

Inquiring Minds: Recent Random Thoughts

#28 March 2014 "Live mindfully and with purpose or not at all." -moi

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CHRISTIAN MANDATE COULD PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC M.O.

Loving one's enemies is probably the most challenging of the Christian precepts. It is a lofty goal, not often followed once Christianity attained political power with Constantine in 325. Yet loving one's enemies embraces more than social interaction *if* one's enemies are also seen as one's antithetical opposites.

According to [wikipedia](#), THE DIALECTIC was a "method of argument for resolving disagreement that has been central to European and I n d i a n philosophy since a n t i q u i t y . [Socrates](#) favored *truth* as the highest value, proposing that it could be discovered through reason and logic in discussion: ergo, *dialectic*. Socrates valued rationality (appealing to logic, not emotion) as the proper means for persuasion, the discovery of truth, and the determinant for one's actions. To Socrates, *truth*, not *aretē* (excellence) was the greater good, and each person should, above all else, seek truth to guide one's life."

So, *via* Socrates, Hegel, and others, we need opposing viewpoints (enemies, if you will) to better ourselves and our society. In modern parlance, the interaction between a thesis and its opposite, an antithesis, yields a synthesis, the best of both worlds.

This is but one reason to engage and be respectful of (love?) those who challenge us with different

view points. Their truth is a safeguard against getting carried away with ourselves.

HYPOTHETICAL REASONING POISONED BY P.C. FEARS

At a dinner party I once conjectured that women might be able to multi-task better than men. This was based on my own limited observations and experiences. Well, that was met by semi-playful guffaws from both sexes. "It was just a hypothesis," I evasively retorted. I suspected there were some studies out there to confirm or deny this, so I resolved to google it later for more evidence. But it really surprised me that people were so sensitive to the question I had raised. Gender differences in both in perception and multi-tasking have nothing to do with equality issues; but I could see that I had stepped on some sacred cows, and these were held by some pretty sophisticated people perhaps over-trained in political correctness.

Incidentally, it turns out my original [hypothesis was correct](#).

BUT CAN MULTI-TASKERS REALLY FOCUS THAT WELL?

I surely cannot multi-task well. This is the reason why I've stopped eating meals in front of the television set, especially if more than just leftovers. To do so makes me not even taste, enjoy, and appreciate the food before me. It also insults the cook, be it my wife or myself, in not giving this gift my full attention.

This is not just about food. Two weeks ago a friend and former classmate of mine, [Paul Page](#), emailed me a piece of music he

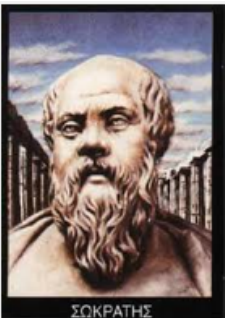
h a d j u s t composed. I listened to it several times playing in the background as I looked through my email. Then I stopped, closed my eyes, and *really* listened to the music Paul had sent me. I savored every note, and its beauty was revealed to me.

My conclusions: Taking one's time to truly be present to what's in front of me at the moment makes the experience so rich and alive. Conversely, rushing, multi-tasking, being preoccupied, etc., detracts and subtracts from the quality of life before me. Mindfulness is a prayer of presence, whereas the distracted life is a blur of blasphemy, the antithesis of being.

PERSEVERANCE, TENACITY, PERSISTENCE: WWII TRAITS

In the face of great challenges such as WWII, the greatest generation taught us so much about character. My father continually told me there was no such word as "can't," which I debated until I understood what he was really trying to tell me. On my desk I have a quote he once d i s p l a y e d which says: "The difficult we do right away, the impossible takes a little longer."

Such is one of the many gifts of my parents' generation for which I am very appreciative. -JB ([addenda](#))



Dad and Mom 1946