

Practical Advice Collection

Practical Advice Collection

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First Things

For More Information

For more books and information, visit me on the web at <http://benjamin-newton.com/>

Feel free to send me e-mail regarding the books and website at <mailto:ben@benjamin-newton.com> I even enjoy constructive criticism

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Introduction

Practical Advice Collection is a collection of material from the Main Series, as are the most the other Reference and Topical series, related to practical psychological and spiritual issues and the

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2nd half is focused on Schizophrenia. The final section is poetry, based on all 3 issues. One of the big themes, of the book, is that a balance of responsibility, rest, and allowing God to work in our lives brings happiness. The other main theme of this book is how my personality, and my experience in the military, and as a person with Schizophrenia can give direction, to other confronted, with similar situations. It is considered unusual, in these times, to consider psychological and spiritual issues, to be practical, but if the end result desired is to be happy, these are the best places to start. After all, we live our lives as dreams, in our minds, and our minds exist, within the dreams, that are dreamt of, in the mind of God.

Ethical Vision

Why Avoid Objectivity?

Fear of Controversy

It is a sad situation today where so few writers of non-fiction know so little about their subjects that they find a need to hide behind facts and statistics. Writers are afraid of having people not like them, because their readers disagree with their conclusions. Most people think that religion and politics are controversial, but in any discipline in even the most narrow and academic subjects are constantly torn part by bitter and nasty debates and whose participants are in a constant struggle to get followers to their approach. It is sad that where there used to be a belief that the free exchange of ideas was of utmost importance, there now seems like there are only certain opinions that people are allowed to have, if they want to be considered as serious or an educated person.

Believe in Yourself

My approach is that I want people to come up with their own ideas and I actually don't want any followers. But I still have very definite opinions on almost everything and I will argue in favor of what I believe. It is great that others disagree strongly as I enjoy real diversity caused by real differentiators like: income, regional history, belief system, political beliefs, family influence, sub culture, hobbies, career, talents, life experiences, and the like. Lets learn to disagree even on important issues and have some faith in what we believe in enough to know that it will prevail. The only thing that I hope to agree upon with my readers is the avoidance of the mainstream beliefs and of the supernatural.

Definitions

Defining Terms

One of the most important aspect of debate is at the very beginning, where you define your terms. Many arguments are in opposition to each other mainly because of a difference, in what the key words involved mean. Philosophy is largely about defining words and philosophical schools are often branched out, according to the philosopher's understanding, of key terms. When you are not clear on how someone is using words and what they mean by them, you cannot fully understand their message.

Denotation

Denotation is the dictionary definition of a word. Although words evolve over time, according to

how they are used or misused, the denotation is a more precise and direct understanding of the word in question. Denotation is the official definition, although there can be more than one and the wording used differs by dictionary.

Connotation

Connotation is based on what a word is thought to imply, rather than what its official definition is. The word Christian communicates a wide range of different stereotypes, that have nothing to do with what the word Christian means. Many other loaded words can divide people, not based on the standard meaning of words, but rather on what prejudices people assume to be true, based on public education, government and powerful lobbies propaganda, peer pressure, group think, and political correctness.

My Use of Connotation and Denotation

When I use many of the words I frequently refer to, I often am writing about how I perceive the connotation and how it corrupts people's understanding, of the reality of the situation. I also use certain words, for their connotation, rather than their denotation. I believe that the word Christian is used very stereotypically and challenged by poorly formed arguments. These arguments are based mostly on inaccurate assumptions, personal experience that are not typical, and on looking for arguments against Christians, instead of trying to find the truth. In other words, because many of those arguing against Christianity do not stick to facts and are not consistent or rational in their arguments, I feel fine with treating Atheism and Science the same way. But I will not claim to be objective, like those, who often attack Christianity, claim.

Radical Equality

The Principle

The big principle that unites most my ethical beliefs is a principle I call "radical equality". My sense of fairness is not based on getting my own way, but, rather on every body being completely equal in every way. People, animals, and the entire ecosystem should be treated with equal weight and should all be empowered to enjoy the same rights and responsibilities. All rules should apply in every situation and should be based on general principles, instead of detail oriented laws that were designed, for rich people to not have to follow them, but are targeted for poor people instead.

Same Application in Every Situation

I believe that animals should have the same rights as people, that employees and employers both have an obligation to each other, that immigration law should be the same for every country, that women should be treated exactly the same as men, that if it is wrong to kill or hurt a person the

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same applies to an unborn baby as applies to an animal as applies to the environment as applies to any one else.

I believe that social services are as important, as law enforcement and national security; that businesses and individuals should pay the same taxes and have the same responsibilities; that father and mothers should have an equal access to their children, when they get divorced; that the environment is as important as the economy; that everyone should get the same financial aid for college; that everyone should have an equal choice as to what education they get; and people should always follow laws, no matter how unimportant they are, how hard it is to get caught, how little the punishment is, or inconvenient they are.

I believe that laws should be more severe, based on how many people are hurt and that economic crimes will get the same penalties as “violent” or physical crimes; that our polices toward other countries should be rated on how they treat their people and not on how much money corporations can make off of their resources; that we should give equal consideration in transportation funding, per person, based on how much energy they consume, in their method of transport; that any organization that has employees and receives money should be taxed equally, no matter what the organization is: a small business, a non-profit, or a large corporation.

Consistency Plus Holistic Worldview

In my writings, I have combined the ideas of radical equality, or extreme consistency, with a holistic worldview. I apply the same values or ethical standards to both: religion and politics, to my use of money and my treatment of others, and to my philosophical reasoning and my writing style. I don't see the environment and the economy, labor rights and animal rights, or my personal morality and my expectations of others as separate things. My religion affects everything in my life including: my beliefs, how I spend my money, how I relate with others, what I choose to write about, and what I expect out of others. My key value is radical equality.

Reality and Ethical Ideals

I realize that I don't have the ability to change the course of government or the culture and even if I do eventually have an influence, it might be centuries away if at all. But just like we still try to follow the ideals in the US Constitution and our religious writings, even in the face of corruption and greed, so we need ethical/moral standards to strive for. Just like in Christianity we get forgiven for everything we turn from and feel bad about, we still need to do our best to reform our ways, to have deeds that provide proof for our faith. We should continue to do as much as we can and not give up just because change is hard or that we can't get others to fully change their ways.

Redundancy

Plan on Being Short

It seems like most people like to put everything to the last minute and the last dollar. Not having extra money and extra time to do something or buy something is asking for trouble. It almost always takes people 4 times as long to finish something than they thought. There is always something unexpected, that you need to allow extra money for. Car repairs can cost thousands very easily and medical bills can easily be in the tens of thousands.

Be Self Reliant

Never rely on anyone else, to do something, or to be on time for anything. Always have backups of your backups, for your important computer files, as backups and the originals can easily fail. Everything fails and you will fail yourself.

Murphy's Law

Redundancy is needed in every walk of life and in every aspect of your life. The one thing I believe in with my whole heart other than the Bible is Murphy's Law. Everything that can go wrong will. Just plan on everything, that could, by any possibility, not work, always assume it will not work and plan ahead accordingly.

Have More Than You Need

Of course you cannot plan out everything and not everything is so important. But anything you value must have an alternate plan. Plan for not having power, running water, or sewer, for at least 72 hours, in the worst time possible. Always be prepared for the weather to change. Carry extra money in cash, to get yourself home, no matter where you are. Do not depend on battery power or credit cards. Always have at least several months of salary saved. Make sure you can get to the money, even if your home is destroyed.

Risky Investments

Don't invest any money, you cannot lose, in anything less reliable than US government bonds or in the bank, earning interest. Never put any money in the stock market that you cannot afford to lose. Most investments are risky to the point of being educated gambling and like gambling in Los Vegas, you can lose everything you have. Do not depend on anything you do not have in cash. Real estate has lost considerable value periodically. Never buy on credit, if you do not have the money, on hand, in the bank, already.

Natural or Man Made Disasters

Plan on your house being destroyed by: flood, earthquake, volcano, or civil unrest. Live in a safe neighborhood and in a city, that is not big enough, to be targeted by terrorists. Have alternate locations, where you can travel to, on foot, where you can live, in the case of natural or man made disasters. Store valuable information, in other locations, than just your house. Keep a list of important phone numbers and addresses.

What to Have on Hand

Always keep water on hand, in enough quantity, to last for, at least 72 hours. Have a sanitary way to dispose of your human waste, without modern plumbing and sewage, on hand, in your house. Keep some sort of self defense on you, most importantly, to keep dogs off you. The best way to deal with animals is pepper spray or even better, do not be in their way. Never feed a wild animal, block its exit, or bother its children.

What the Government Will Do

Do not expect the government to help you out, when you are in a bad situation. Even during natural disasters, the government is there to contain you, rather than help you. If a disaster happens that affects your town, expect people to come to the door, asking for your valuables, with no badges or uniforms, who have firearms, loaded and ready to shoot.

More than Necessary

When you learn multiplication and division, you are getting good at addition and subtraction; when you learn algebra, you get good at multiplication and division; when you learn calculus, you get good at algebra. In the military, you always train to a higher standard than what is necessary in your job. If you need to run a 5km, learn to run a 10km. If your boss tells you to arrive at 9, get there by no later than 8:30.

Above and Beyond

The only way to be on time is to arrive early. The only way to pass a test is to practice beyond what you are tested on. Always do more than necessary. Always go above and beyond and you will always accomplish what you set out to do.

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Spiritual Vision

No Perfect Solution

You Pay for What You Get

There is no perfect solution to any problems. Everything has its upsides and its downsides. You can't have your cake and eat it too. There are no silver bullets. To get something worthwhile you have to pay for it and not buy something else with the same money. If you don't want to save for something before you buy it, then you will be in debt and you will pay many times the amount you would have before, long after what you have used up what you bought. There is no way around it.

You Can't Get Everything You Want

In computers it is often said that you only get 2 of the following 3: cheap price, easy set up, and works. In software you can have any 2 of the following 3: efficiency, cross-platform, and easy to create.

Roots of Problems with Economy

The problems we have with the economy that have faced almost every government throughout history is that either the government, the leader, and/or the people want to get something without having to save for it and then they want to either get out of paying for it, delay paying for it, and then they try to avoid the inherent risk of doing this. The easy way to solve the problem with credit is to not use credit and instead of taking on a huge risk by borrowing money for a given venture, you save up your money before hand to buy whatever you want to.

People Want Everything without Working For it

This is the way with every issue including politics: people don't want to have to pay taxes, but they want all kinds of government services. Businesses and non-profits want to use someone else's money to borrow, but then they don't want any outside group that they borrow the money from to exert any influence. People want to win a war fast and cheaply, but they don't want to have to volunteer to fight in it, make sacrifices to support those who have volunteered, and they don't want the ones they are fighting to not like them or their country. Businesses want to be able to use up limited resources and leave their waste without cleaning it up and not have to pay the cost of this permanent damage.

Things Don't Just Happen

Just understand now that no one can give you anything for free, even if they want to. You must fight for everything you have got. You won't win the lottery, but you probably will get cancer. You may work hard, but you probably won't become famous, wealthy, or powerful. You will probably not make any more money than your parents did. You will not find the perfect job, wife, or have perfect children. Things do not just fall in your lap for free. Bad things will happen to you but good things will only come to the few, the lucky, those who know the right people, and will fade away fast.

The Real Solution

To be free of this, accept reality and focus on helping others and secure your place for eternity. The only thing you know for sure will happen is where you will go after you die. You will have to give up everything for it, but it will not be enough, so God will give it to you for free, as He has already paid the price. You can either have a brief time with lots of money or everlasting life. Choose now. You cannot have both. Either way it is not free.

How to Help Our World

Most Problems are Spiritual in Nature

Most of the major problems our country is facing now, including our debt crisis, environmental crisis, energy consumption crisis, and the increasing power of terrorists are all spiritual in nature. The judgements in Revelations are all caused by environmental disasters, the esistance to the West in the Muslim world has been very effective in blocking the growth of Christianity, and the reason for most wars (including the present ones in the Middle East) for the last several hundred years at least are planned by those who spiritually control the world behind the scenes. So to deal with these problems politically is not effective, because they are spiritual in nature.

God's Rules

We have no power directly over the spiritual world, but God places certain rules on what things are allowed by whom in the spiritual world. God wants people to be in control of their own destiny, so He allows us to take part in His plans, by praying for His will to be done. This takes away the limitations God places on Himself and increases His influence throughout the world. Why God has chosen to work this way may not make sense to most people, but I know it does work this way.

God is in Control

We do not need to fear the problems in the world today, because God places special protection on His people. It is true that the spiritual forces that hate God, what He stands for, and His people

have plenty of power to destroy us, and the reason why we have not been defeated from the beginning is because God is in the world with His Spirit and doesn't allow those behind the scenes to directly hurt His people. The forces against God have the most power when they are doing things in secret and they can get people to stop praying and reading the Bible.

What We Can Do

We are in control of our future very directly. We can take up the cause and choose to be a part of God's plan for the future, or we can do it our own way, but either way God will ultimately win and we will serve one master or another. The best that we can do to help improve our world is to: pray for God's will to be done, have the right attitude before God, read the Bible, and show God's love in the way we treat others in everything we do.

Solutions for Our Addictions

Our Problems are All Addictions

All our problems in America come down to addictions. Our addictions to drugs and alcohol, addictions to fighting the appearance of age, addictions to games and sports, addictions to information and the Internet, addictions to sex and fetishes, addictions to work and networking, addictions to money and investments, addictions to coffee and sugar, addictions to food and weight loss, and all the other ways in which we distract ourselves are caused by our fear of the increasing signs of global catastrophe. The number one reason why our youth pursue distractions is because they seriously believe they will not live past the age of 30.

Real Solution is Prayer

The real solution to our addictions is to solve our environmental, economic, cultural, and religious divisions, that are increasing in their violent confrontations, because we are at the limits of the oil, water, and soil that we need to survive. There are only 2 solutions: stop our addictions to our distractions in the West or a massive die off of the poorest part of the population in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We already know which solution those in power would prefer. The only way to avoid this solution is to pray.

Rebellion Against God is the Cause

We know that all our problems are rooted in our rebellion against the Christian God and His laws. The way to break the cycle is to submit ourselves to God and pray that His will be done. There is no other way to affect change on a global scale. Only God's intervention will save us and will only come when we are truly sorry for our addictions and stop participating in them. That is the power of consumerism of American corporate culture: that we are addicted to it.

The Weak are Hurt Most

The consequences for our addictions is that the poor, the weak, and the sick are going to be trampled upon by our masters – the corporations. When we sin, we hurt pollute the natural world, the animals and our soil and water. There only defense is God’s divine intervention. It is the only way to destroy the disease of sin, where it breeds. Our only liberation is through our choice to pray that the will of God happens, in our lives, as it does in Heaven.

Our Heads and in our Hearts

If we try our way out by science and technology, we will face the same problem within 50 years. The only way we will last to the next century is for us to turn to God. The underlying problem is not a war in the Heavens or on Earth, but the war in our hearts. We need to defeat our carnal self and empower our spiritual self, and that is the key to our survival on earth. We can only do this, by first submitting to God, in all areas of our lives.

Why So Negative?

Reasons

Sometimes my writing may appear negative, but there are good reasons for that. For one, writings is therapeutic for me and helps me accept the things that I cannot control in my life that causes my problems. Second, it is very hard to write something positive and uplifting or humorous. A third reason is that we live in very serious times.

Things are Going Well

What I want my readers to know is that most the most important things in my life are going very well and have been improving greatly each year for the last 10 years. I have learned a lot about myself, my illness, and what caused the major problems in the world today. My mental health has improved greatly as well as my independence. I have a great family and have enjoyed spending my time with them and sometimes I have been able to help them with some things. I have read about computers every day over the last 7 years and have increased my ability to fix or avoid problems as well as my ability to create better graphics and publish books. I have continued to do better financially each year and I have more money saved and my income is very secure.

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Thinking Long Term

My Perspective

Although I believe that it is impossible for anyone to be objective but God, I can assure you that I have no financial interests in anything I write on, because I am a disabled veteran and make all my money because of my disability, regardless of what I do or do not do, and I cannot receive extra money from any other source and keep my pension. This website has never made me any money nor ever will (although it has cost me a lot) and all my books are sold at cost.

When you read my books, you will realize that I am not interested in pushing any particular ideology, except for people to think for themselves and think more broadly. I believe and practice everything I say and my main aim is to improve the quality of life of people and animals. I also do not write anything unless I already have done a great deal more research than most people would before writing about any particular topic.

Another unique element of my perspective is that I see the world as bigger than myself. If some change in the world would make other people's lives better at the expense of or with no direct effect to me, I would welcome it.

Take for example software and computers. Although I don't play games on computers, I still see the value in it, because games accelerate the investment in the graphical processing power of computer chips, which will in turn allow me to improve the quality of my graphics. Even though I don't have an iPod, people buying iPods makes my computer experience and what I can create with it better, because Apple can invest more in computers. The success of mobile computing, although I am not very interested in that in itself, is good because it gets more standards compliant browsers out there, that allow web sites to be designed easier and with more features.

I also see things from a longer period of time than most people. Governments think the farthest ahead and that is only a generation at the most. I am planning hundreds of years ahead of time. I don't form my perspective on what exists currently, but on what could be very important long into the future. That is why I think trends in society that last for many years are very important to consider (because they will shape the kind of society we will have in the future).

I also have decided to focus on things that I am good at and a things that won't be done by other people. I realize that the world needs many more engineers than philosophers. I could make a great contribution to the world designing software, but if I didn't some one else would. If I don't try to prepare people for the future, no one else will. I can afford to pay for someone to clean my house, cook my food, and write the software I use, but I couldn't afford to pay someone to do my work, or even the most basic parts, to my standards with the amount of money I have.

My Vision of the Future

I see our future as a challenge and an opportunity. To think that we will just give up, because life

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becomes very different or more difficult is a response that doesn't comprehend the extent of human creativity and ignores the reality of a benevolent Creator, who has proven His desire to help transform us and the society we live in.

People have lived throughout most of history at a level of basic subsistence and we have only had fossil fuels, electricity, and modern plumbing for a very short period of this history. While the small group of people that controls most that goes on in the world has made some decisions that were not made within the context of potential long term technological, political, economic and social evolution and adaptation, we are not going to be totally annihilated.

Now is the time to rethink what is important in life and what our priorities should be. Before we get into major engineering projects which are costly in time and money, we need to work on the kind of expectations we need to have of our children to prepare them physically, emotionally, morally, and spiritually for a world we cannot yet imagine.

We need to learn to do more with less, develop disciplined habits in spending, physical fitness, and energy use. We need to rethink whether or not we need each and every thing we spend time or money on. Things are changing fast and will accelerate, so we need to start planning what we want life to be like, before all our decisions are made for us. Define your future instead of just passively accepting what others have decided for you.

Ways to Develop Discipline

1. Find role models who are disciplined
2. Pray for God's help to become disciplined
3. Read the Bible
4. Fast or go on a diet
5. Save money or give to charity
6. Volunteer
7. Learn a foreign human or computer language
8. Learn a martial art
9. Meditate
10. Exercise consistently
11. Do anything constructive for a long time
12. Even developing a schedule is a start

Learn to be Kind and Patient

First, Learn from Others' Experiences

1. Find others to emulate who are kind
2. Pray for God's help to become kind
3. Read the Bible

Second, Broaden your Reading

1. Read about a wide range of history
2. Read a variety of ethical writings
3. Read up on common manners
4. Read biographies of famous people

Third, Get your own Unique Perspective

1. Learn your family history
2. Write your own autobiography
3. Discover or develop your own beliefs
4. Understand why you think the way you do

Fourth, Understand that Differences are OK

1. Read things that conflict with your beliefs
2. Find similarities to your beliefs in these writings
3. Try to understand the reason why others think differently

Fifth, Learn Communication Skills

1. Understand how you say things is as important as what you say
2. Learn to be direct
3. Learn how to read body language
4. Learn to evaluate situations from an emotional perspective

Sixth, Learn to Think Empathetically Instead of Purely Fact Based

1. Read writings of famous mystics
2. Read poetry
3. Practice being kind to animals
4. Learn to be subtle
5. Listen to highly sensitive people

Seventh, Learn from Experience

1. Spend time around people that are hard to get along with
2. Spend time around people in pain
3. Volunteer to help those who are disabled
4. Listen to what others say, when you disagree with them

Being Creative and Helping Others

How to Think Creatively

Get Ready to Think

1. Get plenty of sleep
2. Give yourself as much time as possible
3. Thoroughly research the topic
4. Don't limit your options unnecessarily

Think About the Idea

1. Prioritize what is most important
2. Be willing to make trade-offs
3. Discuss the idea with other people
4. Take a lot of time to think about it

Try the Idea Out

1. Make controlled experiments
2. Roll out your idea in stages

Get Ready for Future Ideas

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1. Be willing to try new things
2. Practice thinking differently
3. Take calculated risks
4. Try things you haven't before

Creativity and Saving Money

Living Without a Car

One of the big ways to save money is to not own a car. This involves a real sacrifice and can be isolating. It is not for everyone. The alternatives are most commonly: taking the bus, walking, riding a bike, and taking a taxi. Each has its own purpose and more than one can be used, based on the situation.

What Riding the Bus is Like

If you have good bus service in your town, this could be a solution by itself. One of the things to plan for is to live at a major intersection in town, so that they are unlikely to cut your stop or route, because, at least in my town, they make service cuts every year. One of the things about the bus, at least in my town, is that a bus may not come at the scheduled frequency (they are never on time), if the bus is full or they are behind schedule, so you have to allow extra time. Another thing that is frustrating is dealing with the drivers, who: will often not stop at the right stops, will want you to hurry on the bus at some times and then at others make you wait for people to get off (that you can't see), and they often don't give you time to sit down or to get off before driving off. In my town, the service is good weekday mornings and afternoons. You also cannot carry big packages or luggage, drink or eat, or listen to load music on the bus.

Bus People

The people on the bus can be frustrating too. Most people who ride the bus do so, because they cannot afford any other options. Most people who ride the bus are: kids, the elderly, people with various disabilities like those in wheelchairs and the developmentally disabled, the poor, and people who have lost their licenses to drive, due to reckless or drunk driving. Many people on the bus have bad manners and have a hard time getting along with others. Usually there is at least one person who is very annoying, who does something like: making loud repetitive sounds, staring at you, going on and on with irrational ramblings, or trying to start a conversation with you or the bus driver. I try not to make eye contact with anyone and avoid smiling, which helps keep people from harassing me directly. I also avoid certain times and routes to avoid certain annoying people.

Alternatives to the Bus

If I want to get anywhere on the weekends, I either walk or take a taxi. I have tried using a taxi, to get to a meeting, at a certain time, but I found that, if you call them too early, they forget and that not very many taxis are running on the weekend. There must not be much competition for

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taxis in my town. Riding a bike around town works well, in my town, because of all the bike paths, but you will have to find somewhere to put your bike (there isn't much room on the bus for them) and you should avoid getting a nice one as they are often stolen. Riding a bike in the rain is not fun either and it is hard to carry packages.

Re-Occurring Expenses

Another big way to save money is to reduce re-occurring expenses. Some of these include cell phones, cable TV, Internet, games, movies, music, computers, software, and eating out. Not everyone needs every electronic device out there. People survived fine for thousand of year without cell phones. Most people do not have much time to watch cable TV, so for most people that is a bad investment. You can get the entire season of a show on DVD or on iTunes and just see what you want, without paying, for all the stuff you never watch on cable. The Internet is vital for most people, but check the rates from different companies and different plans, not usually advertised, and you can also get free wireless network, at many different businesses in many areas, like restaurants and coffee shops. You can save money on music, by just buying the songs you want on iTunes, instead of purchasing an entire CD, for one song. You can also save money, by buying movies on iTunes, rather than buying them on DVD or Blu-ray. Many people can actually save money on a Mac, due to not having to pay lots of money for constant repairs, because Macs last longer, and Macs have much higher resale value. You can save on software, by using open source software, instead of paying hundreds of dollars, for Microsoft and Adobe titles.

Theft or Charity

The Meaning of Free Culture

Free culture is a movement primarily Internet based and is an information era application of a much older reason for publishing. Most alive today people can't remember what it was like before people created art, music, literature and that kind of thing, without the primary reason being to make money. In fact, most of the intellectual property created in the last hundred years is also not worth the same as what was created before.

Compare, for instance, sacred religious texts with popular culture creations like Disney movies. Would you more likely risk your life for the Bible or for the animated Cinderella? I believe that there is a direct connection between why something is created and its value.

The Situation Today

Today, most things that are created for profit are not very high quality. Think of a recent movie or song that you thought would be worth preserving. The reason for this is that there is a whole network of powerful people, who act as gatekeepers of information. To reach a wide audience, you need an advertising campaign, which requires an investment of a tremendous amount of money.

Loss of Trust

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The Internet is making it much cheaper to publish information and therefore, we can reach each other, instead of having to get approved by a magazine editor or TV news producer. People used to trust their newspapers and TV reporters, before my generation which has seen a tremendous number of people in the establishment caught, pushing their own agendas and publishing for the advertisers, instead of for the readers. The thing that people get really upset about is when the journalists keep on supporting the establishment, no matter what it does and then, at the same time, claim to be objective.

Foreign Workers

Another thing that is lowering the bar to getting published is that people in third world countries and major Asian nations are now taking over the jobs of American journalists, engineers, and managers. Now one seemed to care when the blue collar workers lost their jobs, because we didn't mind people of color doing menial labor, but when they moved up the ladder to white collar jobs, now everybody gets defensive and cries out about the injustice. If it is ok for factory workers to lose their jobs to foreign workers, it is also ok for white collar workers to lose their jobs as well (and it is about time).

The Best Way to Fight

Many people's response is to steal songs and movies, because they don't find them worth the cost. But the problem with this is we just end up with less control over our media purchases and many people go to jail. The better way to fight the establishment and their control over our information, is to produce the content ourselves. I cannot single handedly provide enough information for everyone in America, but together with hundreds of thousand of others, we can cover a lot of ground.

When someone got a degree in a field, they used to have a certain level of competence, but the professional community has lowered its standards of both integrity and work ethic, to the point that diplomas don't mean much anymore. We may not be able to match the resources to do the same amount of research, but we can contribute without a profit motive, which makes us much more "objective".

Serve your Country

We need to have a free culture in America worth the sacrifices of our military service members and other Department of Defense and State Department workers. Especially as I am a veteran, I believe that it is very important that our military doesn't become an arm of corporations and their desire to get more money and power, at the expense of the average citizen. I do not believe that Disney movies, the NASCAR, or the Wall Street Journal are worth dying for. So if you want to help America and don't want to get burned alive and have permanent brain damage from serving in Iraq or Afghanistan, you will serve your country very well at home, by making sure we have something in America worth sacrificing lives for.

Reasons to Create Rather than Consume

Help Yourself

- you can promote the things you have interests in
- you can be in control
- you can become famous
- if you want something done right, do it yourself
- you know best what you like
- you can pass the time
- you can get a better job
- you can create a market for your job
- you can create things for advertising

Enhance Your Self-Esteem

- you can take pride in your creation
- you can expand your interests
- creating for others provides meaning in your life
- you can find a new hobby
- you can see beyond your circumstances

Learn New Things

- you can enhance your experience
- you learn best by creating based on what you learn
- you can learn a new skill or perfect a skill
- you can make a good resume and portfolio
- you can learn to be patient
- you can learn discipline
- you can develop a work ethic
- you can expand your knowledge

Help Others

- if no one created, there would be nothing to consume
- you can influence others
- you can leave a legacy for your children
- you can meet other people
- you can be a role model
- you can contribute to your community
- you can make your family look good

Why Volunteer?

Getting Perspective

When a person has plenty of money, they have a nice family, and they still feel a lack of purpose or joy in life, a good psychologist will often recommend the client becoming a volunteer or, in some other way, donating their time, for the benefit of others. One of the great things about spending your time making other people's lives better is that it gives you perspective. Many of us in the modern United States have lived very sheltered lives and have little perspective on how the majority of the world lives.

The Way the Youth Live

Basically, we are often spoiled rotten, in comparison. Many of us don't know what difficult really means. We spend most our youth going to school for a few hours day and don't have to even try to pass classes. Most children spend most their free time playing games, chatting or texting on a mobile phone, or hanging around at the local mall. This generation expects more than even my generation did. Kids now expect to be entertained, in order for them to put any effort, into learning at school.

Lazy Employees

Employees, even my parents age, typically do nothing but complain all day. It seems that people's greatest fear these days is actually doing their job correctly. We get paid so much more than any other country and yet we feel no loyalty to the company who pays us and have no pride in what we do. It is true that we have made some great progress, in the last couple generations, as far as rights for women and people of color, but we seem to have gone too far the other way now.

Greater Expectations

The biggest problem today is that people are lazy, because their parents never taught them any work ethic. We need to raise the expectations in our children, if we want to have responsible adult citizens. And some how this generation needs to learn discipline as adults. If we don't learn the easy way, we will be forced to learn the hard way. The easy way is to learn these values by our own choice and in our own way, but if we fail to learn this way, we will be forced to learn as a result of our country falling apart and the economy coming to a complete standstill.

No Easy Way

To have joy in life, we need to have more outlets than just work and play. Some people help others just with their jobs, but most people will not find fulfillment in working alone. If we do nothing after work, but entertain ourselves with corporate media, we will not feel at peace. Constantly distracting yourself does not keep you from having to find meaning in life. There is no substitute way to get self esteem, without putting effort into something. There is no pill that will make you happy, all by itself.

Be a Patriot

It breaks my heart to see the service members give their lives and their health, just for us to be able to consume more. There is no point in fighting for our freedom to choose Coke or Pepsi, Toyota or Honda, Republican or Democrat, and the like. We need to make choices that involve sacrifice. We need to delay our gratification, in order to exercise our free will. The things that are really worth doing require a tremendous effort. Writing a book, running a marathon, spending a year overseas, joining the Peace Corps, becoming an Eagle Scout, participating in local theater, working on a political campaign, and raising money to help the environment are all things that will help you be grateful for the things you already have.

For the Kid in All of Us

The value of Imagination, Independence, and Compassion

Beary, Bow, Patrick, and George are stuffed toy cows. They are leaders of their herd of stuffed cows. They live in my apartment.

They can't go outside of my apartment because they might get wet and dirty. If that happens, and if they don't go into the washing machine and dryer soon enough, they can get sick and they can lose their softness.

I can't always be there to keep them entertained, so they have numerous toys to keep them busy. They have a brown tent, a zebra striped couch, and a yellow dump truck.

Since they don't always have me to play with them, and they can't go outside, they have to think hard to find ways to keep doing fun things despite this situation.

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They can go on adventures even though they can't move very fast. They like to hide on the cow spots blanket, or change the TV remote with their hooves.

They hold meetings with the other cows and sheep. They hold elections and vote on things important to stuffed toys. They also go on dates with their girlfriend stuffed toy cows too.

They also talk to me while I am out around town and they help me think of ways to make drawings and photos with them in it. They also have made up some short songs for me.

They support a real cow that lives in California on a farm. This cow was abandoned by his mom and wouldn't even sell for 1 dollar.

Instead of letting him die from hunger, people now take care of him. He now has no worries and gets to eat, sleep, and play. He doesn't have to do any work.

True Humility

God's Perspective

The Other Side of Humility

I think one of the things that has held me back in my spiritual growth is that I saw God's desire for us to be humble as Christ was as a one sided equation, where we know we have blown it so bad, that we have no reason to have a high opinion of ourselves. I thought of it as that basically all our problems are our fault. The other side of the equation, which I am only now discovering is that God does say that we have failed, but because of His choice and His grace, we are given direct and supernatural help, to become better people.

God Doesn't Want us to Suffer

God doesn't just judge us and then expect us to become more moral, by our own effort. God only wants us to be humble, so that we are willing to ask God for help. God allows things bad to happen to us, but we do not grow by becoming more willing to deal with pain, because we have learned to be more patient and persevere. The reason why God allows problems in Christians' lives is to get their permission to enter their lives, so that God can remove the obstacles and strengthen us, by His grace, so that we learn to stop trying to do everything ourselves.

God's Objective

God is not trying to discipline us, with punishments, like some parents have or the legal system does, to get us to behave better. God has realized that we can't do things by ourselves and so He wants to help. We are worthy of being happy and at peace, not because we earned it, but because God decided to take the penalty Himself and gave the ultimate sacrifice. So even though we are not highly esteemed, by our actions, God does value us more than the protection of His Son (who is also God Himself).

Living a Happier Life

What is Life For?

We are not just to endure life, but to have a happier and more peaceful life. We don't deserve this, but God has decided to give this to us, because He chooses to. A Christian's life is not supposed to be a constant struggle, with no time for rest and recovery, but rather a meaningful and positive existence, where despite our failures, we have hope and the ability to improve our lives (but only by God's divine intervention). God gives us things to do, that we cannot do, not for us to fail, but for us to ask for help. It may be surprising to many people that despite our terrible track record with responsibilities given to us, God really enjoys being with us and is

willing and able to take the time, to change anything in us and in our circumstances, to make our lives better.

Consequences of Free Will

We will never get the credit, but we can have better lives. It is hard to understand why God doesn't just force us to do what is best for us. But God values our freedom and is unwilling to give that up just so that things work out better. God wants us to make the right choices, but ultimately sees us as adults and wants us to choose of our own free will, because love cannot be forced. We are allowed to make bad choices, only as a logical consequence of having the ability to love God and His creation, while still retaining a free will.

Enjoying Life

God doesn't want us to settle for good enough. He doesn't want us to just grin and bear it and just stay alive, because God doesn't want us to commit suicide. Neither is our life's purpose to get some project completed or to help so many people. When we die, the only things we take with us are our identity, personality, and our memories. The most important thing we can do in life is to first be honest as to where we are at, then to learn more about God and get His help, and finally to have a good relationship, with the people we know. If God really wanted us all to be perfect, at any cost, He wouldn't have given us a free will.

My Theory on Theories

Bad Theories

Many people do not like studying theories, as they find them very impractical. I did not feel this way about philosophy though, but the reason why I think people feel this way is that many theories are not a very accurate explanation of reality. I read somewhere (I think in reading some of the philosopher Hume's writing) that reality is the truest judge of any theory. If you ever run into a situation where the theories you learned about it are not useful, then the person who taught the theory needs to rethink it and develop a better theory.

Reason for Failure

One of the big reasons why theories fail to help explain reality is that they don't allow for failure, contradictions, and inconsistencies. What people think is often not well explained by philosophy, because philosophers are too consistent and rational and people aren't. We philosophers often strive for perfection and this ends up not being very useful, to those who study philosophy. I think it is hard to reconcile the way the world works with any theory, because there are many factors that influence the major events, that happen in the world, over the course of history and there are also many factors, that determine why people decide how to respond, to the situations that they were born into.

People are Different

Whenever you try to explain history or an individual's beliefs, by finding just one theory developed from just one perspective, it often fails. One of the problems with reducing people and history down to one theory is that people are very different and things that work for one person, in one time of history, in one situation do not necessarily help another person, in a different situation. I recognized early on that in my writing that I needed to explain things differently, for different people, with different strengths, weaknesses, and situations.

My Approach

I also realized that I was setting myself up for inevitable failure, if I asked for followers, because I could not predict what someone else would get inspired to do, from what I have said. That is why I have asked people to use my writing to inspire them, but to decide on what is important to them by themselves and not try to take an approach that works for me and expect it to work for them. You can also feel responsible, for people abusing your theories, if you try to convince other to believe the same as you.

Opposite Problems

This is the problem with trying to get different people to approach problems in the same way: it doesn't work, because often some people have exactly the opposite problem of other people. Just like people have very different tastes in music and different sense of humor and often don't appreciate different styles, so it is hard for a person to understand how someone else has entirely different needs and problems than another person. It is interesting that, when people asked Jesus what to do to be saved and go to Heaven, Jesus told everyone to do something different than everyone else.

The Biblical Approach

More than a Philosophy

There are a few things that I believe are absolutely true, which the Bible is very clear about, but most things in the Bible are not that simple. Just as Buddha gave different kinds of people different advice, based on their level of understanding, so the Bible is not arranged, so that we can make a detailed theory to consult, to solve our problems. There is no way we can find a philosophy of the Bible, because it is more than a philosophy. The Bible is the word of God, simplified so that we can understand it, but it was designed to work for billions of people, over at least thousand of years of history. That is why it is not easy to explain everything in the Bible by one theory.

Relationship with God

It is often said so many times, by a certain type of really intense Christian, that the Bible is about

a relationship with God. I cannot argue with this as there is a good deal of truth to it. But there is more to life than just relationships and that is not the only way to approach God. I think too many people dismiss large portions of the Bible, thinking they are outdated and are not useful for them to study. I also think many people make what God asks of us too complicated.

Point of Life

God simply wants us to be happy. He wants us to live better lives and become better people. But trying to find some sort of goal is missing the point. The best way of understanding the eternal perspective of God, that I know of, is to think of God as existing in a kind of eternal moment. Living is a process and consists of a variety of experiences and dealing with a variety of emotions and situations.

What God Wants

God wants us to experience His presence in the world and not worry so much. God doesn't require us to know something specific, or attain a certain level of faith or of understanding of theology. Being a Christian means that you decide things for yourself, based on a lot of different types of information. The Bible is the most important one, not because it explains everything, but rather that everything it says is true and accurate.

Who God Is

We can always depend on God, but God will never be able to depend on us. A relationship with God is not like a close friend, where you are complete equals. God is not a drinking buddy. He is our Lord and Savior. We need to understand that, in dealing with God, we need to have a sense of wonder and awe about Him, revere Him, and we need to express this by living serious lives, and in taking things like sin seriously.

Take Life Seriously

When we see Jesus as God, we need to understand that God is also God the Father and God, His Holy Spirit. God definitely does have a sense of humor, but God knows that there is a place and time for it and does not elevate having fun at the expense of our safety and well being. There is a reason why the Bible is not very funny. Life is an experience and the only things we take with us are our minds, emotions, spirit, and everything else that we can't see. We need to focus on what is everlasting and we need to do this by maintaining a balanced existence, just like God is balanced.

Being Realistic

When people are young, they all think they will be famous and that they will be able to solve all the world's problems, all by themselves. I used to want to be famous, so that I could help solve world problems.

Working with People

The Reality of Fame

The thing is that when most people become famous, they are only famous for a short period of time, which is often not at the end of their life. This sets up a situation, where you are going to experience a low of the same magnitude of your high. That is the same reason why drugs cause depression and destroy people. Another thing about fame is having a lot of money. But wealthy people have the same problems everyone else does. In fact, for people making over \$50,000 a year, an increase in wealth does not improve the person's life.

Romantic Ideals

I think we also have unrealistic expectations of others, that we have relationships with. One of the big reasons for divorces among young people is that they expect too much of their spouse. You have to be happy alone, before you can be happy married. Everyone has habits that will make you angry and they will fail you when you need them most. The only one who will unconditionally love you and consistently be there for you, when you need them, is God. The closest thing we can find in physical form is an animal.

Hard to Meet People

I used to be upset and feel myself to be a failure, because I have a hard time finding friends. But I am not the only one. In fact, this is quite common. It is ironic that, in a world filled with ways to communicate instantly and continually, with almost anyone for almost no money, we actually feel more lonely than ever before. The Internet, as many have found out, is a bad way to meet people.

Problems with Virtual Dating

The biggest problem with meeting people first online is that people lie, when they can get away with it. The idea of sharing intimate ideas with someone, before you meet them, is not a good way to start a relationship. I want to see the person first, so that I can find out basic things about them, like whether they are a woman or a man, instead of investing all sorts of time and emotions in someone, who could be making up everything and you have no way of being sure it is not a scam or a stalker.

Finding Friendships

I also have more problems forming relationships than other people, as I have trouble getting to things that start at a certain time repeat in a schedule. I get tired very easily and I have a lot of anxiety about how I will get along with other people that I don't know. I feel bad that I don't know more people, but when I see people in public, who work at the places I buy food from, or I

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see on the bus, I would rather be alone than be around these people. My sister said the other day that it would be really easy for her to find a bunch of really annoying friends, but that the hard part is finding people who are worth getting to know.

Lack of Maturity

I would like to marry someone in their twenties, but I think it is unrealistic to expect someone of that age, to have the maturity, to stay in the same marriage, for the rest of their lives. Most women over 30 are single today. I think most people marry young and then get divorced, before they start to even get to know who they are and what they want out of life. In the past, people were more mature at a much younger age, but today people seem to mature, at later and later dates, as time goes on. Most religions consider this time in history to be one of the most immoral and corrupt.

Anxiety for No Good Reason

Downsizing Our Lives

I think it is also unrealistic of us to think that we can continue to consume more and more resources and to not pay back our debts, while continuing to increase them. The earth is a finite place. There is only so much water, so much energy, and so much room. The way of the future will be to downsize our lives and have simpler and more basic ambitions. We can change the world, in our homes and in our lives, and we need to narrow our focus on this area, and not worry about the decisions everyone else makes.

Problems with Journalists

I think one of the problems with the liberal counterculture media and even the mainstream conservative media is that they are too negative. All we hear all day is the problems. Maybe reporters should stop bringing up problems, without giving possible solutions for them. I think one of the reasons why the alternative media is so negative is that they expect the common person to give up something for the greater good. And then they are unwilling to work with religious groups, which are the vehicle, for many of the positive developments, in the world today.

We Worry Too Much

At this point, most people are so overwhelmed by our problems and are so busy just trying to keep their jobs, that they get discouraged very easily. If you knew how your life would be 10 years from now, would you really want to know? I think it is unrealistic to expect that we will never get sick again or be depressed or in pain, but knowing about it before then is just unbearable. We need to spend less time worrying and more time enjoying what we do have.

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Why Life is Short

Most people will not live past 80 and this has been the case throughout history. And the reason for this is that life is only manageable, for a certain number of years. We are not designed to sustain ourselves, beyond this period of time, in the world, the way it is now. And trying to extend your life does not increase your happiness. Many people now worry about dying, because of heart disease or cancer. Maybe it is ok that we finally die of something. Maybe dying of a heart attack is not the worst way to die. Maybe this is actually progress.

The Cost of Being Healthy

Many scientists now think that we would be healthier and live longer by eating a near starvation diet and work out intensely. Most people have lived this way, throughout most of history, and the people that could afford to not do this, didn't follow that route. Being overweight was once the sign of healthiness and wealth. We also worry about getting fresh air and getting a certain amount of sunlight. We want to travel and vacation outside and in a warm climate.

Staying Inside is Good

There is a reason why people decided to live in a controlled setting, in houses, and in living in the same place. Living a life out in the elements and living off the land is very difficult and the land can only support so many people. Civilizations were able to start when people settled down together and started living off agriculture, instead of hunting and gathering. The populations increased and the first cities started, because they could finally produce enough food, to sustain a large population.

The Best Location

What people don't often see, about these supposedly ideal tropical islands, is that most people who live on them want to live on the mainland. In the tropics, the bugs are bigger, more aggressive, and more poisonous. Most people, if they lived in somewhere outside of carefully maintained hotels, in these tropical climates, in the third world, would realize that living in a temperate climate, in the US is actually one of the best climates to live in. The most rapidly growing cities are ones, where they are big enough to have things to do like concerts and plays, but small enough, to avoid major inner city problems.

How to Respond

Stop Getting Mad

Why They Hate America

Unpredictability

One of the things that makes people hostile to America is not that we are worse than any other empire or even that we are not really promoting democracy and equality, but that we are more than any other thing terribly inconsistent and unpredictable. Many nations are also unstable, but they don't have the most powerful military in the world, in addition to being a very globally aggressive country. People don't know whether the US is going to be involved in the Middle East, support Israel or the Palestinians, is fighting terrorism or Islamic fundamentalism, is going to intervene to prevent unstable regimes from getting nuclear weapons, is going to be a friend or foe of Russia, is going to support or undermine communist China, or is going to work through the UN or going to fight wars unilaterally.

Naïve Americans

As I said before, many Americans are very naïve about global politics. One of the things that Americans don't understand is that all the problems we are experiencing in the Middle East are not our fault and existed long before America was even a British colony. Another thing we don't seem to understand is what we call democracy the rest of the world calls Imperialism.

Find Out Why

We don't really understand that not every country has a political will and infrastructure, and military and economic base to support a liberal democracy like ours. When getting involved in things we have little knowledge about, we need to find out why those who made the decisions, that they did, in the past, before we make a major change in our approach. This is certainly true of not only politics, but also true of almost any situation.

Lose-Lose Situation

We Lose

When we don't have the patience, or the will, to stay in a country, for a thousand years or more, before we overthrow a government, we need to find supporters, in the region, that can stay in power, when we leave. It is not in the interests of either the United States nor the local population in having democracies in the Middle East outside of Israel. The reason why the US doesn't want more democracies in the Middle East and has helped support dictators like those running Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and formerly in Iraq is that we know that the local populations would vote in terrorists as their leaders, if given the chance to vote.

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They Lose

The US and Saudi Arabia want to smooth over this reality and not emphasize this situation, as it makes things difficult, for both our countries, if it is announced on the nightly news. Right after the World Trade Center was bombed on 9/11, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were celebrating in the public streets. Osama bin Laden is revered as a hero in the Muslim world. The Palestinians voted in the Hamas terrorist organization into power in the Gaza Strip. When we invaded Iraq, and the Shiites grabbed power in Iraq, the few Christians still in Iraq suffered worse under them, than under Saddam Hussein. And people think that Bush was loyal to Christians.

Money is Power

Money=Politics

The reason why the people in the Middle East don't want democracy is that it is just another word for Imperialism. We say democracy, but what we mean is capitalism. American democracy means more of their kids are getting addicted to MacDonald's restaurants and Playboy magazines, in the middle of the holy city of Mecca. We think of ourselves as so different from the colonial powers, but we were allied with all of them and helped them keep their empires, before they lost them, over the last 50 years. The exact same oil companies, that controlled Iraqi oil, when the British owned Iraq are the same ones that control it now. Like any addiction, just because someone indulges in it doesn't mean they want their kids doing the same, or even wants to keep being controlled by it.

Money Runs the Media

American entertainment culture, the media, and the marketing departments of the major multinational brands have the power they do, because they have got people all over the world addicted to their products. Do you really think that you are saving money, by having advertising pay for your TV and newspapers? Do you think that even though the only legal responsibility of a CEO is to make as much money, for its shareholders as possible is going to sacrifice profit, to help the environment or to be non-partisan, in their news reports?

Recognizing the Problem

Cost of Advertising

Do you really think that newspapers are not a business, like every other and that they are run and controlled, by those who pay their salaries, meaning the advertisers? It would be much cheaper for us to buy our media, than support it with advertising. The only reason why companies are willing to give away free entertainment or news is because they know that you and your children will spend more money on their products, than you would spend paying, for the free Cable programming.

Keeping Kids Safe

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Just like you don't want your children's values destroyed, by their exposure to sex and violence, so parents of those in the Middle East don't want their children exposed, to this same American culture. When American tanks roll in, shortly behind them come Coca-Cola, Disney, Playboy, Time Warner, Nike, Mac Donalds, Walmart, MTV, and all the other top multinational corporations start appearing next to mosques and holy sites. When Muslim men see how typical American women on movies dress and behave, the rights of women in the Middle East go backwards about a thousand years. We like to think that you can separate money from politics, but it doesn't matter what you think, because they all own your souls and so you will think whatever the advertisers on the American media tell you to believe.

Unequal Politics

Do you think that the current conservative-liberal political divide in America was not invented by mass media corporations? Isn't it surprising that liberals are elected, when the economy goes bad and bail out corporations and that conservatives get in power, when the economy is going well and remove all rules for corporations and give them the seed money, to gamble away, and this money on both situations comes from middle and working class Americans? Why is it that you can steal the retirements of millions of people and not go to jail, but if you rob a convenience store, you serve big time in prison? Why is it that most people who are in prison are poor and most convictions are from plea bargains?

The Solution

Divide and Conquer

The way to beat this thing is to stop watching the news. The way we are manipulated, by the big corporations, is when we get mad at what happens, in politics. Why aren't moral liberals and moral conservatives on the same side? Why aren't social liberals and fiscal conservatives on the same side? Did you know the best way to destroy a country is by siding with one local group and against the other one and then the remaining ally is slowly exterminated?

Stop Getting Mad

Let stop trying to change others minds and start focusing on liberating our own souls. If something happens in the world, that you need to know, they will stop the TV and the radio and break into tour shows or games to announce it. And after you have been watching the news for a while, you will realize it is a waste of your time, because nothing ever changes, year after year.

Everything is Useful

As it says in Ecclesiastes there is a time for everything and every skill and every person has a place of value.

For Individuals

Personality Traits

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Some of the personality characteristics, that are considered to be negative, have a positive side and vice versa. The same people, who make good leaders and can be depended on, for their strength of character can also have problems with anger and have control issues. People who are moody and perfectionists often have surprising abilities like passion, perseverance, and commitment to a project. People who always make jokes and are silly can be very encouraging and optimistic, in situations, where others would break down.

Useful Skills

Some of the things that are valued the least are sometimes the most necessary and useful, depending on the situation. A manager may not have what is considered practical skills, when it comes to building something, but they will prove to be useful, when you need to organize people and solve relationship problems. A computer programmer may not seem important in a survival situation, when electronics break down, but they might be able to use these skills, to solve engineering problems. An engineer may look down on a machinist, but they may need to work together, to complete the building of a machine.

The Most Important

The most important jobs in society are farmer, sanitation worker, truck driver, and the people who maintain the power lines and the pipes that bring us water and electricity. The first thing that needs to be cut in a difficult situation is often the person at the top, rather than the workers. We may not need many people with farming knowledge right now, but if our technology fails, we need to know how to make a plow.

For Society

Don't Cut Taxes Now

Many people may feel that the police are a waste of money, or that they don't need hospitals, because of their good health. But even when things you don't use yourself stop working, the systems around you, that you do depend on, cease to function properly, when even an unrelated service is interrupted. Just like people who use computers don't need to worry about the technical details, when things break down, you need someone who does have this knowledge. People often want to save money, by not buying insurance, but then are surprised that the police usually don't recover stolen items. People rarely value janitors, until there is a sewage leak and things need to be sanitized.

Every Service is Essential

This is the situation we are in now, where businesses and government decide to cut non-essential services, when the economy goes bad. But the problem is that most government services are necessary and are often preventative measures, that are only visibly necessary, when they are stopped. And they are often more expensive and may take considerable time to restart them. Just like when you are on certain psychological medicines and then you feel better and stop taking them, by the time you then realize what they were doing for you, it makes it that much harder, to

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restore yourself to your previous state.

The Downside of Efficiency

What makes our society so easy to break down is that people are just doing enough, to keep things going, when everything works fine, so that money is saved and the system is as efficient as it can be. The problem with pursuing efficiency is that your infrastructure becomes brittle, when it does not have fallback support and extra insulation, to protect from those unusual times, when society needs more than is expected or something else fails. When I was in the military, many things were starting to be done by computers, which had previously been done manually, and I remember many of the NCOs were concerned about relying on computers, because everybody knows that computer break, when they are needed most.

Everything Fails

When building and maintaining infrastructure and basic government services, we need to plan and expect things to fail and develop solutions, that need to be maintained, for when things inevitably fail. Just because it is unlikely that most cities other than New York City, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles will be attacked by a terrorist, the severity of the possible damage makes it worthwhile to plan, for this possibility, in every major city.

Preparing for the Unlikely

There are many things that can be done, to prepare us, for things, that are very rare, like asteroid impacts, super volcanoes, or natural disasters, in areas where they were not expected, but they require a tremendous investment, which only pays itself off, when you end up not having to spend as much money, to rebuild after the disasters. New York city doesn't get hurricanes very often, but when it does the glass used in most skyscrapers cannot withstand even minor hurricane winds, and so this would cause enormous loss of life, injuries, and damage, if people are unwilling to invest the money, to replace them with stronger glass.

What You Can Do

Necessities Not Glamorous

Just like the news reporters focus on car chases and fires, because they look exciting on film, so society seems to want to focus on spending money on exciting things and often decides to pass on the necessary, but unglamorous things. This is one of the reasons why it is good to have survival supplies in place, before disaster strikes. Even in areas that are hurricane prone, most people wait until the last minute to buy supplies and the stores empty in a matter of hours of everything.

Don't Procrastinate

We always see on movies about the elite military and government agencies, that are tasked with preventing catastrophic events, like nuclear wars, that they wait until the very last second, to prevent the disaster. If the Department of Defense really did everything at the very last possible moment, it would continue to run into times, where they had a delay and we would be living in a

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post apocalypse world tomorrow.

Prepare Now

Everything is necessary, at a time, when you don't think you will need it. Always prepare for the unforeseen events, that are going to happen, at any time. The time to prepare, for living without an income, or outside help and without basic services, like modern plumbing and electricity is now. If you wait until it happens, it will already be too late. There is a reason why the kids you called nerds, in high school you call boss, later on in life. Responsibility and preparation pay off.

Affecting Change

Learning Helpful Concepts

Memories and Attitude

Just as life is more than choices, ethics is more than how you treat others. The most important things in life are our memories and our attitude. This means that we need to focus first on our own lives and find peace and joy within who we are and what we do with our time, before we can expect to have fulfilling relationships with others. God comes first, but your family comes before your community or your country. It is better to be family man than a patriot.

Realistic Ambitions

One of the reasons we get to the point, where we have no more energy and are completely without hope, is that we are unwilling, to scale back our ambitions, to what is realistic. Having more power gives you no more influence, as you sacrifice the degree of influence you have, by extending how the number of people you influence. Who influences your child more: you or the President? When we look to expand our lives into new frontiers, the largest frontier is the human heart.

Mind Body Connection

We often see reason and emotions and mind and body as being opposing forces in our lives, but everything in our lives influences everything else in our lives. Having good self esteem can help you be more rational and getting enough sleep increases your spiritual health. Just as the people, who have the most important jobs are often the least powerful, so aspects of ourselves that we take for granted are the key to our complete health.

Stop Doing

When we think that changing our lives involves buying something or joining something, maybe the answer is to cut back and do less. We often think to transform our mind, that we need to read books, but maybe the answers to our problems are not intellectual. Sometimes taking a nap or watching a movie can give you a better insight, just because you allowed yourself time to think.

Starting with Ourselves

Changing Our Own Minds

We spend so much time increasing our resumes and our relationships with others, that we often forget about how important our own well being is, in creating a better life. To change the world we need to first change our own mind. The most important factor in our growth as a complete person is often a series of experiences over a long period of time. Sometimes being a man of action requires a person to first be a thinking person, in order for the actions to be beneficial.

Time to Think

We spend too much time worrying and too little time allowing our mind enough rest, to work through all possible solutions. Getting enough sleep can be more important than psychological therapy. The way to improve our lives lies less in what we do and more in how we think about it. Having a job you do not like, while having a lot of free time may be better than enjoying your job, but not having a break from it.

Attitude Trumps Action

Instead of sending more money to the United Way, you may affect greater change by volunteering in your community. Sometimes we are so focused on the tangible influences like sending letters and canvassing door to door, that we don't realize that way we make members of our families feel when we talk to them. There is more to charity than how many people you help.

Thinking for Ourselves

When we learn new things about ourselves, we often focus on acquiring knowledge and forget that we need to spend time thinking and this second part is the more important, in our emotional growth. Stopping doing something harmful to yourself can be more useful for your self improvement than doing more to help others. When we only spend time on how others perceive us our relationships will become more shallow and less meaningful to our lives.

Learning to Say No

Total Situations

Definition

I have narrowed down the precise reason why I am so intense and serious. I got so serious because of my total experiences. A total situation or experience is where you are in a situation where: you do not want to be there, you have no power or choice over what happens to you, you cannot leave no matter how much pain you are in or how scared you are, you are in the situation 24 hours a day, there is no break or relief, and other people are the ones who make all your decisions for you.

My Situations

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Most people never have this kind of experience, but, if you do, it will change you profoundly. My total situations include: my time in the military, being in the gas chamber during basic training, my stay in the psychiatric ward of a private hospital, when I lived in a group home, and when I lived in a retirement home. You can never really appreciate your freedom and having legal rights, until they are taken away from you.

Psychological Impact

I think these experiences made me feel like I didn't have any control over my life, so it drove me to continue to work hard, to create something that I did have control over. It was hard, for me, to take breaks, because I found that I was able to deal with my total situations, by focusing my whole self on something else and taking a break made it harder, to keep my mind off my situation. I think setting limits on myself will be empowering and help me feel more in control, even though it is me that is making the decisions, because I am not really in control, when I have an addiction to work.

Truth in Experiences

Just like when I ran, I didn't focus on running, but rather thought of other things, because I found running to be boring and painful, and I used the same strategy in these total situations. This desire to be in control of my own destiny also made me appreciate being an adult and being able, to make my own decisions, over how I spend my money and my time. I remember during basic training, I was happiest when I was running, because the drill sergeants finally stopped yelling at me and gave me some space during that time, probably because I was fast enough, by their standards, so that they had little to say.

Limits

Everyone has Limits

When people asked for my help in the past, I felt that I should always help, but I am finally ok with saying no. Everyone and everything has its limits. When I was living in a retirement home in my mid twenties, everyone thought that I worked there and constantly came to me for help. Anything I would do for them was basically pointless as their memory only lasted for about 5 minutes. I think that the CNAs on staff at night may have been tempted to just not give the residents pain medicine or help them with whatever problem they had, because they would ask again 5 minutes later no matter what you did.

Limits Improve Relationships

When giving money to people, either homeless or not, the people you are helping tell others and continue to ask, and become increasingly aggressive, until you finally say no. It is not good to loan money to most people or even give someone money to buy something for you. I remember that one of the guys living in my quad, while I was in advanced training, in the military, I have him money to buy me some boots, when he went to help the drill sergeants trade in the clothes, that we were issued during basic training, if they did not fit. He never bought the boots and never

returned the money and it ruined our friendship.

Humility Requires Weakness

Pace Yourself

Everyone has his limits even Jesus and his Disciples left the crowds, they were ministering to, on occasion. If you allow people to push you too far, then you will end up resenting them and your attitude will be so bad, that it would be better to do less and be positive about it. Everyone needs time to rest and recover. You cannot just do good deeds continually, without pacing yourself, or you will give up and become bitter. It takes a tremendous amount of discipline to stop helping, when your focus is entirely on getting things done.

Be Patient with the Process

Life is a process and not an outcome. Service only needs to be one part of your walk with God. If it becomes the focus, then you will destroy yourself eventually. To grow spiritually, we need have the patience, to allow God to work with us and ask for other people to help us. We are not islands and we cannot just go into a cave and meditate non-stop. We need to balance our service with rest, fellowship, worship, and prayer.

It's Ok to Have Needs

This idea that we can be happy, if only we had more discipline, is a very destructive and biblically wrong attitude, that many people in churches perpetuate. It is ok to be weak and to need others and God. This is what being humble is all about. Our life as a Christian needs to meet our needs, as much as we need to meet the needs of others. You can only be spiritually strong, when you are emotionally and physically rested and balanced. Before you can be of use for others, you need to strengthen your own body and mind.

Little Things Matter

We Worry Too Much

When people want to change the world, they often set their sights too high. Then, when they inevitably discover, that the world is the way it is, for a reason and powerful people actually want it to be the way it is, they realize that things are not so easy to change. I think many also find some exciting new theory, which they think will cause a revolution and have a hard time being able to embrace a more subtle and complex worldview. Most people are afraid of and hate change and with change there is always a risk of things getting worse. But nowadays Americans are so beaten down, by current problems, that we have trouble seeing the big picture.

Assault on Christianity

Focused Attack

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American Christians are even more worried about the future. They believe that people will find the church irrelevant in these times. Christians have taken a beating, for the last 300 years or more, from all directions, in academia. These ideas are not coming, from individual people and it is not a coincidence, that so many people were coming up, with such a well thought out plan, to destroy faith in Christ. This was a spiritual battle, that played out in academia. I think one of the reasons why academia was chosen was because the Church, in all its original sects, including the Latin, Greek, Syriac, and even modern Protestant based Christian churches were all very committed to education. The Church became the center of learning, everywhere it existed.

Ok to Bash Christians

It seems that the only acceptable prejudice is to denigrate the Bible and Christians. People who pride themselves on being rational and objective, use entirely emotion-based reasons, which based on their personal experiences, to make Christians seem as backwards and irrational as possible. Academics have gone to such great lengths, to make it sound like Christians have caused all the problems in this world, that anyone coming from another planet would think our intellectuals were not very bright or logical.

Being the Scapegoat

Some of these often repeated messages are factually and historically plain wrong. As I have said a number of times, Rome is not the original church, is not true to the theology of the early church, and European civilization is based on the Enlightenment and on the Greek and Roman classics and has nothing to do with Christianity. Most Christians are not white and that was true throughout most of Christian history and European and American leaders have not ever followed the Bible, especially not for the last hundred years. Europe did not reject Christianity, because it caused world problems, but rather Europe caused world problems, because they rejected Christianity.

Factually Wrong

Christianity was not bad for the environment either – the Bible says that humans are responsible for taking care of the environment and the prophets talk about environmental disasters, in the future, that were caused by sin. It never says anywhere in the Bible that the world is flat, that the earth is the center of the universe, or anything racist. These things all came from ancient Greek thinkers. Christ was never in India, nor is what Jesus said based on Indian or Chinese belief systems. Isaiah gave a complete and accurate prediction about Christ before Buddha, Lao Tzu, Confucius, or Socrates was born. Most of the major Indian religious, cultural, and literary writings were written down well after Christ was born.

Christianity Won Anyway

But despite all these denigrations of the Bible, Christians, and Christian theology, more people are Christians today than ever before. Pentecostalism and Catholicism are successful international phenomenons, that are popular across at least 3 major continents, with very few white people. Christians outnumber Muslims 2 to 1, in the third world and most of the areas with mostly muslim populations converted hundreds of years ago. Christianity only arrived in most

parts of Africa and the Orient a hundred years ago and the practices and beliefs of Catholic church in Latin America, for hundreds of years now, is only superficially Christian. And most Africans were converted by other Africans.

Spiritual Battle

Finding Small Solutions

So many Christians and Americans in general are worried about the future and at the same time have no big solutions, nor the power to change things, nor even to have our voices heard. But little acts of kindness, manners, and civility make a big difference. We often feel we are not making a difference, because we do not count everything we do, like the small things, like holding open doors, for other people, or saying thank you. Most of the big political events in history are the result of spiritual warfare and are only one part of the picture. The most important battle goes on in our own minds. The attitude with which we do our work is more of a witness than a televangelist giving a sermon, to hundred million people.

Ok to Be Emotional and Weak

The big reason why many people do not become Christian, or drop out of the church, or the faith is not because they do not believe in the Bible, or find it important in their lives, but that Christians are so negative and unrealistic about what they expect of their members. We can make a difference in the world today with very humble acts, that we may never see the results of. No one is going to thank the person, that was the final straw, that led them to Christ. We have to realize that Christianity is not a science and we need to understand how God works and His power through faith. Faith can only exist, when you have no sufficient rational explanation for something.

Focus on Relationships

Having a relationship with someone is more powerful than sending lots of money to charities. People are much more influenced, by their friends, than their political or church leaders. It takes time and patience, to really make a difference in someone's life and there are no shortcuts, to real spiritual and emotional growth. It is worth our whole lives, to save just one person, or improve just one person's life. Individual people coming to faith in Christ are more important than which party controls congress or our nation's foreign policy. A few Christians praying together affect more change than all the political leaders in the world.

See with Faith

Stop seeing with your eyes and hearing with your ears. Dream bigger than saving the world. Save yourself and your family. That is the greatest achievement. Stop limiting yourself to the physical world and the rational reasons for your situation. We can only see what really matters through faith and God prefers to work, through people, who have no power and no abilities, so that He gets the credit. We never have to deal with things alone and God wants to fight the battle for us, if only we would open our hearts to Him.

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Being Without Doing

The Solution

By God's Grace

I have realized that the way that we become is not through doing. And the way to become more Christ like and mature as Christians involves 3 aspects: us being willing to change, God giving us maturity as a free gift by His Grace, and allowing time for this to take place. Praying ourselves as well as having other pray for us will enhance this effort.

God Does all the Work

The reason why it works this way (that God does the whole thing by Himself once we give Him permission) is because this is how God chooses to work with us. Despite our lack of belief in the power of the spiritual in our lives does not mean God is not constantly defying physical laws, to the benefit of those who want to serve Him and to bring others to Himself. Just as God has chosen for us to become righteous enough to enter Heaven, by our faith and His grace, again with God doing essentially the entire thing for us, so He will do almost everything needed, for us to mature in a similar fashion, if we would only consent to His desire to do this.

Spiritual Laws

Different Rules

Most people have a very flawed understanding of how God works and why things happen the way they do in the physical world and we also have a poor understanding of the spiritual world, which makes the former seem more confusing. The way we see the world from our human vantage point, we see throughout history that when one group of people becomes more powerful through technology, economics, weather, or any other factor it dominated the other weaker group of people. The spiritual world also has laws and things also work according to a predictable pattern, but the pattern is different, because of the different rules God governs this realm by.

How Americans Think

One of the big reasons why the US is hated throughout the world and we get ourselves into unwinnable wars is because we don't study history. Many of the same groups, who feel discriminated against and marginalized, did the same thing to others earlier on in history. The US needs to understand, that there are no good guys and in many parts of the world, so we need to choose between the lesser of two evils, or just not get involved. The only other alternative is to occupy a country, for at least a thousand years and the US is not likely to exist in its present form that far in the future, nor does our country have that kind of patience and resolve nor is it

unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary for this to happen.

Real Freedom

God Values Our Freedom

Many people have a poor understanding of God's perspective, motivations, and personality. Great thinkers often spend their entire lives trying to explain why we suffer, when God is all powerful and also perfectly morally good in nature. In America believe we really value our freedom. We think that freedom comes from having more choices and less restrictions in life. But God really values true freedom, especially of people, and God also likes to use people, so that people can be in control of their future.

Why and How Bad Things Happen

God allows bad things to happen, because all these things all arose, from our rebellion against God. God created everything, so that it worked together perfectly. We then screwed it up, by our decision to follow what we assumed was our own will. Many people might also wonder why, if there are powerful evil spiritual forces in the world, why have they not already enslaved us and why we have waited so long for the End of Times. In the spiritual world, God greatly restricts what other spiritual forces are allowed to do. God allows people much more latitude. That is probably why the anti-Christ is a person and why a lot of powerful people are trying to advance technologically and corrupt people morally – they are not allowed to do as much spiritually, so they take the physical approach.

Acknowledging Reality

Our true enemy though is not an outside force, but ourselves. What we need to worry about first is our own lives and how we treat others. We need to “submit to God” which is really a bad approximation, because God already is infinitely powerful and controls everything that happens. How do we really praise God, when the best things we say about God are not flattering, but factually true. To submit ourselves to God is really only about acknowledging reality. What we need to do, to allow God to work in our lives, is to accept His help. So salvation is not so much about faith or about repentance per say, but really just acknowledging what we already know is true.

Only 2 Choices

The only thing we need to do is to ask God to rule our lives and for His will to be done in us and not our will. Some people would say this is not freedom and they are allowed to follow, what they think is their own choice. But there are only 2 choices spiritually: serve God or serve money (the devil). Just like in an addiction, what feels right is not always best for you, nor are you always in control, when you have your own way.

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More Ideological Insights and Inspiration

The Power of One

The Individual

Don't Give Up

I am continuing my writing, in order to encourage others, that we can make a difference, as individuals. The bulk of my writing, before the depression started, in 2008, was trying to get people to realize that the problems in the world we keep hearing about are serious and need to be dealt with now, but that many people, who would be willing to make the sacrifices necessary, to make the world a better place, are just getting discouraged and think that it is time to just give up.

Just One Person

I just started reading a book written by the president of PETA, the animal rights organization, and she make a great case, for how we can make a difference, all by ourselves. Most people would give to charities, if they were wealthy, or try to change the government, if they were able to get into power, but much of history was changed, by a single person, who was just like everyone else, but decided to spend their years on earth making a difference, for others. A few people have changed history starting all by themselves.

As a Group

Lessons from History

In my life time, I have seen the Soviet Union fall apart and atheism lose political power. The Soviet Union was such a huge power that, even as a kid, we feared the Russians, to be our greatest enemy. For much of the Cold War, many Christians were afraid that the majority of the world would give up their faith in religion. My parents saw major changes, in tolerance, for those of other races, within the span of just a decade, so that it is now unpopular and untolerated to be a racist. The US was winning the Vietnam War militarily and the war would have easily gone on, for another ten years, but it was cut short, by the the American people's unwillingness to let the issue go.

More Power than We Think

It is interesting, that we still do not seem to realize, that a government cannot keep itself in power, no matter how much power they have over their citizens, if they push things too far. The reason why the world is in the state it is, is because the US citizens may not want to be aware of some of the dirty things done to maintain our power, but basically expect someone to do those things, and that is the main reason why they are done. For instance, the reason why torture is

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likely still used, within the intelligence community, is not because it is thought to be useful or justified, by those who perform it, but that the leaders of the country would be held liable, if there were a terrorist attack and the people, who were involved, were in custody and did not give up the information needed to prevent the attack.

Power of American Citizens

Basically, Americans really don't care about what happens to non-Americans and feel justified in doing so, in order to maintain the kind of lifestyle, that we are used to. And yes, as always, I am referring to Americans, when I say we, as we have the ability, to change the world, as someone born in the third world does not have the resources, power, and the protection afforded by our civil rights. The really difficult thing, for us to accept very soon, is both the gravity of the situation, but also the great opportunity, that even one American has the ability to exercise, at little risk to themselves.

Keep Working Hard

The future is not set and we don't need to continue down this road. Things will change tremendously, in this generation, more than things have, for maybe thousands of years, and there will be some major losses, but there are also some great things, that will happen, that we cannot even imagine yet. God still has many wonderful surprises, for all of us. We just need to believe and take a chance.

Usefulness of Crises

Psychology of a Crisis

Local Example

I have spent about a year preparing, for surviving the end of the world, as we know it, caused by anything, from natural disasters, to the end of cheap oil. I wasn't happy, with the online communities, because people are so mean online, so I looked up about local Peak Oil advocates and I came across an interesting development and controversy. What had happened is that the local advocates brought this scenario, to the community government and after the case was presented, it was decided, that, instead of spending money, to become more self-sufficient energy wise, the budget was spent on improving the infrastructure, for increased car usage.

Apathy to Despair

This decision seemed to anger and frustrate those, who spent so much time and energy, to present their case, but I was not surprised. The thing is that most people today consider not having electricity and modern plumbing is the same as being in the stone age and would likely just give up and wait to die, instead of working hard, to survive, in a more difficult situation. The problem is, when people are confronted with the possibility of a disaster, they quickly jump from apathy to despair.

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Afraid of Hard Work

I think the big reason for this is that people who have grown up in the situation, that we are in now, have basically adopted the idea, that a successful society is one that: keeps on getting more and more advanced technologically, has fewer and fewer rules, and requires less and less effort, to keep it going. Since they have adopted this worldview, it is hard for them to think about the possibility, of losing this, and still surviving, in a rational manner. The only thing that seems to scare this last few generations is having to do an honest day's work.

Short Attention Span

Crises are Helpful

This may seem discouraging, but this situation has happened before and people will survive. I know it sounds cruel, but the fewer Americans who survive, the better it is, for those left. People will learn the value of hard work, but it is going to have to take a big shock, to get their attention. Unfortunately, Americans seem to jump from crisis to crisis, but have a hard time staying focused on the same thing, when there is no longer and imminent threat.

Understand the Reason Why

We have seen this happen with Homeland Security. The federal government spent tremendous amounts of time and money making sure, that we would never allow another tragedy like 9/11 to happen again and then, less than ten years later, we have the same problem, except the disaster was prevented, due to some fast thinking and brave airplane passengers. We also seem to gravitate between huge economic growth and huge depressions, which we could prevent with some simple oversight, but when no one is watching and the economy is going strong, we get rid of these important rules. We need to learn why things were set up the way they were before we start changing them.

Homeland Security Example

We also had a similar situation with joining the different intelligence and law enforcement agencies under the Homeland Security umbrella. The problem was that these agencies had been organized properly beforehand. We purposely separated the CIA and the FBI, even though it is inconvenient, in order to keep from these agencies from getting too powerful and end up like the SS or the KGB.

The other agencies were under different heads for equally legitimate reasons. Immigration does more than deal with terrorism. It also allows people to become citizens and the Coast Guard does more than just fight terrorism. They help in case of natural disasters and the help fight the war on drugs. And similar reasons explain why all the other agencies were arranged the way they were before we formed a Homeland Security cabinet position.

The Solution

Hit the Reset Button

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One of the things that really differentiates post World War II America, from before, is that we have no frontier. We need to find a way, to start things over again, as a society, as well as have a way, for people, to start over, as individuals. A big enough disaster may just give us the opportunity, to reorganize the way society operates, into a more healthy way of life. The worst thing that could happen is that we never do get hit by a big disaster and we continue on this same path. Without a major disaster, we will learn to work harder and appreciate the opportunities we have, but it will happen much more slowly.

People are Irrational

Instead of trying to appeal to a person's rational awareness of the world, we need to realize, that people are led, by their emotions, most of the time. Instead of fighting this, we need to just accept this. We need to stop debating and understand the psychology of the citizens we are working with. This is the big reason why the government will never admit that we are low on oil, because that will cause the very disaster people are fearing.

People Cannot Decide

The government needs to do some things, without telling the people, and needs to avoid going through a public governmental process. Hard decisions need to be made and it does not matter so much what is decided, except that something must be decided and worked toward. The military understands this very well. Most people are not emotionally able, to make their own decisions, or to run their own government. The average person will never have the education or the inclination, to make hard decisions.

The big reason why the government is so indecisive is because the average citizen is indecisive. We seem to jump back and forward, between opposite approaches, to our problems. We are almost evenly divided, between 2 opposing camps, so we give those, who have the most trouble making decisions, the power, to determine our leadership and our future.

A Different World

Political and Social Changes

Defeat of Atheism

The reason why this is a turning point in history is not just a matter of the decline of the US or the decline of the world economy, but it is the culmination of the downfall of the human ability, to solve our own problems, especially through technology. If the war on terrorism has taught us nothing else is that creativity and drive beats wealth and technology. We have learned that even the smartest people in the room don't give you the right answers and that pride can beat even the wealthiest. Not only have we seen that we cannot rely on government, to save us, during Katrina, but that capitalism can self-destruct, just as quickly, as communism.

Ascension of Christianity

We used to be afraid that most of the world would lose their faith, but now we fear that people

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are taking their belief in God too far. During the last few centuries, the Church has seen a huge barrier, to its expansion and its very survival, in Europe and most of America now, but, in the same period, many times the population of America and Europe have converted to Christianity, in every other major continent, in the world. The biggest contribution from the US, to the world, may very well be Pentecostalism.

One World Economy

The US is not going to fall, unless the rest of the world does. What we have is a one world economy, so that no one really wants anyone else to fail, because even the slightest damage done, to one of the major economies, in the world, will damage the others, just as much. The flip side of the US's complete dependence on China for its manufacturing has the side effect of China depending on the US, for both its market and for its ability to produce so much of the world's food. Basically, if the US is hurt too bad, China not only goes bankrupt but starves.

US Power will be Regional

It is true though that the US will return to a more maintainable world status as a major world power instead of the only world superpower. Some of the most successful and happy years of our country came as a result of our ability to focus on our own problems, and let someone else be hated, for interfering, in world politics. It looks like China and Saudi Arabia might be the world's police force, in the future, and people will forget about the US, just as quickly as they forgot about how much they hated the UK, France, and Russia.

Biggest Changes

The next generation will most likely see the greatest changes, in the recorded history, but they will be more social, than technological. The biggest commodities of the future will not only be oil, but water and soil. One of the sad things, that will happen, in just a matter of time, will be the die off of a major part of the world's population, because there are just too many mouths to feed and most likely Africa and Southern Asia will be hit the hardest. The world balance of power will shift, as a direct result of climate change and weather will be the biggest destructive force and the major focus of national security in the future.

Future of Society and Technology

Do It Yourself

There will be many positive changes, especially social. People will be more focused on the local community and will be more self-sufficient. People will be more and more interested in creating things, rather than consuming things. The do-it-yourself community will grow immensely. The big thing that the web based economy will have to do to survive is to focus on selling novelty and the personalization of products.

Mass Media

If Hollywood survives, their market will not be on selling generic products, to a mass audience. Every form of media will be online and there will be no way to get people to pay for it. More and

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more social groups and individuals will come out with their own media and use it to further their agendas. I think making money purely by advertising will become less and less valuable, as there will be so many more places for ads and so many more companies out there, that they will get lost in the static.

The big companies will be the ones with Big Brands. The big thing that will separate the little players from the big ones will be a matter of how they differentiate themselves. Americans will no longer find it profitable to sell commodity products for commodity prices.

All Information Public

So much information will be available, that the information itself will be less important and the way to sift through it faster will be where the money is. Every piece of information will be available, for everyone, by some point in the future. Scams will become much more convincing as they will be able to make use of this information.

Insignificance of Government

The most important factor in your life will not be the country you live in, but the technology provider that you use to access media and the Internet. The big reason why governments will stop being as big a factor will be because they cannot move as fast as technology can, so people will stop using the government to help them, when someone commits a crime against them.

Huge Industries

People will pay others mainly to give themselves more free time. The thing that will take more time than anything else will be finding things. Even though all information will be online, there will be so much of it that being able to answer meaningful questions will be a major source of income for many businesses. One of the things that people might enjoy most is having a break from technology and creating devices, that are fashionable and easy to use, will be a huge business.

Reaction Against Technology

Eventually people will actually start putting technology into their bodies. About this time, there will be a major reaction against technology and many people will try to exist off grid, but it will be much harder to do so, then ever before. Just like we all have phone numbers and email addresses, but don't have to have them, the same will be true of our access to the Internet and services that help us make sense of all the information.

Why I Am Certain

The Future is Now

One of the reasons why I can say these things with such certainty about the future is because these things are already happening. The reason why they seem futuristic to many people is that they are not mainstream yet because people aren't emotionally ready for them. The biggest changes in the future will be social, not technological.

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Computers are Dumb

The big thing in technology, that will take a very long time, if it is ever possible, unless we find some other advanced technology some other way than inventing it by ourselves, computers will not be much smarter in the near future. Many people are afraid of computers taking over the world, but the most advanced robot in the world can just barely walk upright on two feet up stairs.

Problem with Engineers

The social revolutions will be much like what Facebook is now and the reason why it was not done ten years earlier was not a technological problem, but a social one. People were afraid to give out personal information, when the web first came out, although it was designed originally for two way communication. This is the exact reason why the biggest challenge to change in technology is the older generation, especially the engineers.

The Next Generation

Science Fiction writers with little or no knowledge of science often in-vision some of the greatest technological leaps. The first people to adopt a new technology will always be the youngest generation and one of the key things that holds us back is that our leaders are so old and unimaginative. Some of this will only happen as that generation dies off.

Applications to Politics

These things all sound like they are only related to technology, but the same thing occurs on a political level as well. The big reason why I see the major climate changes, shifts of power, and wars over resources will happen is because people are not emotionally willing to make the changes necessary to avoid these changes.

Not all changes are bad, but people who seek to influence people of the future need to understand not just history, but modern psychology, as well. Philosophy is much less important. The real great thing that philosophy provides is training in thinking rationally for yourself, plus philosophy is also a humanity and the humanities encourage cross-discipline study, more than any of the sciences or social sciences. When you study Asian philosophy, you are studying Asian history, Asian religion, Asian literature, Asian art, and Asian music.

Finding Your Approach

Background

Rationale

It is true, that people tend to be unwilling to change and unwilling to listen to rational arguments and, as individuals, we have little power, to changes the way things are, on a grand scale. But this does not mean that we need to give up. Just like in a job, who you know is more important than what you know. Also, when you want something right, you need to do it yourself. The reality is

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you can get a lot of people to do small things, if you appeal to their emotions, but the most important and the bulk of the work must be done by you and maybe a few others.

Easier Routes

The most important factors, in determining your ability, to influence the future, is to never give up, work much harder than everyone else and to be creative. There are some things that you could do that would be very valuable, but they take a lot of money to do. Avoid these things. One of the big things we can now do, with minimal funding necessary, is to advertise and distribute information online.

Information Laws and Rules

Major Laws

Before you do this, make sure you are not violating any laws, because there is a very good chance that you will get caught, sooner rather than later. The big laws you need to worry about, beyond the obvious ones about not scamming people, making things up about people that are not true, distributing drugs, or other similar things are copyright, privacy, patent, and trademark laws. Copyright problems are the most common.

Ask Permission First

The easy way, to avoid running into a violation of someone's copyright, is to understand that everything is copyrighted automatically, as soon as it is created, and that you should ask people's permission, before using anything, that you have not created yourself. Copyrights cover everything, that is a creative work (in the broadest sense), so copyrights can include software, any kind of media like books, pictures, music, and the like. Patents cover a specific implementation of an idea and the patent laws, that you are most likely to run into, are about software and file format patents.

Copyrights

Copyright laws are in some way very logical and in other ways make little sense. You cannot copyright a short phrase, lists, fonts, or designs. You do not need to register, pay money, or to put copyright notices on your work, to protect your work with a copyright. Copyright laws only extend back a short amount of time. Book copyrights only go back to the 1920s, so anything done before then is not copyrighted, but modern translations (done after 1920) of earlier works are still copyrighted. You need to understand every license, that you have, before you use any piece of software. There are a few major categories of licenses, for programs and they can vary widely, but the main concepts are very similar.

Software Rules

Proprietary Programs

The first one is a proprietary program, like Microsoft Word or Adobe Photoshop. Both these

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programs are considered to be licensed to you and you need to pay, for each copy that you use. One copy means being on one computer at a time. Sometimes, you are allowed to have it on both a laptop and a desktop, but you can't use them at the same time. Many companies, governments, and non-profits often buy a license, for a certain number of users. Many people steal these programs and you probably won't be caught, but if you use them for business and they find out, you can get big fines. The way they find out is that one of the people working for you reports you and gets a big cash reward in exchange.

Variety of Proprietary Licenses

The software companies, who design these programs, often offer better deals, for those who work in education, usually just students and teachers, and for individuals that are not producing anything, that they will make money for. Legally, it would be better to outright pirate (steal) the software, than to use an academic license, for something you are going to sell. The educational licenses are getting stricter and stricter. Some companies monitor whether you are still in school and how many classes you are taking and can revoke your license remotely.

Open Source Licenses

Some people do not like these kinds of restrictions on software, so they use what is called open source software. This basically means, that you can use the software and distribute it all you want, but if a programmer changes the source code and distributes the modified program, then they need to give away their source code as well. Not all open source licenses require this though. Another advantage of open source software is that it survives, even if the company producing it goes out of business, or decides to stop developing it. Open source programs generally use free and open file formats, so you can usually take your work into other programs, to edit or view.

Other Common Licenses

Some other major categories of software include shareware and freeware. Freeware is free, but with the condition that you cannot distribute it, without getting permission. Shareware usually means that a program has a certain time limit or is limited, in what you can do with it, until you buy the program. Other names for shareware include demo ware, donation ware, trial ware and other similar terms.

Media Rules

Background

There are different types of licenses, for media, than for software, which includes every kind of writing, graphics, designs, audio, video, and multimedia. The same concepts apply as before with software. Ask someone's permission, before you use something, that someone else created. No matter what license is given, any rights to the media not specifically granted are retained by the copyright holder and you never get the copyright, unless you get permission stating exactly that. There are also things called moral rights, which means that if you use the images in a way that

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make someone look bad, then you have to get the rights to these as well. Some of the restrictions on copyrights, when you don't have moral rights, include using the media for things like pornography, racism, or promoting drug use.

Privacy Laws

One of the rules, that is unique, to media, are privacy laws. It is illegal, to use someone's image without their consent, unless you recorded the person in photo or video, in a public place. So, before you use anyone's image, be sure to get them to sign a written permission. Also, I recommend not using pictures of children or women of any age. I just avoid people entirely. More and more things are copyrighted, like the insides of buildings and museum art. The main principle to remember is, if it is not a public space, get permission, before you use the images, or video.

Royalty Free

Many designers keep a number of design elements like fonts, illustrations, photos, video clips, and sound effects, for later projects. The most popular licenses are called royalty free, meaning that once you pay for it, you do not need to pay again, no matter how many copies you distribute. You need to check the exact license, because there are often different fees, for different usages like web, TV, or print. There are also restrictions, to try to keep you from selling these same media collections to others. Generally, most clipart, stock photos and fonts are royalty free.

Creative Commons

There is a new license system, that has come out, in the last 10 years and is mainly used on the Internet. Creative Commons licenses include 4 main parts and most any combination of those. The 4 things, that can be allowed by the creator, without permission, are commercial use, free modification, free distribution, and no credit. So any Creative Commons license can allow or disallow any number of these things. So for instance, I license my books, to allow people to distribute them for free and use them for commercial use, but do not allow modification, and they have to give me credit. I license most of my photos, to allow people to modify them, as long as they give me credit and they allow anyone else, to modify their modification, of my original work.

Public Domain

Public Domain licenses allow you to do anything, with the media in question, without even needing to give credit, or having any others restrictions. After copyrights expire, which currently happens for books 75 years after the authors death, or 90 years after it was written, which ever comes first, they became public domain. This is the main reason why theaters love to do Shakespeare (because there are no royalties, that need to be paid). One of the things, that people think is public domain, that is not is the traditional happy birthday song.

Other Information Laws

Patents

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Patent laws usually only affect those publishing media, by having to pay royalties, to use certain patented computer concepts. Some of these are file formats that include MP3, if you use it on a large scale, and recently MP4 video, for any use. I know this sounds terrible and it makes little sense, but because there are so many patents in video compression, that many think it is not possible, to come up with a video compression, that is good enough, to be practical and not violate someone's patent.

Some people have recently tried to sue people for using JPEGs, accessing any files over any network, web browser plugins and equally stupid patents. The big way, to get a lot of money, for not doing anything, is to file a patent, for an obvious and trivial idea, and then wait ten years, for everyone to adopt it, mainly doing so because it appeared to not violate any patents, and then sue a rich company, for violating your patent. This is not how patents were intended to work.

Trademarks

When you start a new company, you can get in trouble, if you use the same name, as another company, in the same industry, especially if the name is not a generic and obvious name. For instance, if you start an office company and you call it Apple, you have no problem, but if you start a software business and call it Apple, you will get into trouble. Logos are not industry specific, so if you make a logo, for any business, that looks like a bite out of an apple, expect Apple, to force you, to change your logo.

Introduction to Belief and Schizophrenia

Forward

I am an orthodox Christian, but I am an independent thinker and I enjoy studying cultures other than my own. I can learn useful things from philosophies and religions that I don't agree with. I enjoy studying about non-dualism in Meister Eckhart, Existentialism, Chinese Philosophy, and Sufism, because that makes the most sense to me from a poetic and ethical perspective. I believe that when Sufists and Hindus were praying to their God it is the same God I worship. I still believe that the only way to be sure of salvation is through Christ, but I don't believe that God sent all these genuine believers who went by another label to Hell. And there is still much Christianity has in common with the revealed religions and can learn from them. The point isn't to be the opposite of another group of people who goes by another label. We should rather hold ourselves accountable to Biblical truth and, if reading poetry or philosophy from another culture helps break down the atheistic and materialist assumptions we were taught in school about the Bible then it is good that we have found the truth and the labels are less important. Calling yourself Christian or just reading the books that are in your church library does not get you in to Heaven. Following what Jesus said and how He acted does. I have learned from Meister Eckhart that it is the attitude and the inner life that matters, from Existentialism that being a critically thinking Christian is the way to be fully human, from Taoism that humility and compassion are at the heart of Christianity, from Buddhism that the world is a reflection of my mind and is sometimes an illusion, from Sufism that we should be passionate and joyful about our faith. No other book other than the Bible has continued to interest me for more than several reads and I see the other philosophies and religions as offshoots of certain principles of Christianity. The issues that Nietzsche and Buddhism bring up are addressed in Ecclesiastes, while Taoist issues are addressed in the Gospels. The Bible, although it is brought down to a human level, is complex enough to encompass all other systems of thought. I enjoy learning these different systems of thought, so that I can express more complex feelings creatively. Chinese thought, especially, is more about psychology than about religion. Using what I have learned from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism helps me manage my symptoms that are caused by my mental illness and how to communicate the powerful feelings that I have with others. I am especially concerned about people referring people with Schizophrenia either away from religion totally or into the occult. There is also a forceful segment of the psychiatry community that tries to persuade people with mental illnesses to not take their medication. In order to keep people away from the extremes of atheism and Animism, I have done original research in mental illness from multiple religious perspectives. I have done this to help out people who may not necessarily be willing to become Christian, although they are all consistent with a Christian world view.

Schizophrenia

My Situation

Schizophrenia is a brain disease caused by genetics and is brought out by a stressful situation. For me and many others, it was the military. The fact that the medicine works - I have not been in the hospital since December of 1999 (I was only in once) proves that it is chemical. Depression, another mental illness, has many causes and could be spiritual as well as chemical and stress to name a few.

I have Schizophrenia and I take medication, but it doesn't mean that I don't deal with delusions, paranoia, and hallucinations. There are also a number of other symptoms of Schizophrenia which are arguably more disabling, including: depression, lack of motivation, inability to concentrate, and inappropriate facial expressions.

Modern medications like Geodon do not cause people to be lethargic or gain weight as much as even Risperol. I have done some of my most creative work while on anti-psychotics and the quality actually went down right after my paranoid episode.

The problem with alternative treatments vary according to the methods. Meditation isn't effective, because it is almost impossible for a person with Schizophrenia to be able to concentrate to the necessary degree. Nutrition has not proven to have much of an effect, but avoiding caffeine especially and sugars too does help.

Bringing religion into it can be helpful, if done as a secondary treatment, in addition to the medication, to combat delusions. Religion alone does not deal with the chemical imbalance. Although non-dualism is effective, other interpretations of mysticism that are involved with the occult are a bad idea. This is not just because they anger God and hurt people, but because a person with Schizophrenia has less control of their mind than the average person and to be a Shaman, Wiccan, etc. it take great mind control. Delusions, paranoia, and hallucinations are often based on grandiose religious themes and so mixing in the occult makes treatment more complex.

Schizophrenia encompasses a wide range of brain imbalances and effects people very differently. After 10-20 years, lowering medication may be more effective.

777 Jesus Won Paranoid Episode

I had been having some problems with spiritual warfare. I had written some stories that I merged my life with Middle Earth. I accidentally put myself under a Witchcraft spell. I walked out of my house that day with my Army jacket. I was ready for warfare. I rushed around downtown. I dropped off my books, that were loading me down in my pack, by the side of the street and an angel flew off with it. I went to the Church and knelt down before the crucifix and prayed to God to spare me. I took my web site off line with the offensive material. I saw "Jesus loves you" engraved in the side of the street that I didn't see before or afterwards. I saw a double rainbow

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when I went home.

I made an altar out of our fireplace. I piled in it all my Buddhist, Feminist, and Atheistic books and lit it on fire. I kept loading books in for several hours. Some that I was unsure about I took to the fire place and, if they survived the flames, I kept them. I tore down the Buddhist goddess of mercy down from the wall and our black cat meowed out side. He was in cohorts with the Devil. I threw in the plastic snake in the fire and commanded evil out in Jesus name and turned my back to the altar. I laid on my bed and weeped for the suffering of the Church during the tribulation. I saw a vision of Star Trek as the future. I started singing "Joy to the World" as my eyes were moisturized with my tears. My eyes had hurt for 3 1/2 years before. They needed the salt they weren't getting from flushing them out several times a day for that time. I looked down at my Bible. It was the Parallel New Testament. We were in a parallel time kept that way by people making the Bible into too many versions.

My parents put out the food for the homeless for the postman to deliver. They spoke to me in code that I was the homeless person this Christmas. I walked out of the house when my parents left. I stood on the porch walking back and forth. The radio dial spun out of control. Many years now went by.

I stood on the porch, until my parents came back. I saw them come back with the dog. I had to decide whether I was going to go out and marry my friend's sister or go down to the Church to pray. I looked at my bank receipt and then put it in my pocket. I knew when I took it out again there would be enough for my marriage. I headed down the grocery store to buy a paper and look for a job. The paper had on it the story of how the world fell apart.

Only Eugene and Springfield were left. On the front page, they said we decided not to hire you (I had been interning down at the Comic News). I went down to the corner and saw the number to the Comic News on a sign. I tried to hang myself on the sign. I was unworthy.

I saw the parents of my friend whose sister I was going to marry aged years and they drove off angrily when they saw me. I should have gone down to marry her. I walked along the sidewalk. I knew I couldn't go back home. Everyone had banned Christians from their houses. I looked for a sign. I picked up a wooden sign that said "777 indoor sale". It was a secret code. I covered up the Bible so the devil didn't know about the parallel time as I walked along. I got on the bus. I shared to them that I was a Christian and I was kicked off the bus with a scornful look.

I saw the devil car pass by, all red with antenna on the top, like horns. I turned aside and continued quickly. I continued up to the church. I stopped, where two ladies were talking. All men were now kicked out of their houses.

The world was controlled by radical feminists. I asked them, if I could go in where it was warm. I told them I was the prostitute. I asked if they were Christians. One lady tried to trick me into thinking that I should go to Eugene to the Mission. The other who was Christian told me there was a Bible study at the Church. It was the only one left. The other church had slipped into just doing good works and lost their faith. I came to the Church and I started to read my Bible.

I sat with my back to the world so no one could see the Bible. I picked a version and read it all

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the way through the book of John. It sounded a lot like Revelations. I was going to wait 3 1/2 years feeding off the Bible for food. I would have to wait for my sister as the only other Christian on earth. As I prayed I turned and saw the sky change color and sunlight came out and I was warm.

I was happy once I finished reading the Bible and knew things were ok. Everyone was racing into the city as they had been racing out before. Everyone was relieved. God played jokes on me with the signs to relax me. I was too tense. As I walked by now with the wooden sign up for everyone to see I smiled and yelled out "777 Jesus won". A motorcycle gang fled from me as I walked by with the police following them. The same police I heard before.

I returned to the store and picked up a copy of the newspaper. I showed a woman everything happened like in the paper. I also offered one to one of the bikers. I went back home and picked up the mail. All the letters were filled with the number 7. I went down to my friends house and dropped off the newspaper and the jam for the homeless person. I was accepted into the American Legion. As I walked down Main Street I noticed that the wind had blown away large clumps of trees and trash. The city was being cleaned up and there were red bows on all the city for me. I was welcome at any hotel.

I saw my parents and they picked me up.

Early Warning Signs of Schizophrenia

from The Eden Express by Mark Vonnegut

1. hear God
2. everything works out perfectly
3. crying, social withdrawal
4. finding meaning in everything
5. visions
6. extreme effort for minor chores
7. lose patience
8. stop eating, sleeping
9. books become alive
10. think you are becoming enlightened
11. loss of coordination
12. overwhelming fear
13. confused about time
14. not wanting to see loved ones

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15. falling in love with strangers
16. believe in conspiracies
17. think too fast
18. think world is ending
19. stealing
20. becoming violent
21. attempt suicide

Stress Relief

Heaven and Earth

There is a rhythm that exists
Deep inside your spirit
When all you hear is breathing
And your mind is all alone
Thoughts take flight
And you see nothing
Returning the power to Heaven
And the ten thousand things
Follow your mind
Liberation is a subtlety
And freedom comes from control
The hierarchy reflects nature
And the order is transparent
Within an instant
Everything fades away
The mind is ruler
And the body follows
When the mind is empty
The body is fully alert

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With each breath
Heaven takes more territory
And the Earth longs
For Heaven's leadership
A unity exists
When Heaven is patriarch
And his rule is sage-like
And shows perspective
The Way leads to your heart
And is illuminated by your breath
Heaven leads the Way
And each member settles in
For a long peace
And a stable rule
The Way is narrow
When your mind is a casualty of war
It broadens
As Heaven is seated on your throne

Using Feng Shui to help with Anxiety

Reduce exposure to Northern Chi and become more Yang

Door at Northern part of house

1. paint red, metal door handle, or metal wind chime
2. surround door with red flowers or ribbon, or red doormat

Bathroom or Kitchen at Northern part of House

furniture is

1. wood
2. wicker
3. bamboo

Without Window in Northern part of House

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plants also help reduce Chi stagnation

use ivy - needs little light

Furniture

1. glass
2. marble
3. stone

Diet

1. Fish, grains, root vegetables
2. No sweets, raw fruits, iced drinks, coffee, wine, sugary soft drinks

Exercise helps

Finding a Hobby

According to Viktor Frankl, a person with Schizophrenia needs not worry about what causes each delusion or paranoia, but, rather that he has a disease and that the medicine he takes does the battle for him. He needs to focus on something else, because if he faces the battle head on, his subconscious will overtake him. There is a place for religion proper: when dealing with acute symptoms; but it is also important to work with your hands, to find balance and meaning in life. Craft materials don't cost very much anymore and can help a person with Schizophrenia to express their feelings, through the arts. And the arts are very interrelated with religion. Music and decorative ceremonial objects are a vital part of the religious experience. Not everyone can write their own music, but handicrafts are a more universal creative medium. I have discovered 5 crafts that I enjoy. You might want to consider one or more of them.

1. Cross Stitch
2. Sculptey
3. Stickers
4. Laminating
5. Terra Cotta Pots

Cross stitch is a type of needle-craft. It is easy to master the several main stitch types and you can get complete kits with the needle, threads and stamped pattern. You also need a wooden hoop. These are available at any good craft store. One of the draw backs is that it requires good eye sight.

There are several brands that work almost identically, but the idea is that you mold this special type of plastic and then you bake it in the oven, at low heat, so that it hardens. It is easier to work with than clay and it already comes colored. You can buy it and books that give ideas on how to make animals and decorations with it at most craft or toy stores. This requires good eyesight, but

to a lesser degree than cross stitch, as the sculpty comes in small squares.

This type of work requires a modest investment. To just do small stickers, it will cost you 20 US dollars for the machine, and the cartridge included. To make larger stickers, as well as laminate and make magnets you will have to invest 50 US dollars plus 20 US dollars per cartridge. It comes with a sticker cartridge and idea book. And the cartridges are about 8 feet long of sticky. I bought a Xyron 510 from Joann Fabrics online.

Terra Cotta pots can be used for more than just planting. They can also be used to make animals and decorative containers out of. I found some free designs at About.com and also bought a book for about 10 US dollars from the Craft Ideas online store. You can also likely get some designs at national chain book stores like Borders, or Barnes and Noble. I had trouble finding designs at even major craft store chains. The pots cost 50 cents and up, depending on the size, and can be bought at any craft store.

Stress Prevention

How to Avoid Mood Swings

ideas from *Managing Your Emotions* by Joyce Meyer

1. use self talk
2. listen to the Holy Spirit
3. make emotional stability your goal
4. spend time with people who are more emotionally stable than you are
5. know God is in complete control
6. put our confidence in Christ
7. the goal is not to be emotionless, but rather to have control over your emotions
8. let God change the circumstances by calling for his help
9. take refuge in God
10. avoid extreme highs and lows
11. having joy in Christ means to have calm delight
12. do not boast when God brings joy
13. expect to feel bored at first, when you stop going through highs and lows
14. know that most of life is just routine

Overcoming Depression

ideas from Managing Your Emotions by Joyce Meyer

1. try to keep your emotions level
2. know that when you despair, God will always give you a way out
3. when you are disappointed, call on God for a new direction, so you don't get discouraged
4. think of tomorrow in handling money
5. don't get into fights
6. when you are downcast, look to God, to lead you to a better situation
7. choose that you want to live, with hope and joy
8. choosing to live in hope and joy means not letting the inevitable let downs get you down
9. the Holy Spirit will lift you up
10. keep your concentration on God, or you will lose it to depression
11. avoid guilt, so you don't have to be hospitalized
12. avoid focusing on your own human weaknesses
13. be aware that change is naturally accompanied by depression
14. fear is a normal reaction to change, but it must be controlled like any other emotion
15. confront your depression: ask yourself why you are depressed, instruct yourself, announce your response
16. worship God
17. resist the depression immediately
18. meditate on everything God has done for you
19. pray to God for help

Psychology

Personal Psychological Issues

My Biggest Flaws

Negative Effects

I just had an insight tonight that the source of most the things that bother me and stress me out are based on two aspects of my personality: I am both impatient and a perfectionist, but not in just the ordinary sense - I take these to the utmost extremes. The most likely cause of being a perfectionist comes from my experiences in the military and my impatience is related to my mental illness. One of the reasons why it took me so long to figure this out is because I can easily get into an endless loop trying to deal with these problems, especially if I think I need to do it all right away and perfectly.

Positive Effects

I think some of the positive side effects of my biggest flaws are that I am very disciplined and passionate about whatever I set my mind to. I never do anything part way or put something important off to the next day. Another things that drives me even further into this mode of thinking is that I believe that society will likely fall apart soon and the people I meet on a daily basis are so lazy and apathetic.

How the Army Changed Me

My Life Started Over

The Army changed my life, so much, that I consider my life to have started over again, when I joined the military. Serving in the Army changed my perspective on life. I became much more serious, risk adverse, confident, paid more attention to detail, learned about the importance of the labor movement, decided I never wanted to be a leader, and I learned more about the way the world worked.

Never Could Relax

The military was not all bad, but I was constantly under tremendous stress, as I never got enough sleep, during training and I never felt I could relax. The military has much higher standards, than the rest of the world. They perform duties that, if done wrong, kill a great number of people.

Results of Losing Wars

Losing wars is a big deal and the US can lose its position, as a superpower, partially, by losing wars. Europe has had to join together, to compete with the US, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and Japan, because of almost destroying itself, in two world wars and then a decades long cold war.

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The Gas Chamber

After I joined the military, I realized that I was taking a bigger risk than I had previously known. I wasn't afraid of dying or of bullets, but I was scared of the idea of being burned alive, which is very common nowadays. We all had to go through a gas chamber, with very highly concentrated and higher strength tear gas and then take our protective masks off, for 5 minutes, while in there. It felt to me like my eyes and lungs were on fire and I was drowning in fire. It is one of the most painful experiences I have had.

Contemporary Use of Chemical Weapons

I had asked my recruiter specifically about poison gas and if it was commonly used against us, but he said that no one uses it now. He was an Army Ranger, so he knew enough to know that wasn't true. It is true that chemical weapons are banned in warfare, by the Geneva Conventions, but the governments we fight wars against almost always have either never signed the Geneva Conventions, or if they have, they have no intention of following them.

Protection from Chemical Weapons

During both Iraqi wars, the military was sure they would be gassed, even though they had taken some extreme tactics, to keep them from happening. The protective gear is not very sophisticated, but it does work, if sealed up properly, against a number of different poisonous gases. We are trained in this, in Basic Training, as well as, how to administer shots, to counter the effects, of nerve agents. The real money is spent on very sophisticated sensors.

Avoiding Chemical Weapons Use

During the first war in Iraq, the president communicated to the Iraqi leadership, that it would use nukes, against Iraq, if it used poisonous gas, on US troops. During the second war, special agents went in beforehand and found the leaders responsible, for releasing chemical weapons, and told them they would be leaders in the new government, if they didn't release the poisonous gas, but if they did, they would be tried for war crimes.

Military Legal System

The laws are much more severe in the military. For example, you can go to prison, for committing adultery and be killed, for raping someone. You also get in trouble, with the local laws, in the place, where you committed the crime, as well. You can even get in trouble, for being a few minutes late to formation, or having food in your locker.

The Article 15

A First Sergeant can give you an Article 15, for something, as little as, not dropping for push-ups, when a Sergeant orders you to. When you get an Article 15, you are given additional chores, to do, for 2-4 hours a day, after all your regular work and get a few hundred dollars, taken out of your small paycheck. This idea that the military commits all sort of terrible crimes and soldiers get a way with it is not my experience at all, but high ranking officers may be able to get around the rules.

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Always on Call

People who have never served in the military do not know this, but your enlistment in the military is not a 9 to 5 job. You can and will be taken away from your free time, for anything that your unit's leaders want you to do. It isn't just in time of war, or even for a good reason. It is not at convenient times that they call on you and you never get extra pay for it.

Pressures of an NCO

One of the big reasons it is so hard, to get qualified people, to serve a second enlistment in the Army is that you have to commit to being an NCO (like a Sergeant in the Army), for a small amount more pay, and then are solely and completely responsible, for 4-8 other soldiers. If they need to lose weight, you make sure they do so, in your free time. If they cannot get to work on time, it is your job to make sure they do so, in your free time.

Increased Confidence

Now that I have gone through such intense training, I feel much more confident, about things that would have previously scared me. My tolerance for pain has increased, as well. I now can push myself, to the point of a heart attack, while exercising, because I have been through much more pain, in the past. I am not afraid of getting into a fight, with a person or an animal. I am not afraid of having to survive, without modern plumbing, electricity, police, and fire services. I am still afraid of going to prison, but that is just commonsense. I gained my confidence with computers, at this time, as well.

Why I Never Gave Up

I am Complex

Many people wonder why I have committed, so many years to creating, what has now evolved, into many books. The answer is long and complex, as I am a complex person. First of all, the idea that I didn't give up is not true: I ended my military service before my tour enlistment was up and I never graduated from college.

I Did Fail

What interested me in philosophy at the time was Philosophical Taoism and Christian Existentialism. I was taking a Chinese Literature course, for my non-business breadth requirement, along with Chinese (which I had to drop out, of as they went too fast) and then because I did not pass enough classes, I had to take summer courses and Existentialism was one of the only courses still open.

I Identified with Philosophy

Taoism was a tradition in China that scholars became part of, if they failed their public service exam, which was based on writing poetry about Confucianism. Since I failed in both the military and college, I could identify with Taoism. When I took my Existentialism class, I realized that I had always been an Existentialist. Both of these philosophies emphasized humility and what I

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hated most was arrogance, so it was a natural fit.

Trying to Replace what I Lost

One of the reasons why I started writing so much was that I had burned my plans, for a Christian nation in Lebanon, for the time of the apocalypse. I destroyed this, when I was having my psychotic or paranoid episode. I also burned my poetry, that I had written for a girl in high school, while I was in the military, as I believed that future girl friends would not like that. After all this was destroyed, I wanted to create something of equivalent value.

My Relief

After I was diagnosed with Schizophrenia, my chronic allergic pink eye cleared up, which I had for the previous 3 years, and I thought I had cancer, but I found out was wrong. At first, I thought my stay in the hospital was because of an emotional break down. I didn't find out, until a month later, that I had Paranoid Schizophrenia, so I asked if I would get worse and they said no, so I was very relieved.

I was Good at Something

I never considered giving up, or even knew how to do it. I worked hard to be able to read philosophy and write again. I found these activities very rewarding, as I was good at them, in contrast to most of the things I did in high school and the military (which I wasn't good at). I took on many activities to improve myself in high school, including: Boy Scouts, Speech, French, Cross Country, Track, and Cheerleading. I was also bad at infantry and working with computers, in the military.

I was Doing Something Important

I wanted to contribute something important in my life and as I tried various volunteer activities, I could never get a volunteer position, where I felt I was making, as much of a difference, as when I was writing. I knew if I didn't do what I was doing, then no one else would and I knew I would never make any money off of it. I continued to read as I found Asian philosophy to be very interesting and worthwhile to study. It helped me to be an ethical person and to understand myself better.

Until the World Ends

At this point, I have continued to have more and more to say over time, so I will continue as long, as the world stays together. And the world ending as we know it has given me a push, to complete, as much, as possible, before everything falls apart. We are faced with more problems, with more severe and likely disasters than ever before. But I have never even thought of what giving up would mean or how I would do it, so I am definitely not giving up now. And, most importantly, my family and God has never given up on me either.

Ways in Which My Thinking is Chinese

Cyclical View of Time

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In the modern world, time is often thought of as linear and sequential and that later times in history are always more advanced than earlier times. But the more we learn about history, the more we learn how advanced ancient cultures were and how much was lost shortly after these empires collapsed. We are finally learning that the Romans were more advanced than Europe up until the 19th century and most of the technologies that allowed the advance of Europe in the last 2 centuries were imports from China, ancient Greece, India, and the New World. Italian food was only recognizable after the noodle was imported from China and the tomatoes from the New World. From India came the concept of zero, the numbering system we use today, the use of chickens for food, and using cotton for clothing. Most Western war fighting technologies, including: gun powder, missiles, and modern information warfare techniques.

Emotional Factors First

Most people in the Europe and America relate in terms of what is called rational intelligence. This means that most people in the West base their interactions on facts, dates, figures, statistics, linear logic, and other things that can be written down and measured. Another approach is called emotional intelligence. This kind of thinking does not have any set rules nor lend themselves to a observe and record approach. Most communication is not in spoken words, but is instead communicated through body language. If someone does not like you at work, they can make your life miserable, even while following all the rules designed to make the work environment pleasant. You cannot pin down the way a person feels to a given event or a specific time frame, but they can identify who it is who is causing them pain.

Obsession with Self-Sufficiency

I think that it is important to know how do do as many things as possible. I learned early in my education about computers that I couldn't get anyone to solve the problem unless I paid them vast sums of money. This is when I started learning more and more about computers in order to know them well enough to fix problems myself. In my website and book publishing I also depend on as little as I can, so that I have control over the future of what I have created. I do everything myself because if you want someone to do a good job at something you have to pay them enormous sums and to get someone to do a great job at something, you need to do it yourself. One of the biggest problems today is that people have too low a standards in how they behave and how hard they work.

Different Formal and Private Manners

A lot of people that have met me think I am outgoing, friendly, optimistic, and have everything figured out. But this is only my public side. My family knows a very different side of me. I am really moody, passionate, artistic, critical, and dedicated. I spend a tremendous amount of time thinking and for a long time constantly thought of how I could improve my website in the back of my mind. I don't reveal much to a psychologist or doctor, because they are not family. It is also hard to be bare your souls with a bureaucracy when only random things you say are written down out of context and then you are forced to explain them many years later out of the blue to a totally different person. It is also hard to trust someone who is working for the government and is required to keep a record and pass on anything you might say to who knows what agency for who

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knows what reason without ever even telling you. It is funny that people are afraid of the things that they type into Google, but they are not afraid of the government having all the information and either losing it, mixing it up, or prosecuting you later for it, without informing you what for or given a chance to verify if the information is accurate (all because of the Patriot Act).

Importance of Writing and Written Culture

Writing is the vessel in which culture is contained, consumed, changed, and preserved. This generation wants to give up on reading, because they think it is too hard. Most people now just want to look at pretty pictures or funny videos of people doing stupid things. In the past, people fought hard, in all cultures, to get their kids into school and learn how to read and write. Many people would have paid almost any price to give their children a decent education. And the church used to be part of this tradition. The problem with relying on others to take care of the writing is that you lose the ability to participate in the culture. In other words, you are giving up your citizenship and your constitutional rights as well as your ability to understand religion, art, history, math, Science, or anything else communicate mainly in writing. When people lose the ability to express themselves with words they give up their freedom and their humanity. Without writing, we would not have anything other than stone tools and we would be living hand to mouth off the land, all by ourselves.

Why So Rational?

Why The Need to Explain Things?

I am actually much more mystical, than rational and the big reason why I have put so much effort into providing detailed arguments, for what I believe, is to ground me in reality. When suffering from paranoia, you can easily get lost in fantasy and lose touch with reality. This does not mean that the fact based understanding of the world explains everything, nor is it the most important aspect of the world. But as much as I believe God helps me in everything I do, I don't expect to not pay my bills and instead wait on God, to pay them miraculously. Being spiritual should not mean giving up your ability to interact with others, to be on time, and to take care of your health and finances.

The Bible Doesn't Need Apologetics

I have focused a lot lately in my writings on being more systematic and giving reasoned out arguments, for my beliefs and decisions. At the same time, I do not believe that the Christian God or the Bible need my reasoned out arguments, for belief to spread. In fact, without me, the 3rd world has already realized that Western Civilization and Christianity are totally different things. They know that capitalism and imperialism is not the the only way to structure society.

Christianity Has Already Won

For the amount of time that Christianity was known in the third world, it took very little time to outnumber Islam 2 to 1. Also, those practicing indigenous religions are much more likely to favor Christianity, over Islam, in Africa and in East Asia there are many more Chinese

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Christians, than we know of. Even in Indonesia, which accepted Islam considerably recently, did so in the 13th Century. Islam had a thousand year head start in Africa (excluding the Christian enclave of Ethiopia) and Southern Asia (after successfully ethnic cleansing the Syriac language and Eastern Orthodox Christians in these areas).

Rationalism Has Improved my Situation

I have found that being rational in my public self has been useful, both in increasing my credibility with others in the mental health system and people I meet, as well as, improved my ability to restrict paranoia, to a certain part of my mind. I believe that the world in which I live (America) is much more in need of embracing spirituality, than they need to listen to human reasoning and I have much more interest in the spiritual than the sciences. So, if I didn't have Schizophrenia, I would likely have never approached my work, in the way that I have now. I would likely have used art, instead of writing and the only writing would likely just be poetry.

Mental Illness

The Schizophrenia Split

Reality vs. Fantasy

Many people confuse multiple personality disorder with Schizophrenia, but these disorders are totally unrelated. Schizophrenia does cause a mental split, but not between different personalities. The split is between fantasy and reality.

Like Apostle Paul

The two aspects of your mind are a lot like that which the Apostle Paul talks about in his Letters to the different early churches in the New Testament. Paul talks about the spiritual man and the carnal man as being constantly at war, so although part of you doesn't want to sin, the other part is addicted to it and wants to continue participating in those behaviors. Paul says that even he does not do what he want to do, but that which he doesn't want to do, he does.

Counseling Doesn't Work

In experiencing the symptoms of Schizophrenia, the person knows in one part of their mind that what they fear or what they imagine is not based on reality, but the other part of them still fears or imagines that anyway. A lot of psychology is about trying to overcome your addictions and usually focuses on both cognitive and behavioral solutions to the patient's obsessions and other destructive behavior. But the paranoia and delusions caused by Schizophrenia cannot be dealt with in the usual way.

Only Medicine Works

Traditional counseling does not solve the fantastic beliefs a person with Schizophrenia suffers with. The only effective way to treat Schizophrenia is by sedatives/tranquilizers. The medicine works by slowing the entire body down, including the mind. This medicine lowers the intensity

of the paranoia and delusions, but does not resolve the other symptoms of Schizophrenia, including: depression, inappropriate facial expressions, lack of motivation, and trouble relating with other people.

Symptoms of Schizophrenia

Types of Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a broad category of different mental disorders mostly caused by abnormal development of the brain in the adolescent years. Schizophrenia is caused by a combination of a genetic tendency and a stressful experience. Most people think that people with Schizophrenia all have hallucination, paranoia, and delusions. There are actually different types of Schizophrenia and some of them do not have paranoia or hallucinations as symptoms.

Variety of Symptoms

Hallucinations suffered by people with Schizophrenia are almost always auditory and are mostly voices. Only some people who have Schizophrenia hear voices. Paranoia is about fear of people or other sentient beings coming after you, while delusions involve all the other types of misconceptions about reality. Most people who have Schizophrenia have delusions, but only some of them suffer from paranoia.

Schizophrenia vs. Other Mental Illnesses

Paranoid Schizophrenia is widely accepted as the most disabling mental illness. The main reason why Schizophrenia is more serious than clinical depression or bipolar disorder is that these disorders are mood disorders, while Schizophrenia is a thought disorder. There is also a hybrid disorder which causes much less severe symptoms of Schizophrenia combined with either the mania or depression aspects of bipolar disorder.

Fear is Not Fun

What is Paranoia?

Many people enjoy activities that give them a rush for fear like: skydiving, bungee jumping, living in deserts or tundra, watching horror movies, going to haunted houses, traveling to war zones, or being a volunteer fire fighter, a policeman, or a prison guard. Some of these activities that people engage in help us out and we are indebted to those, who are willing to, for whatever reason, risk their lives, for our protection.

I have a unique perspective on what is commonly referred to as paranoia: which is an extreme form of perpetual fear, although it is not based on the reality of the situation you are in. But it is very real to those experiencing it. This kind of fear is not fun, it is very exhausting, and the adrenaline rush is not something that those who suffer with this enjoy in any way.

When you have fear that is out of your control and not something you can stop, by avoiding dangerous situations or not reading or watching movies about them. It is not a fear that you can

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reason out and place limits on and it makes it no less real to your mind, even though you know, in another part of your mind, that is is baseless.

Medicine Causes Constant Tiredness

People who don't take medicine for pain or mental illness often think that the medicine takes away the entirety of the symptoms, but this is not true. Even while taking powerful sedatives, I experience paranoia frequently. One of the side effects of taking powerful sedatives is that they affect the entire body and are not just limited to slowing down the brain. They make my body so tired, that I am constantly more tired, then I ever was, even while doing intense training in the military and only getting 3 hours sleep at night.

I am always exhausted, no matter how much sleep I get, and never feel fully rested. I cannot just sleep or stop working, when I am when I am tired, because if I did that, I would never stop sleeping. At the same time as my body is very tired, my mind is still very active. Part of the reason why I work so fast is that my mind has always been much faster than other people's, because I have always been very intelligent. Another reason for working so fast is that I do not have as much time to work as other people do, because I cannot work for hours on end and not get stressed out and over stimulated.

People Think "He is Totally Crazy" or "He has No Problems"

And people who are not familiar with mental illnesses assume that a person is totally out of control of their mind and is living in a complete fantasy world. But if they were then they would not be able to work out the elaborate scenarios, they use to protect themselves from the fear. When you are paranoid or delusional, you have a certain aspect of your brain that believes a reality that is not accurate, but most of your reasoning ability still works. People often think people will become violent when they are paranoid, but it is most likely that they will avoid other people and escape from situations that scare them.

The things that are most disabling to me and cause me to avoid activities, that most people enjoy, are a combination of my paranoia and my lack of energy. It is hard to meet new people and engage in new activities, when you constantly worry about the "worst case scenario" It is also hard to do physical activities or go out in the evenings or the early mornings, when you are so tired.

In addition, much of the volunteer work is not fulfilling, because most volunteer jobs are not very interesting and, at the same time, volunteering requires that you commit to a set schedule. Having to do the same thing every day is very stressful for me. Other city clubs also require you to do a lot of work. People generally don't believe I can do anything, so they never give me a chance or they don't believe that I am really disabled, so they don't give me extra consideration.

Extreme Anxiety

Related Symptoms

Schizophrenia is related to anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder, in that it is common for

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people who have Schizophrenia to have symptoms common to those suffering from these other disorders. Paranoia is really just an extreme form of fear and anxiety is like fear but less intense, so it is reasonable for these disorders to have cross-over symptoms.

Common Symptoms

The most common anxiety symptoms amongst people with Schizophrenia are: an avoidance of confrontations and other stressful situations, anxiety about being around more than couple people at once, and an aversion to many daily activities that most people participate in. This is one of the main causes of isolation amongst people with Schizophrenia apart from the typical financial factors.

What Stresses Me Out

One of the things that stresses me out is any situation where I am overly mentally stimulated like: being in crowded, infrequently visited, or new places; trying to listen to music or play complicated or thinking games for long periods of time; any interactions that require filling our forms or dealing with bureaucracy; waiting for meetings, events, and transportation that are not on time; dealing with obnoxious, talkative, aggressive, or rude people; dealing with the elderly, the homeless, the developmentally disabled, or children; and other similar situations.

Overcoming Anxiety

One of the worst things you can do if you have the symptoms of an anxiety disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder is to give in to the obsessive thoughts. The more you follow your obsessive thoughts with compulsive actions, the more addictive and intense the thoughts become and the more the symptoms increasing take over and dominate your life. To overcome theses disorders, you need to gradually increase your exposure to the thing that disturbs you.

Separate and Not Equal

Not Treated as Equals

One of the things that bothers me most about being mentally ill is that the people whose job it is to provide services for us do not know anything about the mentally ill. Instead of treating us as equals and people who need extra help, they pressure us by: not trusting us, not listening to us, not explaining things to us correctly, not being consistent or reliable, assuming they always know more than us, assuming everyone's situation is the same, treating us as criminals, assuming our time is not important, using fear to intimidate us, making services difficult and time consuming to access, and trying to control us by having control over our access to our medicine, our money, and our independence.

Source of Problems

The biggest sources of the problems are: that all the services provided for the mentally ill are constantly being reduced due to budget cuts even when the economy is doing well, using a complex bureaucracy under the assumption that this prevents dishonest people from making money off the services, the people that run the services are there because they get a power trip

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over controlling other people, and the general lack of knowledge by those whose job it is to provide services for the mentally ill.

Political Correctness

Every other disability even one like ADHD where almost everyone has, the government goes to great lengths financially, legally, and socially to empower those people affected, whereas with the mentally ill it is politically correct to: blame us for problems not related to us, single us out in ways that would never be acceptable for other people with disabilities, expect things that are unreasonable to expect of us, perpetuating stereotypes and urban myths that have no basis in reality, denying us funding, letting criminals illegitimately use mental illness to get out of prison time so that people continue to assume that the mentally ill are out of control or commit crimes more than other people, and generally use our disability against us.

We Want Equal Help

The blind get people to go to great lengths to convert books to tapes and braille, pressure webmaster to have to re-design their website so that blind people can access them, and create talking crossing lights all at great expense to the taxpayers. The government goes to great lengths to make ramps for wheel chairs and add wheelchair lifts to public buses. The developmentally disabled a tremendous amount of government funds, get special classrooms and funds for their education, and they get to behave aggressively and be obnoxious when they control themselves. I don't want other people with different disabilities to get less from the government, but I don't know why the mentally ill don't get the same amount of government support financially, legally, and socially.

General Psychological Issues

The Corruption of Individuality

Definition of Consumerism

I cannot give a set definition of consumerism that holds true for everyone. Obviously we in the West and more and more in the rest of the world have to work and pay for entertainment to relax. This is not what I mean by consumerism. Just like being rich is relative and not wrong in and of itself, it all comes down to what Paul said of sin: if you do mostly what you do not want to do, that is a sin and an addiction. If you can pay your bills and are not overwhelmed by debt, then just follow your conscience. If other people think you have a problem, that would be a fairly reliable sign of a problem. Even work can be a sin and an addiction, of which I am often guilty. And becoming saved will not necessarily give you the ability to you overcome your addiction right away.

Consumerism = Sin = Addiction

The modern American culture is based on consumerism. The reason why businesses and governments want us to continue to be primarily consumers, rather than producers, is because

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they know they get more than just our money – they get our souls. In other words, consumerism is based on sin and addiction times 10. We constantly talk about how much we save, when we buy things and how wonderful it is to have the wealth, freedom, and variety to choose what we want. But in our quest to exercise our freedom, we are becoming slaves to our addictions.

Not True Freedom

Modern American consumerism is so addictive because: we can afford it, we get instant gratification, and we get prestige by buying the same things as other people do. Ultimately we want to be happy and belong to a group. The problem is rooted in our misunderstanding of the concept of individuality and our democracy being based on inalienable rights. Some of the most extreme individualists are the Existentialist philosophers, but they always associated freedom with responsibility and freedom from conformity, as vital components of their beliefs.

How to Conquer Our Addictions

The true way to conquer our addictions is to submit ourselves to God. We think in being able to do whatever we want that we are free, but it doesn't work that way. We were designed to have God be part of our lives. When we say want freedom, what we usually mean is that we want to belong to something greater than ourselves. The admission to almost any group is costly in money, time, and comes with a loss of freedom in thinking. The admission to the family of God is free in money and allows you to be the one in control of your destiny.

Controlling Your Future

God does not want you to submit to Him out of fear of going to Hell, or out of desperation after trying everything else. God just wants us to follow His rules, because He created us and the rules are there for our protection. Being led by God and following His rules will save us from our addiction, allow us to belong to the greatest family, and allows us to have free choice in what we do, without ultimately serving others, by our choices. You have to choose what group you want to belong to: the one that gives you hollow freedom that leads you to physical and spiritual death, or the one that gives you a new life and new genuine freedom, that you can control with God's help.

Reasons to Relax

Relaxing is Important

Part of life is rest and doing things you enjoy is a need, not a want. As much as I talk about how bad the mistakes are that we have made, how people should push themselves and give their all, and my sadness at the loss of interest in fine literature and art; it is good to play games, watch TV, and lay down for a nap. Just as you work hard, so you need a way stop your work, enjoy what you have created, and distract yourself from the problems, in your life and in the world. No one can work constantly and still remain healthy enough to continue their work.

Making Time to Relax

Most of us are too busy to enjoy life or have time to spend with people, outside our families. If

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we allow ourselves time to relax, we will be more patient with each others, accomplish more in less time, and make better decisions. Rest is as important as work and we need to have both a balanced and healthy life. When we cut back, on things we think we have to do, we will have more time to do what we want to do and we will enjoy life more. It is also easier to have contact with God, when you take time out to stop working, so that you can concentrate on what God has to say, without distractions.

Being Creative

Relaxation is important for creative people, because you often get your best ideas, when not consciously thinking about them. Often times inspiration comes, when doing some daily routines, that don't require much thought. You also cannot really judge your work, when you are tired, like you can evaluate it, when you are rested up. If you get discouraged with something you created, don't throw it away. Decide about it, after you finish sleeping.

Dealing with Schizophrenia

Relaxing is important, for people with Schizophrenia, as it is easier for us to get over stimulated and get stressed out, when dealing with everyday situations, that are much more difficult for us to deal with, than for other people. Another major problem, for people who suffer with Schizophrenia, is the paranoia or delusions, that constantly wear on us, much like pain drains your energy. The medicines that treat some of the symptoms of Schizophrenia are often sedating, so they make the person affected much more tired than other people.

Making Good Decisions

To make a difference in the world, we need to make good decisions about the economy, environment, international relations and other big issue that affect us on a large scale. But to get there, we need to start making smart choices in our individual lives, on a much smaller scale. We need to give ourselves time to rest and recover, just like we need to: allow areas for the environment to return to its original state, have the patience to give other leaders time to think and have time away when making important decisions, and we need to give our economy allowances for not always growing and not constantly expect more out of it all the time.

Discover My Life Story

Childhood

I was born in 1978, and in Middle School, I saw the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, starting with the breaking down of the Berlin Wall. I grew up in the 90's when the world was much simpler. We didn't have any major wars going on and the economy was growing. Computers were simple and most people didn't have access to the Internet.

I was involved in church and Scouting from an early age. I started out in Tiger Cubs in 1st Grade and finished by becoming an Eagle Scout, just before I graduated from high school. I spent the years between 8 and 18 at an Evangelical Quaker church.

Elementary School was boring, while Middle School I was unpopular and it was a living hell. One of the things that made Middle School so bad is that I had some huge warts on my hands, which I had to get removed by acid, liquid nitrogen, and then by minor surgery. I also had a newspaper delivery route near my house and had to get up at 4 am twice a week, for several years. I had to collect the money, by going house to house and it was like pulling teeth, to get people to pay a couple bucks a month, for the newspaper.

High School

High School was much more fun, as I spent most my after school hours in a variety of activities and clubs. My junior year, I was involved in 12 extra curricular activities. I also became popular, after I spent a year on the Cheerleading Team, as the Yell King and Spirit Man. I also ran Cross Country and Track the other 3 years and my senior year I took weightlifting and conditioning, to get ready for the military.

I spent 2 of my summer vacations, during high school, working at Boy Scout summer camps. One was in the middle of a national forest in the mountains, by a small lake and the other was on the coast, with direct beach access. One summer, I also went to Washington, D.C., because I won first place in my state in a national peace essay contest, sponsored by the US Institute of Peace. In DC, we did a simulation of the conflict in Somalia during the mid 90's and got to meet important government and organizations like our congressional representatives, the State Department, the Red Cross, and more. We also saw the Smithsonian and toured the capitol.

During the school year, I participated in many clubs, including: Model United Nations, Speech, French Club. My junior year I also did Peer Counseling, Catering Club, and started my own Political Club. I missed so many days of school, due to my extra curricular activities, that I should have had to repeat most my years of high school. Most the activities I was involved with, I was bad at, including: Speech, sports, and Scouting. This influenced me to later focus on things I was good at, including the humanities and the arts.

Army

My junior year, I signed up for the Army, in the Delayed Entry Program. One reason I signed up was for the money for college, but I also believed that was what God wanted me to do, as preparation for something later. I left for the military a month after I graduated from High School. The military was very stressful, but very exciting. I knew I was doing something important, but I also was terrified of a number of the risks involved, especially of the threat of chemical weapons.

One of the things we had to do in Basic Training was go into a gas chamber for 5 minutes, with CS gas (which is a kind of tear gas) and then take off our masks, while we were inside. I felt like I was being burned alive. I figured if the training gas was so bad, then the real chemical weapons must be infinitely worse. Later, the psychiatrists that diagnosed me with Schizophrenia thought that the gas chamber was the time when I had my first psychological break with reality.

I was in the military from 2 July 1996 to 15 August 1997. I finished all my training, to work with computers and I was stationed in Hawaii from February to August 1997. I really enjoyed Hawaii. I was on the island of Oahu – the one with Honolulu and most the tourist sites on it. I got to see almost every thing there for tourists. I also took and passed several college classes and tests that counted for college credit. I ended up completing my Freshman Year of college, during my stay in the military. What I enjoyed most about Hawaii was the people at the churches I went to.

I left the military with an Honorable Discharge under the regulations for discharges for combat stress. I was diagnosed with Schizoid personality disorder. I left in 5 weeks, after going to my commanding officer, and asking to get out. I was obviously out of my mind, at the time. Never do it this way. Even dishonorable discharges take longer than this.

When I was in the military, they had a number of different discharges, including: general, other than honorable, etc. In the military, you can get what is called an Article 15, for minor infractions, like being late to formation or having food in your locker. You get fined a couple hundred dollars and get several weeks of extra duty, after your work. Any NCO can give one of these out, for almost anything, no matter how minor. If I had one of these, since I was only in for a year, I could have gotten one of the other discharges, like general, which would have kept me from being able to get my disability pension later on. Luckily, I had none of these.

When I left Basic Training, I got chronic allergic conjunctivitis (also known as pink eye), which I had for several years more, until I got started on my first anti-psychotic, when I first got diagnosed with Schizophrenia. My eyes itched and burned all the time until then.

College

When I left the military, I started at a local Community College for a year, to complete my lower division required courses, for business management. I hated the business classes, but I believed that this was the way to a good job and so I did it anyway. I had to take accounting 5 times to pass it, although I did very well in economics. After continuing for a year at the local University in town, I finally decided to change majors, to Journalism, as I enjoyed and was good at writing

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and I believed it would get me a good job.

I tried taking a Chinese language and a History of Philosophy series of courses, but stopped taking Chinese, because I couldn't learn the language fast enough and the philosophy courses, because I forgot to do the first paper which would have given me an F. I also had to drop an advanced Feminist Anthropology course, because I couldn't figure out what phrasing the teacher wanted me to use for my papers and I had to drop a required course in Statistics, because my ability to do basic math left me.

Along the way, I took a Chinese literature series of courses, for my breadth requirement, a class on Existentialism, and one on Ecofeminism, to make up for courses which I failed, plus an advanced class on Beauvoir and did well in all of them. This was when I realized I was good at philosophy. This is also when I started the website and started writing poetry about God and religion.

Schizophrenia

Then on 11 December 1999, I had a break down and had my first psychotic episode. My parents found me walking on the street and took me to the hospital emergency room. I was talking a mile a minute. The doctors thought I was on methamphetamine, until I took a urine test. Then they sent me to the psychiatry ward of another local hospital, where I went in voluntarily. I spent 10 days (until my dad's insurance stopped) and then left in my parents care.

I found out a month later that I had Paranoid Schizophrenia. I just watched TV, for the first several months, but then started reading, where I left off, in my Chinese Literature and Existentialism classes. I then wrote up my paranoid episode and started writing poetry again.

That fall, I left my parents home and stayed in a local mental health group home with 8 other mentally ill men. I stayed there until I got my veteran's pension. Then I moved out into my own apartment and had an in home care worker help me with cooking and cleaning. I later spent some time in a retirement home, after having trouble with the in home care and to make sure I remembered my medicine. I stayed there for 2 years and had to eat terrible food and deal with some very nasty and delusional old people.

Then I left, for my own apartment again. I chose one next to an independent living arrangement for the mentally ill and they monitored my medicine. Now I am completely on my own and I published 4 books with what I had written up until then and then continued to write.

Discover My Disability

Background Information

General Information

Schizophrenia describes a wide spectrum of mental health disorders. Schizophrenia is a thought disorder and is the worst mental illness one can have. It is not known what causes it. There is a genetic tendency and then it is brought out by a stressful situation, most commonly, military service. About 1% of the population has Schizophrenia worldwide and it has the same rates of infection across the globe, in every country and culture. Diagnosis doesn't generally happen until the affected person has a psychotic episode and breaks a minor law, so they can be sent to a psychiatric hospital (I never committed a crime and voluntarily signed myself in). The illness generally starts for men in their 20's and for women in their 30's, but it can easily take a decade to admit they have a problem and to get properly diagnosed and on effective medicine.

Common Misunderstandings

Schizophrenia has nothing to do with multiple personality disorder and is very different from bipolar disorder and clinical depression. Schizophrenia has no effect on your intelligence, independence of thinking, or creativity. Schizophrenia is often confused with some sort of existential crisis of spirit or as a sign of someone having the special spiritual ability, but in reality having spiritual powers has nothing to do with Schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a mental disability and does not give the person any special gifts. In fact, a person with Schizophrenia has less control of their mind and would find things like meditation to be very difficult. Confusing spiritual powers and mental illness is insulting to both groups as it creates the perception that spiritually aware people are somehow disabled and it insults people with Schizophrenia who try to avoid the spiritual world.

Dealing with the Illness

Symptoms

The symptoms of Schizophrenia are grouped into positive and negative categories, positive meaning what you have in addition to what a normal person has and negative meaning lacking something a normal person has. The positive symptoms can include paranoia, auditory hallucinations (hearing voices), and delusions. The negative symptoms include depression, lack of motivation, and lack of facial expression.

Treatment

Schizophrenia was only successfully treated to some extent since the 1950s when it was discovered that tranquilizers, also known as sedatives, helped. Sedatives are the only treatment that has had any degree of success. Counseling can help as a secondary treatment. There is no traditional medicine treatment that works for Schizophrenia. Before the 1950s, a person with Schizophrenia would starve to death, because when a person goes into a psychotic episode, they stop eating.

Medicine and Side Effects

The medicine brings the positive symptoms under control, but it does not get rid of all of them, so that you can deal with them and either causes or does not alleviate the negative symptoms. The medicine does not make you any less creative, any less independent of thought or affect your intelligence. The medicine slows things down and make you very sleepy and gain a lot of weight. The newest medicines are supposed to not cause sleepiness and weight gain and just target the mind, but they still have those same side effects for me. Only certain drugs work on certain people and for many people the newer drugs aren't effective on them or they cannot afford them. It is very hard for a person with Schizophrenia, to remember to take their medicine. Many people stop taking their medicine, because they have less symptoms than before and they think they don't need it any more. This usually results in having to go back to the hospital and starting from scratch.

Living with the Situation

Daily Life

A third of people with Schizophrenia just stare at the wall all day, a third are in assisted living and a third are mostly independent. People with Schizophrenia are no more violent than anyone else, but are often the victims of crimes, as people try to get them involved in various scams and they also often live in poor neighborhoods, as most have to live on a state pension that is very small. Many people with Schizophrenia cannot read anything longer than a newspaper article and although there is often an increased interest in religion, it is almost impossible for someone with Schizophrenia to understand philosophy, regardless of intelligence. Schizophrenia is related to anxiety disorder, but many degrees of magnitude greater. People with Schizophrenia are often uncomfortable around other people and live isolated lives.

Unqualified Workers

Many people are hard to diagnose as to what mental illness they have, which is made worse by the fact that many mentally ill individuals have tried to self medicate with various street drugs and many of the workers in the mental health system do not have adequate training and try to push certain agendas like telling people to treat their symptoms by some kind of diet, some sort

of meditation, or to reduce the amount of medicine they are on which are all ineffective.

My Situation

Paranoid Schizophrenia

I have Paranoid Schizophrenia. This is the worst kind of Schizophrenia. What is most disabling symptom to me is paranoia. Paranoia is basically a kind of terror – think fear on steroids. Paranoia and delusions are similar, but usually distinguished by paranoia being a fear of people coming after you and delusions include other situations you imagine, all of which are not real. My diagnosis is definite, as I have been diagnosed to have the same mental illness by 3 independent psychiatrists, and no psychiatrists since then have ever challenged my diagnosis (psychiatrists are the only ones qualified to diagnose mental illness, which have much more training than a psychologist, even one with a Ph.D.). I also have never taken any street drugs or abused prescriptions, which made it easier to diagnose me.

Behavioral Strategies

In addition to the medicine I take, I have several other methods, that help keep my symptoms under check. I have to be careful what I watch on TV and read on the Internet, to avoid things that trigger increased paranoia. I keep busy with projects, to avoid paranoid thoughts and voices. I also get out, as often as possible, to keep myself grounded in reality. I try to limit what I do, at any one time, so that I don't get stressed out, to avoid depression and paranoid thoughts. I have also have a PRN medicine I can take, when I am having acute symptoms.

More Psychological Insights and Inspiration

Dealing with Self Esteem

The Military

As I have said before, I think that my continued study of psychology, compared to studying other things, will give me the best opportunity, to grow emotionally and be a happier person. I believe that my greatest enemy is myself. I believe that the most important factors in how I live my life are the choices I make. One of the things I have realized over time, that causes my great stress, is my low self esteem, coming mostly from my experience in the military.

Soldier with Schizophrenia

I always was more sensitive, than most people, and held onto things others did to me, for too long and was overly occupied, with what others thought of me. But in the military, these situations became much more intense and my emotional response became ingrained, much deeper. A lot of my motivation, to try to make life more fair for myself and others, comes from some of the extreme circumstances, that I had experienced, while in the military. Like most people, I already knew what was important to me, so that later in life, most experiences just re-enforced, what I had believed all along.

Also, as a person with Schizophrenia, the main disability that I have, which covers most symptoms, is that everything in my life is exponentially more emotionally intense, than it was for me beforehand, or it is for others, like me, in similar circumstances, that do not have Schizophrenia. Some of the things in the military, that caused my great stress was my fear of even tear gas and my constant failures, to be able to perform the combat skills correctly, while under such extreme stress.

Recognizing Ranks

An even bigger stress was, for me, to recognize and correctly respond, to the correct rank of the person walking by me (you only salute officers and you have to use the correct exact rank, when referring to the soldier, whether enlisted or officer - if you get this wrong, then you get into a lot of trouble and are publicly embarrassed). One of the reason why this was so hard for me is that the ranking system works different, depending on service, but also the ranks, for enlisted, are on the upper arm and for the officers, on their shoulders or on their lapel.

This makes it very hard to see what their rank is, when you pass by them. You constantly need to know the rank of everyone in the room, at any given time. This is because the highest ranking person in the room has to tell everyone, to stand at attention, whenever an officer comes in, or stand at ease, whenever an NCO comes in.

Rifle Training

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I realized soon on, that if I was in a combat situation, that I would be of no use. I remember, when we did the manual of arms (this is how you learn how to move your rifle, in a marching formation, which also helps you keep your rifle away, from being pointed at others, during basic rifle marksmanship target practice), I had to drop for push-ups, after each move, because I would always get it wrong.

I was so bad at shooting (although I had to shoot and qualify, with my left hand, even though I am right handed) that the drill sergeant gave me the spot on the test range, where it was rigged, for the farthest target to pop-up and do down and it count it as hit, no matter if I hit it or not (when you qualify with the rifle, you shoot at targets, that look like green soldier outlines, which pop up for 3-5 seconds and then go down, to simulated the difficulty, of hitting a moving enemy soldier).

Coping with Stress

Deflecting Criticism

There are many coping mechanisms people, who have low self esteem, use to cope, with their relationships with other people. Some of the major ones are minimizing, blaming, non-competing, overachieving, inflating, and projecting. I use a lot of these, to cope with my low self esteem.

Basically, I try to find a way to deflect any kind of ranking, because I want to find equal relationships and am not interested in fighting for control. Arrogance is what bothers me most and I link that with leadership and any kind of hierarchy or ranking. But it would be good for me to be aware of this, because at an extreme level, this will make it harder for me, to meet new people.

Biggest Deflectors

Probably the ones I use most is non-competing. I am very good at a lot of things, but I never have the ability to perform under pressure. That is one of the reasons why I never enter any competitions, or take any tests or classes, to prove my abilities.

I also would say I overachieve, which is partly because I really care about the future of humanity and the rest of the creatures that live on this earth, but also I constantly run into people, who tell me my life is easy, because I don't work.

Other Deflectors

I also use minimizing as a strategy, because I often find that others will challenge me and say that I am wrong, because they disagree with me, even though I have more experience than them. I don't wish to get in an argument, to prove what I know, partly because I don't think of good responses, while I am under stress.

I think I do projecting often, too, as for most people the things, that bother me most, about others are things I don't like about myself. I don't like anyone who is loud, intense, and controversial.

Dealing with My Illness

The symptoms of my mental illness expound these problems. One of my most disabling symptom of Schizophrenia for myself is paranoia. I think that people are against me or that they can hear my thoughts. I worry that people will reject me and that is why I have a hard time making new friends or find new hobbies. In the military I took lots of risks, so now I am very careful not to risk anything important and I over emphasize this, in my mind.

Power Issues

Avoiding Abuse

I also see people sense my fear as a weakness and abuse that knowledge, which happens with abusive mental health workers. These people think that I won't or can't speak up for myself, but, of course this isn't true. Whenever I run into a situation where a person is abusive, I leave the situation, as soon as possible.

There are lot of people on the bus, that are looking for an easy target, to solve their problems, so I keep an unpleasant expression and do not make eye contact. Old people are the worst, in my experiences, and I don't mean retired people, but people who cannot even walk and are very rude and thoughtless and expect everyone else to stop what they are doing and sacrifice their time and energy, to help them.

The most traumatic situations I had to deal with all occurred for me as an adult. My parents weren't perfect, but they did a very good job and I am still friends with them to this very day. My sister and I did not get along well when we were kids, but she has been a close friend, since we became adults. The traumas I experienced are what I refer to as total situations.

No Control

A total situation is where you have no power and no control over almost everything in your life and you have no way of getting out of it, nor is there any break from it. These are situations in which I never was able to relax, or trust the people in power. The total situations, that I dealt with were in the military, being voluntarily committed to a behavioral psychology ward in a private hospital, living with 9 other mentally ill men in a group home, and living in a retirement home in my mid twenties.

These situations reinforced my sense of wrong and right and my commitment, to do all I could to bring social justice, to the poor and persecuted. They have also permanently altered how I see others and myself, so that I now am able to appreciate even small freedoms in life. It has also convinced me to be very risk adverse and to not trust other people, especially people in the mental health establishment.

Breakdown of Trust

Chemical Weapons

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I felt helpless in the military because I had no control over my freedom. I felt that I was lied to by my recruiter. I specifically asked about the NBC training and its possible use in wars. I was told that none of our enemies would use it and that the gas chamber doesn't hurt at all and you only have a little trouble breathing for half a minute.

When I went into the gas chamber, we had our protective masks on at first and I could feel my hands burning terribly. Then we were told to take off our masks and open our eyes all the way. I felt like I was drowning in fire and I could barely breathe. My lungs and my eyes hurt the worst. When I got in my platoon was in the last group so as they added another stick of CS gas for each platoon, we then had the highest concentration. We were in for only 5 minutes, but it felt like an eternity.

My Psychotic Break

I asked to be let out when it was my turn to leave, but the drill sergeant threw me back in to the end of the line. I found out later that you have to go through the gas chamber once a year for active duty soldiers. Other soldiers in my platoon later said my experience sounded like a bad trip on LSD. Later on I found out that during the first and second Persian Gulf wars that the US military expected to be gassed and the front line troops all went in in full MOPP4 gear (protective masks and chemical suits).

This time in the gas chamber was when the Psychiatrist reviewing my pension case for the VA said that my mental breakdown and first paranoid episode occurred. The military is actually the most common stressful event that brings about a mental illness if you have a high genetic probability, meaning close family with the same mental illness.

Lessons Learned

When people vote for wars in the Middle East, they need to understand that the chemical weapons that will likely be used in future conflicts, are many times more painful than CS gas, by factors of 100 or 1,000, and most often they are not fatal, although most would likely wish to die. People wishing to serve in the military need to understand this very well. The only reason why we do not have as many deaths as in Vietnam as we do in Iraq and Afghanistan is that we keep people alive, that are so badly burned, that they would have died, of their wounds, in any other time in history.

My situation, where I was able to leave the Army, with an honorable discharge, and receive a full pension was a miracle and I would be in Iraq or Afghanistan to this day, if my pension was not approved a few months before September 11th. All enlistments are 8 years long and the military can call you back at any time, especially if you have a specialized skill, or they don't have enough troops. Everyone, who passes through basic training, is considered first and foremost an infantry soldier and no matter what speciality you have, you will be on the front lines, carrying that special equipment, in addition to your combat gear.

Mental Health

I often have trouble making relationships because I do not trust other people. It takes a long time

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for someone to gain my trust. I am especially untrusting of people in power over me. I remember what it was like to at once point to be honest and let them help me and the next thing I knew I was locked in and couldn't leave. When you admit to having emotional problems, you quickly lose your rights and another person gets to decide what you are allowed to do and what kind of freedom you have.

You lose control over how you spend your time, what you can eat, where you can live, where you can go, and most importantly they are in control of your access to your medication. The people are paid very little and have almost no knowledge of mental illness. It is common for them to never believe anything you say and they are attracted to this field because they enjoy having power over others.

I will never seek help when I have an emotional crisis, because of how I was treated by the mental health caregivers. My latest experience going to the hospital when I was severely depressed, I was put in a padded room and told I could not leave with nothing to do and a camera focused on myself. When I am depressed, locking me up is just going to increase my stress and my emotional pain.

Other People's Problems

Taking Advantage

I am quick to say no to others and am not very friendly, when I am walking on the street or waiting for the bus, because I know that when you appear weak, people take advantage of it. If I see someone in distress, or someone asks for anything, who I don't know, I always refuse and, if I can, get away as fast as possible. I have learned the hard way, that many people are opportunists and have various scams set up, to make easy money and profit from nice people, trying to help out. Just because I see someone who is dressed in rags or can barely walk, I know that it is likely a trick.

Too Good to Be True

Whenever anything I read seems too good to be true, and I cannot find enough information about it online, then I stay away from that group. I used to try to find another person with a website that is from a Liberal Christian point of view, but all I have found is people mixing Paganism with Christianity, social liberals, or the Christians involved in the paranormal. Whenever I read something about an interesting scientific discovery like quantum mechanics or string theory, new abundant energy sources, or environmental solutions all paths lead to very dark and disturbing places. I have found out that most things alternative are either very depressing, anti-Bible or both.

Religious Boundaries

I think most of the good things going on in the world are done by Christian groups and that there is a good reason why so many Evangelical organizations have decided to be very narrow theologically and conservative socially. When people get creative with theology, they have no

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sense on what areas they should stay away from. I guess I have a good understanding of what the Bible says, so I know very well what is clear and what is not. It seems pretty obvious to me, but most people don't research the subject well enough, before making major decisions, that will affect the rest of their lives, like joining groups, purely based on personalities they like. There are certain decisions, that you cannot just undo like: sexually transmitted diseases, drug addiction, committing crimes, and making poor decisions, in other aspects of their lives.

Going Forward

My Decisions

Leaving the Stage

I have learned, to be happy, without taking major risks, in my life. I know that this part of America is the best part of the world and I have no desire, to see the destruction to the rest of the world and the injustice and violence, that is only intensifying. I have realized, that no one cares about what I say and people do know what to do, to solve the major world problems, but the reason why they won't take these steps is that they would require giving up things, that they are addicted to and cannot imagine living without. I don't know the future, but I won't be surprised if the future looks more like the past, and it might be the best thing for us.

Internal Growth

That is why the path forward for me is focused on making my life, my home, and my family the best it can be. Just as the monks of the Eastern Orthodox church decided to withdraw, to the wilderness and pursue their relationship with God and forsake worldly ambition, as Christian Constantinople fell to the Muslim Turks, so I end my criticism of my generation. I am only responsible for myself and my own actions. Whatever happens to the world will happen, as the result of the collective decisions we make, and even more directly, as God moves it.

Who I am

Highly Sensitive

I am not just sensitized due to trauma and due to my illness, but I am also sensitive by nature. I am risk adverse, by my very nature. I spend a lot of time and effort trying to understand all the factors and consequences of a perceived mistake. I try to prepare for the loss of everything and am religious about making backups of my files. I spent a whole year getting ready for disaster survival, even though few disasters have or even would likely happen, where I live.

I take it personally, when I am rejected or exploited. I am more sensitive to physical pain and social problems. I like calm and organized places like libraries and movie theaters. I do poorly under pressure and am very sensitive to negative feedback. I find the Internet hard to navigate as I am overstimulated, I have too many options, and everyone is so negative and rude.

Honesty

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I think that honesty with ourselves and with others we work with is a good start in dealing with stress and trauma. I have found that despite people's lack of education about mental illness and the perpetuation in the media, that we are serial killers and terrorists, that most people are open to the idea of my having mental illness. They don't know much about it and don't seem to hold any stereotypical views about it.

Many people are also very interested, in what it is like, to have a mental illness. Some people, after seeing and talking to me, think that I was too smart and that there is some connection between insanity and brilliance. That is not true, in any sense, but it is a better stereotype than thinking I am violent. Some people also talk about famous people, who supposedly have mental illnesses, although these people generally have clinical depression or are bipolar (manic depression), which are much less disabling.

Uniquely Me

One of the things, that makes me so unusual, is that I take my medicine regularly and didn't have any trouble accepting my illness. I also am highly motivated and can understand abstract thought and very subtle ideas. None of this is supposed to be possible. I think that it is a miracle.

The reason why I have been able to write so many useful books about philosophy is just like how God chose a shepherd to be king of Israel, Moses was a person with a speech impediment, and Sarah was elderly when she had a baby – I have this ability because it gives credit to God and not to myself or my training. The reason why I accepted my illness, at first, was that I knew something was wrong with me and then I asked, if it was going to get worse, and I was told that it wouldn't. Only in this last year, when I read about some of the other symptoms of Schizophrenia, was I depressed about what I had lost.

One of the things that helps me most is a good night's sleep. That is the most important thing I can do, to stay positive and motivated. I also produce better work, when I have enough rest.

Building Relationships

I am the kind of person, who wants deep and intimate (emotionally) relationships, with a couple people. When I am in groups, I have learned to say little, so that I do not say anything controversial and end up alienating others. But, since I did not feel relaxed, in these situations, I have a hard time feeling part of the group. Often I am so uncomfortable in these situations, that I end up not going at all.

Equal Relationships

I am looking for equal relationships. One of the ways, to have equal relationships, is to have an equal amount of time talking about yourself, as they do talking about themselves. It is good to be concerned about the other person, but it is not always appropriate to respond, by giving advice, on how to solve the problems they face. Don't ever assume that their situation is like yours.

It is important to think about what the other person is saying and adjust your responses accordingly. And when you ask, for the other person to open up to you, you must sincerely want

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them to, or it will alienate you. It is important, to get emotionally involved and empathize, with the other person. But most importantly, you must stop trying to use specific formulas, because they can be transparent.

Deepening Relationships

When someone offers help, if you do not agree the first time, they likely will never ask again. Another important factor is that for the relationship to be equal, you must offer a roughly equivalent amount of help, to the other person, in the relationship. When accepting help, make sure that it is something, that the other person is able to do easily, and that you really would be helped by their contribution.

You need to know what to do, at the right time, to ask for something, or reveal more about yourself. The right time will be when the other person is in that place too. Feel out how much they are willing to get involved and allow them to make the decision, without pressure. But you must continue to be honest, straightforward, and direct. Temper this with your friend's point of view and emotional state.

Often asking for input about situations, that you thought went bad, is often a good way to get a more balanced view, on whether you need to improve, as we tend to over personalize other's reactions to us. Giving and receiving must be balanced, in a healthy and equal relationship.

Rejection

When someone rejects you, there are generally four major reasons for the rejection. One of the reasons for rejection is when the other person sees every relationship as a part of climbing the social ladder. Sometimes asking for a relationship with another, in this situation can be considered weak and therefore they are repulsed, by your offer. In some groups, this is the general tone or culture of the group. Try making relationships elsewhere.

Another reason, for why you may be rejected, is that the other person is using a coping skill, for dealing with being under valued. You may get a response that is part of minimizing, blaming, or noncompeting. Let go of trying to respond directly, to the accusations, but understand why the other person feel this way. The best response is to acknowledge the other other person's feelings as normal and empathize with them.

Add that you want to pursue a relationship, with the other person, and admire one of their great qualities. Talk about this situation, in the context of the whole length of your relationship, with them. Keep avoiding blaming either one of you, but keep acknowledging the frustrations, of the other and agree with them.

Some people have a hard time building relationships and are afraid to take the risk, because they think they will always be rejected. There is no way to get them to open up to you, but you can express your concern for them.

Some people will constantly respond to your attempts to form a relationship, by starting an argument. The other person sounds very emotional, but loud and intense, or the other response is that the other person starts a debate and never lets you respond.

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If you will never see the person again, then just ignore them. Otherwise, you can try to deal with the other's emotional trauma by refusing to argue, refusing to agree something negative about yourself, by not allowing the other person to blame you, by trying to reduce the other person's shame, and by talking it over the next time you see them.

Avoid Simple Formulas

Make sure you are genuine and honest. You can build on what you have read, but without really caring and acting natural, you will be obviously superficial. The worst thing to do is have some predictable way of responding to people, so it is better to be clumsy and shy than to overemphasize what you have read.

Like no theory explains things for everyone, so must even the best advice must be filtered, through our experiences, and we should not put all our faith, in the latest books we read. People do not like being treated, like some kind of experiment and will respond very negatively, if you seem too predictable.

Artistic Freedom

Emotions

Controlling Emotions

I wanted to say something about emotions. I believe that emotions are important and useful, but they can also easily spiral out of control. Some people recommend meditation, tai chi, yoga, guided relaxation, and those kind of things. While many of these things can be useful, to certain people, in certain occasions, it isn't for me.

The big reason why is that it is too difficult and complex for me. Something I can do and look forward to doing more often is to take recreational breaks every so often and to walk a good ways each day. I am starting to like playing simple games, drawing sketches, listening to music, and seeing pictures of maps, art, and scenery on my iPad.

Religion and Emotions

I have some incredibly strong emotions, in my relationship with God. I said recently, that reading a whole chapter of scripture was scary to me, because it felt like I was going to burn up, due to the intensity of God, that I could gather from reading the Bible. Sometimes, when I am swept up in emotions, I think that having no free will, or that not doing anything for myself would make me closer to God.

I have enjoyed Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in the past, because they are one of the few churches, that don't teach you to suppress and dominate your emotions, with your intellect. It is good to be rational and have a good grasp, of the mortal world, in which we live, but I think it is dangerous, to ignore what we think our emotions are telling us.

Faith is a belief in something that you cannot prove and Paul called Christ's death on the cross

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the foolishness of God, that is greater than man's knowledge. Like it or not, we have a number of parts of us, that need to take control or give up control, much like instruments start and stop, at various points, in the symphony. The key point to remember is that God is the conductor.

New Developments

My Life

One of the things that makes me very grateful and gives me much peace is that God helped me write 50 books. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit as my muse, but I will take credit for the mistakes. I finally feel like I can relax and just enjoy life. My situation is difficult, for a number of reasons. Some of the major ones I just wrote about and the vast majority of people will never have to deal with it. On the other hand, I have some unique assets, that other people would kill for: I have no debt, I can't lose my source of income, and I have plenty of money for what I want to do.

I also live in the best place on earth and my apartment is the best in the town and is close enough, so I can walk to the bus station. My place is also beautiful and a gated community and my landlords are really nice and helpful. It seemed that there were people out cleaning and keeping things up, all summer and they really seem to care about the place. I have my own clothes washer and dryer, that came with the apartment, I am renting an air conditioner, that they set up, my house is very well insulated and the sound doesn't penetrate. I can get up whenever I want to, I can eat whatever I want to, I can spend my money anyway I want to.

The Fall

I am excited that it the fall season has just arrived and I can already imagine the holidays. My sister lives in the same city as me and my parent only live about 45 minutes north of me. My sister just got her own house and so we will likely celebrate, at least one of the holidays there. All of us have put in a tremendous amount of work into improving our lives and it has really paid off for all of us. We also use our creative abilities in unusual ways, that make us happy and help others.

I love the fall, because it starts getting cool, cloudy, and rainy again this time of year. I do badly in the heat and I also have sensitive eyes, so summers can be rough on me. Summers are often downers for me, because hardly anything is going on. If I walk by the local University, in the summer and on a Sunday, the streets are deserted. I likes the fall, as it is like a new beginning, because this is when school starts again. A lot of my best memories happened in the rain and the cold and on cloudy days. A lot of those are memories from high school, when I was on an event for cross country or speech.

Sources of Strength

Parent's Influence

The biggest factors in my resilience and ability to overcome the odds stacked against me in the

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combination of my personality, my traumas, and my mental illness are prayer and family support. One of the biggest reasons why people are not well adjusted, confident, and content with their lives is that they experienced profound traumas, in their formative years.

The way you raise a child makes the most difference, in what a young adult has to draw from, when encountering obstacles and tragedies, that arise due to conditions we mostly have no control over. When you can build your sense of self on a good foundation, it makes emotional recovery much easier and more successful.

Divine Intervention

Not only has having a good relationship with my family and being raised in a supportive and healthy environment been a key to my success, but the divine intervention of the Christian God has made all the difference. No matter how damaged you are, due to living through difficult circumstances, God can always transform you into a better person, if you are willing to make the effort. Real spiritual and emotional growth does not come quickly or easily.

God works on a different time frame and in a complex series of events, that we cannot discern. The most important thing that God gives those who are willing to ask is grace. And it is His grace that gives purpose and value, to any circumstance you are in, for whatever reason. This grace is what makes life worth living and gives purpose to our lives.

Personality Traits

The final major influence has been my inheritance of certain personality traits of my parents, like stubbornness and curiosity. As I said before, all character traits have dual aspects. No matter how bad people assume a personality trait is, there is always an equally great positive aspect, to every one.

Stubbornness is often thought to cause people to not ask for help, but, if you have the grace to use it in a useful way, it can be a great source of strength and motivation, to do what is right, even when others don't understand or appreciate the importance, of what you know in your heart is right. Curiosity has sometimes led me to study things that only led to dark and depressing thoughts, but everything I have learned has made me a better person and helped me understand how the world works, how I can change it, and how to get along well with others, who don't share my values.

My Understanding of God

One of the things that makes me so different is the things I am sure of and those I am unsure of. Sometimes I have no doubt about a certain direction I should take or insights into why things happen the way they do. Other times I doubt everything. The most important thing I just intuitively know is that the God of the Bible is the real God.

I know from nature, from experience, and from intuition that the universe was created by an eternal, all-powerful, and perfectly good God. I know that His personality is the same as the one described in the Christian Bible. And the Bible continues to amaze me, with how well it explains why the world works the way it does, or why I experience life the way I do. I always feel there is

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so much more that I could understand, when God would choose to reveal it to me. The God of the Bible is beyond everything I could hope for or imagine.

Final Psychological Insights

Too Literal

Background

Why so Different?

One of the things, that has continued to perplex me, throughout my life, is the explanation of why I am so different, than everyone else. Part of it, I now know, is due to my mental illness, service in the military, and level of intelligence. But those factors are not enough, to explain my perspective, on the world. One of the ways, in which I am different, than most other people is that I know things, that no one else seems to understand, and things everyone seems to understand, I have immense difficulty in wrapping my minds around.

What Being Literal Means

One of the things, that my parents keep on repeating, is that I am very literal. I just recently have realized what they meant by this. I know my parents would have explained it, if I had asked, but I just didn't think to and they thought I knew what they meant. This literal interpretation, of everything, has had more impact on my relationships, than any other factor has. It is hard, to explain, what being literal is, but I think it is related to my binary view of the world. This is similar to what people often differentiate different views of ethics being either black and white or shades of grey. But I am using this analogy, in terms of broader thinking, than just ethics.

Rationale

I think this comes, from my aversion, to thinking of myself, as being arrogant. I like to make things simple enough, so they can be understood, by the average person. I really despise elitism. I am on the side of the poor, the discriminated against, and the powerless. This is probably because I thought of myself, as being under the same situation, at one time. None one was there to help me, so I want to be there to help others, so they don't have to go through it alone, too.

How it Works

Effects

Because of this combination, of both wanting to be intellectual and being a man of the people, at the same time, I ended up, with a bizarre combination of: precise, thorough, rigid, consistent, logical, simplistic, and extreme patterns of thinking. I have tried, to find a way, to be smart and still be populist and see others, in the same way. This combination is probably rare, except for: revolutionaries, prophets, serial killers, and cult leaders. I think I will end up better, because of my willingness to follow rules and my aversion to physical pain and isolation.

Examples of Being too Literal

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When people asked me to do something with them, after I had first met them, in a number of cases, it didn't work out for me, so they didn't ask again. I took the invitation literally, but they meant to show an interest in me, so that when they didn't ask me again, it wasn't because they didn't like me – it was because they thought I had rejected them.

Just like I feel pressured into doing things, so that when I run into someone and they ask what I am doing, that I have things to share. I then get so busy trying to do things, that I end up not seeing them again. But, I realize now, that they didn't expect me, to do anything, and I actually was doing way more, than they were anyway.

When I talk to someone about something academic and they don't tell me, that they don't understand, I think that they do understand, but they likely feel the need, to hide their lack of understanding, because they think I will take it as a sign of weakness in them. I think many people I run into think I am elitist or have high expectations of everyone, because of my degree of motivation to learn.

How Others Perceive This

This inability, to see things symbolically, is something, that most people do not have a problem with, so many times people might have thought because I was so smart, but appeared unable, to grasp the most basic things, they thought of me as an idiot savant (someone who is very good at one thing, but can do little else). The other things that people used to explain this was to think I was crazy or messing with them.

My Motivation

The Military Factor

My Pain is Not that Great

One of the things, that people have a hard time understanding, about me, is my immense motivation, to pursue interests that are: extremely demanding emotionally, take up a huge amount of time, and make me no money. I think the motivation comes, from the perspective I have had, when in the military. I know, that as difficult as things are for me, they are much harder, than that, for most people, in the world today. I also had experiences, in doing things, in the military, that are much more scary, than anything, in causing me physical pain.

Damage to Self Esteem

Many things, in the military, that I was very afraid of, I had to do anyway and I was treated like I was of no more value, than a piece of meat, at the same time. The drill sergeant of my platoon treated us like we were worthless, for our entire Basic Training. One of the things, that made things even harder was my lack of sleep, during Basic Training and Advanced Training, in the military. I got, at the most, 7 hours of sleep a night, during Basic Training, and then, during the first month or two of my Advanced Training, I only got 3 hours of sleep, at night.

No Control Over Anything

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I have always needed, at least 12 hours of sleep, to feel rested. When I was in the military, I never felt safe. I felt, that I was constantly being evaluated and could have anything demanded of me, at any time. I had no power, over anything, in my life. At the same time, I knew that, as tough as the training was on me, that during a war conditions could cause a exponentially greater amount of pain. The only possible way, to get out of something, the NCOs tell you to do is by your own death.

Making Sense of It All

Causes and My Response

This tremendous amount of stress, combined with my genetic predisposition to mental illness, and my very sensitive personality are what caused me to get diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia. My mom has always thought, that, one of the reason why I was able to do so well, was that shortly after getting out of the hospital, I began again reading philosophy and my decision, to not just give up, was the catalyst. My not giving up comes from my inability to comprehend what giving up means or how to do it.

Why This Had to Happen

My immense motivation has caused me unnecessary pain, but it is likely the reason why I was able, to understand these insights, these last few years. Maybe I needed to work very hard, to understand how to not push myself so hard. Just like I said, that people are not emotionally ready to accept, that we are going to go back to the stone age, technologically, so I think that I may of not been emotionally ready, to accept, that pushing myself less, was not giving up. I guess that my biggest fear is that, if I take a break, that I will never be able, to motivate myself, to go back, to work, on what I find important.

Problem of Suffering

Being a Christian gives me a sense of purpose, to much of the things, that were very hard, for me, to go through, but the idea that God is perfectly good and cares about you is very difficult, to understand, when you have to go through things, very few others have to. One of the things, that really bothered me, throughout my life, is that I didn't understand some of the things, that I have learned recently and I thought, that if I knew about these issues earlier in my life, then I could have made my life better.

Sometimes Ignorance is Helpful

But, I have also realized, that God might give us ignorance, in parts of our life, when knowing these things, about our lives, would not make them better, because we either could not change those things, about ourselves, even if we knew about them, or that not understanding those things actually made us able, to do things, we would not have been able to do, otherwise. Sometimes, your ignorance can be an advantage, to you in, certain situations.

Difficulty of Explaining Suffering

The way things happen, in our lives, little makes sense of most of it, but that is likely because our

brains can't handle the complex web, of causality, that God works through. And maybe there is no real good answer to why God allows us to suffer, that would be sufficient for us. Maybe the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is the best explanation of why God allows us to suffer – He, at least, was willing to Himself.

Beyond Our Suffering

The other things that I don't think people realize are: the amount of control God gives, to people, to affect our world good and bad, how much God holds back, from what should happen, as a result of our poor choices, and exactly how devastating sin was, to God's creation. God actually set up things perfectly for us, by both giving us free will, but, at the same time, not understanding what evil was, so we could have a rational world, have freedom of choice, and the impossibility of doing evil. I guess that explain why we just can't seem to live by even simple rules. I do know that pain, in any form, is a powerful motivating factor and greater pain generally motivates us more.

Big Changes

Kinds of Change

Change Causes Stress

Making big changes, for me, usually ends up, in failure, because the rapid change gives me both depression, over what I have given up, and anxiety about having, to commit, to something long-term. Instead of getting less stress, by taking on a new simpler and easier pursuit, I just remove the thing, that gave me purpose and joy. The most stressful thing, to me, is not the stress of dealing with the difficulty in what I have chosen, but starting new, unrelated things. And when I want to make a change, I can do so, only if I have no pressure, to achieve something, or feel like I am under a timeline. The most successful things I have done I did little bits, at a time.

Incremental Change

When I started writing poetry back in 1998, I didn't plan on writing even one book let alone 52. But, I just kept writing and learning about technology, then I had enough material, I tried putting it together, in bigger chunks, learned LaTeX, and just tried making nice PDFs. When I was able to do that, then I entertained the possibility of writing books. When I tried to write an entire book in a month, I got stressed out, but when I put together my collections and added a chapter, at a time, to one book, I had much less stress.

Avoiding Stress

No Commitments

I have learned not, to make any long term commitments, like signing up for: college classes, volunteer work, social clubs, or even gym memberships. When I have a certain time, that I have to be, at a certain place, on a reoccurring basis, it stress me out and it triggers depression and

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paranoia. I obsess about having to keep doing the things over a long period of time and have trouble taking it one day at a time.

Having No Plans

That is why I don't plan out any books or website changes, or keep lists of things to do. I also find most activities much more intense, than other people do. I do better, in controlled settings, like a movie theatre or a library. But, I have the freedom, to not have, to commit, to anything and trading one set of stress for another would not be an improvement.

New Projects

Rationale

Reaching the Logical End

As I have finished studying virtually everything, that interests me, in the humanities, I have come to a logical end, to my studies. This doesn't mean that I won't write, but maybe on different topics, or at least with the addition of subjects to my usual mix.

Consistency with My Worldview

As I like to think of myself as a "man of the people," I have decided to start learning some things about sports and entertainment. I expect it to take some time, but there are people who follow sports and entertainment that could never understand anything as complicated and subtle as philosophy.

Goals

Good Results

Instead of giving up everything else, that I enjoy doing now, I have decided, to just move, in this new direction, when I feel like it. I might also be able, to both gather enough material and get inspiration, to write a new book, on these new subjects. The two best outcomes would be making it easier to find people with common interests and because I am just very tired, of all the effort involved, in having, to think so deeply and so much.

Making Life Easier

I think, that my interest, in the humanities has made my life more difficult, than it needs, to be. I just need, to remember not to over research it, so that I don't bring the negative aspects, of more academic pursuits. After all, studying and memorizing about the history and statistics of sports, or the addresses and trivia of all the celebrities is kind of missing the point of watching a game or a show.

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Poetry

Animal Epic Poem

Ecclesiastes 3:19

In a blink of God's eye
We share the animals life-span
No one knows the fate of the beast
Back to the earth or raised to glory
We are made of clay
And share in its instability
From nothing but matter we were designed
And back to organic sludge we will return
How are we different
From those we lead to the slaughter?

Jeremiah 9:10

Drowning in our own pollution
Our mega-cities vacant as a ghost town
All this comes from sin
And God's wrath
God mourns for the livestock
Which he can no longer hear in the fields
Wild animals roam
In what has become badlands

Daniel 1:8

With nothing but the fruit of the vine
We need not feast on another's life
Daniel was stronger than the king's best men

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Living on nothing but herbs and clean water
Wisdom and understanding, health and vitality
Do not arise from piles of carcasses and the devil's water

Matthew 25:40-43

Your dog was hungry
And all you gave him was the scraps from your table
Your dog was hot in the car
And you let the heat damage his brain
You left you dog chained up outside
And he came back with frostbite
Your dog's brother was in the kennel
And you left him to die
You're dog needed to visit the vet
And you said you couldn't afford it
As you have done to those which society does not value
So you have done to the Son of God

Hebrews 2:10-11

Christ was the supreme sacrifice
With his death, no animal needed give its life
As a sheep transformed into lamb chops
Jesus identified with our woolly friends
Paying the ultimate price
He asked us to eat His body
And drink His blood
And we are His sheep
To be sacrificed in our choices

Practical Poetry

Addicts

I have heard more sermons than I can count
I have been to every church in town
They all blend together
And mean nothing to me
I have believed what no one else understands
I have written in koans for many years
I cannot find anyone to share my joy
I cannot find meaning in my culture
All that line the pews are empty faces
With blank stares
No has the time to stop and think
No one cares what is right
My neighbors only care about sound bites
And what is convenient
They only believe what they were told
There is no originality or creative spark
I carry the world upon my shoulders
And no one understands
They say I am important
But I am void of plans
And see no way out
God is always silent
But I can always feel evil
We are consumed by desire
Our economy is based on destruction
We don't care if the world ends tomorrow
As long as we don't miss our TV show tonight

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We think we make a difference
By watching the news
But we are in too deep
We have brought about our own destruction
There is nothing more to do
But wait for the big one to get us
Our media is obsessed about the end
But we ignore the obvious
No one cares about tomorrow
No one cares if the white man
Lives or dies
We are a dying race
And just a blip on the radar
No one feels sorry for my country
And everyone plots its doom
There is no time for explanations
Or even just time to talk
They are too busy building bombs
And planning attacks
Will God intervene this time
On our behalf
Or will this time be worse
Than the holocaust?
Maybe if I clothed myself
In the finest fashions
And did a miracle diet
And got hooked on meth
Or acted like a fool on film
And sent it across the web
People would buy my book

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And listen to me for 10 minutes
There is no reason to bore yourself with the truth
Or stop listening to drivel
There is a time for revolution
But only to avoid our taxes
We would rather save 10 percent on care insurance
Than give to the needy
We would rather watch NPR
Than take the time to think
Our solutions only cause more problems
And there is no one who really cares

A crowded vehicle

Each has their own destination
Each exits and enters at different times
Each stop is a routine
Each stop is an opportunity
We are all here for different reasons
Some made the choice
And some have no choice
Each route links us to another path
Each bus has determined ending and starting points
Each time the crowd is different
Some destinations are more popular
But they are never exactly the same
Each time the bus passes by
We know we are in for a wait
Each stop we are closer to our end point
When we board we seldom talk
On each bus there is someone loud

Practical Advice Collection

The rules are few
And the penalties light
Eating is a crime
And our feet must remain down
Exits are to the front and to the rear
The bus is heated in the winter
And cooled in the summer
It is a refuge from the elements
And we have time to dry off

Just say no

Just say no to beef
Just say yes to your bovine friends
When you look into their big brown eyes
How can you continue to participate in their deaths?
With each veggie burger and turkey jerky stick
A cow's life is saved
Eating other farm friends is not ideal
But sometimes soy beans give too much gas
Eat more pork products
My stuffed toy cows say
Because we had stuffed toy pig who was bad
It is not that I hate the taste
Or that I am afraid of getting sick
It is just that I cannot bear
The look of sorrow
On my little stuffed toys' faces
There is nothing worse than the sound
Of a crying stuffed toy
There is nothing worse

Than when you hurt their feelings
I continue to avoid beef
And they are happy
When they smell piggy on my breath

Ethics of shampoo

The brand of shampoo you buy
Is an ethical choice
Little furry animals will thank you
If you buy the right brand
Do you want rabbits and mice
To suffer for you saving a dollar
You don't have to sacrifice safety
For cruelty free shampoo
And the shampoo will be just as effective
Your hair will be soft and thick
Look for "not tested on animals" on the label
To save the little ones from torture
If you don't want to be a guinea pig
Think how much worse the little animal feels
We can see how much we care
By how we spend our money
We should not worship animals
Or torture them either
They are our friends
They are like little children

The Appointment, an Epic Poem

Waiting

I walk in and sit down

Practical Advice Collection

I am there a half hour early
I pull out my magazine
I finish it in ten minutes
I began to think
My mind starts to wander off
How will I interpret the psy babble?
How will I stupefy my ideas?
I keep looking up
As I hear what could be sounds
Will he repeat the same ideas again
Or will I get some gem of useful thinking?
A calm passes over me
I can survive without him
The room is cool
And it is bright outside
What a nice day
It took me an hour to get here
I had to take the bus
Then walk a half a mile
It is always easy to think on the bus
When people aren't making annoying sounds
And walking always makes me feel good
At first, before I start questioning my every action
Last night it took a while to fall asleep
But it was early when I laid down
I woke up early and still felt tired
The sun wasn't even out yet
I watched some news
I looked up - I missed the sunrise
I remember now about my chi

Practical Advice Collection

I wonder if he will like that
It must seem strange to a doctor
How people could know so much before science
How they used food for medicine
How doctors eventually became politicians
And how complex the diagnosis could be
When everything boiled down to either yin or yang

Preparation

Good - he's not in the office yet
Don't need another one of those
So much paper work
I wonder if I really need to give him this test
Like I'm going to come up with a different diagnosis
I wish I could get this damn computer to work
I guess I'll have to call the maintenance guy tonight
No test today, I guess
Is my tie straight?
He probably doesn't even care
Where is my coffee?
I guess I'll have to call up my receptionist
Bring me up my cappuccino!
Thanks
Will I take wifey out to the opera tonight?
I hope I still have the tickets
She probably already found them
And has bought a new dress for it
I can finally sit down
Gee that was a long weekend
Why does my daughter always ask for money

Practical Advice Collection

Right at first?

I wonder what job she will get with a major in dance

And when will she actually start

She is going to be 25 before she starts again

At this rate

I forgot to polish my shoes

Not again!

I hope I get some wealthy clients

When I can only charge them 100 an hour

I can barely pay for my SUV

And second home on the beach

I think I hear the client

I should greet him

No, that would be unprofessional

Come in, now

I'm ready to see you

Hot and Cold

Like the crests of the ocean waves

My emotions rose and fell

As he tried to comprehend my ideas

And I sought to apply his suggestions

Like the calm of the lake

I kept an inner confidence

Not merely a master of intellectual wit

But one who has the benefit of powerful experiences

Like a river high in the mountains

I am always near my source

Speaking rapidly and in sudden bursts

I exude a passion for my case

Practical Advice Collection

Like a salmon tasting sea water for the first time
I interpret my background in new ways
Each sentence never spoken before
Each thought given a new life
And each idea connected differently
Than even the session before
Like the taste of French fries
The conversation had a familiar flavor
Addictive and satisfying
There was a depth opened up by a true desire
The darkness clear as day
By the light of knowledge
And a peace illuminated
The mystery of the night
For in the middle of my winter
I burned inside like an ember
Like the heat of the midday sun
Blood hot and palms sweaty
This was another time
Where I was really there
In the heat of the conversation
From my heart came laughter
And I was truly happy
A cold resilience
And a warm character
Both analytical and creative
I seemed unsure of which direction
Should I go
A deep set fear and a hearty laugh
Each aspect showed up the other

Black and White

My voice soft and child like
My inexperience showed through
Like my bright blue bow tie
And my beaming smile
I was outspoken and competent
But inside I felt too soft and easily swayed
I try hard to not be self-conscious
To be nothing if not proud
Of my pear shaped figure
And my big feet
Black and white
Red and blue
I am consoling yet firm
Sympathetic yet bold
What am I to make
Of this deafening quiet
And silent screams
With each word I say
He expands to a paragraph
With each inflection of my voice
His mind is stirred
He is interesting and dynamic
Trapped yet freeing others
What can I say
To one who already has the answers?
If he could just listen to himself
And remember my main point
That it is not a race for an answer
But rather a way of sitting

Practical Advice Collection

Not a method of thinking
But a way of seeing
A new twist on his broad background
An open window into his soul
A silence in his racing mind
A soft touch with a strong hand
Something to blend the fire and water
That consumes his heart and mind

Personal History, an Epic Poem

Reflections on Soldiering

The room is glowing red
We are convulsing in the furnace
Within a crematoria though alive
We gasp for breathe as though drowning
Little chamber filled with fire
How long will we be locked within your walls?
Large beady eyes glare at us
Telling us to surrender our eyes to the flames
Behind the masks and beneath the suits
Our leaders show no sign of care
No understanding
Of the corrosive atmosphere
Bound within the gates of Hell
We are paralyzed with fear
After spending several ages in fire
The door is flung open
We are allowed out one by one
The burning gradually decreases

Practical Advice Collection

And we can begin to breathe again
But at any moment
We may be forced back in
Next time it will be longer
And there is no end in sight
Each day we spend in training
We lose a year's memory
Our days before we went to war
Fade to be nothing more than a dream
There is no time to enjoy life or relax
When every waking hour must be devoted discipline
Our music is the orders of the Drill Sergeant
And our dance is the manual of arms
Our only realm for expression is in our dreams
And our only book is the Soldiers Manual
We believe in the claymore and in our protective masks
They are all that watch over us
We are free when we are running
As long as we are fast enough
How can I live any longer
With the threat of drowning in fire?
I never would have chosen this road
If I knew what war was like
If a POW camp is harder than this life
And combat is both more boring and more terrifying than training
How will I withstand the reality of war?
How will I become a soldier?
There are no more choices to make
After the one that got me here
There is no independence in the Army

Practical Advice Collection

There is no justice in what we do
How can we defend others rights
When we have none?
Drill Sergeant says I am now a soldier
That I have been transformed
That there is nothing but shame in turning back
That there is hope in what lies ahead
That I will not have to face the same realities
The others will have to face
But I for the first time understand fear
And I cannot trust anyone to save me
I am on my own with no one looking over me
Yet I have no freedom and no escape
I feel like an infant
I feel weak and powerless
But there is no guardian
There is no one I know
Dying doesn't scare me
But the possibilities of suffering do
I see no meaning
Except in avoiding pain
There is no reason to live
And no protection except in death

Descent into Madness

I now know the horrors exist
That are worse than we can imagine
I am now in constant pain
I carry in my eyes the unquenchable fire
The one that never stops burning

Practical Advice Collection

I am injured beyond repair
But my country says its not that bad
I cannot study for long
Nor can I concentrate
I manage to pass enough classes
By learning quickly and a good memory
I try to meet others
But I am too tired to extend myself
No one will hire me
Except for a phone survey place
I cannot work with chemicals
My eyes burn even worse in their presence
My paranoia continues to grow
I think I am growing a third eye
Spiritual warfare seems to make sense
But I end up in the hospital
And the doors lock behind me
I am now in Hell again
But only my mind burns
I cannot escape
But time passes by more quickly
I move out to the outside room
And am allowed to have some freedom
I go home
And continue to sleep for long time periods
I struggle to get on my own
And get acknowledged that I am ill
I struggle to read again
And am finally able to write again

Becoming an Artist

I finally decide I have said enough
And my message is complete
But two towers fall
And 3000 people die in a plume of smoke
My poetry reaches maturity
And becomes on par with any other
I am published for the first time
In a respectable journal
I get a Mac and I learn to draw
And then I am able to arrange music
I bring my pain and my hope
To others in art
All good writers are moral
Out of compassion comes beauty
And I have an increasing joy
To draw from
As I learn about other cultures
And revolutionary ideas
Out of the poetry and art
An eccentric blend of theory is born
And eventually a subculture
The theory gets a human face

Memories of a Soldier

The Dark

Is is dark now
And I fight to stay awake
I never was this tired before

Practical Advice Collection

But my time in the Army
Sure was exhausting
And many things I still remember
Happened at night
The night of our arrival
At Reception Battalion
Lasted far past midnight
It took us hours to get into formation
And to stop talking
I don't remember
What processing they were doing
That took all that time
The night watch was so long
I read my green Gideon's pocket bible
And scoured its indexes
Finding helpful verses
I still don't know
What we were watching for
At Basic Training
Day started in a flash of light
The light switch was flipped
And we jumped out of bed
And ran into formation
Then we ran out into the dark
And stopped under stadium lights
My arrival to my Duty Station
Was in the deep of night
So idyllic with the palm trees
And the fresh sea air
I was lost of course

Practical Advice Collection

Following Drill Sergeant's orders
I didn't get on the bus
With the rest of the soldiers
But I found my way to my unit
With a lot of help
Ironically the cab dropped me off
Within feet of my assigned battalion
I walked to and from my job
Usually in the dark of dawn or dusk
And I wore my sleeves long
And wore mountain boots
Because it can get chilly
With the air conditioning so high

Fear and Excitement

My experience in the Army
Was full of fear and excitement
I was terrified of being tortured
But I was thrilled beyond imagination
At being part of history
The risk is beyond human
But with the adrenaline going
You forget all the problems that could arise
I knew what I was doing was important
And it was exciting work
For someone just out of high school
Hawaii was a dream on earth
And the activities were plentiful
The land and ocean are breath taking
But the people are what keep you there

Practical Advice Collection

One bus travels the perimeter of Oahu
From North Shore to Waikiki
By Scofield Barracks and Pearl Harbor
Location is everything
And that was perfect
But my mind was tormented
With long bouts of depression and paranoia
In my barracks
I was kept awake
With fear of deployment
And fear of chemical attack
I had no trouble at work
My supervisors were amazed at my performance
I tested out of a year of college
And maxed out my sit-ups portion of the PT test
But worries worked at my stomach
And I could never relax
I saw the island
But had trouble enjoying anything
It was not that I was just negative
But my mood kept me on a bad course
When I went in for counseling
They knew something was wrong

Churches Numerous

God was very real to me
When I was in the Army
And the church was the safest place for me
A place where little was expected
I went to church during Basic Training

Practical Advice Collection

There were no Drill Sergeants there
And there were no orders to follow
At Advanced Individual Training
I attended a Methodist church
A block from our barracks
The other soldiers wondered why
I went every week
But that was all I had left of myself
When I arrived at my Duty Station
I tried a number of churches
I found a church next to my barracks again
But I was the only white person there
It was full of excitement
And people even danced in church
It was Church of God in Christ denomination
But I don't remember their theology
My roommate drove me to his church
At the other end of the island
This was the best church in Honolulu
It was Word of Life Christian Center
Or something like that
This was the First Charismatic/Pentecostal church
I attended regularly
It was a great place to meet
Nice young women my age
And they had activities for 20 somethings
Another church I went to was called
Oahu Church of Christ or something like that
They met in the form of potlucks
At a different place every time

Practical Advice Collection

And there were always outdoor baptisms
At every service
The final church I went to
Was just outside the base
Every Sunday was a salvation message
And members were expected to come
Other times of the week as well
Saturday nights the preacher answered questions
And there was prayer and speaking in tongues
Every other night throughout the week

Histories

Going Home

I am going home today
This home is like a dream
Away in the Army
For just over a year
I feel great excitement
And serious relief
Today is the anniversary
Of when World War 2 ended
I shall never forget today
August 15, 1997
Everything is surreal
And I do not believe
Anything is real
With the awesome release
I feel a failure
I did not serve my full tour

Practical Advice Collection

I did not know now
That I was mentally ill
Or that this was why
I was given a discharge
All I knew
Was my eyes burned
And I would have this condition
Indefinitely
I met people from my home church
And I heard of others
Triumphs and failures
I was introduced to a girl on the phone
Who was a few years younger than me
When we talked I realized
I had no hobbies or interests
I don't know how it was for others
But the military life
Did not allow me time for leisure
Or maybe it was just the mind set
That I could never let my guard down
Or ever relax
I was told by my CO
That I should enroll in college
And I did so that fall

Community College

A few days
After I came back
I bought my first computer
I was going to major in business

Practical Advice Collection

So I bought a PC
I had saved 5,000 dollars
Of my military income
And I got 10,000 dollars
For college expenses
Because of my service
I realized that I had enough for tuition
But not enough for housing
So I stayed at my parents' house
I did ok in calculus
I excelled in economics
But I had to take accounting
5 times to pass
I missed so many French classes
Because I was using the Internet
With the free hours from AOL
I started out researching my pink eye
But got diverted to finding
A different way to be Christian
Later on I would realize
That the answers lay in the church
I grew up in
Despite those attitudes were the ones
I was trying to escape
I didn't study much
And slept as much as possible
As the pink eye never relented
That summer I took several required
English courses
And started my website

Practical Advice Collection

This was the first time
I was introduced to Postmodernism

University

Not only did I have a Community College
In the town I grew up in
We also had a University
And there are several other colleges there too
Besides my business courses
I took History of Philosophy
And Chinese language course
Both these fell through
For different reasons
The philosophy course required
Weekly papers
And I missed the first
So I had to audit it
As I missed the deadline to withdraw
I stopped going as I thought
Socrates was a smart ass
In my Chinese class
I couldn't learn as fast as they taught
So I had to drop out of it too
But I stayed in my Chinese Literature class
And I really enjoyed it
This is how I was introduced
To Chinese philosophy
That spring I had to find an apartment
And I switched to Linux
Cold turkey

Practical Advice Collection

After researching it for 6 months
I was trying to figure out
How to get Microsoft applications
From crashing
So I looked into programming
And all roads led to Linux
That summer I went back
To stay at my parents house
And I took summer courses again
For the credits I missed
During the school year
I took several electives
One was Existentialism
One was about Ecofeminism
I switched my major
To Journalism
Which made much more sense
As I have always been
Good at writing
I took business initially
As my dad recommended it

Schizophrenia

When school let out that winter
I thought I was wrestling with
Spiritual warfare
But as I found myself
In the mental ward of a local hospital
I knew I was having emotional problems
I didn't know until a month later

Practical Advice Collection

That I had Schizophrenia
My parents came to see me all day long
But I only remember them
Coming in the evening
I was explaining trigonometry
We were all afraid of one of the guys
He was big and not very nice
And he controlled the TV
I remember how excited we got
When we realized we could order
More than one of the food items
To one of the residents
My pastor came to see me
And said he could get me out
I knew better for some reason
I was so excited to leave the first room
Which they called Hell
And to go out into the next area
In the hospital ward
I remember we got to do
Group activities there
One guy showed me how to dance
I was hyper-religious
According to my psychiatrist
Who kept asking me if I heard voices
He didn't introduce himself
So it was a few days later
Before I realized he was my doctor
I remember how hard it was to sleep
The dementia patients next door

Practical Advice Collection

Kept screaming all night
To get out
I had to under go an MRI
Which was very scary for me
But my mom was there for me
And I was given a mirror
So I could see out
When I left the hospital
I watched TV most of the day
And I slept a lot too
I finally decided to read and write
Which was very difficult at first
I was only able to
Write after 4 months
It was hard for me
To even ride across town
At first
I remember when I got back
From the hospital
I threw out
Everything sharp in my room
I was afraid to be alone
For several months
I started attending
A local recreation group
For the mentally ill
I also worked on learning Javascript
And eventually started
On my website again

Group Home

That fall I entered
A group home
I shared the house
With 8 other men
With mental illnesses
And there was a staff person
There at all times
They basically ignored us
We had to clean and cook
All by ourselves
There was no help in this
They just required that we did this
The TV was always on VH1
And we had to leave the house
For at least 1 hour at 11am
I started volunteering
At a local Internet Service Provider
Doing tech support
I also volunteered at a local music hall
Taking tickets and checking IDs
We had to be in
By a certain time each night
And had to stay inside until
A certain time in the morning
They wouldn't let me go to bed
Before a certain time
And I had to get up by a certain time
The reason why I was here
Was because I started out with only

Practical Advice Collection

200 and some dollars a month
From the state agency
And this was the only place that would take me
I visited my mom once a week
She was on the other side of town
And I got 20 dollars a week from her
Which I spent mostly on books
I kept writing poetry and reading
Mostly about Buddhism at this point
And I continued to work on the website
I started on a new medicine
Which made me less tired
When I was on the previous medicine
If I didn't fight to stay awake
I would always be asleep
Then my money came in
From the Veterans
And I moved into my own apartment

On my Own

My first apartment was downtown
I was only a few blocks
From the bus station
So I could get to anywhere in town
With only one bus
I lived on the 6th floor
Of a 12 floor building
I never lived up this high before
And it was nice for a while
But I had to go

Practical Advice Collection

All the way down
6 floors to get food
Or something to drink
And it was hot in the summer
The place was heated by a boiler
And I could not control the temperature
We started off with cleaning help
And realized we needed someone
To do the wash for me
And so we started with our several year
Adventure with in home care
One person couldn't walk or read
Other people took 3 hours to dust a fake plant
One of the guys waited until
Half way through the time
To cash the check for groceries
One lady kept falling asleep
One guy made fun of fat people
Another one kept looking through my trash
One of them was mentally ill himself
One lady said I wasn't supposed to
"Snitch" food from myself
With everyone things were moved
Around everywhere except where they found them
The next apartment was out in west side of town
It was a few blocks from
A Bible college
Which I was thinking about attending
Until they told me I shouldn't
Watch sitcoms, die my hair, or study Buddhism

Practical Advice Collection

The apartments were duplexes on ground level
And the site was like a big park
Most neighbors were young families with small children
Which is good noise wise
I continued with the in home service
The big problem with the in home service
Is that they wouldn't check my medicine
So I was set up with a group
The other side of town
To hold my medicine and monitor it
But I had to get there every day
Within a one hour window
Early in the morning
This stressed me out
And led to my next living arrangement

Retirement Home

At first this sounded fine
Although unusual
This group would take care of
Managing my medicines
Doing my laundry
Cleaning my room
And provided me with 3 meals daily
This place was definitely cheap
And I thought at first
That they were just smarter about things
But I found out later
That this basically summarized the place
The food was too small

Practical Advice Collection

It did not taste very good
And it was all old people food
They only spent
1 dollar person/meal on food
If you were a few minutes late for the meal
You didn't get it
The medicine was always screwed up
The residents constantly harassed me
If I was out for even 5 minutes
10 people would want me to help them
The rooms were tiny
And they were just one room
I was very patient at first
But gradually lost patience
As no one would leave me alone
I lived there for almost 2 years
The average age was mid 90's
The average stay was 6 months
And most people had a memory of 5 minutes
Residents would scream insults at me
They would physically hurt me
They would order me around
They would repeat the same stories
For hours on end
They were very loud and up all night
The staff did nothing about any of this
I got ants in my room
I left no food in there
And they gave me grief
About wanting another apartment

Intelligence Poetry

inspired by music sung by the Temptations

It's Growing

I meet the challenges of each project
I surpass myself with greater stretches of my imagination
Each time I complete something new
I look back each day in reflection
It is with a broken rhythm that I follow through
With that which I choose for myself
From writing to reading to drawing
There and back again
Each project something different entirely
But related to every other one in ten thousand ways
Each blurring the distinction between reading writing and drawing
Reaching beyond the limits of distinction
Between the modes of artistic operation
There is a struggle at many points
This creates another kind of broken rhythm
Where the push comes at different angles and in different movements
Is there ever a plateau of peace for an artist
Or is the battle the definition of art?
It would be relaxing to forget about my expectations
And no one would fault me for caring a little less about achievement
But what does that say to others
Who have even greater obstacles to overcome?
With each new project I become a different person
But is it the contents of my portfolio that grow
Or my heart?
But what good is it to grow inside?

Practical Advice Collection

But not have anything to give to others
With each word I come nearer to completion of my work
With each second I come nearer the end of my life
How will I make the words count
And the seconds pass by more slowly?
If life is lived too fast
And too much gleaned from too little a stalk
The life of the plant will not last as long
And the sun will fade the life out
Does art even affect others?
Is it too abstract to feel
Or is it just that there are too few
Who are willing to change?

Don't Look Back

With so little time left
Why look back?
It is not the time to look back
Because I can hardly turn my head far enough to get a good angle
There is little room left for turning around
On this narrow road of the muse
But it might look something like this
Where everything means something
There were times when I could not see
Right in front of my face
There was a fog that never lifted
There was a silence that never let up
The air was blurred with the brilliance of the sun
And nothing could escape the glare
I reflected back the warped light

Practical Advice Collection

That shown down on me
And there was nothing but shadows
And bright spots darting around me
What appeared to be the stark truth
Was just another lie
Just another reason
For my mind to play tricks on me
There were times when I could barely hold on the world
And there was nothing that could fill the void
When no one was really there
And nothing was real except fear
There was no reason to keep going forward
There was a stop just a head
And my mind had to get off
With nothing to guide me
But illusions of grandeur
Who could recognize me as a prophet
But my true enemy - my deluded mind
With each step it became easier to walk
And I started walking forward
My mind stopped going in circles
And there was time to stop and ask for directions

Ain't too Proud to Beg

Please stay for me
It is not often that your visit is so pleasant
What can I do to make you more comfortable?
What reason is there for you to comfort me?
It is not that I need the company
But that you are now a part of me

Practical Advice Collection

I do not trust my choices
Without your guidance
It is not that you make such a difference
In the daily routines that I struggle with
But it is the long lonely nights
And times I push to get more done
That I need you most
That no other will work as substitute
Now that you understand
How I feel
I can perhaps show you
The depth of my desire
Without your imagination I can create nothing
Without your intellect I cannot understand why I create
Without your calm I cannot go through a stressful moment
Without your judgment I cannot stay away from the hospital
There are times when you go away
Without telling me
I have a hard time
Letting you go
But that is no reason
To leave without notice
I try my best to take care of you
But you are so hungry for attention
You eat up so much time
And you do not remind me when you need something
I work hard to keep you entertained
And out of trouble
But can there be a time
When you can look after me?

Practical Advice Collection

Could you make it on your own
Just one day more?

All I Need

I'm sorry that it happened that way
I didn't know that I hurt you
There is a blindness with love
That no salve can heal
There are reasons why I do not notice
That which hurts you most
It is not that I don't care
But obliviousness is common in our relationship
We do not communicate so as to not hurt the other
Why we cast long glances at each other in silence
The truth is just too sad
And the reality uncompromising
What is there to a meaningful relationship?
What would it take to make us happy together?
Is it filled with mirrors and sunlight
Or is it better that it be cool and dark?
Is self love the same as a long friendship?
Does there need to be some other comparison?
Does the mind know the heart as well
As two lovers know of each others likes?
Can you trust your heart
When your mind is broken?
Is there a way to heal both organs at once?
How can one live without either one?
The mind's heart is fragile indeed
But strong enough to wound the greater heart

Practical Advice Collection

How can I say I am sorry
When my heart cannot think without you?
There must be something to do
To mend a broken mind
There must be a way
To learn from the heart
Is the heart the only organ that loves
Or is the mind the only part that can feel true love?

I Wish it would Rain

There are times when the sky weeps for us
When we are not strong enough to let out our feelings
Sometimes it feels like that is the only way
To weep enough to satisfy your heart
The mind is not as strong as the heart
But it feels all the more
Sometimes it is not smart to think with your heart
And feel with your mind
But that is how it usually works out
We don't seem to have enough sense
To use our organs right
I cannot walk farther than the grocery store today
I cannot smile long enough for you to see
There are not enough hours to sleep today
I cannot complete a sentence today
Without my mind able to do the heavy thinking
My heart is troubled
And here doesn't seem to be any relief
There is no way to hold back the flood of feelings
I wish I could stop the blinding heat

Practical Advice Collection

Emitting from my mind
There is nothing to slow the pain
When the heart no longer has a hold

Mainstream Poetry

based on the Realist philosophy of Han Fei Tzu

Integrity

Talk in secret
Plan in the dark
Hide in the shadows
Never disclose your sources
Does it matter
What is right and wrong?
Just shut up
And do as your told
Affairs are normal
They come with the territory
Just don't make promises
To those you sleep with
Influencing others is easy
Just pad their ego
Speak highly of others
Who think as they do

Administration

Do not be too nice
Or soften your policies
Your hard heart
Might give way
Forget to honor

Practical Advice Collection

Those who sacrifice
They should be grateful
Since you're all that
Send the homeless back
To migrant labor
And 18 hour work days
Working themselves to death
Don't let soldiers
Return to their families
Or get civilian jobs
It is their duty
To be put in danger
And to be paid little
It used to be ok
To be kind
But people are jerks
And need to be treated badly
Winning hearts and minds
Is said by the ignorant
Who cares what the people think
We don't need their loyalty

Power

Dividing power amongst the leaders
Will just cause disorder
Leaders should be distant
And unresponsive to the people
If he listens to the people
They might expect something from him
If the leader makes compromises

Practical Advice Collection

He loses too much
Why should he make concessions
And lose his absolute grip on power
We cannot serve both the common good
And still defend individual rights
Patriotism means not asking for protections
But sacrificing so the government can take over more
If the leadership does not approve of pundits
They should be silenced and lose their jobs
If the leaders like the proponents
They should make the children study their propaganda

Opinions

Women go downhill after 30
But men haven't reached their prime until 50
Doctors are just out for the money
Nurses just want extra benefits
No one in health care
Works for anything other than the money
People are unwilling to invest
Even when the payoff is big
And the investment is little
Just bet your retirement
On the latest technology
Its a sure thing
Why be nice to your employees
People only follow dictators
Art is unproductive
And should not be promoted
What we really need

Practical Advice Collection

Is more people to sign up for the Army
So we can push around small countries
And more ranchers
So we can have an even more heart disease
Give the taxes to the corporations not the people
Poor people got that way because they are lazy
It is not the government's responsibility
To look after its people

Considering Military Service?

I served in the Army and here are some of the things I found to be both good and bad about the military. I also worked with the other services too, so I know something about them.

You can feel confident that you are doing something important and something that not everyone can do. You also feel like you are accomplishing something important. Remember, whether or not you agree with what the government has sent you to do, you are still being a great help. And you don't have to feel responsible for what your country decides, because the military does not decide when and where to go in.

You meet some great people in the military that you will remember your whole life. They often have strong personalities and are not always friendly at first, but these guys will save your life even by sacrificing their own. The military does a background check on all recruits before they can join and checks for personality defects, by putting recruits through stress during initial training.

Military service looks great on your resume and if you pick the right job you can get some very valuable training. Look into something that you can do that has a civilian equivalent. There are a lot of good engineering and mechanical related jobs that you can be trained in that will translate into good jobs when you get out of the military.

Very few people get the college money they are promised. The government is not going to give you hundreds of thousands of dollars for college if they can avoid it, so they put many restrictions on it like you have to start within 2 years of leaving the military, you can't change majors (unless enough of your credits apply to the new major), you only get it if you have an honorable discharge, etc. Going to college in the military is not usually an option, because the military is too understaffed to spare service members.

You don't get paid that much during your service. In fact, if you have a wife and a kid and have a college degree, but want the military to pay back the money, you will be under the poverty level and receiving food stamps. You can also get an Article 15 for even very minor infractions, and be penalized with a hundred dollars taken out of your pay check and get a few weeks of extra duty every day.

You might be expected to risk your long term health or life. There is a reason why they send you through a gas chamber, while you are in basic training in the Army, Marines, and sometimes in the Navy and Air Force and it isn't just a rite of passage. The countries the US fights have not signed the Geneva conventions and it is very common for them to torture prisoners and to use chemical weapons. Being exposed to chemical weapons like mustard gas and chlorine is like being burned by battery acid in your lungs and eyes.

Realize that the military is very stressful and if you are struggling with psychological issues or are a sensitive person of any kind, joining the military will just exasperate your problems and the military is not set up to do everything for you and take care of things if you can't.

Practical Advice Collection

First, consider if joining Americorps or the Peace Corps will satisfy what you are looking for. In Americorps, you help Americans in America, without the high risk of personal injury. You also have many choices on what you can do and who you work for.

Look into joining the Air Force, if at all possible. The Air Force has few of the downsides that the other services have. The one downside to the Air Force is that it is hard to advance very far in rank, because people stay in so long.

Choose the shortest length of service possible. It is very easy to be accepted back into the military for another enlistment, but very hard to get out, while you are still under your tour of duty.

Join the Reserves or Guard first. There are some very interesting jobs that the Reserves and National Guard can do if you are willing to move to another state. If you really enjoy military life, you can very easily change to Regular enlistment, but it is much harder to go the other way around.

When you have joined, always give 150 percent and be a team player all the time and you will avoid 99 percent of the problems most people encounter in the military.

If you are considering the Army or the Marines, go play paint ball and go camping with your recruiter; this will give you somewhat of an idea about some of the things you will do in the military.

If you are thinking of joining the Navy, really think carefully what it might be like with a bunch of high school age kids on a little ship in the middle of the ocean. Find out exactly how much space you have and some of the things you might have to do there.

If you have joined in the Delayed Entry Program and have changed your mind, it is very easy to get out and does not count against you in the civilian world or even to the other services. If you show up to your swearing in and shipping date, then it is very hard to get out, until your enlistment is up.