

Common Ground Readings (Anthology)

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Common Ground Mission Statement

Common Ground aims to help Armenians here and abroad form a consensus around ***Armenia's future*** development as ***a welcoming home for all Armenians*** and to promote a sense of responsibility and foster action to make Armenia an ***exemplary country worthy of our ancient culture and heritage.***

It is not a political party or think tank. Inspired by the cautionary maxim, ***without vision the people perish,*** Common Ground is a place to talk openly, share knowledge, gain insight, clarify our thinking, gain a better understanding of options, so that we are equipped to ***act responsibly and intelligently*** as Armenia and the Armenian nation face the challenges of the coming decade.

More succinctly: ***Vision without action is a daydream, action without vision is a nightmare.*** Our goal is ***action with vision.*** Common Ground aims to foster vision so that our actions will realize our dreams.

Common Ground House Rules

1. ***Maintain the Commons*** – keep this space clean – clean up after yourselves and your colleagues. At Common Ground we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers!
2. ***No Smoking*** – it's bad for your health and worse for those around you. No Smoking just outside the door either. Don't throw your cigarette butts on the ground – find a trashcan.
3. Maintain a friendly atmosphere based on ***courtesy, civility, and mutual respect***.
4. ***Be a good listener*** - Remember you have 2 ears and 1 mouth, so you should listen twice as much as you speak. Keep your comments short and to the point, under 2 minutes (an hourglass is provided at each table for this purpose). Give other people a chance to speak before speaking a second time.
5. ***Share your thoughts*** – don't hide your light under a bushel – share your ideas so that others can benefit.
6. ***Be generous in your relations and reactions*** – avoid nitpicking or fault-finding that is irrelevant to the discussion. Compliment and complement each other. Remember acts of omission can be as harmful as acts of commission. Failing to say a good word can be as destructive as saying something nasty.
7. ***Don't interrupt each other***. Don't have side conversations while others are talking. It's rude.
8. ***Stick to the topic***. Avoid ad hominem attacks. Intervene when you hear such attacks and say, "Let's stick to the topic – Hard on the problem, soft on the people." If you want to change the topic, ask permission first.
9. A discussion at its best is a ***creative, enjoyable activity with an outcome***. At the end of a discussion you should have learned something, clarified your thoughts or the thoughts of others, found new issues and problems that need clarification.
10. ***Before starting a discussion always:***
 - ascertain how much time you have.
 - set the agenda – what issues will you discuss, how will you discuss,
 - determine whether you have the facts and information necessary for the discussion, if not identify the gaps and set aside such issue for future discussion.
 - don't argue about facts – factual disputes cannot be settled by discussion – they require research and evidence.
11. ***Hospitality*** - Coffee and Tea are available at Common Ground and participants are expected to make nominal contributions in the Contributions Box to cover this cost (AMD 200). You are expected to clean and return your mug to the cupboard and wipe the table after use.
12. The Common Ground staff is here to help you and is a partner in this enterprise. ***Treat the staff with respect***. Suggestions are always welcome.

Common Ground Board

The Board of Common Ground is appointed by the Arak-29 Charitable Foundation, which funds Common Ground.

Participating Organizations and Individuals

Participation in Common Ground Activities and use of Common Ground facilities are privileges granted by the Common Ground Board to selected groups and individuals. Those privileges will be revoked, if abused. Participating Organizations may use the Common Ground facilities by submitting a written request to the coordinator with proposed times for use. Common Ground facilities are designed for up to 30 people. The Common Ground scheduling coordinator will make best efforts to respond within 2 business days to such requests. All activity schedules will be reviewed every six months to ensure that the facilities are being utilized efficiently and fairly.

Priority will be given to activities organized by the Common Ground Board.

Intergroup Discussions

One of the main activities of Common Ground will be **Intergroup Discussions**. These are designed to bring together people from different groups who have an interest in a topic. Intergroup Discussions are by invitation only. Participating organizations will be invited to propose names of individuals from their organizations to take part in the discussions. Common Ground staff may invite additional individuals. We hope that besides holding an enriching discussion, the individuals in each group will get to know each other better, make new friends and find new colleagues as they take time during the discussion to get to know each other.

The Cupboard Club

Individuals who have been invited to be charter members of Common Ground will have their own mug (for tea or coffee) and own place in the cupboard for their mug. From time to time, the Common Ground board will invite additional members who have been active in Intergroup discussions or are exemplary of Common Ground's values to become Cupboard Club members, presenting them with their own mug and place in the cupboard. Cupboard Club members are expected to make a special effort to take part in Common Ground activities and to promote the values and activities of Common Ground. Since the space in the cupboard is limited, Cupboard Club members are expected to relinquish their space (they can keep the mug) on their own or at the request of the CG Board during times when they become less interested or active in Common Ground.

Finally, brethren,
whatsoever things are true,
whatsoever things are noble,
whatsoever things are just,
whatsoever things are pure,
whatsoever things are kind,
whatsoever things are of good report,
if there be any virtue
and if there be anything worthy of praise,
think on those things.

Philippians 4:8

Without vision, the people perish.

– *Proverbs 29:17*

Be the change you wish to see in the world.

The difference between what we do and what we could do would solve most of the problems of the world.

Keep your *thoughts* positive because your thoughts become your words.
Keep your *words* positive because your words become your behaviors.
Keep your *behaviors* positive because your behaviors become your habits.
Keep your *habits* positive because your habits become your values.
Keep your *values* positive because your values become your destiny.

Gandhi's Seven Precepts on Social Injustice

Wealth without Work
Pleasure without Conscience
Knowledge without Character
Commerce without Morality
Science without Humanity
Worship without Sacrifice
Politics without Principle

Mahatma Gandhi

Non sub homine, sed sub Deo et lege.

Motto of Harvard Law School – *Not under man, but under God and law.*

Leges sine moribus vanae

Motto of University of Pennsylvania – *Laws without mores are vain.*

Non ministrari, sed ministrare

Motto of Wellesley College – *Not to be served, but to serve.*

Orare est laborare, laborare est orare

Motto of Benedictines. *To pray is to work and to work is to pray.*

Contemplata aliis tradere

Motto of the Dominicans – *Hand on to others the fruit of our contemplation*

I am human. Nothing human is alien to me.

If you're right, I'll do what you do. If you're wrong, I'll set you straight.
Terrence

If you cannot completely eradicate wrong ideas, or deal with inveterate vices as effectively as you wish, that's no reason to turn your back on public life altogether. You wouldn't abandon ship in a storm just because you couldn't control the winds.

On the other hand, it's no use attempting to put across entirely new ideas, which will obviously carry no weight with people who are prejudiced against them.

For things will never be perfect, until human beings are perfect -- which I don't expect for quite a number of years! More. Utopia (1516)

Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart.

Who looks outside, dreams.

Who looks inside, awakens. - Jung

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or

a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you lived. This is to have succeeded. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live accordingly to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity and trust.

Our life is frittered away by detail.

If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself than be crowded on a velvet cushion.

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.

I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do everything, it is not necessary that he should do something wrong.

A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to a race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy that he can. Let everyone mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made.

However mean your life is, meet it and live it: do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poor-house. —Thoreau

Go to the people.
Learn from them.
Love them.
Start with what they know.
Build on what they have.
But of the best leaders,
when their task is accomplished,
their work is done,
the people will say:
“We have done it ourselves.”

– *Lao Tzu, Tao te ching*

When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete,
everybody will respect you.

– *Lao Tzu, Tao te ching*

In a country well governed,
poverty is something to be ashamed of.
In a country badly governed,
wealth is something to be ashamed of.

– *Confucius*

The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.

– *Confucius*

Wherever you go, go with all your heart.

– *Confucius*

Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without.

– *Confucius*

Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.

– *Confucius*

8

The supreme good is like water,
which nourishes all things without trying to.
It is content with the low places that people disdain.
Thus it is like the Tao.

In dwelling, live close to the ground.
In thinking, keep to the simple.
In conflict, be fair and generous.
In governing, don't try to control.
In work, do what you enjoy.
In family life, be completely present.

When you are content to be simply yourself
and don't compare or compete,
everybody will respect you.

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All streams flow to the sea
because it is lower than they are.
Humility gives it its power.

If you want to govern the people,
you must place yourself below them.
If you want to lead the people,
you must learn how to follow them.

The Master is above the people,
and no one feels oppressed.
She goes ahead of the people,
and no one feels manipulated.
The whole world is grateful to her.
Because she competes with no one,
no one can compete with her.

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When taxes are too high,
people go hungry.
When the government is too intrusive,
people lose their spirit.
Act for the people's benefit.
Trust them; leave them alone.

Tao Te Ching Lao Tse

A good and virtuous nature may
recoil in an imperial charge.

Plato, Republic
Book 1

Then now, Thrasymachus, there is no longer any doubt that neither arts nor governments provide for their own interests; but, as we were before saying, they rule and provide for the interests of their subjects who are the weaker and not the stronger — to their good they attend and not to the good of the superior. And this is the reason, my dear Thrasymachus, why, as I was just now saying, no one is willing to govern; because no one likes to take in hand the reformation of evils which are not his concern without remuneration. For, in the execution of his work, and in giving his orders to another, the true artist does not regard his own interest, but always that of his subjects; and therefore in order that rulers may be willing to rule, they must be paid in one of three modes of payment: money, or honour, or a penalty for refusing.

What do you mean, Socrates? said Glaucon. The first two modes of payment are intelligible enough, but what the penalty is I do not understand, or how a penalty can be a payment.

You mean that you do not understand the nature of this payment which to the best men is the great inducement to rule? Of course you know that ambition and avarice are held to be, as indeed they are, a disgrace?

Very true.

And for this reason, I said, money and honour have no attraction for them; good men do not wish to be openly demanding payment for governing and so to get the name of hirelings, nor by secretly helping themselves out of the public revenues to get the name of thieves. And not being ambitious they do not care about honour. Wherefore necessity must be laid upon them, and they must be induced to serve from the fear of punishment. And this, as I imagine, is the reason why the forwardness to take office, instead of waiting to be compelled, has been deemed dishonourable. Now the worst part of the punishment is that he who refuses to rule is liable to be ruled by one who is worse than himself. And the fear of this, as I conceive, induces the good to take office, not because they would, but because they cannot help — not under the idea that they are going to have any benefit or enjoyment themselves, but as a necessity, and because they are not able to commit the task of ruling to any one who is better than themselves, or indeed as good. For there is reason to think that if a city were composed entirely of good men, then to avoid office would be as much an object of contention as to obtain office is at present; then we should have plain proof that the true ruler is not meant by nature to regard his own interest, but that of his subjects; and every one who knew this would choose rather to receive a benefit from another than to have the trouble of conferring one. So far am I from agreeing with Thrasymachus that justice is the interest of the stronger. This latter question need not be further discussed at present; but when Thrasymachus says that the life of the unjust is more advantageous than that of the just, his new statement appears to me to be of a far more serious character. Which of us has spoken truly? And which sort of life, Glaucon, do you prefer?

I for my part deem the life of the just to be the more advantageous, he answered.

Plato, Republic, Book V

Unless either philosophers become kings in their countries or those who are now called kinds and rulers come to be sufficiently inspired with a genuine desire for wisdom; unless that is to say, political power and philosophy meet together, while the many natures who now go their several ways in the one or the other direction are forcibly debarred from doing so, there can be no rest from troubles, my dear Glaucon, for states, nor yet, as I believe for all mankind;

Plato, Republic, Book VII

Then, I said, the business of us who are the founders of the State will be to compel the best minds to attain that knowledge which we have already shown to be the greatest of all — they must continue to ascend until they arrive at the good; but when they have ascended and seen enough we must not allow them to do as they do now.

What do you mean?

I mean that they remain in the upper world: but this must not be allowed; they must be made to descend again among the prisoners in the den, and partake of their labours and honours, whether they are worth having or not.

But is not this unjust? he said; ought we to give them a worse life, when they might have a better?

You have again forgotten, my friend, I said, the intention of the legislator, who did not aim at making any one class in the State happy above the rest; the happiness was to be in the whole State, and he held the citizens together by persuasion and necessity, making them benefactors of the State, and therefore benefactors of one another; to this end he created them, not to please themselves, but to be his instruments in binding up the State.

True, he said, I had forgotten.

Observe, Glaucon, that there will be no injustice in compelling our philosophers to have a care and providence of others; we shall explain to them that in other States, men of their class are not obliged to share in the toils of politics: and this is reasonable, for they grow up at their own sweet will, and the government would rather not have them. Being self-taught, they cannot be expected to show any gratitude for a culture which they have never received. But we have brought you into the world to be rulers of the hive, kings of yourselves and of the other citizens, and have educated you far better and more perfectly than they have been educated, and you are better able to share in the double duty. Wherefore each of you, when his turn comes, must go down to the general underground abode, and get the habit of seeing in the dark. When you have acquired the habit, you will see ten thousand times better than the inhabitants of the den, and you will know what the several images are, and what they

represent, because you have seen the beautiful and just and good in their truth. And thus our State which is also yours will be a reality, and not a dream only, and will be administered in a spirit unlike that of other States, in which men fight with one another about shadows only and are distracted in the struggle for power, which in their eyes is a great good. Whereas the truth is that the State in which the rulers are most reluctant to govern is always the best and most quietly governed, and the State in which they are most eager, the worst.

Quite true, he replied.

And will our pupils, when they hear this, refuse to take their turn at the toils of State, when they are allowed to spend the greater part of their time with one another in the heavenly light?

Impossible, he answered; for they are just men, and the commands which we impose upon them are just; there can be no doubt that every one of them will take office as a stern necessity, and not after the fashion of our present rulers of State.

Yes, my friend, I said; and there lies the point. You must contrive for your future rulers another and a better life than that of a ruler, and then you may have a well-ordered State; for only in the State which offers this, will they rule who are truly rich, not in silver and gold, but in virtue and wisdom, which are the true blessings of life. Whereas if they go to the administration of public affairs, poor and hungering after the^e own private advantage, thinking that hence they are to snatch the chief good, order there can never be; for they will be fighting about office, and the civil and domestic broils which thus arise will be the ruin of the rulers themselves and of the whole State.

Most true, he replied.

And the only life which looks down upon the life of political ambition is that of true philosophy. Do you know of any other?

Indeed, I do not, he said.

And those who govern ought not to be lovers of the task? For, if they are, there will be rival lovers, and they will fight.

No question.

Aristotle (384-322 BC), *Nichomachean Ethics*.

Good & The Golden Mean.

**Book I: happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue
virtue requires action; it is not a state, but an activity that produces a good result;
to be virtuous one must act virtuously.**

As in the Olympic Games it is not the most beautiful and the strongest that are crowned but those who compete (for it is some of these that are victorious), so those who act win, and rightly win, the noble and good things in life.

**Book II: virtue is the golden mean between two vices,
one of excess and one of deficiency**

recklessness	courage	cowardice
vanity	proper pride	false humility
lavishness	generosity	meanness
ostentatious	magnificent	niggardly
irritable	good-tempered	passive
boastful	honest	false modesty
brazen	modest	bashful
flatterer	friendly	quarrelsome
buffoon	quick-witted	dull, boorish
envy	righteous indignation	spite

moral virtue comes about as a result of habit

Book I

1

Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim. But a certain difference is found among ends; some are activities, others are products apart from the activities that produce them. Where there are ends apart from the actions, it is the nature of the products to be better than the activities. . . .

2

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it,

then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right? . . .

For even if the end is the same for a single man and for a state, that of the state seems at all events something greater and more complete whether to attain or to preserve; **though it is worth while to attain the end merely for one man, it is finer and more blessed to attain it for a nation or for city-states.** These, then, are the ends at which our inquiry aims, since it is politics, in one sense of that term.

4

All knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good, what it is that we say politics aims at and what is the highest of all goods achievable by action? Verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness, and identify living well and doing well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise. . . .

5

Let us, however, resume our discussion from the point at which we digressed. **To judge from the lives that men lead, most men, and men of the most vulgar type, seem (not without some ground) to identify the good, or happiness, with pleasure; which is the reason why they love the life of enjoyment.** For there are, we may say, **three prominent types of life- the pleasure seeking, the political, and thirdly the contemplative life.** Now the **mass of mankind are evidently quite slavish in their tastes,** preferring a life suitable to beasts, but they get some ground for their view from the fact that **many of those in high places share these tastes.** A consideration of the prominent types of life shows that people of superior refinement and of active disposition identify **happiness with honour;** for this is, roughly speaking, the end of the political life. But it seems too superficial to be what we are looking for, since it is thought to depend on those who bestow honour rather than on him who receives it, but the good we divine to be something proper to a man and not easily taken from him. Further, men seem to pursue honour in order that they may be assured of their goodness; at least it is by men of practical wisdom that they seek to be honoured, and among those who know them, and on the ground of their virtue; clearly, then, according to them, at any rate, virtue is better. And perhaps one might even suppose this to be, rather than honour, the end of the political life. But even this appears somewhat incomplete; for possession of virtue seems actually compatible with being asleep, or with lifelong inactivity, and, further, with the greatest sufferings and misfortunes; but a man who was living so no one would call happy, unless he were maintaining a thesis at all costs. But enough of this; for the subject has been sufficiently treated even in the current discussions. Third comes the contemplative life, which we shall consider later.

The life of money-making is one undertaken under compulsion, and wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else. And so one might rather take the aforementioned objects to be ends; for they are loved for themselves.

But it is evident that not even these are ends; yet many arguments have been thrown away in support of them. Let us leave this subject, then.

6

Yet it would perhaps be thought to be better, indeed to be our duty, for the sake of maintaining the truth even to destroy what touches us closely, especially as we are philosophers or lovers of wisdom; for, while both are dear, **piety requires us to honour truth above our friends.**

...

7

Let us again return to the good we are seeking, and ask what it can be. It seems different in different actions and arts; it is different in medicine, in strategy, and in the other arts likewise. What then is the good of each? Surely that for whose sake everything else is done. In medicine this is health, in strategy victory, in architecture a house, in any other sphere something else, and in every action and pursuit the end; for it is for the sake of this that all men do whatever else they do. **Therefore, if there is an end for all that we do, this will be the good achievable by action, and if there are more than one, these will be the goods achievable by action.**

So the argument has by a different course reached the same point; but we must try to state this even more clearly. Since there are evidently more than one end, and we choose some of these (e.g. wealth, flutes, and in general instruments) for the sake of something else, clearly not all ends are final ends; but the **chief good is evidently something final.** Therefore, if there is only one final end, this will be what we are seeking, and if there are more than one, the most final of these will be what we are seeking. **Now we call that which is in itself worthy of pursuit more final than that which is worthy of pursuit for the sake of something else, and that which is never desirable for the sake of something else more final than the things that are desirable both in themselves and for the sake of that other thing, and therefore we call final without qualification that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else.**

Now such a thing happiness, above all else, is held to be; for this we choose always for self and never for the sake of something else, but honour, pleasure, reason, and every virtue we choose indeed for themselves (for if nothing resulted from them we should still choose each of them), but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, judging that by means of them we shall be happy. Happiness, on the other hand, no one chooses for the sake of these, nor, in general, for anything other than itself.

Happiness, then, is something final and self-sufficient, and is the end of action.

Presumably, however, to say that happiness is the chief good seems a platitude, and a clearer account of what it is still desired. This might perhaps be given, if we could first ascertain the function of man. For just as for a flute-player, a sculptor, or an artist, and, in general, for all

things that have a function or activity, the good and the 'well' is thought to reside in the function, so would it seem to be for man, if he has a function. Have the carpenter, then, and the tanner certain functions or activities, and has man none? Is he born without a function? Or as eye, hand, foot, and in general each of the parts evidently has a function, may one lay it down that man similarly has a function apart from all these? What then can this be? Life seems to be common even to plants, but we are seeking what is peculiar to man. Let us exclude, therefore, the life of nutrition and growth. Next there would be a life of perception, but it also seems to be common even to the horse, the ox, and every animal. There remains, then, **an active life of the element that has a rational principle**; of this, one part has such a principle in the sense of being obedient to one, the other in the sense of possessing one and exercising thought. And, as 'life of the rational element' also has two meanings, we must state that life in the sense of activity is what we mean; for this seems to be the more proper sense of the term. Now if the function of man is an activity of soul which follows or implies a rational principle, and if we say 'so-and-so-and 'a good so-and-so' have a function which is the same in kind, e.g. a lyre, and a good lyre-player, and so without qualification in all cases, eminence in respect of goodness being added to the name of the function (for the function of a lyre-player is to play the lyre, and that of a good lyre-player is to do so well): if this is the case, and we state the function of man to be a certain kind of life, and **this to be an activity or actions of the soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man to be the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence: if this is the case, human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete.**

But we must add 'in a complete life.' **For one swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy.**

8

With those who identify happiness with virtue or some one virtue our account is in harmony; for **to virtue belongs virtuous activity**. But it makes, perhaps, no small difference whether we place the chief good in possession or in use, in state of mind or in activity. For the state of mind may exist without producing any good result, as in a man who is asleep or in some other way quite inactive, but the activity cannot; for one who has the activity will of necessity be acting, and acting well. **And as in the Olympic Games it is not the most beautiful and the strongest that are crowned but those who compete (for it is some of these that are victorious), so those who act win, and rightly win, the noble and good things in life.**

...

For, besides what we have said, the **man who does not rejoice in noble actions is not even good**; since no one would call a man just who did not enjoy acting justly, nor any man liberal who did not enjoy liberal actions; and similarly in all other cases. If this is so, virtuous actions must be in themselves pleasant. But they are also good and noble, and have each of these

attributes in the highest degree, since the good man judges well about these attributes; his judgement is such as we have described. **Happiness then is the best, noblest, and most pleasant thing in the world, and these attributes are not severed as in the inscription at Delos-**

**Most noble is that which is justest, and best is health;
But pleasantest is it to win what we love.**

For all these properties belong to the best activities; and these, or one- the best- of these, we identify with happiness.

Yet evidently, as we said, it needs the external goods as well; for it is impossible, or not easy, to do noble acts without the proper equipment. In many actions we use friends and riches and political power as instruments . . . As we said, then, happiness seems to need this sort of prosperity in addition; for which reason some identify happiness with good fortune, though others identify it with virtue.

9

For this reason also the question is asked, whether happiness is to be acquired by learning or by habituation or some other sort of training, or comes in virtue of some divine providence or again by chance. Now if there is any gift of the gods to men, it is reasonable that happiness should be god-given, and most surely god-given of all human things inasmuch as it is the best. But this question would perhaps be more appropriate to another inquiry; happiness seems, however, even if it is not god-sent but comes as a result of virtue and some process of learning or training, to be among the most godlike things; for that which is the prize and end of virtue seems to be the best thing in the world, and something godlike and blessed.

It will also on this view be very generally shared; **for all who are not maimed as regards their potentiality for virtue may win it by a certain kind of study and care. But if it is better to be happy thus than by chance, it is reasonable that the facts should be so, since everything that depends on the action of nature is by nature as good as it can be, and similarly everything that depends on art or any rational cause, and especially if it depends on the best of all causes. To entrust to chance what is greatest and most noble would be a very defective arrangement.**

The answer to the question we are asking is **plain also from the definition of happiness; for it has been said to be a virtuous activity of soul, of a certain kind.** Of the remaining goods, some must necessarily pre-exist as conditions of happiness, and others are naturally co-operative and useful as instruments. And this will be found to agree with what we said at the outset; **for we stated the end of politics to be the best end, and politics spends most of its pains on making the citizens to be of a certain character, i.e. good and capable of noble acts.**

. . .

. . . we have assumed happiness to be something permanent and by no means easily changed, while a single man may suffer many turns of fortune's wheel.

Yet even in these nobility shines through, when a man bears with resignation many great misfortunes, not through insensibility to pain but through nobility and greatness of soul.

If activities are, as we said, what gives life its character, no happy man can become miserable; for he will never do the acts that are hateful and mean. For the man who is truly good and wise, we think, bears all the chances life becomingly and always makes the best of circumstances, as a good general makes the best military use of the army at his command and a good shoemaker makes the best shoes out of the hides that are given him; and so with all other craftsmen. And if this is the case, the happy man can never become miserable; though he will not reach bliss, if he meet with fortunes like those of Priam.

Since happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue, we must consider the nature of virtue; for perhaps we shall thus see better the nature of happiness. The true student of politics, too, is thought to have studied virtue above all things; for he wishes to make his fellow citizens good and obedient to the laws. As an example of this we have the lawgivers of the Cretans and the Spartans, and any others of the kind that there may have been. And if this inquiry belongs to politics, clearly the pursuit of it will be in accordance with our original plan. But clearly the virtue we must study is human virtue; for the good we were seeking was human good and the happiness human happiness. By human virtue we mean not that of the body but that of the soul; and happiness also we call an activity of soul. But if this is so, clearly the student of politics must know somehow the facts about soul, as the man who is to heal the eyes or the body as a whole must know about the eyes or the body; and all the more since politics is more prized and better than medicine; but even among doctors the best educated spend much labour on acquiring knowledge of the body. **The student of politics, then, must study the soul,** and must study it with these objects in view, and do so just to the extent which is sufficient for the questions we are discussing; for further precision is perhaps something more laborious than our purposes require.

Virtue too is distinguished into kinds in accordance with this difference; for we say that some of the **virtues are intellectual and others moral**, philosophic wisdom and understanding and practical wisdom being intellectual, liberality and temperance moral. For in speaking about a man's character we do not say that he is wise or has understanding but that he is good-tempered or temperate; yet we praise the wise man also with respect to his state of mind; and of states of mind we call those which merit praise virtues.

Book II - The Golden Mean

1

Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while **moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (ethike) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word ethos (habit)**. From this it is also plain that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. For instance the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. **Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.**

Again, of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity (this is plain in the case of the senses; for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses, but on the contrary we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them); but **the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyreplayers by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.**

This is confirmed by what happens in states; for legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them, and this is the wish of every legislator, and those who do not effect it miss their mark, and it is in this that a good constitution differs from a bad one.

Again, it is from the same causes and by the same means that every virtue is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art; for it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyreplayers are produced. And the corresponding statement is true of builders and of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly. For if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher, but all men would have been born good or bad at their craft. **This, then, is the case with the virtues also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of**

another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference.

2

Since, then, the present inquiry does not aim at theoretical knowledge like the others (**for we are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, since otherwise our inquiry would have been of no use**), we must examine the nature of actions, **namely how we ought to do them**; for these determine also the nature of the states of character that are produced, as we have said.

But though our present account is of this nature we must give what help we can. First, then, let us consider this, that **it is the nature of such things to be destroyed by defect and excess**, as we see in the case of strength and of health (for to gain light on things imperceptible we must use the evidence of sensible things); both **excessive and defective exercise destroys the strength, and similarly drink or food which is above or below a certain amount destroys the health, while that which is proportionate both produces and increases and preserves it. So too is it, then, in the case of temperance and courage and the other virtues.** For the man who flies from and fears everything and does not stand his ground against anything becomes a coward, and the man who fears nothing at all but goes to meet every danger becomes rash; and similarly the man who indulges in every pleasure and abstains from none becomes self-indulgent, while the man who shuns every pleasure, as boors do, becomes in a way insensible; **temperance and courage, then, are destroyed by excess and defect, and preserved by the mean.**

4

It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good.

But most people do not do these, but take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do.

5

Next we must consider what virtue is. Since things that are found in the soul are of three kinds- passions, faculties, states of character, virtue must be one of these. **If, then, the virtues are neither passions nor faculties, all that remains is that they should be states of character.**

6

We must, however, not only describe virtue as a state of character, but also say what sort of state it is. **We may remark, then, that every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well; . . . the virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well.**

How this is to happen we have stated already, but it will be made plain also by the following consideration of the specific nature of virtue. In everything that is continuous and divisible it is possible to take more, less, or an equal amount, and that either in terms of the thing itself or relatively to us; and the equal is an intermediate between excess and defect. **By the intermediate in the object I mean that which is equidistant from each of the extremes, which is one and the same for all men; by the intermediate relatively to us that which is neither too much nor too little- and this is not one, nor the same for all.**

If it is thus, then, that every art does its work well- by looking to the intermediate and judging its works by this standard (so that we often say of good works of art that it is not possible either to take away or to add anything, implying that excess and defect destroy the goodness of works of art, while the mean preserves it; and good artists, as we say, look to this in their work), and if, further, virtue is more exact and better than any art, as nature also is, then virtue must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate. I mean moral virtue; for it is this that is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. **For instance, both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue. Similarly with regard to actions also there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. Now virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue. Therefore virtue is a kind of mean, since, as we have seen, it aims at what is intermediate.**

For men are good in but one way, but bad in many.

Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. **Now it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect; and again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate.** Hence in respect of its substance and the definition which states its essence virtue is a mean, with regard to what is best and right an extreme.

We must, however, not only make this general statement, but also apply it to the individual facts. For among statements about conduct those which are general apply more widely, but those which are particular are more genuine, since conduct has to do with individual cases, and our statements must harmonize with the facts in these cases. We may take these cases from our table.

With regard to feelings of **fear and over-confidence courage is the mean**; of the people who exceed, he who exceeds in fearlessness has no name (many of the states have no name), while the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, and he who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward.

...

With regard to **giving and taking of money the mean is liberality**, the excess and the defect **prodigality and meanness**. In these actions people exceed and fall short in contrary ways; the prodigal exceeds in spending and falls short in taking, while the mean man exceeds in taking and falls short in spending. (At present we are giving a mere outline or summary, and are satisfied with this; later these states will be more exactly determined.) With regard to money there are also other dispositions- **a mean, magnificence (for the magnificent man differs from the liberal man; the former deals with large sums, the latter with small ones), an excess, tastelessness and vulgarity, and a deficiency, niggardliness**; these differ from the states opposed to liberality, and the mode of their difference will be stated later. With regard to **honour and dishonour the mean is proper pride, the excess is known as a sort of 'empty vanity', and the deficiency is undue humility**; and as we said liberality was related to magnificence, differing from it by dealing with small sums, so there is a state similarly related to proper pride, being concerned with small honours while that is concerned with great.

With regard to **anger also there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean**. Although they can scarcely be said to have names, yet since we call the intermediate person **good-tempered** let us call the mean good temper; of the persons at the extremes let the one who exceeds be called **irascible**, and his vice irascibility, and the man who falls short an inirascible sort of person, and the deficiency inirascibility.

With regard to **truth**, then, the intermediate is a truthful sort of person and the mean may be called truthfulness, while the pretence which exaggerates is **boastfulness** and the person characterized by it a boaster, and that which understates is **mock modesty** and the person characterized by it mock-modest.

With regard to **pleasantness** in the giving of amusement the intermediate person is **ready-witted** and the disposition ready wit, the excess is **buffoonery** and the person characterized by it a buffoon, while the man who falls short is a sort of boor and his state is **boorishness**.

With regard to the remaining kind of pleasantness, that which is exhibited in life in general, the man who is pleasant in the right way is **friendly** and the mean is friendliness, while the man who exceeds is an obsequious person if he has no end in view, a **flatterer** if he is aiming at his own advantage, and the man who falls short and is unpleasant in all circumstances is a **quarrelsome** and surly sort of person.

There are also means in the passions and concerned with the passions; since **shame** is not a virtue, and yet praise is extended to the modest man. For even in these matters one man is said to be intermediate, and another to exceed, as for instance the **bashful** man who is ashamed of everything; while he who falls short or is not ashamed of anything at all is **shameless**, and the intermediate person is **modest**.

Righteous indignation is a mean between **envy** and **spite**, and these states are concerned with the pain and pleasure that are felt at the fortunes of our neighbours;

8

There are three kinds of disposition, then, two of them vices, involving excess and deficiency respectively, and one a virtue, viz. the mean.

9

That moral virtue is a mean, then, and in what sense it is so, and that it is a mean between two vices, the one involving excess, the other deficiency, and that it is such because its character is to aim at what is intermediate in passions and in actions, has been sufficiently stated. **Hence also it is no easy task to be good. For in everything it is no easy task to find the middle, e.g. to find the middle of a circle is not for every one but for him who knows; so, too, any one can get angry- that is easy- or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for every one, nor is it easy; wherefore goodness is both rare and laudable and noble.**

Vision without action is a daydream.
Action without vision is a nightmare.

– *Japanese saying*

Teach this triple truth to all:
A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and
compassion are the things which renew humanity.

– *Buddha*

As an irrigator guides water to his fields,
as an archer aims an arrow,
as a carpenter carves wood,
the wise shape their lives.

– *Buddha*

There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to
truth:
not going all the way, and not starting.

– *Buddha*

Going alone you may move faster, but going with others
you will go farther.

– *Ghanean proverb*

You should handle everything as tactfully as you can, and what you can't put right, you should try to make as little wrong as possible. For things will never be perfect, until human beings are perfect – which I don't expect for quite some time!

– *Sir Thomas More. Utopia (1516)*

But man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

– *Shakespeare – Measure for Measure. Act ii. Sc. 2.*

Of all the words of thought or pen,
The saddest are these, it might have been.

– *Whittier*

Reasonable men adapt themselves to the world.
Unreasonable men adapt the world to themselves.
That's why all progress depends on unreasonable men.

– *George Bernard Shaw*

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.

– *Thoreau*

E. M. Forster, "What I Believe" — from *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1939) — on the eve of WWII

This brings me along to Democracy . . . "the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives." Democracy is not a beloved Republic really, and never will be. But it is less hateful than other contemporary forms of government, and to that extent it deserves our support. It does start from the assumption that the individual is important, and that all types are needed to make a civilization. It does not divide its citizens into the bossers and the bossed - as an efficiency-regime tends to do. ***The people I admire most are those who are sensitive and want to create something or discover something, and do not see life in terms of power, and such people get more of a chance under a democracy than elsewhere.*** They found religions, great or small, or they produce literature and art, or they do disinterested scientific research, or ***they may be what is called "ordinary people", who are creative in their private lives, bring up their children decently, for instance, or help their neighbours. All these people need to express themselves; they cannot do so unless society allows them liberty to do so, and the society which allows them most liberty is a democracy.***

Democracy has another merit. It allows criticism, and if there is not public criticism there are bound to be hushed-up scandals. That is why I believe in the press, despite all its lies and vulgarity, and why I believe in Parliament. Parliament is often sneered at because it is a Talking Shop. I believe in it because it is a talking shop. I believe in the Private Member who makes himself a nuisance. He gets snubbed and is told that he is cranky or ill-informed, but he does expose abuses which would otherwise never have been mentioned, and very often an abuse gets put right just by being mentioned. Occasionally, too, a well-meaning public official starts losing his head in the cause of efficiency, and thinks himself God Almighty. Such officials are particularly frequent in the Home Office. Well, there will be questions about them in Parliament sooner or later, and then they will have to mind their steps. Whether Parliament is either a representative body or an efficient one is questionable, but I value it because it criticizes and talks, and because its chatter gets widely reported. ***So two cheers for Democracy: one because it admits variety and two because it permits criticism. Two cheers are quite enough: there is no occasion to give three. Only Love the Beloved Republic deserves that.***

What about Force, though? While we are trying to be sensitive and advanced and affectionate and tolerant, an unpleasant question pops up: does not all society rest upon force? If a government cannot count upon the police and the army, how can it hope to rule? And if an individual gets knocked on the head or sent to a labour camp, of what significance are his opinions? This dilemma does not worry me as much as it does some. I realize that all society rests upon force. ***But all the great creative actions, all the decent human relations, occur during the intervals when force has not managed to come to the front. These intervals are what matter. I want them to be as frequent and as lengthy as possible, and I call them "civilization".*** Some people idealize force and pull it into the foreground and worship it, instead of keeping it in the background as long as possible. I think they make a mistake, and I think that their opposites, the mystics, err even more when they declare that force does not exist. I believe that it exists, and that one of our jobs is to

prevent it from getting out of its box. It gets out sooner or later, and then it destroys us and all the lovely things which we have made. But it is not out all the time, for the fortunate reason that the strong are so stupid.

So that is what I feel about force and violence. It is, alas! the ultimate reality on this earth, but it does not always get to the front. Some people call its absences "decadence"; I call them "civilization" and find in such interludes the chief justification for the human experiment. I look the other way until fate strikes me. Whether this is due to courage or to cowardice in my own case I cannot be sure. But I know that, if men had not looked the other way in the past, nothing of any value would survive. ***The people I respect most behave as if they were immortal and as if society was eternal. Both assumptions are false: both of them must be accepted as true if we are to go on eating and working and loving, and are to keep open a few breathing-holes for the human spirit.*** No millennium seems likely to descend upon humanity; no better and stronger League of Nations will be instituted; no form of Christianity and no alternative to Christianity will bring peace to the world or integrity to the individual; no "change of heart" will occur. And yet we need not despair, indeed, we cannot despair; the evidence of history shows us that men have always insisted on behaving creatively under the shadow of the sword; that they have done their artistic and scientific and domestic stuff for the sake of doing it, and that we had better follow their example under the shadow of the aeroplanes.

Others, with more vision or courage than myself, see the salvation of humanity ahead, and will dismiss my conception of civilization as paltry, a sort of tip-and-run game. Certainly it is presumptuous to say that we cannot improve, and that Man, who has only been in power for a few thousand years, will never learn to make use of his power. All I mean is that, if people continue to kill one another as they do, the world cannot get better than it is, and that, since there are more people than formerly, and their means for destroying one another superior, the world may well get worse. ***What is good in people - and consequently in the world - is their insistence on creation, their belief in friendship and loyalty for their own sakes;*** and, though Violence remains and is, indeed, the major partner in this muddled establishment, I believe that creativeness remains too, and will always assume direction when violence sleeps. . . .

In search of a refuge, we may perhaps turn to hero-worship. But here we shall get no help, in my opinion. ***Hero-worship is a dangerous vice, and one of the minor merits of a democracy is that it does not encourage it, or produce that unmanageable type of citizen known as the Great Man. It produces instead different kinds of small men - a much finer achievement.*** But people who cannot get interested in the variety of life, and cannot make up their own minds, get discontented over this, and they long for a hero to bow down before and to follow blindly. It is significant that a hero is an integral part of the authoritarian stock-in-trade today. An efficiency-regime cannot be run without a few heroes stuck about it to carry off the dullness - much as plums have to be put into a bad pudding to make it palatable. One hero at the top and a smaller one each side of him is a favourite arrangement, and the timid and the bored are comforted by the trinity, and, bowing down, feel exalted and strengthened.

No, I distrust Great Men. They produce a desert of uniformity around them and often a pool of blood too, and I always feel a little man's pleasure when they come a

cropper. . . . He fails with a completeness which no artist and no lover can experience, because with them the process of creation is itself an achievement, whereas with him the only possible achievement is success.

I believe in aristocracy, though - if that is the right word, and if a democrat may use it. Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are to be found in all nations and classes, and all through the ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty and chaos. Thousands of them perish in obscurity, a few are great names. They are sensitive for others as well as for themselves, they are considerate without being fussy, *their pluck is not swankiness but the power to endure*, and they can take a joke. I give no examples - it is risky to do that - but the reader may as well consider whether this is the type of person he would like to meet and to be . . . On they go - an invincible army, yet not a victorious one. The aristocrats, the elect, the chosen, the Best People - all the words that describe them are false, and all attempts to organize them fail. Again and again Authority, seeing their value, has tried to net them and to utilize them as the Egyptian Priesthood or the Christian Church or the Chinese Civil Service or the Group Movement, or some other worthy stunt. But they slip through the net and are gone; when the door is shut, they are no longer in the room; their temple, as one of them remarked, is the holiness of the Heart's affections, and their kingdom, though they never possess it, is the wide-open world.

With this type of person knocking about, and constantly crossing one's path if one has eyes to see or hands to feel, the experiment of earthly life cannot be dismissed as a failure. But it may well be hailed as a tragedy, the tragedy being that no device has been found by which these private decencies can be transmitted to public affairs. As soon as people have power they go crooked and sometimes dotty as well, because the possession of power lifts them into a region where normal honesty never pays. For instance, the man who is selling newspapers outside the Houses of Parliament can safely leave his papers to go for a drink, and his cap beside them: anyone who takes a paper is sure to drop a copper into the cap. But the men who are inside the Houses of Parliament - they cannot trust one another like that, still less can the Government they compose trust other governments. No caps upon the pavement here, but suspicion, treachery and armaments. The more highly public life is organized the lower does its morality sink; the nations of today behave to each other worse than they ever did in the past, they cheat, rob, bully and bluff, make war without notice, and kill as many women and children as possible; whereas primitive tribes were at all events restrained by taboos. It is a humiliating outlook - though the greater the darkness, the brighter shine the little lights, reassuring one another, signalling: "Well, at all events, I'm still here. I don't like it very much, but how are you?" Unquenchable lights of my aristocracy! Signals of the invincible army! "Come along - anyway, let's have a good time while we can." I think they signal that too.

The Saviour of the future - if ever he comes - will not preach a new Gospel. He will merely utilize my aristocracy, he will make effective the goodwill and the good temper which are already existing. In other words, he will introduce a new technique. In economics, we are told that if there was a new technique of distribution there need be no poverty, and people would not starve in one place while crops were being ploughed under in another. *A similar*

change is needed in the sphere of morals and politics. The desire for it is by no means new; it was expressed, for example, in theological terms by Jacopone da Todi over six hundred years ago. "Ordene questo amore, tu che m'ami," he said ; "O thou who lovest me set this love in order." His prayer was not granted, and I do not myself believe that it ever will be, but here, and not through a change of heart, is our probable route. ***Not by becoming better, but by ordering and distributing his native goodness, will Man shut up Force into its box, and so gain time to explore the universe and to set his mark upon it worthily.*** At present he only explores it at odd moments, when Force is looking the other way, and his divine creativeness appears as a trivial by-product, to be scrapped as soon as the drums beat and the bombers hum.

The above are the reflections of an individualist and a liberal who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him and at first felt ashamed. Then, looking around, he decided there was no special reason for shame, since other people, whatever they felt, were equally insecure. And as for individualism - there seems no way of getting off this, even if one wanted to. The dictator-hero can grind down his citizens till they are all alike, but he cannot melt them into a single man. That is beyond his power. He can order them to merge, he can incite them to mass-antics, but they are obliged to be born separately, and to die separately, and, owing to these unavoidable termini, will always be running off the totalitarian rails. The memory of birth and the expectation of death always lurk within the human being, making him separate from his fellows and consequently capable of intercourse with them. Naked I came into the world, naked I shall go out of it! And a very good thing too, for it reminds me that I am naked under my shirt, whatever its colour.

Prudence

"Be as cunning as serpents, but inoffensive as doves." Matt. 10:16.

excerpted from André Comte-Sponville, (trans. Catherine Temerson), *A Short Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life*, (London: William Heinemann, 2001)

Prudence is one of the four cardinal virtues of antiquity and the Middle Ages.¹ . . . Prudence seems too advantageous to be moral, just as duty is too absolute to be called prudent.

We no longer believe sufficiently in the absolute to be willing to sacrifice our lives, our friends, or our fellowman to an ideal. Indeed, I suspect we would find such an ethic of conviction (*Gesinnungsethik*), as Max Weber calls it, rather frightening. What is the value of having absolute principles, if it is to the detriment of simple humanity, good sense, gentleness, and compassion? We have learned to be wary even of morality, and the more absolute it claims to be, the more suspicious we are of it. Preferable, for us, to an ethic of conviction is what Max Weber calls an ethic of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*), which, without disregarding principles (how could it?), concerns itself as well with foreseeable consequences of action. Good intentions can lead to catastrophe, and purity of motivation has never been able by itself to prevent the worst. Good motives aren't enough, and it would be wrong to act as though they were: hence an ethic of responsibility requires that we answer not just for our intentions or principles but also for the consequences of our acts, to the extent that they can be foreseen. It is an ethic of prudence, and the only valid ethic. *Better* to lie to the Gestapo than to turn in a Jew or a Resistance fighter. But in the name of what? In the name of prudence, which is the apt determination (for man and by man) what *better* means.

We know that the Romans translated the Greek *phronesis* as *prudentia*, particularly in their translations of Aristotle and the Stoics. What does the term describe? An intellectual virtue, and reason; prudence is the disposition that makes it possible to deliberate correctly on what is good or bad for man (not in itself but in the world as it is, and not in general but in specific situations) and through such deliberation to act appropriately. It could be called good sense, but in the service of good will. Or intelligence, but of the virtuous kind. It is in this respect that prudence is the precondition for all the other virtues; without it, we cannot know what use to make of the other virtues or how to attain the goal (the good) they put before us. . . . Merely loving justice does not make us just, nor does loving peace make us peaceable by itself: deliberation, decision, and action are also required. Prudence determines which of them are apt, as courage provides for their being carried out.

The Stoics considered prudence a science ("the science of what to do and what not to do," they said). Aristotle legitimately rejected their opinion since science has to do with certainties whereas prudence deals strictly with contingencies. Prudence presupposes uncertainty, risk, chance, and the unknown. A god would have no need of it, but how could a man do without it? Prudence is not a science; rather it replaces science where science is lacking. One deliberates only when one has a choice to make, in other words, when no proof is possible or adequate – that's when one must want not just good ends but also good means, in order to achieve them. To be a good father, it is not enough to love one's children, nor is it enough to wish them well for that wish to come true. Love does not excuse a lack of intelligence. The Greeks knew this, perhaps better than we. *Phronesis* is like practical wisdom: wisdom of action, for action, in action. Yet it doesn't take the place of wisdom (real wisdom *sophia*), for it is also not enough to act well in order to live well, or to

¹ The others are courage, temperance and justice.

be virtuous in order to be happy. In this Aristotle was right, and almost all the other ancients were wrong: **virtue is not the only prerequisite for happiness. Prudence, however, is a prerequisite for both, and even wisdom cannot do without it. For wisdom without prudence would be unsound wisdom, and therefore wouldn't be wisdom at all.**

Epicurus may have made the essential point: prudence, because it chose [or chooses?] (by "measuring . . . and by looking at the conveniences and inconveniences") which desires should be satisfied and by what means, "is a more precious thing even than philosophy". What good is the truth if we don't know how to live? What good is justice, and why would we want it, if we're incapable of acting justly? Prudence, one might say, is a true *savoir-vivre*. . . . Prudence foresees or calculates pleasure. A temporal virtue, always, and sometimes temporizing. For prudence takes the future into account, recognizing all the while that who we confront it [with?] depends on us (in which regard prudence relates not to expectation but to will). The prudent man is attentive not just to what is happening, but also to what can happen; he is both attentive and careful. *Prudentia*, Cicero notes, comes from *providere*, which means to *foresee* as well as to *provide*. Reality imposes its laws, its obstacles, its detours. Prudence is the art of taking them into account; it is lucid and reasonable desire. Not instant gratification. Romantics, who prefer their dreams, will sniff at it. Men of action, on the other hand, know that there is no other path, even when the goal is improbable or exceptional. Prudence is what differentiates action from impulse and heroes from hotheads. Basically it's what Freud calls the reality principle, or at least it's the virtue that corresponds to it. It's about enjoying as much and suffering as little as possible. Hence **prudence is for human beings what instinct is for animals.**

The ancient concept of prudence (*phronesis*, *prudentia*) goes far beyond the mere avoidance of danger, which is more or less what it has come to mean for us. There are some risks we must know how to take and dangers we must know how to confront – whence prudence in the ancient sense of the word, as the "virtue of risk and decisions." Prudence is not the same as fear or cowardice – as the modern meaning sometimes seems to suggest. It assumes courage: without courage prudence amounts to pusillanimity, just as without prudence courage amounts to recklessness or folly. First of all, do no [avoidable] harm; first of all protect. Such is the essence of prudence, and without it the virtues themselves would be powerless or even harmful.

Prudence does not preclude risk taking, nor does it always mean avoiding danger. What risks to take? What dangers to face? How far can I push my limits and toward what goal?

"Prudence," says Augustine, "is love that chooses with sagacity." Not the object to be attained – desire takes care of that – but the means for attaining or safeguarding it. The sagacity of mothers, or lovers. To protect or win the love of those they love, they do what they have to do or (since intellectual virtues always entail the risk of error) at least what they think they must do, and out of their concern humanity – theirs and ours – originates. Love guides them; prudence enlightens them. May it also enlighten humanity itself! If prudence, as I have said, takes the future into account, it is because it would be dangerous and immoral to forget that future. Prudence is that paradoxical memory of the future, or better yet (since memory as such is not a virtue), that paradoxical and necessary fidelity to the future. Parents wanting to safeguard the future of their children know this . . . More power means more responsibilities. . . . We deceive ourselves if we think that prudence is a thing of the past; it is the most modern of our virtues, or rather the virtue that modern times has made most necessary. . . . How many horrors have been committed in the name of the Good? How many crimes in the name of virtue? Almost always out of violations of prudence. We must be wary of those who are blinded by the Good. They are too attached to their principles to consider individuals, too sure of their intentions to bother with the consequences.

Morality without prudence is either futile or dangerous. "Caute," says Spinoza: "Take care." In short, **morality is not sufficient for virtue; virtue also requires intelligence and lucidity.** It is imprudent to heed morality alone, and it is immoral to be imprudent.

Generosity

excerpted from André Comte-Sponville, (trans. Catherine Temerson), *A Short Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life*, (London: William Heinemann, 2001)

Generosity is the virtue of giving. But unlike justice, which requires that we give "to every man his due," generosity entails giving the other person what is not his, but yours, which he lacks. . . . Certainly both justice and generosity concern our relations with others . . . Generosity seems to owe more to the heart or temperament, justice to the mind or reason. Generosity does not mean acting in accordance with this or that law; it means doing more than what the law requires – at least what the laws of man require – and acting in conformity with the sole requirements of love, morality, or solidarity.

To be in solidarity is to be part of a group that is in *solido*, in Latin, for the whole. Hence, in the French legal code, debtors are said to be *solidaire* when they are jointly liable for the debt. . . . solidarity is first of all the fact of cohesion, interdependence, a community of interests or a collective destiny. . . .

One can't have it both ways: either the community is a genuine community that actually exists, such that in defending others, I am merely defending myself (there is certainly nothing blameworthy here, but such actions are too self-interested to be morally motivated), or else the community is illusory, abstract, or ideal, so that my fighting for others is no longer a question of solidarity (since my personal interests are not at stake) but one of justice or generosity (justice if others are being oppressed, wronged, or despoiled; generosity if they are not, but are simply weak or unhappy). In other words, solidarity is either too selfish or too illusory to be a virtue. It is either self-interest well understood or too generosity misconstrued.

Solidarity can be truly generous only if it goes beyond self-interest, even acknowledged self-interest, mutual self-interest – in other words, only if it goes beyond solidarity. If it is in our interest to help others, then we would not need to be generous, we would just do it. The fact that we do not do so, or do so in such small measure, proves that we really don't regard such actions as being in our interest and are hypocrites in pretending otherwise; it's not that we have bad eyesight or lack lucidity. We have bad hearts, for our hearts are selfish; it's generosity, much more than lucidity, that we lack.

What percentage of your income do you devote to helping those who are poorer or less fortunate than you? Don't count taxes, since they are mandatory, and leave out what you give to family and very close friends, since love alone, much more than generosity, accounts for what we do for them (which at the same time we do for ourselves, their happiness being our happiness). And can we know whether the little we do give comes from generosity or whether it merely represents the small price we pay for moral comfort, to sooth our pathetic good conscience?

As Jankélévitch wrote, "For though we can give without loving, it is almost impossible to love without giving." But is it love, then or generosity? Yet the idea that we feel generous to our children has never occurred to me. We have a duty to be generous toward them. We love our children too much, we worry about them too much; it would be deluding ourselves to see virtue here. Whatever we do for them we do for our selves as well. Why would we need virtue? Love is sufficient, and what love! As for the other kind of love, the kind that is free from the self, the love of saints or the blessed, I am not certain that generosity can tell us much about it or that it can tell us much about generosity.

Generosity, as I said, is the virtue of giving – giving money (whereby it touches on liberality) or giving of oneself (whereby it touches on magnanimity or even sacrifice).

Per Descartes: Generosity is both the awareness of one's own freedom (or of oneself as free and responsible) and the firm resolution to make good use of that freedom. Consciousness and confidence, therefore: conscience of being free and confidence in making use of this freedom. That is why generosity is productive of self-esteem. Descartes sees in generosity not only the source of all virtue but also the "supreme good for each individual," which consists, he says, "in a firm will to do well and the contentment that this produces."

True friends, Montaigne, notes, "cannot lend or give anything to each other,"... "everything being in fact common as between them."

In its own way, generosity, like most other virtues, obeys the biblical commandment. But can we really love our neighbor as ourselves? If we could, what would be the point of generosity? As what good is it to make love a commandment if we are incapable of following it? Only actions can be commanded; therefore, the commandment requires not that we love, but that we act as though we loved – that we do unto our neighbor as we would unto or loved ones, and unto strangers as we would unto ourselves. The commandment prescribes not feeling or emotions, which are not transferable, but actions, which are.

All the world's a stage, and living means acting. But the roles and the players in this human comedy are not all equally good. Shakespearean wisdom: morality might well be a question of performance, but there is no good play that is not in some sense a morality play. Is anything more serious or more real than laughing or crying? We pretend, but it's not a game: the rules we follow are not there for our amusement; they make us what we are, for better or for worse. We each play a role, but that role is uniquely our own. And in truth, it is more than a role, it is our life, our history. There's nothing arbitrary or accidental in all this. We come to be who we are through our life experience.

Generosity invites us to give in the absence of love to the very people we do not love and to give them more the more they need it or the better equipped we are to help them. Indeed when love cannot guide us because we do not feel it, let us be guided by urgency and proximity. Some call this charity, mistakenly (since true charity is love and false charity condescension or pity). It should be called generosity, because it depends on us, solely on us, because in this sense it is free, because it is – in opposition to the bondage of instincts, possessions, and fears – freedom itself, in spirit and deed. Love would be better, of course, which is why morality isn't everything or even the essential thing. But generosity is still better than selfishness and morality better than apathy.

Personal advantage is not about being more comfortable or living longer; it is about living as freely as we can, as authentically as we can. To live forever is not the point, since we cannot; **the point is to live well. And how can we without courage or generosity?**

According to Hume, if generosity were absolute and universal, we would have no need of justice; and as we have seen, such a state of affairs is indeed conceivable in the abstract. On the other hand, it is clear that justice, even when it is accomplished, cannot exempt us from **generosity, which, though less necessary to society than justice, is more precious**, it seems to me, to our humanity.

I conclude by observing that generosity, like all the other virtues, is multiple both in its content and in the names that we call it or that serve to describe it. Combined with courage, it turns out to be heroism. Joined by justice, it becomes equity. Coupled with compassion, it becomes benevolence. In league with mercy, it becomes leniency. But its most beautiful name is its secret, an open secret that everyone knows: accompanied by gentleness, it is called **kindness**.

Politeness

excerpted from André Comte-Sponville, (trans. Catherine Temerson), *A Short Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life*, (London: William Heinemann, 2001)

Politeness is the first virtue, and the origin of perhaps all of the others. . . .

It can clothe both the best and the worst, which makes it suspect. Politeness is artifice and we rightly tend to be wary of artifice; it is an adornment and we tend to be wary of adornments. Diderot speaks of the "insulting politeness" of those on high; one might also mention the obsequiousness or servile politeness of those below.

What is so disturbing about the polite bastard? It isn't hypocrisy, since a polite bastard *is* polite. The polite torturer is nevertheless a torturer. Just as blood is more visible on white gloves, so horror is more apparent when it is civilized.

I have digressed, perhaps, but not so much by accident as out of vigilance: the important thing about politeness is, first of all, not to be taken in by it. **Politeness is not virtue and cannot take the place of virtue.**

In that case, why call it the first of virtues, the origin of all the others? The contradiction is not as great as it may appear to be. The origin of the virtues cannot be a virtue (for if it were, it would itself require an origin).

Politeness comes before the others in time rather than in importance. It serves as a foundation for the moral development of the individual. A child does not have moral standards. However, it does discover quite early on "prohibitions." "Don't do that: it's nasty; it's bad; it's not nice; it's naughty . . ." Or else, "It's dangerous." Very soon the child learns to distinguish between what's merely bad (a misdeed) and what is also bad *for* him (a danger), between the hateful and the harmful. A misdeed is a strictly human evil, an evil that does no harm (at least not to the person who commits it), and evil without immediate or intrinsic danger. Some things are allowed, some things are forbidden. The rule suffices; it precedes judgment and is the basis for it. But then does the rule have no foundation other than convention, no justification other than usage and the respect for usage? Yes, it is a *de facto* rule, a rule of pure form, a rule of politeness! Don't say bad words; don't interrupt people; don't shove; don't steal; don't lie. To the child, all these prohibitions appear identical ("It's not nice"). The distinctions between the ethical and the aesthetic will come only later, and gradually. **Politeness thus precedes morality, or rather, morality at first is nothing more than politeness: a compliance with usage and its established rules . . . a compliance with the world and the ways of the world.**

Now, **a principle of Kantian ethics is that one cannot deduce what one should do from what is done.** Yet the child in his early years is obliged to just that, and it is only in this way that he becomes human. Kant himself concedes as much. "Man can

only become man by education," he writes. "He is merely what education makes him," and the process begins with **discipline**, which "changes animal nature into human nature." What better way to say it? **Custom precedes value; obedience, respect; and imitation, duty.** Hence politeness ("one doesn't do that") precedes morality ("one shouldn't do that"); morality only comes into being little by little, as an internalized politeness that has freed itself from considerations of appearance and interest and focuses entirely on intentions (which politeness doesn't concern itself with). . . **Good manners precede and prepare the way for good deeds.** Morality is like a politeness of the soul, an etiquette of the inner life, a code of duties, a ceremonial of the essential. Conversely, politeness can be likened to a morality of the body, an ethics of comportment, a code for life in society, a ceremonial of the inessential.

So morality starts at the bottom – with politeness. But it has to start somewhere. There are no natural virtues; hence we must become virtuous. How? "For the things we have to learn before we can do them," **Aristotle explains, "we learn by doing them."** Yet how can we do them, if we haven't learned them? There are two ways out of this circular causality: apriority is one way, politeness is the other. But apriority is beyond our reach; politeness is not. "We become just," Aristotle continues, "by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts." Through habit, Aristotle seems to say, but that answer is obviously inadequate: a habit presupposes the prior existence of what we would be making a habit of and therefore cannot account for it. **Kant provides a more helpful answer.** For him, these first semblances of virtue can be explained in terms of discipline, in other words, as a product of external constraint. . . . **discipline . . . a respect for usages and good manners.** . . . To say "please" or "excuse me" is to pretend to be respectful; to say "thank you" is to pretend to be grateful. And it is with this show of respect and gratitude that both respect and gratitude begin. Just as nature imitates art, morality imitates politeness, which imitates morality. If we become moral, . . . it is not through virtue, but through education, not for goodness' sake but for form's sake, not for moral reasons but for reasons of politeness. Morality is first artifice, then artifact. By imitating virtue we become virtuous. "For when men play these roles," writes Kant, "virtues are gradually established, whose appearance had up until now only been affected. These virtues ultimately will become part of the actor's disposition." . . . "States of character arise out of like activities," says Aristotle. Politeness is that pretense, or semblance, of virtue from which the virtues arise.

We end up resembling what we imitate, and politeness imperceptibly leads – or can lead – to morality. **Every parent knows this; it's called bringing up one's children.** I am well aware that politeness is not everything, nor even the essential thing. Yet the fact remains that, in everyday language, being *well brought up* means first of all being polite, which is highly revealing. . . . The word *training* rubs us the wrong way, I know; but who could do without it? **Love is not enough when it comes to bringing up children; it's not even enough to make them lovable or loving.** Politeness isn't enough either, and that is why both politeness and love are needed. Family upbringing is located, it seems to me, between these two poles. . . .

Politeness, then, is not a virtue, but a simulacrum that imitates virtue (in adults) and paves the way for it (in children). **Politeness in the child may not be different in nature**

from politeness in the adult, but it is different in its significance. In the child, it is essential; in the adult it is inessential. What could be worse than an ill-mannered child, except perhaps a wicked adult? **We aren't children anymore.** We know how to love, how to will, and how to judge. And so we are capable of virtue, and of love, for which politeness is no substitute. . . . There are even some people whose politeness disturbs us in its perfection. Indeed, consummate politeness smacks of insincerity, for honesty sometimes demands that we displease, shock, or offend those around us. We all know people like this, people who, for all their honesty, will remain prisoners of good manners all their lives, not revealing themselves to others except from behind the glazed screen of politeness, as though having once and for all confused truth and decorum. . . . **It is better to be too honest to be polite than to be too polite to be honest!**

There is more to life than good manners; and politeness is not morality. Yet it is not nothing. Politeness is a small thing that paves the way for great things. . . . A self-satisfied politeness, one that takes itself too seriously and believes in itself, is one that, taken in by its own manners, fall short of the very rules it prescribes. Self-satisfaction is always impolite.

Philosophers will argue over whether form isn't really everything, whether the distinction between morality and politeness isn't merely an illusion. It could be that usage and respect is all there is – that politeness *is* everything. . . . Yet I believe nothing of the sort. Love holds its own, and so does gentleness and so does compassion. Politeness is not everything; indeed it is almost nothing. *Almost*, but not quite; for man, too, is *almost* an animal.

An Irishman's Philosophy

There are only two things to worry about - either you are well or you are sick.
If you are well, then there is nothing to worry about.
But if you are sick, there are two things to worry about
Either you will get well or you will die
If you get well, there is nothing to worry about.
If you die,
There are only two things to worry about.
Either you will go to heaven or hell.
If you go to heaven there is nothing to worry about.
But if you got to hell,
you'll be so damn busy shaking hands with friends
You won't have time to worry.

Lessons for Life from Noah's Ark

Author unknown

One: don't miss the boat

Two: remember that we are all in the same boat

Three: plan ahead -- it wasn't raining when Noah built his ark

Four: stay fit -- when you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something important

Five: don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

Six: build your future on high ground

Seven: for safety's sake, travel in pairs

Eight: speed isn't always an advantage -- the snails were on board with the cheetahs

Nine: when you are stressed, float a while

Ten: remember, the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.

Old English Prayer

Give us, Lord, a bit o' sun,
A bit o' work and a bit o' fun,

Give us in all the struggle and sputter,

Our daily bread and a bit o' butter,
Give us health our keep to make

And a bit to spare for other's sake.

Give us, too, a bit of song,
And a tale and a book to help us along.

Give us Lord, a chance to be
Our goodly best, brave, wise and free,
Our goodly best for ourselves and others

Till all men learn to live as brothers. Amen.

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Emily Dickinson

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Are you — Nobody — too?

Then there's a pair of us!

Don't tell! they'd advertise — you know!

How dreary — to be — somebody!

How public — like a Frog —

To tell one's name — the livelong June —

To an admiring Bog!

ANYWAY

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;

. . . Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;

. . . Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;

. . . Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;

. . . Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds.

. . . Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.

. . . Fight for a few underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;

. . . Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;

. . . Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;

. . . Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;

. . . Give the world the best you have anyway.

Mother Teresa

(Poem engraved on the wall of her home for children in Calcutta, which omits the parts in italics which were part of the original *Paradoxical Commandments* by Keith Kent written in 1968)

Malcolm Gladwell, Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference, (NY: Little Brown, 2000)

Law of the Few. Social epidemics work in exactly the same way. They are also driven by the efforts of a handful of exceptional people. . . . It's things like how sociable they are, or how energetic or influential among their peers. . . . The Law of the Few says the answer is that one of these exceptional people found out about the trend, and through social connections and energy and enthusiasm and personality spread the word . . . (p. 21-22)

Stickiness Factor - The idea of stickiness in tipping has enormous implications for the way we regard social epidemics as well. We tend to spend a lot of time thinking about how to make messages more contagious – how to reach as many people as possible with our products or ideas. But the hard part of communication is often figuring out how to make sure a message doesn't go in one ear and out the other. Stickiness means that a message makes an impact. You can't get it out of your head. It sticks in your memory.

The Stickiness Factor says that there are specific ways of making a contagious message memorable; there are relatively simple changes in the presentation and structuring of information that can make a big difference in how much of an impact it makes. (p. 24-25)

Power of Context - In an experiment, people who saw smoke seeping out from under a doorway would report it 75 percent of the time when they were on their own, but the incident would be reported only 38 percent of the time when they were in a group. When people are in a group, in other words, responsibility for acting is diffused. They assume that someone else will make the call, or they assume that because no one else is acting, the apparent problem – isn't really a problem. (28)

Law of the Few – Connectors, Mavens, Salesmen

Connector – Paul Revere – able to cause a word of mouth epidemic. rare set of social gifts (33)

Six degrees of separation does not mean that everyone is linked to everyone else in just six steps. It means that a very small number of people are linked to everyone else in a few steps and the rest of us are linked to the world through those special few.

My social circle is, in reality, not a circle. It is a pyramid. And at the top of the pyramid is a single person who is responsible for an overwhelming majority of the relationships that constitute my life. Not only is my social circle not a circle, it's not mine either. It belongs to Jacob. It's more like a club that he invited me to join. These people who link us up with the world, who bridge people, who introduce us to our social circles – these people on whom we rely more heavily than we realize – are Connectors, people with a special gift for bringing the world together.

2

What makes someone a Connector? The first – a most obvious criterion – is that Connectors know lots of people. They are the kinds of people who know everyone. All of us know someone like this. But I don't think that we spend a lot of time thinking about the

importance of these kinds of people. I'm not even sure that most of really believe that the kind of person who knows everyone really knows everyone. But they do. There is a simple way to show this. . . .

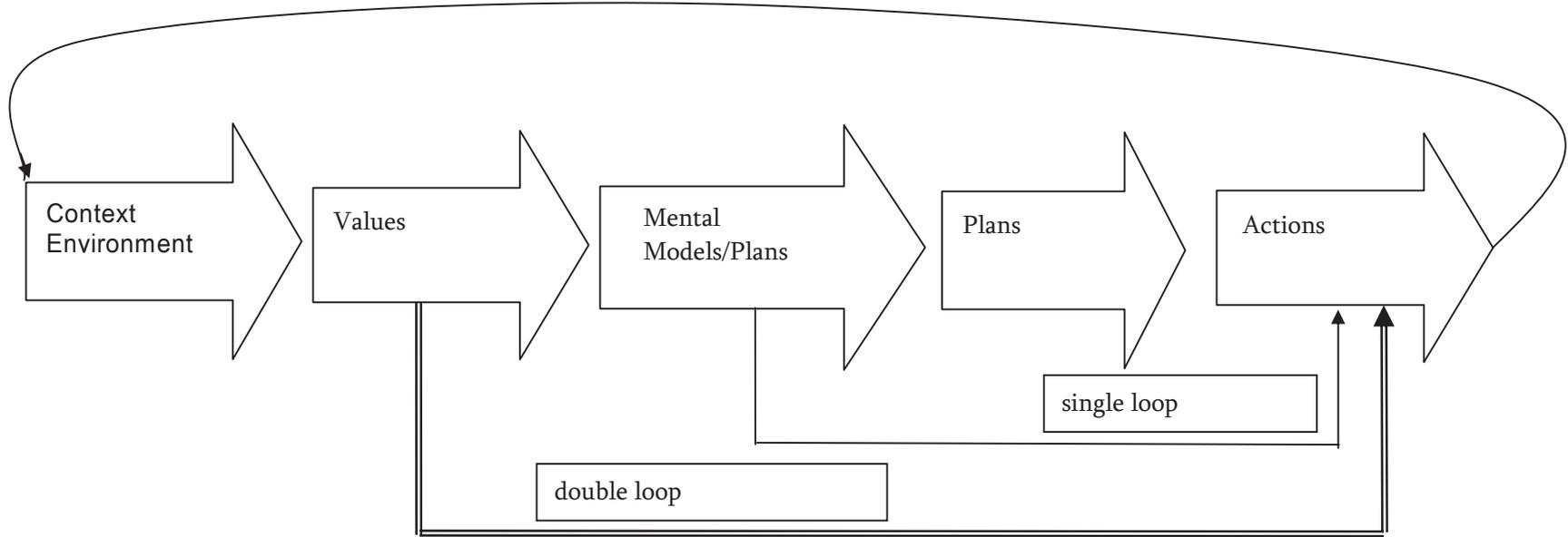
Sprinkled among every walk of life, in other words, are a handful of people with a truly extraordinary knack of making friends and acquaintances. They are Connectors.

Connectors have an instinctive and natural gift for making social connections. He's not aggressive about it. He's not one of those overly social, back-slapping types for whom the process of acquiring acquaintances is obvious and self-serving. He's more an observer, with the dry, knowing manner of someone who likes to remain a bit on the outside. He simply likes people, in a genuine and powerful way, and he finds the patterns of acquaintanceship and interaction in which people arrange themselves endlessly fascinating.

Connectors are important for more than simply the number of people they know. Their importance is also a function of the kinds of people they know. Connectors have network of "weak ties"

They are people whom all of us can reach in only a few steps because, for one reason or another, they manage to occupy many different worlds and subcultures and niches. In the case of Connectors, their ability to span many different worlds is a function of something intrinsic to their personality, some combination of curiosity, self-confidence, sociability and energy.

Social Adaptation and Environment Change



Seven Forms of Capital

		<i>Representative Elements</i>	<i>Representative Examples</i>
<i>Social</i>	Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible Articulations • Norms • <i>Mental Models</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecture, Music, Language • Range of Acceptable Behaviors • <i>Trust, Wealth Creation Attitudes, Long-Term Thinking</i>
	Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Population • Education and Training • Attitudes and Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition, Medical & Mental Health • Primary & Secondary, Technical • Self-responsibility, action-orientation
	Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Qualitative, Quantitative Data</i> • <i>Frameworks and Concepts</i> • <i>Knowledge Generation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Statistics, Opinions, Records</i> • <i>Theories, Processes, Procedures</i> • <i>Universities, R&D, Market Learning</i>
	Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Good, Clean Governance” • Justice System • Defense • <i>Connective Organizations</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency, No Hidden Costs • Property Protection, Predictable Regulations • Protection of Nation • <i>Chambers of Commerce, Unions</i>
<i>Physical</i>	Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Systems • <i>Private Wealth</i> • <i>Public Wealth</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banks, Stock Markets • <i>Bank Deposits</i> • <i>Bank Reserves, Taxes, Duties, Macroeconomic Stability</i>
	Man-Made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation, Communication • Power • Water and Sewerage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, Ports, Telephone Systems • Electric Grids, Generation Capacity • Pipelines, Pumping Stations
	Natural Endowments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Issues • <i>Raw Materials</i> • <i>Climate and Location</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation, Restoration • <i>Agricultural, Mineral, Petroleum</i> • <i>Proximity to Markets</i>

Virtuous Cycle of Progress

Plight => Problem => Issue =>Solution

A Plight is complex of bad circumstances and ill will that harm victims in violation of their rights, dignity, and morality

A Problem is a *plight* that has been transformed into a systematic argument based on solid facts and laws - rights and duties that provide basis for compelling a remedy

An Issue is a *problem* for which there is public pressure and political power to compel the people/entities that have the duty and resources to remedy the problem

Vicious Cycle of Regress

Plight => Victim's Cries => Pity/Apathy/Deaf ear => No Solution=> Helplessness => Plight

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking by **Malcolm Gladwell**

Malcolm Gladwell, a New York Times reporter, first hit the publishing scene with his book *The Tipping Point*. Now he has another New York Times Bestseller, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. Gladwell makes the following critical points, which are followed by questions they encourage:

1. "The part of our brain that leaps to conclusions.... is the called the adaptive unconscious and the study of this kind of decision making is one of the most important new fields in psychology". He likens the adaptive unconscious to "a kind of giant computer that quickly and quietly process a lot of the data we need in order to keep functioning as human beings".

This is the part of us that allows us to make snap decisions whether under stress or even in the gentleness of moments.

In example after example, Gladwell shows how we can grab a "thin slice" of information, which provides critical insight into the whole.

This critical "thin slice" information is perhaps the jewel or nugget in the whole.

For example, students who watched videos of couples during a conflict were able to assess in only a few minutes whether the marriage will survive with some 90% accuracy. Trained psychologists, dealing with couples over much greater periods of time, had difficulty approaching such a figure, presumably because of too much information.

Question: What is the "thin slice" when it come to employee productivity or the filing of claims? Perhaps it is showing that you care?

2. "Decisions made very quickly can be every bit as good as decisions made cautiously and deliberately". The caveat here includes training, experience, and circumstances. The more education and skills we have coupled with experience under similar circumstances, the more likely we are to make a good snap decision as opposed to perhaps a disastrous one.

Just ask a Marine how important preparation is.

Question: How much training do you really do? How good are your folks under fire?

3. "In one study, we were watching newlyweds, and what would often happen with couples who ended up in divorce is that when one partner would ask for credit, the other spouse wouldn't give it".

Gladwell reports the "thin slice" in a relationship, which will lead to its failure, is where one party is condescending towards the other (or conversely where one party doesn't give the other credit).

No rocket science here. Furthermore, he tells us that once a relationship starts going south, there's a 94% chance it will continue to do so. Whether its defensiveness, stonewalling, criticism, contempt or condescending behavior, none of us need a book to know these actions are harmful to marriages and workplace relationships as well.

Question: What approach do you take during disagreement? Are you proud of it? Does it work? Has there been any agreement on how to handle matters before they go south?

4. "It is quite possible for people who have never met us and who have spent only 20 minutes thinking about us to come to a better understanding of who we are than people who have known us for years."

He gives the example of peeking into someone's medicine cabinet (to help us understand that we can learn as much, or more from one glance at a private space as from hours of exposure to a public space).

Taking a quick look at an employee's cubical can be the workplace equivalent of the medicine cabinet.

Question: What impression does your workplace or workspace make in a nanosecond?
Realize it is never not making that impression!

However, Gladwell in the chapter of his book on Warren Harding's Mistake, that our first impressions are not always correct.

As an example he cites one of the worst American presidents of all time, Warren Harding.

In 1899 in one of the hotels of Ohio lawyer and lobbyist Harry Daugherty met a newspaper editor from the small town of Marion Warren Harding. Daugherty looked over at Harding and said: "he would make a great President". In 1914 Harding have been elected to the U.S.Senate.

In 1916 Daugherty arranged for Harding to address the Republican presidential convention, because he knew that people only had to see and hear Harding, to be convinced of his worthiness for high office.

The convention was deadlocked between the two leading candidates, so, Daugherty predicted, the delegates would be forced to look for an alternative.

So the republican party bosses threw up their hands and asked, wasn't there a candidate they could all agree on? And one name came immediately to mind: Harding!

"Didn't he look just like a presidential candidate?" So Senator Harding became candidate Harding, and later he became President Harding.

Harding served two years before dying unexpectedly of a stroke. He was, most historians agree, one of the worst presidents in American history.

It means that sometimes we can know about someone or something in the blink of an eye than we can after months of study. But we also have to acknowledge and understand those circumstances when rapid cognition leads us astray.

Books like *Blink* can provide insight if after reading them we ask "What does this mean for me or my business?"

Holmes – Perhaps the most famous quotation in American Common Law - "The **life of the law** has not been logic; it has been experience."

1. Nature of Legal Profession

The reason why it is a profession, why people will pay lawyers to argue for them or to advise them, is that in societies like ours the command of the public force is intrusted to the judges in certain cases, and the whole power of the state will be put forth, if necessary, to carry out their judgments and decrees.

2. Law as prediction of when state will use force

"Take the fundamental question, What constitutes the law? You will find some text writers telling you that it is something different from what is decided by the courts of Massachusetts or England, that it is a system of reason, that it is a deduction from principles of ethics or admitted axioms or what not, which may or may not coincide with the decisions. But if we take the view of our friend the bad man we shall find that he does not care two straws for the axioms or deductions, but that he does want to know what the Massachusetts or English courts are likely to do in fact. I am much of this mind. **The prophecies of what the courts will do in fact, and nothing more pretentious, are what I mean by the law.**"

- Holmes, *The Path of the Law*, 10 *Harvard Law Review* 457 (1897).
http://www.constitution.org/lrev/owh/path_law.htm

- People want to know under what circumstances and how far they will run the risk of coming against what is so much stronger than themselves, and hence it becomes a business to find out when this danger is to be feared. The object of our study, then, is prediction, the prediction of the incidence of the public force through the instrumentality of the courts.
- If you want to know the law and nothing else, you must look at it as a bad man, who cares only for the material consequences which such knowledge enables him to predict, not as a good one, who finds his reasons for conduct, whether inside the law or outside of it, in the vaguer sanctions of conscience.
- Law as practice consequences of actions
- You can see very plainly that a bad man has as much reason as a good one for wishing to avoid an encounter with the public force, and therefore you can see the practical importance of the distinction between morality and law. A man who cares nothing for an ethical rule which is believed and practised by his neighbors is likely nevertheless to care a good deal to avoid being made to pay money, and will want to keep out of jail if he can.
- [I]f we take the view of our friend the bad man we shall find that he does not care two straws for the axioms or deductions, but that he does want to know what the Massachusetts or English courts are likely to do in fact. I am much of this mind.

- The public really pays the damages, and the question of liability, if pressed far enough, is really a question how far it is desirable that the public should insure the safety of one whose work it uses.

3. Law is not Logic, but Tradition, History, Precedent

- The Life of the Law is not reason, but experience.
- You can give any conclusion a logical form. You always can imply a condition in a contract. But why do you imply it? It is because of some belief as to the practice of the community or of a class, or because of some opinion as to policy, or, in short, because of some attitude of yours upon a matter not capable of exact quantitative measurement, and therefore not capable of founding exact logical conclusions. Such matters really are battle grounds where the means do not exist for the determinations that shall be good for all time, and where the decision can do no more than embody the preference of a given body in a given time and place. We do not realize how large a part of our law is open to reconsideration upon a slight change in the habit of the public mind.
- At present, in very many cases, if we want to know why a rule of law has taken its particular shape, and more or less if we want to know why it exists at all, we go to tradition.
- ...
- The rational study of law is still to a large extent the study of history. History must be a part of the study, because without it we cannot know the precise scope of rules which it is our business to know. It is a part of the rational study, because it is the first step toward an enlightened scepticism, that is, towards a deliberate reconsideration of the worth of those rules.

4. Law, Morality, Choice Theory

[T]he law, if not a part of morality, is limited by it.

The law can ask no better justification than the deepest instincts of man.

We learn that for everything we have we give up something else, and we are taught to set the advantage we gain against the other advantage we lose, and to know what we are doing when we elect

The fallacy to which I refer is the notion that the only force at work in the development of the law is logic.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841-1935)

*** Quote ***

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. was born in Boston on March 8, 1841. He would live until two days short of his 94th birthday. His father, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., was a physician, a professor of medicine at Harvard, and an author of novels, verse, and humorous essays. Thus, Holmes grew up in a literary, and prosperous, family.

Holmes attended private schools in Boston and then, like his father, Harvard. Young Holmes was not overly impressed with the Harvard of that time, finding the curriculum stultifying (Henry Adams later remarked that "Harvard taught little, and that little ill."). He exercised his literary talents as editor of the Harvard Magazine, and in numerous essays. His graduation was even in some doubt, as he had been publicly admonished by the faculty for "disrespect" towards a professor. Holmes evidently took this as an affront and left to train for the Civil War. His unit was not immediately sent to the front, and Holmes was persuaded to return and receive his degree.

After graduating from Harvard, Holmes began his Civil War service. He was wounded in battle three times and also suffered numerous illnesses. Though he was later to glorify wartime service, he declined to renew his term of service when it expired. Holmes apparently, and justifiably, felt that he had done more than his duty, and had survived one battle too many to continue tempting fate.

Holmes returned to Boston, decided to study law, and entered Harvard Law School in 1864. Though at first uncertain that law would be his profession, he soon became immersed in study and decided that the law would be his life's work. He committed himself to the law, but not necessarily to the private practice.

After passing the required oral examination, Holmes was admitted to the Massachusetts bar in 1867. For the next fourteen years he practiced law in Boston. But his love for legal scholarship, rather than the mundane daily practice, was evident during this period. He worked on a new edition of Kent's Commentaries, a mammoth endeavor that took some four years, and became the editor of the American Law Review.

Holmes married Fanny Dixwell in 1872. They had known each other since Holmes was about ten years old, as she was the daughter of the proprietor of the private school he attended. Their marriage was to be childless, and endured until her death in 1929.

Holmes's most famous work, *The Common Law*, published in 1881 grew out of a series of twelve lectures he was invited to deliver, which required that he explain the fundamentals of American law. Holmes questioned the historical underpinnings of much of Anglo-American jurisprudence. The work contains Holmes's most famous quote, "The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience." Holmes had come to believe that even outdated and seemingly illogical legal doctrines survived because they found new utility. Old legal forms were adapted to new societal conditions.

Shortly after publication of *The Common Law*, Holmes was offered a post teaching law at Harvard. After some intense negotiation, mainly centered on money, because Holmes was not wealthy and needed the income to live, he accepted the professorship. But after teaching only

one semester, he resigned to accept an appointment to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, the state's highest court. The opening had arisen at the end of the current Republican governor's term, and as he was to be succeeded by a Democrat, the appointment had to be accomplished with dispatch. Holmes's departure from Harvard caused some consternation, however, as he was one of only five full-time professors, and an endowment had been specially raised to fund his professorship.

Holmes served on the Supreme Judicial Court for twenty years, becoming chief justice. He loved the work—the legal research and the "writing up" of cases. Holmes found the work easy, at least for him. He could see immediately to the heart of an issue, and his intellectual powers were far superior to his colleagues. Holmes was never accused of modesty, especially concerning his superiority to his fellow judges. Though he was happy on the Supreme Judicial Court, he desired greater fame and challenge.

The opportunity for ultimate professional advancement came in 1902, when Holmes was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to the United States Supreme Court. His appointment might never have happened, except that the "New England seat" on the court became vacant during Roosevelt's term, and Roosevelt and Holmes were both friends with Massachusetts Senator, Henry Cabot Lodge. Lodge persuaded Roosevelt that Holmes was "safe," meaning favorable towards Roosevelt's progressive policies. Roosevelt would later regret the appointment, after Holmes participated in striking down some of Roosevelt's initiatives.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. would serve on the Supreme Court longer than any other person—thirty years. He was called "The Great Dissenter" because he was often at odds with his fellow justices and was capable of eloquently expressing his dissents. Louis Brandeis often joined him in dissents, and their views often became the majority opinion in a few years' time. Holmes resigned due to ill health in 1932, at age ninety. He died in 1935 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery next to his wife.

Holmes's legal philosophy evolved over the sixty-odd years he wrote on the law. At first, he attempted a rational, systematic, or "scientific" conceptualization. But over time, he came to realize that the law was more of a compendium of decisions reflecting individual judges' resolutions of actual cases. Thus, the growth of the law was by experience molded to actual controversies in the society of the day.

Widely considered a "liberal" because he believed in free speech and the right of labor to organize, Holmes was very conservative in his response to injury cases. He was a champion of "judicial restraint"—deferring to the judgment of the legislature in most matters of policy.

Holmes is considered one of the giants of American law. Not just because he wrote so well, but also because he wrote so much, and for so long. A lawyer seeking a quote from Holmes is never left wanting. Even the Internal Revenue Service building in Washington, D.C. bears his writing, "Taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society."
<http://www.let.rug.nl/~usa/B/oliver/oliverxx.htm>

To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve -what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.

It is astonishing to see how many philosophical disputes collapse into insignificance the moment you subject them to this simple test of tracing a concrete consequence. There can be no difference anywhere that doesn't make a difference elsewhere - no difference in abstract truth that doesn't express itself in a difference in concrete fact and in conduct consequent upon that fact, imposed on somebody, somehow, somewhere and sometime. The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one.

There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was an adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means.

In what respects would the world be different if this alternative or that were true? If I can find nothing that would become different, then the alternative has no sense."

Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed. A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad a priori reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action, and towards power. That means the empiricist temper regnant, and the rationalist temper sincerely given up. It means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality and the pretence of finality in truth.

At the same time it does not stand for any special results. It is a method only. But the general triumph of that method would mean an enormous change in what I called in my last lecture the 'temperament' of philosophy.

[If] you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be changed.

Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest.

[T]ruth in our ideas means their power to 'work,'

This pragmatist talk about truths in the plural, about their utility and satisfactoriness, about the success with which they 'work,' etc., suggests to the typical intellectualist mind a sort of coarse lame second-rate makeshift article of truth. Such truths are not real truth. Such tests are merely subjective. As against this, objective truth must be something non-utilitarian, haughty, refined, remote, august, exalted. It must be an absolute correspondence of our thoughts with an equally absolute reality. It must be what we ought to think, unconditionally. The conditioned ways in which we do think are so much irrelevance and matter for psychology. Down with psychology, up with logic, in all this question!

See the exquisite contrast of the types of mind! The pragmatist clings to facts and concreteness, observes truth at its work in particular cases, and generalizes. Truth, for him, becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working-values in experience. For the rationalist it remains a pure abstraction, to the bare name of which we must defer. When the pragmatist undertakes to show in detail just why we must defer, the rationalist is unable to recognize the concretes from which his own abstraction is taken. He accuses us of denying truth; whereas we have only sought to trace exactly why people follow it and always ought to follow it. Your typical ultra-abstractionist fairly shudder at concreteness: other things equal, he positively prefers the pale and spectral. If the two universes were offered, he would always choose the skinny outline rather than the rich thicket of reality. It is so much purer, clearer, nobler.

Rationalism sticks to logic and the empyrean. Empiricism sticks to the external senses. Pragmatism is willing to take anything, to follow either logic or the senses, and to count the humblest and most personal experiences.

Overview of Freakonomics: Themes and Fundamental Ideas

Although, as the authors note, there is no single unifying theme the book is built around, we have identified a number of concepts that recur throughout the book.

Positive vs. Normative Analysis

Many of the tales in *Freakonomics* are intended to challenge the prior beliefs (i.e., the conventional wisdom) of the reader. The conclusions derived from various investigations described in each chapter will often surprise you. They may even irritate your sensitivities.

The investigations in these chapters, perhaps like no other quantitatively-oriented book, bring home the differences between looking at the world from the point of view of a moralist and the world view of a scientist.

If morality represents the way that people would like the world to work, economics represents how it actually does work.

According to the authors: "it is well and good to opine or theorize about a subject, as humankind is wont to do, but when moral posturing is replaced by an honest assessment of the data, the result is often a new, surprising insight."

The Nature of Scientific Inquiry

Freakonomics provides new insights into the scientific process. The investigations in *Freakonomics* address economic and social issues that are frequently difficult, but not impossible, to quantify.

The means of formulating testable hypotheses, the difficulties involved in gathering useful data and the utilization of those data are testaments to the discipline and creative mental processes of true scientific inquiry.

Freakonomics provides concrete illustrations of how unconventional methods of data gathering and “stand-on-your-head” ways of looking at data are often necessary to make sense of the world.

Knowing what to measure and how to measure it makes a complicated world less so.

Incentives are the cornerstone of modern life

Indeed, incentives have been the cornerstone of human existence. Economics is the study of human behavior as it manifests itself in the sometimes foggy mist of incentives.

An understanding of incentives is the key to clearly understanding any human behavior.

The conventional wisdom is often wrong

Freakonomics takes pleasure in using the powerful quantitative tools of economic inquiry to turn conventional wisdom on its head.

The authors do not argue that conventional wisdom is always wrong, but they do conclude that the conventional wisdom that is used as an explanation for many social issues is unexamined, unquestioned and often not correct.

Dramatic effects often have distant, even subtle, causes

As the authors state: “the answer to a given riddle is not always right in front of you.” Of course, positive economic inquiry and gathering and interpreting the data that are necessary to solve a sticky social riddle are often hard. But it is the hard part that makes it worthwhile! If it were easy, everyone would do it.

ch.1. ln.. 4-5 Subject of the essay: the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual.

ch. 1, ln. 79-80 the rulers should be identified with the people, that their interest and will should be the interest and will of the nation

ch. 1, ln. 84-85 [The rulers'] power was but the nation's own power, concentrated, and in a form convenient for exercise.

ch. 1, ln. 114-120 The "people" who exercise the power are not always the same people with those over whom it is exercised; and the "self-government" spoken of is not the government of each by himself, but of each by all the rest.

ch. 1, ln. 135 "the tyranny of the majority" is now generally included among the evils against which society is required to be on its guard.

ch. 1, ln. 340 the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or reasoning with him, or persuading him, or entreating him, but not for compelling him.

ch. 1 ln. 370 - Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion.

ch. 1 ln. 471 - Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves, than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest.

ch. 2, ln. 30 If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.

ch.2, ln. 64 few think it necessary to take any precautions against their own fallibility.

ch. 2, ln. 125 Men, and governments, must act to the best of their ability.

ch. 2, ln. 142 - on any matter not self-evident, there are ninety-nine persons totally incapable of judging of it, for one who is capable; and the capacity of the hundredth person is only comparative; for the majority of the eminent men of every past

generation held many opinions now known to be erroneous, and did or approved numerous things which no one will now justify.

ch. 2, ln. 210 – we have done the best that the existing state of human reason admits of.

ch 2, ln. 265 The truth of an opinion is part of its utility.

ch. 2, ln. 621 Our merely social intolerance kills no one, roots out no opinions, but induces men to disguise them, or to abstain from any active effort for their diffusion.

There needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence; and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs, as protection against political despotism.

Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.

[P]ersecution is an ordeal through which truth ought to pass, and always passes successfully, legal penalties being, in the end, powerless against truth, though sometimes beneficially effective against mischievous errors. (Mill then goes on to refute the universality of this statement. – SK)

[H]owever true it [an opinion] may be, if it is not fully, frequently, and fearlessly discussed, it will be held as a dead dogma, not a living truth.

The greatest orator, save one, of antiquity, has left it on record that he always studied his adversary's case with as great, if not with still greater, intensity than even his own.

[I]n the absence of discussion The words which convey it [truth], cease to suggest ideas, or suggest only a small portion of those they were originally employed to communicate. Instead of a vivid conception and a living belief, there remain only a few phrases retained by rote; or, if any part, the shell and husk only of the meaning is retained, *the finer essence being lost.*

But when it has come to be an hereditary creed, and to be received passively, not actively – when the mind is no longer compelled, in the same degree as at first, to exercise its vital powers on the questions which its belief presents to it, there is a progressive tendency to forget all of the belief except the formularies, or to give it a dull and torpid assent, as if accepting it on trust dispensed with the necessity of realizing it in consciousness, or testing it by personal experience; until it almost ceases to connect itself at all with the inner life of the human being.

Both teachers and learners go to sleep at their post, as soon as there is no enemy in the field.

ch. 2, ln. 1054 – there are many truths of which the full meaning *cannot* be realized, until personal experience has brought it home.

ch. 3, ln. 160 Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing.

The fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful, is the cause of half their errors.

[C]onflicting doctrines, instead of being one true and the other false, share the truth between them; *Popular opinions, on subjects not palpable to sense, are often true, but seldom or never the whole truth. in the human mind, one-sidedness has always been the rule,*

[O]nly through diversity of opinion is there, in the existing state of human intellect, a chance of fair play to all sides of the truth.

["T]he end of man... is the ...development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole;" for this [the individuality of power and development] there are two requisites, "freedom, and a variety of situations;".

Persons of genius... are... a small minority; but in order to have them, it is necessary to preserve the soil in which they grow. Genius can only breathe freely in an atmosphere of freedom.

Ch. 4, ln. 410. Originality is the one thing which unoriginal minds cannot feel the use of.

Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric. Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded;

ch. 3, ln. 503 If a person possess any tolerable amount of common sense and experience, his own mode of laying out his existence is the best, not because it is the best in itself, but because it is his own mode.

[T]he only unfailing and permanent source of improvement is liberty, since by it there are as many possible independent centres of improvement as there are individuals.

But the strongest of all the arguments against the interference of the public with purely personal conduct, is that when it does interfere, the odds are that it interferes wrongly, and in the wrong place.

I am not aware that any community has a right to force another to be civilized. So long as the sufferers by the bad law do not invoke assistance from other communities.

ch. 5, ln 12-3. The individual is not accountable society for his actions, in so far as these concern the interest of no person but himself.

Advice, instruction, persuasion, and avoidance by other people... are the only measures by which society can justifiably express its dislike or disapprobation of his [the individual's] conduct.

ch 5, ln. 790 Where everything is done through the bureaucracy, nothing to which the bureaucracy is really adverse can be done at all.

ch. 5, ln. 910. The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it. A State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes - will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished; and that the perfection of the machinery to which it has sacrificed everything, will in the end avail it nothing, for want of the vital power which, in order that the machine might work more smoothly, it has preferred to banish.

A writer wants what he has to say to be heard again and again. He wants it to be heard after he is dead.

The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills 1952

It is the heart of man that I am trying to imply in this work.

Seventy Thousand Assyrians 1934

Every man in the world is better than someone else and not as good someone else.

The Resurrection 1935

The child race is fresh, eager, interested, innocent, imaginative, healthy and full of faith, where the adult race, more often than not, is stale, spiritually debauched, unimaginative, unhealthy, and without faith.

My Heart's in the Highlands 1939

I believe there are ways whose ends are life instead of death.

Antranik and the Spirit of Armenia, 1936

Good people are good because they've come to wisdom through failure.

Saroyan

I have made a fiasco of my life, but I have had the right material to work with.

My Heart's in the Highlands 1939

"You betray honor, you betray yourself, you betray the human race when you believe the way to truth is in the way taken by the mob, when you agree because it's convenient, when you accept, when you conform, when you don't go after truth as if it had never before been seized."

Here Comes there Goes You know Who, p. 49

The order I found was the order of disorder.

1952 The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills

The real story can never be told. It is untellable. The real (as real) is inaccessible, being gone in time. There is no point in glancing at the past, in summoning it up, in re-examining it, except on behalf of art - that is, the meaningful-real.

The Bicycle Rider In Beverly Hills 1952

It is impossible not to notice that our world is tormented by failure, hate, guilt, and fear.

1946 Letter to Robert E. Sherwood

“The role of art is to make a world which can be tolerated.”

The Human Comedy 1943

In the most commonplace, tiresome, ridiculous, malicious, coarse, crude, or even crooked people or events I had to seek out rare things, good things, comic things, and I did so.

The Bicycle Rider In Beverly Hills 1952

I was never interested in the obvious, or in the details one takes for granted, and everybody seemed to be addicted to the obvious, being astonished by it, and forever harping about the details which I had long ago weighted, measured, and discarded as irrelevant and useless. If you can measure it, don't. If you can weigh it, it isn't worth the bother. It isn't what you're after. It isn't going to get it. My wisdom was visual and as swift as vision. I looked, I saw, I understood, I felt, "That's that, where do we go from here?"

Here Comes There Goes You Know Who

No foundation. All the way down the line. No foundation.

The Time of Your Life

Every man alive in the world is a beggar of one sort or another, every last one of them, great and small. The priest begs God for grace, and the king begs someone for something. Sometimes he begs the people for loyalty, sometimes he begs God to forgive him. No man in the world can have endured ten years without having begged God to forgive him.

The Beggars

You must remember always to give, of everything you have. You must give foolishly even. You must be extravagant. You must give to all who come into your life. Then nothing and no one shall have power to cheat you of anything, for if you give to a thief, he cannot steal from you, and he himself is then no longer a thief. And the more you give, the more you will have to give.

The human comedy

Neither love nor hate, nor any order of intense adherence to personal involvement in human experience, may be so apt to serve the soul as this freedom and this necessity to be kind.

1952 The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills

What is the purpose of human life? On the animal level it is certainly to avoid pain if possible. If it is not possible, then on the human level it is in order to put up with pain decently. On the personal level, man's purpose is to be the unique thing every man is by birth, a uniqueness which is inexhaustible, although in most individuals it is extinguished almost at the outset.

Every man is entitled to be continuously alive and in transition, changing if not for the literal better at least for the usages of recognizing the change itself . . .

Man is an accident, but the element of the deliberate in his accidental reality is now sufficient to permit him to put up with or to seek to correct the wrongs of the accidental that is in him, and to cherish, accept, recognize, employ extend, enlarge, improve, and thrive upon the accidental rights which were also born into him, the principal one of which is to continue, after which the rights are inexhaustibly varied. But he must continue. He must be there, in his accidental abiding place, himself, and he must respect his right to be there as painlessly as may be.

Here Comes there Goes You know Who, p. 224

Merely to survive is to keep the hope, greatness, accuracy, and the grace alive.

1952 The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills

The greatest happiness you can have is knowing that you do not necessarily require happiness.

My Heart's in the Highlands 1939

In the time of your life live—so that in that good time there shall be no ugliness or death for yourself or for any life your life touches. Seek goodness everywhere, and when it is found, bring it out of its hiding-place and let it be free and unashamed. Place in matter and in flesh the least of the values, for these are the things that hold death and must pass away. Discover in all things that which shines and is beyond corruption.

Encourage virtue in whatever heart it may have been driven into secrecy and sorrow by the shame and terror of the world. Ignore the obvious, for it is unworthy of the clear eye and the kindly heart. Be the inferior to no man, nor of any man be the superior.

Remember that every man is a variation of yourself. No man's guilt is not yours, nor is any man's innocence a thing apart. Despise evil and ungodliness, but not men of ungodliness or evil. These, understand. Have no shame in being kindly and gentle, but if the time comes in the time of your life to kill, kill and have no regret. In the time of your life, live—so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it.

**Preface to William Saroyan's The Time of Your Life,
1939 Pulitzer Prize Winner**

Of course the human race is Armenian. How could it be anything else.?"

Here Comes there Goes You know Who. p. 82

It is simply in the nature of the Armenian to study, to learn, to question, to speculate, to discover, to invent, to revise, to restore, to preserve, to make, and to give.

First Visit to Armenia 1935

I began to visit Armenia as soon as I had earned the necessary money.

First Visit to Armenia 1935

I love Armenian people - all of them. I love them because they are a part of the enormous human race, which of course I find simultaneously beautiful and vulnerable.

First Visit to Armenia 1935

The whole world and every human being in it is everybody's business.

My Heart's in the Highlands 1939

On that note, I'll end where we began:

A writer wants what he has to say to be heard again and again. He wants it to be heard after he is dead.

1952 The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills