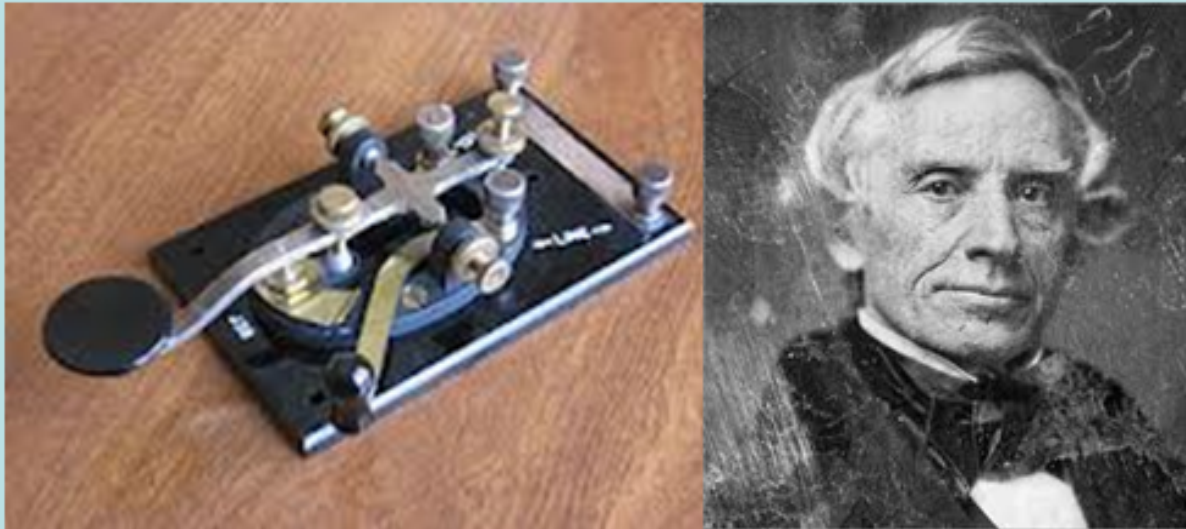


A forum to encourage independent thinking

The THINK Club

Published Quarterly

Volume 18.3 Summer 2013 \$250 Life Membership



Remembering Dots and Dashes

The Art of Living Happily
High Places and Fast Lanes
Book Reviews: The Art of Thinking Clearly
The Examined Life



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Letters



Thinking Wildly

(The Immortal Quotes of Will Rogers)

I enjoyed your humor article very much published in the Spring 2013 issue (Air Dreams). I could not stop laughing while reading this article. It provided very good exercise to my lungs. Keep writing.

Vikram Prasad
West Bloomfield, MI

I liked David Beagan's thoughts about exceptionalism (Home of the Exceptional: Spring 2013)

Charlie Hall
Fenton, MI

While I have no objection to increasing domestic production (US Energy Self Sufficiency: Spring 2013) of oil and gas, I still think investment in alternative energy should be a bigger priority. Whoever develops that technology and dominates that market will be the true superpower eventually.

Ajay Wadhwa
Milwaukee, WI

Alexander Hamilton started the U.S. Treasury with nothing - and that was the closest our country has ever been to being even.

An economist's guess is liable to be as good as anybody else's.

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts.

I was not a child prodigy, because a child prodigy is a child who knows as much when it is a child as it does when it grows up.

Everything is changing. People are taking the comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke.

If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.

There are three kinds of men:

The ones that learn by reading.

The few who learn by observation.

The rest of them have to touch an electric fence.

A fool and his money are soon elected.

If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went.

Everybody says this here thing we're involved in ain't a real war. Congress says it ain't a war. The President says it ain't a war. 'Course the guys over here getting shot at say it's the best damned imitation they ever saw.

The THINK Club is published quarterly by The THINK Club Publications, a forum to encourage independent thinking among fellow human beings.

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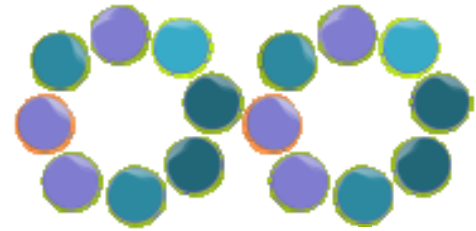
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Editorial



The Art of Living Happily

By Anil Shrivastava

As we grow older we realize that we knowingly and often without legitimate reason have hurt others. Probably, all of us have done so at some time in our lives. We lie to each other, humiliate each other and abandon each other.

On a larger scale, nations inflict violence on each other. But most of the hurt is caused between individuals in intimate relationships. When that happens, hearts are broken, and the essence of intimacy is destroyed.

Although what's done cannot be undone, there are ways to repair the damage to a large extent. I have experimented with some with good results:

We do not have to feel compelled to make a point. I have argued with people all night trying to prove them wrong and have continued the argument through emails. That was a total waste of time and emotional energy. What is right will always be right. Trying to convince someone about that is the same as trying to reinvent the wheel. Was I focused on making sure that I won? We forget that in life winning is not always achievable and sometimes, we take turns being the one to lose. Being a good sport is losing with an undefeated heart. It takes courage to accept one's own drawbacks and accept defeat.

We should not expose our expectations on others. We keep resentment in our heart for others not acting like we do. We do things according to our own capability and upbringing. The other person may be capable in other areas and may be judging us according to his/her capability and upbringing. We should not be judgmental.

Lastly, we should forgive others who have hurt us in the past. After all, we have hurt others too. Forgiveness should not be mistaken as being the same as pardoning someone. Pardoning comes from ego. We have no right to either punish someone or release someone from punishment. Forgiveness is to move beyond keeping grudges.

How ironic is it that we read moral teachings but never act upon them? I have recited the following mantras thousands of times without paying attention to its meaning:

May all be happy;
May all be free from
afflictions.
May all see the
goodness of others
And in everything;
May no one suffer
sorrow
May all live in peace!

Holding on to grudges is like grasping a fiery object. It will burn us, not anyone else. Anger and grudges don't disappear as long as we keep thoughts of resentment in the mind. Angry words destroy us and do not heal. On the contrary, kind words can change our world.

We are what we think. We create the world around us with our thoughts. We should control our thoughts and think constructively, otherwise we will live in illusion. Our thoughts should not be about faults of others; it should be about their goodness. This reminds me of another prayer that I recite every day but do not always act upon:

May He protect us
together,
May He nourish us
together;
May we work together
With great energy;
May all be vigorous
and effective,
And may we not hate
anyone.

Thinking of others' feelings and being accommodating is essential to coexistence. This is

the key to living happily.

Commentary



A Web of Lies

By Robert Bickmeyer

Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Michael Warren's written testimony adds fuel to the fire that the Internal Revenue Service has targeted conservative groups with Tea Party or Patriot in their name or are pro-Israel or in any way opposed to the Obama administration. Judge Warren chairs the Michigan-based non-profit Patriot Week Inc.

It was learned that the IRS commissioner, Douglas Shulman, had visited the White House 157 times. It is beyond suspicion that President Obama and/or his staff had ordered these conservative groups to be prey for auditing.

There is a history of elected representatives pursuing illegal and/or unethical activities. Memory takes me back to a Michigan state representative, David Jaye, who was convicted of drunken driving in 1993 and again in 2000. He was then expelled from the state senate by fellow Republicans.

When Richard Nixon disgraced the office of the president the Republican hierarchy pressured him into resigning, "for the good of the country."

Fingers were pointed at President Ronald Reagan when he was involved in the Iran-Contra affair. If he violated the law he was doing what he thought best for the country – freeing American hostages in Iran and helping the Contras fight communism in our hemisphere.

Conversely, everything President Bill Clinton was charged with (too numerous to list here) were for the personal pleasure or profit of Clinton. He lied to his wife, his staff, his cabinet, Congress and the American people. Subsequently, he was impeached by the House of Representatives, then tried in our Senate. A majority voted to convict him, but the 67 votes (two thirds) required for a conviction was not reached because many of the Democrats who had claimed his actions were

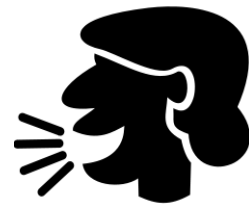
indefensible and reprehensible failed to vote with their conscience.

Further to the aforementioned IRS scandal, a web of lies were told about the attack on our embassy in Benghazi claiming that it was a spontaneous attack, not a planned attack by al Qaida. There was a cover-up (more lies) of our failure to provide help to our embassy that resulted in the deaths of four Americans.

In an unprecedented intrusion on freedom of the press Attorney General Eric Holder lied under oath to Congress. As has been written, "This government is out of control and corrupt." Anyone who does not see it has his/her head in the sand. My memory fails to recall any time when our country has been more divided.

I ask that President Barack Obama resign "for the good of the country."





Fast Lanes and High Places

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

My first exposure to the Detroit automotive empire left a lasting impression on my mind. Coming fresh off the boat (an FOB) and working for a supplier company in a small town in Indiana, I longed for the wide blue yonder outside the confines of the godforsaken town I lived in. It was my first visit to the metropolis, Detroit. I was awed by its magnitude and especially by its sprawling automotive centers in the city and suburbia. The VP of my company was summoned by an auto executive to justify the cost of one of the components we made for his company. Usually an employee at the bottom of the company's food chain was not supposed to be a part of the delegation, but as luck would have it, they needed a sacrificial goat to accompany them. Fortunately, I was chosen to be the one. "He that is down needs fear no fall" (John Bunyan). I was bent upon enjoying my first free outing to the Motor City.

We arrived in the office of the auto executive around midmorning. His office was the size the entire living area of my studio apartment I rented in Indiana. He had a miniature golf range in his office. We greeted him. He just nodded at us swinging his golf club and puffing a big cigar at the same time. Our VP complimented him on his nice swing and discussed golf for the rest of the time. Soon it was noon. Our VP asked the auto executive to join us for lunch. We drove to a place in Southfield, Michigan where they had a martini and steak lunch served by glamorous, scantily dressed waitresses. The executive and our delegation had a good time. Our VP was very happy with me as our contract for producing the component was renewed. I was the one who determined the labor content that went into manufacturing the component.



I decided to work for the auto industry in Detroit. After a few years, my wish was granted. It was party time as I wandered in the magnificent halls of General Motor's Technical Center in Warren, Michigan. There was a product launch going on in one of the spacious lobbies at the time. The members of the product team and media were mingling and enjoying a catered lunch. I was a little hungry, so I joined them in the feast. Suddenly, someone asked me, "Where do you work young man?"

"Oh, I work in this building. I only started last week. How 'bout you?"

"I work here too, what's your name?"

:I am Anil Shrivastava and what's yours?"

"I am Eaton, Bob Eaton", he replied in James Bond's style.

"Oh! You are Mr. Eaton, our executive director," I uttered.

"Mr. Eaton was my father, you can call me Bob." He then invited me to attend the press conference.

Later, Mr. Eaton became the head of GM Europe. Subsequently, he was hired by Mr. Iacocca to succeed him as Chrysler's CEO bypassing Bob Lutz. Mr. Eaton gave away Chrysler to Daimler of Germany (He called it a merger of equals) and took a hefty severance package in return, worth tens of millions of dollars. Chrysler was judged worthless a few years later. Bob Eaton joined Fortune's list of 'History's Ten Worst Auto Chiefs.'



I had an encounter of a different kind with Tom Lasorda. He was called back by GM from Eisenach, East Germany where he was the plant manager of the Opel plant. His new position was Executive Director of GM's Advanced Manufacturing Engineering. One afternoon I was minding my own business when someone tapped my shoulder. He then asked, "Hi! I am Tom Lasorda, what's your name?"

I introduced myself to Tom. He then asked me, "What do you do here?"

"Well, it is very difficult to describe my job as it is still evolving due to the recent reshuffle of the Advanced Engineering staff."

For some whimsical reason, he was impressed by my answer and gave me some visible assignments. I had no idea what Tom's real role was in the ever changing organization at GM. Some days he'd stand in the parking lots and jot down the license plates of company cars whose drivers didn't wear a seat belt. I was supposed to maintain a database of those employees. Later he introduced a '5S' program related to housekeeping. As a part of '5S' each employee was supposed to mark areas on his or her desk with tape for placing items such as pens, pencils, staplers, etc. Yes, the area for trash can was also supposed to be marked. Tom Lasorda would visit the office areas and give citations to employees who would not keep the items in their designated places. Of course, I maintained a database for that too.

Mr. Lasorda's next move was to become a VP at GM which never happened. In one of his employees' meetings, he invited Rick Wagoner (then chairman and CEO of GM) to an emotional speech he gave about company loyalty. Soon after that, he sold all his GM stock and joined Chrysler as a Senior VP of manufacturing. Later, Mr. Lasorda became the CEO of Chrysler. Chrysler, eventually, filed for bankruptcy and Mr. Lasorda was fired. He is currently the CEO of Fisker Automotive. As of now, Fisker is preparing to file for Chapter 11. (To be continued)

Perspective



Federal Income Taxes

By Robert Bickmeyer

What frightens me is that those people who believe in high tax rates for largess government entitlement programs also vote. Many of them vote once every four years in presidential elections. This is for those folks and President Obama.

When President Kennedy cut tax rates across the board by approximately 20 percent, tax revenues increased in 1964 and 1965. After President Reagan's tax cuts, revenue doubled. That's because when your taxes are lowered by \$1, you are more likely to spend it. The business owner where you spend it pays taxes on it as part of his profit. He passes that \$1 on to an employee in the form of a wage, where it becomes taxable income. The employee spends it and the process is repeated again.

During the course of the year, this \$1 generates untold revenue for our government, far more revenue than if it had been taken from you with a higher income tax rate. Multiply this \$1 many times and tax revenue is increased.

Conversely, if everyone is taxed at a high 90 percent rate, revenue would be higher than ever, but for only one year. The American people, not having anything to spend would generate no profits or salaries to be taxed the following year. Tax revenue is necessary to run our country, but excessively high tax rates can destroy the economy.

Furthermore, as these untaxed dollars are spent many times they promote growth in the economy and create new jobs. Thus many formerly unemployed workers become tax payers.

We must be wary of the fact that there are two extremes – tax rates that are too low and tax rates that are too high. Too low will not generate enough revenue to avoid deficit spending by the government. Too high will, as explained, take too many multi-taxed dollars out of circulation. A study of the rates in effect during Presidents Kennedy and

Reagan administrations would be a good starting point.

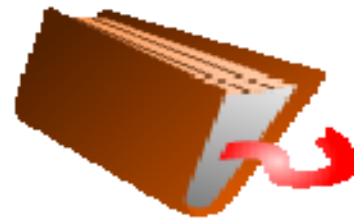
While we are in the income tax arena let's take a ride on the horse that carries the proposal of a flat tax, with a suggested rate of 17 percent. The Obama administration stresses that all tax taxpayers should pay their fair share. I agree. A taxpayer with taxable income of \$10,000 would pay \$1,700, one with taxable income of \$100,000 pays \$17,000 and he with \$1,000,000 would pay \$170,000 and a billion dollar wage is taxed \$170 million. The foregoing would be the result of a fair flat tax of 17 percent when loop holes, tax credits and deductions are eliminated and tax returns could be filed on a postcard. Reasonably established standard deductions and personal exemptions would free low income earners of any tax. Whatever constitutes a fair share is in the eyes of the beholder. This is my "fair share."

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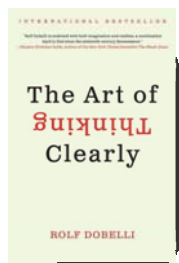
Book Review



The Art of Thinking Clearly

Author: Rolf Dobelli

Harper Collins Publishers 2013 (p. 399)



As one who tries to be an independent thinker, this book attracted me. The Art of Thinking Clearly exposes 99 cognitive biases – simple errors all of us make in our everyday thinking - and shows us how to become rational thinkers. Author Rolf Dobelli brings a fresh perspective because of his

unique skill-set. He's a Swiss writer, novelist and entrepreneur. And he's founder of an invitation-only society of the most distinguished thinkers, scientists and artists.

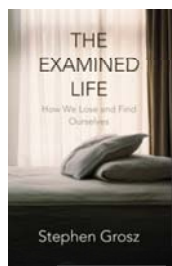
Each short chapter deals with one cognitive bias, showing the thinking error in action and enlightening readers about how to think clearly. Most of us are prone to making bad decisions because of our cognitive biases. This book will teach you how to discard irrationality and replace it with clear thinking. Perhaps the biggest benefit, however, is that it empowers the readers to become better thinkers by getting rid of biases.

No matter how much you know, you're always going to be biased in your thinking. This book increases your chances of thinking clearly.

The Examined Life: How We Lose And Find Ourselves

Author: Stephen Grosz

W. W. Norton & Company 2013



I saw this book reviewed elsewhere and decided that it would be a good read. I did enjoy it and it raised some interesting points – praising children can be counter-productive if said a certain way – but I did find the case histories a little cursory. It does show the unusual side of our human nature and I felt that this came to the fore as more of the

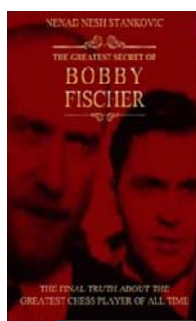
book was read. I did feel though that I didn't really learn

much about why we do things. It's a good read but it left me asking more questions including ones I thought this book would answer

–Reviewed by Gary Walsh

The Greatest Secret of Bobby Fischer Everly Rare Book Series By Naned Nesh Stankovic

This is a behind the scenes, intimate account of a short and intense portion of the every fascinating life of former world chess champion Bobby Fischer. When



Fischer returned to the chess world in 1992 to play a match with Boris Spassky his body guard quickly became his personal assistant, looking after Fischer's every need. The author in catering to the champion's every whim, is able to provide incredible details of the day to day life of Bobby Fischer and the demons that possessed him.

Fischer's life of triumph and ultimate tragedy might have been different if he had taken advantage of this pivotal moment in 1992. But the madness that possessed Fischer was already in full swing.

This book could have been so much more, but it needs a real editorial scrubbing. The authors many efforts to muse poetical are undermined by the awkward phrasing and grammatical mistakes. This book is a must read for hard core Fischer fans but others may wish to pass on it.

Sent your comments to:

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Essay



It's All about Political Leverage and Viewership

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

The case of George Zimmerman has been ruling the airwaves lately. The media created a great drama draining the emotional energy of all Americans which boosted their viewership. The rest of the world did not matter. I too was drawn into these magna opera labeled as the 'Trial of the Century' (the OJ Simpson saga was last century).

I have no opinion or comment in these matters since I am neither a legal expert nor a political pundit. However, I have some thoughts and questions of my own.

Florida has a stand-your-ground law that states that a person may justifiably use force in self-defense when there is reasonable belief of an unlawful threat, without an obligation to retreat first. Thus the jurors in Zimmerman's case justifiably acquitted him of any wrong-doing because Zimmerman supposedly feared for his life in the final moments of his struggle with Trayvon Martin. Zimmerman felt his life was in danger before shooting Martin, and it was his voice that was, supposedly, heard screaming for help in 911 calls.

What happens if someone of dark skin walks in a compound during the dark hours of the day? Can a vigilante in Florida justifiably shoot the person because he or she may feel threatened by that person's presence? Would the killer walk freely, if the prosecution could not prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt? It's disturbing, of course.

Attorney General Eric Holder took aim at "Stand Your Ground"-style laws — such as the one that figured into the George Zimmerman case — saying they may encourage violence and "undermine public safety." Rev. Jesse Jackson asked Congress to hold hearings on the death of Trayvon Martin. He wants the United Nations Human Rights Council to

investigate the case as well. Rev. Al Sharpton said, "Stand Your Ground" law is "scary" and has "rendered us vulnerable to all kinds of attacks in this country." There is widespread protest all over America against the Zimmerman verdict. Expressways were blocked by demonstrators in Los Angeles. They want the governor of Florida to convene a special session of the Florida Legislature to address the "stand-your-ground" law.

The question is why the outrage now? Where were those leaders and protesters when such incidents happened before? Why do we have to react only when it happens to one of us? Why can't we be proactive instead of being reactive?

From the very beginning of the case, Mr. Zimmerman was described as a "white Hispanic" by the media. Why refer to someone as a "white Hispanic" instead of just saying Hispanic? Why accentuate race at all? Hundreds of citizens are murdered in Detroit every year (last week alone seven teens were murdered). I wonder why doesn't the media make a case to save them or why don't our leaders march to honor the innocent victims? Is it all about political leverage and viewership? Just thinking!

George Zimmer was born in New York City to a Jewish family. Zimmer attended primary school in Scarsdale, New York, before studying at Washington University in St. Louis where he was a member of the Phi Chapter of Sigma Alpha Mu, and where he received an A.B. in Economics in 1970. Upon graduation, he worked as a substitute teacher before joining his father in the clothing manufacturing business. Later in the early 1970s, he worked as a purchasing agent and salesman in Hong Kong.

Current Affairs



Remembering Dots and Dashes

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Thousands of people crowded telegraph offices around India to send the country's last telegrams, as the government shut down the 163-year old service on Sunday, July 14, 2013. The age of mobile phones and e-mail, technology eventually helped make the telegram obsolete. It was Gandhi's email and the British Raj's messenger between the subcontinent and England. At its peak, 60 million telegraphic messages per year were generated in India.

Developed in the 1830s by Samuel Morse the telegraph revolutionized long-distance communication. It worked by transmitting electrical signals over a wire laid between stations. In addition to helping invent the telegraph, Samuel Morse developed a code (bearing his name) that assigned a set of dots and dashes to each letter of the English alphabet and allowed for the simple transmission of complex messages across telegraph lines. In 1844, Morse sent his first telegraph message, from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, Maryland; by 1866, a telegraph line had been laid across the Atlantic Ocean from the U.S. to Europe.

I have sweet and sour memories of telegraphic messages known as telegrams. Most of the time, telegrams used to cause anxiety among the recipients. Usually, a postman carrying a telegram used to be a messenger of death. I have personally eye-witnessed at least 20 such incidents in India.

Indians used to send money through telegrams. This service was the most reliable

means of sending money anywhere on the subcontinent. During my trip to India in 1982, a friend of mine wanted to send a sizeable amount of money to his sister in a remote corner of India. On reaching my village, I went to the local post office. The post office building was a little hut of mud. A desolate looking man (a postal clerk who doubled as a postman), took money from me. He then made some dots and dashes on a rusty instrument which looked like a one-hole paper puncher and handed me my receipt. On returning to the States, my friend thanked me as his sister had received the money the next morning.

I remember, If someone had to be picked up at the railway station, the telegram used to reach our home on the same day. There were no emoticons or net lingo then, but we used to truncate words and sentences to save money. During an epidemic or riots the anxious loved ones would send message, "Send Welfare." The answer would be "OK." It was very common for bosses to receive telegrams from vacationing employees declaring, "mother serious" meaning he'd like to extend his vacation.

India was the last country in the world to use the telegram on such a large scale. It was the major part of a communication mode that carried messages during India's fight for independence and was a vital part of Indians' day-to-day life. I, for one, will sorely and surely miss it.

Point

Government Surveillance Is Necessary

By Bala Prasad

When the news leaked that the government might be listening in on every mode of communication, a number of people got bent out of shape. How could it be? In a democratic society, with elected officeholders, it certainly reeked of totalitarian government.

A basic duty of any government is to provide security for its people. If every phone must be tapped, every e-mail and text scanned and every communication recorded, so be it. To ensure our security, nothing should be left undone.

Debate about surveillance will continue, just as it does with guns, abortion, capital punishment and so on. However, government should be allowed to collect phone and internet use and whatever else, so long as there are safeguards in place. The government must store basic information about every citizen to detect possible terrorist activity and then ferret out more information as needed. In this pursuit for security, if it needs to monitor activities of any person, anywhere it should do so. However information that no longer serves a purpose should be expunged. Safeguards in these situations are needed.

Some will not be placated regardless of the amount of safeguards. They will question the need for secrecy. Secrecy is often necessary to protect national and individual security, but shouldn't be used to protect policymakers from political backlash.

Perhaps we might have been able to prevent 9-11. Edward Snowden's activities expose our national security to the world. No doubt there are secret activities all over the world that have successfully thwarted terrorism. These remain secret and should not enter the public arena.

Examples of absurdity include Mr. James Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, denying the existence of a surveillance program while testifying to the U.S. Senate. Mr. Clapper, a public servant, should be severely punished for lying to the Senate. At the other extreme is Sarah Palin commenting that we are becoming a totalitarian surveillance state. Mrs. Palin will have to wait until the public speaks for her dose of bitter medicine.

Naysayers love to quote Benjamin Franklin who supposedly said, "Those who surrender freedom for *security* will not have, nor do they deserve, either one." But Mr. Franklin did not live with remote controlled terrorist threats. With great respect to Mr. Franklin, if we did not need to change with time, we would not need all the amendments to the original constitution.

Counterpoint

Surveillance Undermines Our Freedom

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

I agree that the first duty of any government is to provide security to its citizens from both external and internal threats. Furthermore, I agree that surveillance of certain individuals, groups and institutions is required in order to protect U.S. citizens. However, any government must maintain a proper balance between security and liberty.

We are all aware of the damage to individual liberty done by the recent IRS actions of snooping on conservative groups. Another point of controversy is rampant data mining of all U.S. citizens' digital activities by the National Security Agency (NSA) without distinguishing between good citizens and bad citizens.

In a democracy, governments need to be transparent and trustworthy in their actions. Government's actions should occur within the confines of the intended function of the surveillance which should be directed towards the injurious and the malicious. No action of a representative government should harm, harass or invade the everyday liberties of its citizens. That's where the government has to be transparent. Unfortunately, the IRS, the Justice Department and Benghazi incidents have already reduced people's trust to a low ebb.

Worst of all, if we use or abuse the data mining of our everyday citizen's activities for political purposes, we may be inching in the direction of totalitarianism. We need transparency as to what the NSA does and doesn't do with the data it collects. The lack of transparency on the part of the NSA or IRS is making a lot of citizens fearful and skeptical of its representative government and that's not the way it should be. Americans need a fuller understanding of what the spy agencies are doing in their name. To quote astronaut Eugene Cernan, "we can go after the bad guys without hurting the good guys."



Treating Wounds

by Dr. Niru Prasad

The management of wounds constitutes a significant topic of Emergency Medicine and I will briefly discuss with you first the emergency management of life threatening problems, followed by wound assessment in general, and then I would emphasize the emergency treatment of human and mammalian bites.

Emergency Management of Life Threatening Problems

All patients coming to Emergency Room with open wounds should initially be assessed for evidence of life threatening injuries. Always remember A B C D where C stands for Circulation and Control of bleeding followed by D which is neurologic status of the patient. When facial and scalp injuries are present think about intracranial and cervical spine injuries.

Hemostasis

It is very important to apply direct pressure to the bleeding area and elevate the extremity above the heart level to diminish the capillary oozing. Hemostasis can also be achieved by using epinephrine-containing solutions and chemical hemostatic agents like gelfoam or surgicel. Direct hemostasis methods include ligation or electric cauterization to the cut vessel end. Chemical cauterization is done by using silver nitrate.

Location of Wound

Consider head and neck area – think about intracranial bleeding or cervical spine injury and act accordingly. Extremities – deep wounds in the extremities should always be carefully examined for neurologic deficit, tendon or bony injuries.

Wound Assessment

A detailed history is very important for assessing the extent of injury and appropriate management. History should include when, where and how the injury occurred. Types of injuries: puncture wounds, superficial or deep lacerations, crush injuries or heavily contaminated bites. Tetanus immunization status – the date of most recent booster shot, or whether immunized at all, should be determined. Allergies – always check with the patient regarding allergies to the medication, anesthetics, antibiotics or the irrigating solution. For those of you who are preparing for Board exam, remember the MNEMONIC:

A - Allergies

M - Medication - Menstrual history, Birth Control Pills

P - Present illness

L - Last meal

E - Events prior to injury

Prepare for Definitive Care

After initial assessment the wound should be covered with sterile dressing until definitive care is given. X-rays should be obtained if indicated. If there is a delay in definitive evaluation and management such as Plastic Surgery or Orthopedic evaluation, then the wound should be gently irrigated, and a sterile dressing should be placed. Always make the patient comfortable. For wounds inflicted by an animal or a human bite, aerobic and anaerobic cultures should be obtained. A few words about the local anesthetic for those of you preparing for the Board exam. People with allergies to Lidocaine, Mepivacaine (amide group) what anesthetic would you use? The answer is 2% Procaine which belongs to the Ester group of anesthetics. We always mix 1% Lidocaine with Sodium bicarbonate solution to reduce the local tissue irritation at the site of infiltration.

Cleaning and Debridement

There have been numerous articles written regarding wound soaking versus irrigation. References have been given in the bibliography. The most frequently used procedure at our Emergency Room is to irrigate the wound with 50 to 100cc of Saline solution or Betadine and Saline through a nineteen (19) gauze angiocatheter. There have been studies done that show prolonged soaking of the wound helps in deeper penetration of the local bacteria.

Hair Removal

Wounds in a hairy area are difficult to debride and suture since hair acts as foreign body, delays healing, and promotes infection. Hair should be properly shaved 1 to 2 mm above the skin level. Eyebrow hair should never be removed since removal destroys the clinical landmark

Continued on next page

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Wound Care

and makes accurate alignment of wound edges difficult. Eyebrow hair regrows slowly creating cosmetic problems for heavily contaminated wounds. Mechanical scrubbing is performed with highly porous sponge or brush. Soaps and detergent should not be used. Phisohex should not be used for wound cleansing as it is extremely irritating to the tissue and increase the potential for infection if used directly over the wound. Also prolong use of agents containing hexachlorophene in children is associated with severe toxicity including neurologic damage and death. Irrigation of wounds with antibiotic solutions is associated with decreased rate of wound infection.

Debridement

Retained debris and devitalized tissue should be properly removed before sutures are given.

Wound Closure

Primary wound closure is preferable because of faster healing, less scarring, improved hemostasis and better functional results. All foreign bodies should be removed to minimize the chances of infection.

Contraindications to Wound Closure

The following factors affect the risk of infection with wound closure and determine whether closure is justified.

1. Heavy Bacterial Colonization Deep heavily contaminated wounds like a lake wound, human or animal bite wound, a wound over 6 hours old, retained foreign bodies. Devitalized tissue are contraindications to wound closure. For a lake wound, if closure is absolutely necessary, single layer closure is indicated with loose sutures. Active wound infection at the time of the Emergency Room visit is a contraindication to wound closure. Contaminated wounds if properly debrided and cleaned will not get infected if left open. After 48 to 96 hours these wounds can be closed with essentially no loss in wound healing time. Delayed primary closure should be considered in cases of wounds contaminated by feces, pus, foreign bodies, saliva, etc. Crush and blast injury inflicted wounds should also be considered for delayed closure. The wound should be covered with fine mesh gauze and a dressing should be applied. The patient should be started on antibiotics before discharge and regular follow-up on an out-patient basis should be done.
2. Wound Tapes. Tape closure is useful in superficial, clean and tidy wounds especially in children and wounds in obese patients and those on steroid therapy.

3. Suture Selection. All sutures represent foreign bodies in the wound so the smallest size and the least amount of suture that will achieve adequate tissue opposition should be employed. Cutting needles are used for dermal and epidermal closure, round and tapered needles are used for closing Fascia muscles and subcutaneous tissue. Normally 5-0 or 6-0 nylon sutures are frequently used at Emergency Room for simple wound closing.

Post-Operative Wound Care and Dressings

Proper dressing of the wound serves as protection, immobilization, control of edema by compression, absorption, debridement, delivery of topical medication (antibiotics and cosmetic appearance). Non adherent dressings like Telfa and Petrolatum impregnated gauze are favored. Topical antibacterial ointments are used to minimize the risk of infection and prevents the bacterial colonization of the wound. Silvadene ointment is frequently used for abrasions, burns and crush injuries. Adverse reactions must be watched for because excess amounts of silver sulfadiazine may cause leucopenia – pigmentation of skin if used on the face. Bacitracin and Neosporin ointments are also frequently used locally over the wound.

Potential

Patients with sutured lacerations are instructed to follow wound precaution sheet and are advised to return in 5 to 7 days for suture removal – earlier if there is any sign of infection.

Management of Animal and Human Bites

The basic management of these patients are the same as mentioned before. Emphasis is put on antimicrobial therapy since they are effective in preventing wound infection when the wound has fewer than 10⁶ organisms per gram of tissue before treatment is started. Studies have been done in past that wounds with more than 10⁶ organisms per gram of tissue become infected despite antibiotic prophylaxis and should be kept open. Sharp lacerations are resistant to infection and will not need chemoprophylaxis, however open wounds do tend to get infected.

For human bites seen within 1 to 2 days, antibiotics of choice are Penicillin or Erythromycin. The proper dose can be calculated according to body weight. Human bites older than 2 days - Dicloxacilline. For cat bites Penicillin or Tetracycline. For mammalian bites it is very important to clean, debride and irrigate the wounds. All bite wounds on extremities should be treated with antibiotics, elevation and temporary immobilization of affected parts.

Dog Bites

Dog bites can cause open wounds with extensive tissue

Continued on next page

Continued from Previous Page

Wound Care

recrosis. Treatment again includes thorough wound irrigation, debridement left open or loosely sutured. The antibiotics of choice are 1st generation Cephalosporin, or Dicloxacilline. Sometimes at the Emergency Room, parenteral dose of Cefazoline 8 - 17 mg/kg is given intravenously or intramuscularly. Antibiotics should be given for 7 to 10 days. All dog bites should be reported to Health Department. The dogs should be watched for rabies and tetanus prophylaxis should be given after checking with the child's immunization status.

Cat Bites

Cat bites usually cause deep puncture wounds with little crush injury and are associated with high risk of infection with Pasteurella Multicoda which is an organism carried in cat's saliva. In rare cases cat scratch fever develops in affected individuals characterized by suppurative lymph adenitis and signs of sepsis. Cat scratch fever is supposedly a viral disease, however adequate antibiotics are used to control infection. Oral Penicillin 250 to 500 m/m QID for 7 days or Tetracycline as an alternative are still the antibiotics of choice. First generation Cephalosporin may also be used.

Human Bites

Adult human bites are more serious since they can cause crush or tear injuries on affected areas. Those on dorsum of the hand may cause tendon injuries. These wounds can be extremely necrotizing because of anaerobic and aerobic flora of the mouth. Treatment again includes massive wound irrigation and heavy doses of antibiotics with either Penicillin, 1st generation Cephalosporin or Clindamycin. Tetanus Prophylaxis should be obtained.

Management of Puncture and Lake Wounds

Puncture wounds are at high risk of becoming infected especially if dirty, contaminated or containing foreign bodies. Wounds associated with penetration through soles of sneakers contain debris particles and get infected. Superinfection with Pseudomonas is a likely possibility. Treatment again includes thorough wound cleansing, irrigation, X-rays to rule out foreign bodies and adequate antibiotics therapy which includes Dicloxacilline time 25 mg/kg or Erythromycin 30 - 50 mg/kg.

In summary

I have briefly discussed with you the management of wounds and mammalian bites at the Emergency Room. I have included the current guidelines regarding Tetanus and Rabies Prophylaxis and antibiotic selection as suggested in recent Antibiotics Therapy, 1991, by Sander. For those of you interested in reading in detail all about mammalian bites I have enclosed a list of important articles in the bibliography.

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The Late Great Detroit, Michigan

In the 2010 United States Census, the city had 713,777 residents, ranking it the 18th-largest in the United States.

At its peak population of 1,849,568, in the 1950 Census, the city was the 4th-largest in the United States. Of the large shrinking cities of the United States, Detroit has had the most dramatic decline in population of the past 60 years (down 1,135,971) and the second largest percentage decline (down 61.4%, second only to St. Louis, Missouri's 62.7%). While the decline in Detroit's population has been ongoing since 1950, the most dramatic period was the significant 25% decline between the 2000 and 2010 Census.

The population collapse has resulted in large numbers of abandoned homes and commercial buildings, and areas of the city hit hard by urban decay.

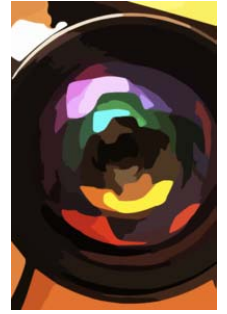
Detroit's 713,777 residents represent 269,445 households, and 162,924 families residing in the city. The population density was 5,144.3 people per square mile (1,895/km²). There were 349,170 housing units at an average density of 2,516.5 units per square mile (971.6/km²).

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American Scene

The Puzzle of Free Will



By David Beagan

When I was in college we had a philosophy discussion group that would meet every so often to discuss a topic. A professor or two would show up to help moderate the discussions on whatever was the topic of the meeting. During the discussion on free will I posed the question, “could it be that we just feel like we have free will, but we really do not?” I was pleased that the professor seemed to think my question was insightful. Had I not been so timid, perhaps I would have presented my comment as a statement rather than a question.

As I have pondered this question over the years, I have never really escaped the idea that we don’t have free will. Sam Harris, philosopher and neuroscientist, came out with a book last year, titled *Free Will*, which says as much. Our common notion of free will, that at various times we make choices that could turn out one way or the other, is not compatible with a universe of laws and rules.

But I must admit, when I am not actually pondering the question, I think and act as if I do, and as if everyone else does. This puts me in the curious position of acting as if something is true that I don’t really believe. When I watch a movie, it feels like the actors are making choices, key decisions are leading to potentially different outcomes. But we know that on the film, the actual outcome is laid out, frame by frame on the celluloid (or video tape or hard disk). So maybe my vantage point as an observer in my own heads no less exciting and meaningful, but hidden behind it in the reality of physics is where the true control lies. To keep things in order – let us all go on without the burden of imagining we are all robots – philosophers have taken to allowing for a more limited version of free will. A free will that is something that allows us to do what we want to do. In other words, if we can do as we please (what pleases us) then we have free will.

Given that we have free will of some kind or other, how good are we at looking into the future and making wise decisions? Driving on the roadways, I am frequently surprised see other drivers getting caught behind a stalled car or road block in a particular lane even when the obstacle was visible for quite some time. Is it preoccupation with a cell phone call or just general failure to look ahead?

More seriously, the city of Detroit has entered bankruptcy. One of its big creditors are retired employees will be left with a lot less. This situation developed over many decades, and while some remedial actions were taken, on the whole the situation gradually worsened. Maybe there is almost no capacity to exercise free will when leadership needs to take action against slow moving and powerful forces whose consequences seem far away.

Many young people today will opt not to buy health insurance, to the detriment of our emerging collective health care system, because they are essentially healthy. But anyone could get into an accident or contract an unlikely disease at any age. It is precisely this area, where risk is concerned, that people’s decision making process breaks down. We often exaggerate the significance of an unlikely threat while not taking proper precautions against other things. Someone may fear dying in a plane crash while thinking nothing of driving to the airport. Fortunately, many of us do buy home, auto, and life insurance, acting against our own immediate self interest.

I keep thinking that perhaps here lies the path to proving the existence to a free will. When we can act in our own future self interest by making a sacrifice now, seems like the best chance to demonstrate that we are acting of our own free will. Alas, I can’t quite see my way clear to overcoming the philosopher’s arguments against it.

Green for Go

[Kalpana Iyer Mohanty](#)

("The article first appeared in India Currents (www.indiacurrents.com)")

After reading the timeless 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald in the ninth grade, and waiting through the tantalizing advertisements and trailers, I saw the movie *The Great Gatsby* on opening night in Delhi last weekend. The theatre was full. The audience was largely well-educated, well-traveled, well-heeled expats and Indians, who knew of the book, the author, and the message.

This quintessential American story of excess, idealism and the American Dream, has now been globally released for a new and varied audience to analyze from their own perspective.

The plot has Nick Carraway (Toby Maguire) coming to New York in the spring of 1922 to take up residence next door to Jay Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio), a partying playboy millionaire, and close to his cousin, Daisy (Carey Mulligan), and her aristocratic philandering husband, Tom Buchanan (Joel Edgerton). Carraway is witness to the excesses and the lack of morals of the jet-setting upper crust.

How might the average Indian audience interpret the movie? Some may view it as just another opulent Bollywood movie: beautiful, rich, well-dressed people, palatial homes, and good music. What's not to love? The only thing missing is a group dance sequence. Some things may not be understandable—like Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan not playing the lead role and the movie having a sad ending. Surely with his money and good looks, Gatsby's mama could have found him a nice wife from a good family. On the other hand, some other things may be so understandable as to be unremarkable: such as the vast economic inequality and steep social class hierarchy; such as Tom's racist comments and poor treatment of his servants; such as the gender inequality expressed in Daisy's statement when her baby girl is born—"That the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool." This can be as easily said of contemporary India as 20s America.

For others, it may support what they've long believed to be true: the United States is a land of excess and depravity, with no spirituality and no family values to ground their youth. As Fitzgerald says of Tom and Daisy, "They had spent a year in France for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together."

Some people, particularly some Americans, could interpret the movie to mean that the American Dream did not really exist then and doesn't exist now. With growing inequality within the

country, the continuing economic slump, and a rival for superpower status, the good life seems to be over. But Fitzgerald is not depicting the American Dream. He is revealing an American Nightmare—rudderless materialism without roots, ethics or philosophies.

But while some no longer believe in the American Dream, many still do—or at least want to.

The American Dream is much more than just material wealth. It supports the concept of freedom in a land where traditions don't hang heavy around your neck. It promises a vast number, breadth and depth of opportunities. It speaks to equality, self-reliance, and accepting failure as one step along the route to success. If you try hard enough, you can forge your own destiny and succeed—unless, like Jay Gatsby, you get lost along the way.

The Dream maybe of American origin, but it also applies to other parts of the New World—like Canada and Australia—that may be less quick to name or claim the concept. And it's not that discrimination and inequality don't exist in these nations, but they aren't an integral and accepted part of the system.

Some renditions of the American Dream are not perfect and some, taken to an extreme like Fitzgerald's, can lead to tragic endings—but that doesn't make the dream irrelevant or passé. Fact or fiction, the American Dream is based on hope, and Gatsby is one of the most hopeful characters found in any story. When his friend Nick Carraway tells him that he can't repeat the past, Gatsby denies it vehemently: "Can't repeat the past?" Gatsby cries out. "Why of course you can!" All mistakes are recoverable and happiness lies just around the corner. No matter the reality, hope continues to exist.

After I graduate from high school I, and many of my friends, would like to savor this American Dream during our university years. It's not for the material things, which are now available in many countries and often in greater abundance. Rather, it is to experience life in a place that strives for equality, promotes independence, and encourages new thinking—that allows us the freedom to be who we want to be and the opportunities to be the best that we can be. Moreover, it's the chance to have teachers and classmates who also believe in what we believe. For many of us, we look towards the green light and it says "Go."

Observations



Dishonoring the Treasonous

Snowden and Other Famous Treasonous Acts

While Edward Snowden has been vacationing at a Moscow airport for weeks now, the condemnations are raining down upon him. Mr. Snowden leaked the National Security Agency's (NSA) secrets to the enemy countries overriding the judgment of the elected representatives of the American people. The 29-year old Snowden will certainly go down in history for his act of treason.

Unfortunate as it may be, these traitors become characters of folklore over a period of time. Here are four others that we have chosen for induction to Hall of Shame.

Junius Brutus

“Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar!” – Shakespeare's depiction of Caesar

While this line is probably fictional, it expresses Caesar's emotion at the time extremely well. According to Plutarch, when Caesar saw Brutus among the assassins, he covered his head with his toga and resigned himself to his fate. Legend says that the strong feelings Caesar felt for Brutus were due to Caesar being Brutus' father, which would greatly amplify the heinousness of the crime. While this is disputed, it is definite that the two had a very close relationship. He joins Judas and his co-conspirator Cassius in being held in Satan's three mouths in Dante's Inferno.

Mir Jafar

Mir Jafar was an ambitious leader under the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-Ud-Dalah. In 1757, Robert Clive of the British East India Company made a deal with Mir Jafar, et al. They agreed to hand over the Bengali army at the Battle of Plassey in exchange for control of the new puppet state. This new puppet state, with Mir Jafar as its Nawab, paid large bribes to the Company and its officials. “Mir Jafar of Bengal and Mir Sadiq of Deccan are disgrace to the faith, disgrace to humanity, disgrace to the nation.” – Allama Iqbal

Mir Jafar was the last ruler of Bengal to have any autonomy; after his death, the British controlled the

region until Pakistani independence, almost two hundred years later. Consequently, Mir Jafar and his treason against Bengal are seen as the beginning of British rule in India.

Benedict Arnold

At the beginning of the American Revolution, Arnold was a successful American commander: he helped capture Fort Ticonderoga and was a significant part of winning the Battle of Saratoga, widely considered to be the turning point of the war. However, Arnold was given credit for neither success, and was brought down and humiliated by his adversaries. Feeling scorned by the United States, he made a nefarious offer to the British: he would sell them West Point, a possible key to winning the war. The plot was exposed when a British spy, Major John Andre, was captured. Arnold fled and joined the British army, leading raids against the Americans.

Guy Fawkes

As a young Englishman, Guy Fawkes converted to Catholicism, a faith he exercised devoutly. He left England for the Low Countries, where he fought for the Spanish Catholics against the Protestant Dutch in the Eighty Years' War. He later returned and met Thomas Wintour and Robert Catesby, who were planning to assassinate the Protestant King James I and his government by blowing up the Parliament building; this would later become known as the Gunpowder Plot. Prompted by an anonymous letter, authorities searched the space underneath the House of Lords and found Fawkes guarding 36 barrels of gunpowder. He was sentenced to death by hanging, drawing and quartering, but leaped from the scaffolding, committing suicide to avoid the misery.

Source: <http://listverse.com/2012/06/19/10-notable-traitors-in-history/>

Mental Exercise

By David Beagan



Drinking Problem

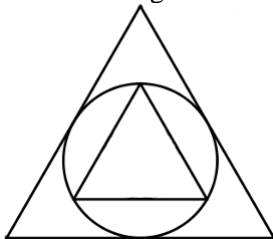
Start with a 16-ounce bottle of wine. To make it last longer, follow this plan: first day, drink 1 ounce of wine and refill the bottle with water. Second day, drink 2 ounces from the bottle and refill with water. Third day, drink 3 ounces of the mixture and again refill with water. Continue until the bottle is empty, how many ounces of water have been drunk?

Cacophonous Car

There is something that goes with an automobile. It comes with an automobile, but is of no use to it. The automobile can't move without it. What can this be?

Triangle Try

In the following diagram a circle is inscribed inside an equilateral triangle, which in turn, has another equilateral triangle inscribed in it. How many times bigger is the big triangle than the smaller triangle.



Speeding Mystery

Let's say that you and a friend drive from the same place in New York to the same destination Washington D.C. You each drive in separate cars and depart at the same time, you get ahead of your friend right from the start while always driving the speed limit throughout the trip. Nonetheless your friend gets ticketed for speeding. How?

Number boxes

Fill in each box with a number from one through eight so that no consecutive numbers are in squares next to one another. Squares that are diagonally adjacent are next to one another.



Save the Whales

Without this, whales would starve. It has nine letters in its name. Take away six letters and you are left with one. What is it?

Make Ten

Look at these four marks:



Can you add five more marks to make ten?

Answers

Drinking Problem

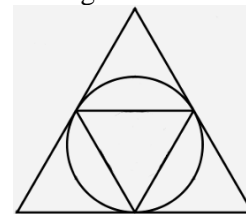
Since the exercise ends with an empty bottle, calculate all water added to the bottle. 1 ounce on day 1, 2 ounces on day 2, . . . , 15 ounces on day 15 (which gets drunk on day 16, emptying the bottle). $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 11 + 12 + 13 + 14 + 15 = 120$ ounces of water.

Cacophonous Car

Noise.

Triangle Try

The smaller triangle can be rotated so that it is clear that the larger is divided into four equal triangles. The big triangle is four times larger than the small one.



Speeding Mystery

Your friend creates a wide gap between you by slowing down, then breaks the speed limit in catching up to you.

Number boxes



Save the Whales

It is whalebone. Take away the six letters: w, h, a, l, e, and b and you are left with "one".

Make Ten

The five marks are added like this:



Publisher's Desk



The Good Life

By Bala Prasad

Having more and more free time at my disposal, I find myself quite often at different local, national, and international libraries. It exposes me to a wide range of knowledge. It also allows me to delve into areas I would like to know more about. Recently, I ran across many writings and books about aging. It held a special interest for me as I am up there on that ladder. Old age is bad news and I would prefer to remain young. But, there are some offsetting advantages. When little time is left it concentrates our mind and gives a sharper sense of what is important and what is the good life.

Our sense of what is the good life is of course varied and different. Whatever they may be, what are the building blocks that bring us to that threshold, and which early traits predict them best. With no definition of what constitutes a good life, it will be difficult to have an unambiguous conclusion, except for a few major ones. The happy outcome depends crucially on having the means to live comfortably. A good old age also depends on staying reasonably healthy. Being well-educated is best possible way to ensure better health and affluence. If these requirements were met, people, both men and women, grow more content with age. This seems to be because they live in the present, not in the future. They don't have to work or work harder than they want to. The tension of competing at work was relaxed, children by now have been married and become self-supporting. It is a relief not to think of reaching their higher goals and have no reason to worry about professional advancement. Instead they found serenity and pleasure in cultivating their garden, carpentry, travelling, or

whatever else they want. Even the marriages are happier in their older age. At the time of marriage or in earlier years men and women had sharply divided roles. As they age women tend to get psychologically more independent. Women are too aware of age creeping upon them, starting with the first gray hair and first wrinkle. They become well-accustomed to these facts and others by the time they are in their 50's. Old age sneaks up on men and takes them by surprise, and becomes quite disturbing. Having been a master of the household is no protection against what happens to them. Or it might just have been they found the right partner or having rubbed against each other for so long the barnacles has worn off. Either way, when they retire and spend more time home together men become more and more dependent on their wives.

I am neither active professionally nor concerned about my professional presence. And in general I have a gracious life in my old age. My microcosm is in quite good shape. Everybody counts on modern technology to lead us to greener pasture but this belief might turn out to be the greatest illusion of them all.

So education is the most important building block still within our control. Affluence will follow and so will good health, and many more happy years.

Sincerely,

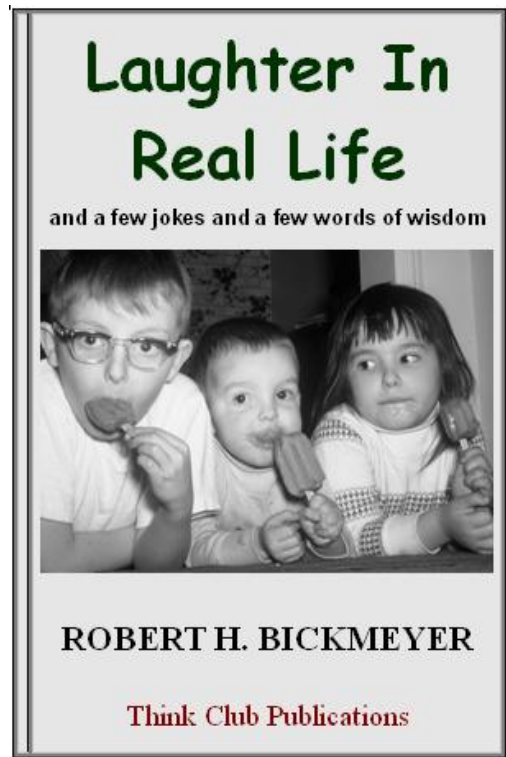
Bala Prasad

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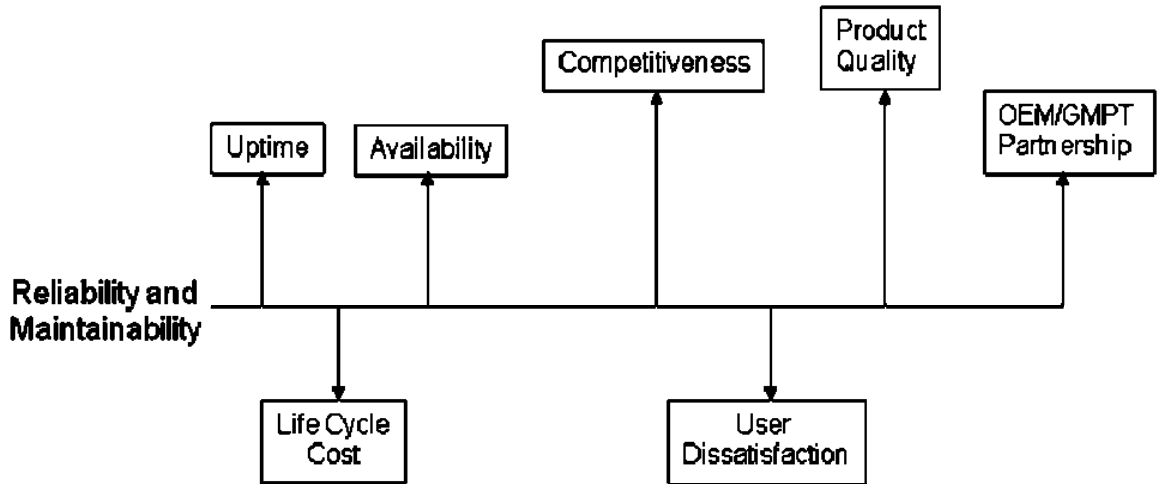
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