

Inquiring Minds: How to Change One's Mind w/o Losing It

#49 July 2018 "...so many challenges, but the first, closest and biggest challenge is our mindset!" -Ernest A Yeboah

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60 DAYS IN THE DESERT OF SOLITUDE

With Nothing Exciting to Report..until now

April 1 Patricia took a tumble, broke her hip, and made us both suddenly aware of our fragility, our dependency, and our partnership of almost 50 years. Time together at home, hooked on MSNBC, CNN, and PBS, and therefore a little depressed about the political scene; we find more hope and happiness in family and friends as we all age and face our various challenges.

Seeking some intellectual inspiration I turned to reading and watching movies. Below are some books and/or articles I liked.

COMEY'S BOOK AND FATAL FLAW REVEALED

James Comey's book, *A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership*, was a very revealing and well written autobiography leading up to his famous encounter with the president. He tells stories of himself as lad in fifth grade who at first was "the cool guy in his class" to a new setting where he was "the smart kid who was bullied from then on," even though he was physically larger in high school and college. Such hazing set him on his way to protect others from bullies as a prosecuting attorney. He worked under Rudy Giuliani in wiping out the notorious five (mafia) families in New York. He talks about his dealings with Martha Stewart. Yet he was ultimately intimidated by "not wanting to appear biased and damage the FBI" when he broke protocol, bypassed the DOJ, and spoke about the ongoing investigation of Hilary Clinton. This was his huge error in judgment—possibly costing Hilary the election. Tragic, but Comey may still find redemption.

LOOKING FOR A GOD EXPERIENCE, SOME TRY

["PLANT MEDICINES"](#) WHICH ARE MAKING A COMEBACK

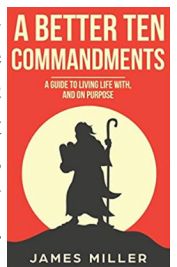
Twenty years ago at the men's retreat in Big Basin Little Lou asked (Fr.) Sean if he though a God experience might be had by taking various hallucinogenic drugs. Sean said it was quite possible. The question has stayed on my mind because my own *experience of God* has always been an indirect reflection of his/her wonder in life, nature, and love of family and friends. For me God was more of a belief than an experience. Last month another companion of that same group told me he had read 100 pages of a best-seller by Michael Pollan, *How to Change Your Mind*. It means literally "change one's mind," that is, the brain's hardwiring built up over time which filters all we see to fit habit or our belief systems. This is done by mind-altering drugs, natural or manufactured as in the '60's, but now more focused and intentional. Pollan who has many best-sellers on food, and other topics, and is a UC professor at the Graduate

School of Journalism; presents an informative history of various types of psycho-active drugs and their medical use in US by hundreds of therapists and thousands of patients from the 1950's until 1965 when they were made illegal in the US. In 2009 the door for study was re-opened. Pollan himself walks the reader through several personal experiences he had starting when he was sixty, "a good age to change one's point of view for dealing with the rest of one's life." However, since experiences are ineffable, ie. unable to be explained, just as one cannot describe the taste of an apple to one who has never tasted one, his trip could not be communicated to the uninitiated such as myself.

My conclusion after reading 268 pages of the 400+, I'm not so curious to try plant medicines which will make me physically ill (purging often takes place with ayahuasca and others) or induces temporary psychosis. ([more](#) in *The San Jose Mercury*)

TWO PHILOSOPHICAL FINDS WHICH MAY INTEREST YOU AS A LOVER OF WISDOM

The first is a 100 page book written by a "non-professional" who wanted a code of ethics, free from the trappings of religion. *A Better Ten Commandments* is one of the clearest and most refreshing books I have ever read on ethics. It is highly researched as indicated by a very comprehensive bibliography, but it reads so well. \$3 for the ebook. Read a chapter [here](#).



"Ten Non-Commandments" chosen as crowd-sourced from a non-religious group as reported in Time magazine

1. Be open-minded and be willing to alter your beliefs with new evidence.
2. Strive to understand what is most likely to be true, not to believe what you wish to be true.
3. The scientific method is the most reliable way of understanding the natural world.
4. Every person has the right to control of their body.
5. God is not necessary to be a good person or to live a full and meaningful life.
6. Be mindful of the consequences of all your actions and recognize that you must take responsibility for them.
7. Treat others as you would want them to treat you, and can reasonably expect them to want to be treated. Think about their perspective.
8. We have the responsibility to consider others, including future generations.
9. There is no one right way to live.
10. Leave the world a better place than you found it.

Hope you are well and as peaceful as possible. —Joe