

One Planet, Two Worlds

Written by Alex Baer

Saturday, 03 October 2015 16:53

The problem with being a curmudgeon is that you still have things to say long after you know you really should shut up.

And so, as Curmudgeon General of The Benighted, Yoo-nited States -- one of many lifelong self-appointees, I see, based on a quick glance and a hasty listen snatched from around the media fountain -- here I am again.

My *Curmudgeon General* website is on hold. I am tired, listless. (Oh, a sizeable lottery win could still perk me up, but we'd have to be speaking about "Sharing-Size" quantities at this point.)

I mean, it's everything: It's getting cold here again. Durable Goods are failing after four years after replacement. There's been another school shooting. The car needs to keep its tires and wheels, and get everything else replaced. Politics, Stupidity, Futility, Ignorance, and Pride in being hard-of-thinking are all in full bloom.

You know: *The usual*.

So, rather than fuss with a new website that won't even *web* or *site*, I thought I'd vent some pesky thoughts here, and let the bees in my head play on *your* screen for a while, if you don't mind.

There are only two kinds of people...

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See, it doesn't much matter anymore what the topic is -- guns, religion, gays, taxation, infrastructure repair, education, health care, science, you name it...

... aside from the apathetic and incoherent masses (please hold your jovial speculations on the percentage of the population involved here), there are only two groups of people in these here YOO-nited States:

Those who respond to emotional appeals and messages, and

those who respond to intellectual appeals and messages.

(I am very purposefully staying away from making divisions along the heart-mind and blood-brain borders, because heartless, hot-blooded Republicans can still love their children, and brainy Dems and Indies can still be thoughtless at times.)

Neither side has much of value to say to the other. Logic and Emotion have no common language -- they are not even in the same dimension or omniverse.

But, to paint in very broad strokes, trying to illustrate my impoverished canvas here:

Republicans, Teabaggers, Libertarians, and others in the Emotions-and-Feelings camp live by the gut, primarily responding to Fear and Competition to spur action.

Democrats, Independents, and others in the Thinking-and-Logic camp live by the mind, primarily responding to Thought and Cooperation to spur action.

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To continue stereotyping my way to a point:

Dems and Indies, and their siblings and heirs, endlessly labor to craft the thoughtful use of facts, logic, and intelligent argument, hoping to find the perfect alignment of ideas and words which would uncloud and enlighten GOP minds, loosening all the tumblers, and letting in Reason and Rational Thinking. This is the effort to work toward discussions and compromise, like adults do -- or used to do.

But, no barriers are dropped, no minds are changed, discussions are either deadlocked or draw blank looks, and NOTHING EVER HAPPENS. The arguments, meanwhile, are re-crafted, re-shaped, re-polished...

Meanwhile, members of the GOP and their ilk and kin, continue to bellow and launch ballistic bombast, blasting and lambasting their Fears and Angers on a flood of issues, like emotionally jangled, hard-put-upon children, too lost in their own wailing and shrieking to consider being calmed -- too overheated to consider compromise more than appeasement.

But, their opponents never ignite as they themselves do, and the wild fire of their eyes never jumps from person to person, and the fires on one head of hair never leap to another's -- and so, NOTHING EVER HAPPENS. The screaming and wailing and shrieking, and all the other fear responses, continue.

Hearing versus Listening...

Both groups shout past one another. Neither group hears the other. Neither group responds to the other. Neither group is equipped to receive messages from, or send them to, the other group. *Plug and Socket. □ Round Peg, Square Hole. □ Apples and Oranges.*

No, worse: Apples and Ocelots. Apples and Buicks. *Apples and Comets.*

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Nothing useful is done for regular citizens in the country unable to afford personal purchase of pet politicians nor pretty perks 'n' policies for sale. Nothing is done for the country. Nothing useful is done for the rest of the planet or its people.

Carpe Diem and Seizing the Pants...

Unless and until we humans can zero in on this profound dilemma of the human species, and of *Americanus Insanus* in particular, we are simply whizzing and farting in the wind, windmilling our arms all around, babbling incessantly about all manner of disagreeable details and developments, emptily objecting and buzzing about the latest headlines.

Just more lost and wasted spittle in the breeze.

So, here's the Real Thing to Focus On: How do we turn the *Armageddon-Apocalypso* clock back to a quarter-to-Sanity-o'clock, and restore the art of meaningful, civil, compromise? How do we retrain ourselves to not only hear, but listen, to one another? How do we stop the shouting and competing, and reheat the thinking and the cooperating which we used to do so well?

How do we turn the impatience born of frustration -- on all sides -- into the seemingly unfocused leisure of discussion, negotiation, compromise?

When All Else Fails, Try Something Different...

In lieu of magic wands, and being only mortal, I can only suggest this bitter pill: ***Hard Work. Not being mind-readers, we have only Communication on our tool belts. □ Our tools are hearing, listening, thinking, patience, and reason.***

Emotions do a crappy job of carrying into reasonable communication, so Emotions should be considered incompatible with communication and be checked at the door.

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However satisfying ice-cold logic can be, you have the warm subjects, and subject matter, with some human heart -- so, be ready to let some emotions back in from the checked-baggage cloakroom.

To be blunt: Freaked-out, terrified children cannot stop to process logic, thought, and facts. Once calmed, even balky children can be reasoned with -- or, at least, negotiated with. And, in this analogy, objectionable as it may be to the Fearful, parents need to remember that no amount of insisting will make logic and fact penetrate the mind of a scared child.

Discussion and listening and negotiating: These are very different skills from the shouting, hearing, and threatening talents so evident -- so abundantly in evidence -- today.

Two Things...

I wish I could have spent as little as one year -- even one whole month -- of my life living in a country of my own making, feeling good about everything it did, both inside and outside its borders. I could say the same thing of my species, too.

However, I realize I have spent more than 50 years as a human, and as an American, making that same wish, and realizing that this wish has not come to pass, nor is it likely to.

... and a Couple More, too.

We have some giant steps in learning to accomplish, and I don't think we're up to it. We have to learn how to interact with one another in productive, useful, non-psychotic, non-Fearful ways.

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We also have to learn how to keep from killing the planet -- a tough-enough thing to attempt, without heaping disbelief of any problem into the mix.

Those are two very short fuses, and they are related. It is not by accident.

Humans are running out of "Our" broad sweep and vista of time, even faster than I am running out of my small, postcard-sized container of mine.

It's Hell being meat -- *mortal* meat, at that.

Sign me,

- *Another Earthbound Misfit*
- *Waiting for the Emergency Locator Beacon Pickup*
- *After Being Dropped Off On This Planet By Mistake*

POSTSCRIPT:

For some time, I've been teasing my old noodle to fish out a good, solid word that would be the opposite of "Fear." I came up with lots of good candidates, but none went far enough or deep enough. So, I started dangling my hook in the murky waters of the Webz. Here is what I found:

"Courage" is not the opposite of "Fear." This is because "Fear" is a state and "Courage" is an activity or action -- in other words, it is possible to be afraid and still act courageously.

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I have discovered many people have conjectured that "Peace" is the best opposite word for "Fear." I have thought about this, and consider this the best possible choice, too.

I will combine my human elements and say that it not only feels right, but it sits well in the mind, too. *Harmony*.

POST-POSTSCRIPT:

Being a curmudgeon automatically means being a windy bastard, so here are some more loose and escaping thoughts, for free.

Like you, I am not religious, but I am spiritual. I frankly do not know why everyone isn't born an agnostic and then remain so, keeping an open mind, until or unless there's any solid evidence or proof requiring a change in beliefs.

Strike that -- I DO know why people change and fall into religion. I simply *wish* it were a human norm that we would remain agnostics. No crime in a lifelong session of saying, basically, "*Beats me, man.*"

Meanwhile, as perspective, I offer you the gift of a quote I bumped into this morning:

"When I have a terrible need of -- shall I say the word, religion -- then I go out and paint the stars."

That one was from Vincent Van Gogh. I understand that this man's ideas, and his art, weren't worth a damn until *after* he was dead, like many geniuses. Sounds about right, for *this* planet.

[taps forehead knowingly with forefinger...]

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... you know: *Nice planet, nobody home.*

At any rate, happy *Starry Night*, in all the hot noons and scalded nights left up ahead.

Your "R" Rated Bonus Resource -- a 60's "Primal Scream" favorite (both during my own 60s and during the 1960s) to help provide some smiling perspective on It All:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svPDzNO6GQk>

Oh, and: ☐ Last one off the planet, please give a quick heads-up to all the other species, letting them know they should all be OK from that point on...

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