



ARE YOU WOKE YET?

Should you remain silent when you realize the stories about America you've been telling yourself are proven false by the President's behavior? A philosopher who is not taking part in discussions is like a boxer who never goes into the ring. Once awakened, the worst case scenario may prompt you to think "life sucks". If this sounds like you, recognizing other people lead productive lives while your life continues to be underwhelming, is a step in the right direction and can lead to self awareness and surrender. Philosophy allows us to use the tools of logic and reason to analyze the ways in which we experience the world. It teaches critical thinking through logical analysis; it allows us to understand the stories we tell ourselves, and our place in the world.

Nietzsche once proclaimed, "How shall we comfort ourselves, murderers of all murderers!" Unlike Nietzsche, most people avoid facing their dark side opting instead to project their biases. Projection occurs when we attribute an element of our personality, which resides in our unconscious to another person or a group. By itself, projection is one of the commonest psychic phenomena. Everything that is unconscious in ourselves we discover in our neighbor and we treat him accordingly. Projection is a necessary component in our psychological development as it's a primary means by which we can gain an awareness of elements residing in our unconscious. If people never did silly things nothing intelligent would ever get done.

According to Professor David Logan, author of "Tribal Leadership", 48% of the groups we belong to, at first, seem to be functional, with most individuals having a high regard for their place in the organization. However, many of them complain that they're doing all the work. They form "dyads" - one-on-one relationships between two people - and have little communication beyond that.

Immanuel Kant and Donald Trump's philosophy fall under this group as many of Kant's writings and Trump's rhetoric promote a revolutionary enthusiasm that are often bias. David Hume's "Method Of Moral Philosophy" showed that reason is properly a "slave to the passions unlike the experimental and empirical; which illustrates mankind's greatest weakness. Unlike Hume, Kant unintentionally blinded himself by seeing the world for what he wanted it to be, instead of Hume's emphasis on reason and empirical data, to perceive the world as it really is. Kant emphasized the superiority of good will over nature. His writings omitted vital events and information that make one question man's behavior or their convictions. We find this behavior in most places where smart, successful people show up. Failure to confront our imperfections forces us to continually look for scapegoats to make up for when the story we're telling ourselves doesn't add up. Scapegoating at a group level is made easier by the fact that some group members (all races) are individuals composed of their own weaknesses and flaws. Maximilien Robespierre, the architect of the French Revolution's Reign of Terror effectively utilized scapegoating to secure power, encouraged the execution, mostly by guillotine, of more than 17,000 enemies of the Revolution. Robespierre was also beheaded after he attempted to place fault, blame and pressure (more scapegoating) on the members of the National Convention. The goal of the French Revolution was to change the system, and get food back into citizens' mouths by getting rid of the monarchy and found a system powered by the people, their slogan was "Liberty! Equality!" This ideological war has been waged since the 17th century and continues today,

(Enlightenment) emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. Aware of this, it could be argued, Donald Trump (and/or his handlers) stole a page from a famous philosopher's playbook in order to create doubt and an air of mystique by not putting any plans down on paper. The writings of Socrates were never saved or written down. All of what we know about Socrates is from what other people wrote about him. Our main source of what we know about Socrates is from the writings of his student, Plato. Some of Plato's dialogues, such as the Crito and the Phaedo, are loosely based on fact. Trump's avoidance of the free press is an attempt to minimize the media's access to verifiable activities illustrated by the demise of the White House Presidential Press Conference. Unlike philosopher Yuval Noah Harari, many of us haven't put in the work of reading these writings, shutting out new ideas easily accessible to us. We often ignore new ideas despite knowing a thing does not therefore cease to be true because it is not accepted by many. Yuval Noah Harari describes this phenomena in his book "21 Lessons For The 21st Century", "When a thousand people believe some made-up story for one month, that's fake news. When a billion people believe it for a thousand years, that's a religion, and we are admonished not to call it "fake news" in order not to hurt the feelings of the faithful (or incur their wrath)."

Enabling readers to experience an epiphany about communication that unites Americans around a core set of values is my goal. These values encourage dyads to become "triads" - groups of three people together with shared projects and common values. "Triads are the building blocks of Information that flows freely through networks and innovation enabling individuals to surrender. Surrender is the simple but profound wisdom of yielding to rather than opposing the flow of life. Surrender is not the same thing as resignation. One can surrender to the reality of a situation and still take steps to create a different path. The concept of "motivation" is very important and challenges the assumption that acceptance will lead to equality or a lack of motivation. Equality is as undesirable as it is unrealizable. Attempting to achieve equality requires that each of us forego who we are and what we can do in order to create something in which no one ultimately believes - a society everybody is the same or has the same. Let us by all means seek to increase opportunities for all. We have to proceed knowing to increase opportunities for all is likely to favor those better able to take advantage of them and may often first increase inequalities.

John Hagelin stood as a candidate for President of the United States for the Natural Law Party, a party founded by the Transcendental Meditation movement, in the 1992, 1996 and 2000 elections capturing a high of 23,000 votes in the year 2000. Dr. Hagelin said that research shows that traditional approaches to defense fail because they do not address the underlying cause of violence and conflict: they do not relieve the acute political, ethnic, and religious tensions that fuel terrorism and war. Hagelin states, "We need an effective means to eliminate these deep-seated tensions—a proven approach that can prevent violence and bloodshed and promote peace and prosperity in the world." Yuval Noah Harari, who practices vipassana meditation is less optimistic and thinks modernity is a deal. Hariri said, "The entire contract can be summarized in a single phrase: humans agree to give up meaning in exchange for power." Harari believes objective things exist independent of human consciousness, like radioactivity. Subjective things exist solely in one's imagination, like a child's imaginary friend, religion, money and corporations. "The inter-subjective is something that exists within the communication network linking the subjective consciousness of many individuals. If a single individual changes his or her beliefs, or even dies, it is of little importance. However, if most individuals in the network die or change their beliefs, the inter-subjective phenomenon will mutate or disappear." Unequal results of human achievement conjure up simplistic notions of injustice. These perceived unfairness add to the challenges my business face today. Any small business owner worth their salt has to follow politics and current affairs closely as the decisions made at the seat of power aren't simple and/or transparent. These acts naturally impact the future success of any business since ignorance is never a good excuse. The romantic idea of love and peace are noble and easily rationalized, but the last time I checked most landlords don't accept hugs in lieu of rent. Lastly, the obstacles in American politics we most often can't resolve are usually Republican and Democratic extreme ideologies. These circular arguments enable obstruction of fair governance and can be addressed by the transparent communication I advocate. There is room to go higher still. We should be able to be innovative to create new opportunities, allowing us to embark on history-making projects. This is how we end up changing the world for the better. The most unfortunate thing regarding nihilism is not the loss of the ability to believe, but the inability to see the beauty, opportunities and possibilities of things and events occurring around us daily. Our success starts with the stories we tell ourselves.