

Developing Minds

So I shared a short video on Facebook about the corporate greed of the medical industry and chemotherapy. Chemotherapy is 87% unsuccessful, yet doctors get such huge kickbacks from prescribing the medicaments between the pharmaceuticals and the insurance corporations that they just keep on prescribing them. Now, we can go into the deeper economics of doctors practice, student loans, options versus care no matter how desperate, but, ultimately I think we can all agree that the system is broken. Once again the larger argument is the “evils” of corporations and greed. Yes, I agree strongly that corporations are not people, but people are corporations. So where does that leave us as individuals? How can we approach such a huge and powerful destructive, and not to mention extremely well-funded, enemy of our pursuit of happiness and equality? Remember “America”?

To me this argument resolves to a duality, a choice of paths. I have spent my entire life railing against the power centers in our society. All my losses were painful and humiliating. All my victories were deeply personal and isolated.

The duality is about governance. And here I must confess a deep abiding respect for my forefathers in this branch of thought. People like Michel Foucault, Karl Marx, Sheldon S. Wolin, Robert Reich and the list continues. The question for me goes like this; Do we opt for a society governed by elite wisdom to provide endless regulation on the behavior of its citizenry, or inculcate demands on the early development of children and parents to be raised with fundamentals that will greatly increase the probability of “healthy” life affirming thoughts and behavior with a propensity and even reward for compassionate and responsible (read responsible for the whole not just the self) actions. I can already hear the arguments for the impression that this is a religious argument. I reject that posture. As far as I know, history has proven that religion is the greatest factor in any society for partisan, segregation, isolation, fear mongering violence promoting life UN-affirming behavior and justification. No, I think the question is one of a choice or well navigated confluence of two options.

On the one hand, regulating out the possibility of corporations entirely to allow the trade of goods and services to be individual, local and therefore transparently self-regulating; and/or on the other hand to school our children to behave in a manner that rewards and discourages the ideas of corporate as a source of power over people. The first choice seems relatively easy in this case. Just add regulation. But as we can witness from a look at our recent

history, regulation does little to curtail avarice and plunder. So, what about the second option?

The human species is different from other species in innumerable ways. The one that stands out for me is the tremendous amount of time it takes to make a human being independent. It is so dramatic a difference that one might ask if and independent human is ever achieved? Unlike other animals that can provide for themselves in a matter of months, humans take, well, as many as 20 years or more... By independent human, I mean a human that can feed and dress themselves and enter the human society as a self-maintaining individual with a mind ready to participate productively to create security and happiness.

That last part is where I believe we most spectacularly fail. We teach our children to dress, mostly, and certainly to eat. Then we put them through a schooling of servitude and memorization. We pound authoritarian threats into them and expect them to be kind and considerate. In fact, it would be too easy to make a list of contradictions imposed on our children both in secular “study” and popular media. I think we need to stop training brains, and focus instead on developing MINDS.

This is why I talk constantly on the Buddha’s teachings and also why I am an Artist. The two endeavors allow for me to jostle and influence introspective search and critical thought. If “good” governance, or what I call life affirming behavior has any chance of manifesting and superseding the survival of the fittest, then I believe it must be taught and inculcated into young minds untrained as yet by a brute force culture allowed to flourish for far too many millennia. We must arrest the continued developments of avarice. It will demand of us some very strong actions and much resistance. I believe that our likeliest chance for success is a tenacious effort to rebuild our educational systems. It may even take parental licensing to achieve this. We require licensing to drive cars, and yet we allow anyone to raise our children. I do mean OUR children, because the nonsense that individuals raise their own children is an exceptionally blind view of the way societies work. We talk about putting our children in school to socialize them, but what does that really mean, under whose influence and supervision? This is a huge problem in society that must be addressed with an equally huge attention and dedicated management. I believe the current budget on national defense and education should be reversed, but not just for the opportunity of money itself, but for the size and gravity of the endeavor. Research and an ever developing model of human education will require, at first, much de-programming from the plethora of power politic in our cultures. Perhaps a study of Bhutan could yield guidance.

Surely with this grand and kind planet, our vast resources, our beautiful minds, we can do better. Right now, I think we need to make a stand for it. I don't think more violence is the answer. But I do believe that the firmness of our stance will take much courage, dedication and resilience.

I know we are up to the task and I will continue to support this change in all my capacities.

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