about consumer products and investing! Founders will too.” [3]

### **If you only save one**

Save *Regional Advantage*. It had the clearest combination of conviction and explanation: not just a title drop, but a concrete lens for understanding how openness and cross-company mixing affect innovation [1]

---

### **Sources**

1. Reid Hoffman x John Lilly on why AI won't replace your network
2. The new inner game: Your unfair advantage in the age of AI
3. X post by @saranormous
4. X post by @joshelman