

What's That You Say?

A Few Thoughts on Interpersonal Communication
and the Concepts of Right and Wrong in Today's
Complex Societies.

By: Jim Bates

October 2018

First Thoughts

From the main and sub-titles of this work, it should be expected that much of it's content will have to do with the exploration of and viewpoints on person-to-person communication in one form or another. But to prepare the reader for some of the terminology presented within, I'd first like to provide a quick definition primer of some of the more unusual usages.

Communication: A single, individual, two-way exchange occurring between entities, which may be either individuals or groups. It may consist of physical, verbal or visual/sensual elements or any combination of them. Multiple communications can often be strung together to form lengthy conversations but each single, two-way exchange within that conversation is considered to be a new and distinct communication.

Active Communicator or AC: The individual or group that first initiates a new communication and then controls continued communication effort.

Passive Communicator or PC: The individual or group that is the initial recipient of a new communication and who may either accept or reject the effort.

Positive Communication: A single two-way exchange where the PC accepts and responds positively to the communication attempt.

Negative Communication: A single two-way exchange where the PC rejects and responds negatively to the communication attempt.

Maximum, Positive Two-Way Communication: The state where an AC and PC can maintain continuous conversation.

Right: Correct

Wrong: Incorrect

This work attempts to examine and define interpersonal communication in terms of positive and negative, or Right and Wrong, which is precisely why any communication must be considered as a single, two-way exchange since, during multiple exchanges, communication can sometimes switch, without warning, from being positive to being negative in mid-conversation.

In order to accurately assess the full value and validity of modern human communication, it is necessary to examine its contents, intentions and impact. We must also recognize that communication, in its most rudimentary form, has really been around since cellular life first appeared on this planet roughly 3.8 Billion Years Ago and that genetic-based predispositions for particular styles of communication have been, as a direct result of evolution, continually handed down, from generation to generation, ever since.

Those concepts and others will be found in a variety of topics that follow, presented as numbered Thoughts, rather than book Chapters in an attempt to reflect the very personal

nature of this writing. In addition, each thought is preceded by a unique quotation, some taken directly from the thoughts of recognizable individuals while others are taken from my own personal song writing efforts, the purpose of which is to set the stage, so to speak, for the content and concepts to follow.

I am also making a specific attempt to keep the presentation of all these concepts as gender-neutral as possible which will not always be easy given the content surrounding many of the ideas but which reflects an approach that I feel is absolutely critical to ensuring the widest possible interest, understanding and acceptance.

If any of these thoughts help do nothing else but stimulate the reader's own thinking about their place within the global community and if, after reading any passage, the phrase 'That's interesting' crosses the reader's mind, then I must consider it to be a success.

Table of Contents

Thought One

Every Time I Try to Communicate with Someone Life Gets in the Way.....	5
---	---

Thought Two

The Golden Rule...Close But Not Quite.....	8
--	---

Thought Three

Right and Wrong...Can It Be That Simple?.....	11
---	----

Thought Four

Them vs Us...Must it Always Be This Way?.....	14
---	----

Thought Five

Death...The Final Curtain Call.....	19
-------------------------------------	----

Thought Six

I'm Okay Man...the Union has my Back.....	22
---	----

Thought Seven

Love and Sex...A Great Combination Plate or Individual Dishes?.....	25
--	----

Thought Eight

Are We Alone at Last?.....	28
----------------------------	----

Thought Nine

The Universal Drug.....	30
-------------------------	----

Thought Ten

We Are All Born Artists and Scientists.....	33
---	----

A Few More Thoughts

Thought One+.....	35
Thought Two+.....	36
Thought Three+.....	36
Thought Four+.....	37
Thought Five+.....	37
Thought Six+.....	38
Thought Seven+.....	39
Thought Eight+.....	39
Thought Nine+.....	40
Thought Ten+.....	40

Final Thought.....	41
--------------------	----

“We make our world significant by the depth of our questions and the courage of our answers”

Carl Sagan
Astrophysicist
1934-1996

Thought One

Every Time I Try to Communicate with Someone, Life Gets in the Way

Being raised as a spoiled-rotten little boy and being incredibly lazy at the same time, initially seemed to make life very easy for me...but that didn't last for long.

Turning 16 only at the start of grade 12/13 let me pull the 'Sorry mom...I just can't legally do that yet' card for a long time and so I managed, successfully, to escape the drudgery of real-life work for a significant period of the time that I spent at home while others around me had already been working for years. At the same time, I quickly learned to tolerate and even embrace the denial of the benefits of work...money...which, in turn, itself greatly limited my opportunity for constructive social interaction.

That's where good old Mom came in. She would frequently throw me a \$1 or a \$2....big money for a kid back then...and I would head off to the Capital or Regent theatres with return bus fare, admission fee, snack money and even some extra left over, completely oblivious of those other kids who actually had to work, very hard, for many hours, in their own efforts to achieve the exact same result.

For a considerable period of time, this self-centric view of the world paid me a grave injustice as I was rarely able to really consider and appreciate any one else's point of view being so focused and intent on my own. But in fact, over time, I have discovered that a large majority of individuals, contrary to their own view of themselves, are afflicted with this exact same shortcoming and that, on a global scale, this imperfection directly and negatively impacts our own two-way communication capability and success.

It is my basic contention that successful two-way communication between individuals is really the cornerstone of all positive human interaction and, in the following pages, it is my intent to demonstrate what 'successful' communication looks like and to possibly expand the reader's own concept of what communication itself actually means.

Experience has taught me that successful two-way communication between individuals is really the ultimate human accomplishment offering 'riches' of mind and spirit beyond belief or imagination.

But, as with most persons, a large part of my adult waking hours were spent employed at work of one kind or another where the vast majority of interpersonal communication consisted primarily of discussing daily production needs, implementation of monthly meeting directives and yearly planning input requirements leaving me with an enormous, unfulfilled desire for much deeper and thought-provoking conversations.

Now most fortunately for me, my life partner was, during much of this period, enthusiastically indulging my sincere attempts to encourage her acceptance of physics, chemistry, astronomy, evolution and The Big Bang as all real entities that could actually be measured and understood. During this time, my investigation and presentation of a variety of 'proofs' underlying these concepts occupied most of my free-time thinking and interpersonal interaction but it also helped to reinforce some of the most basic interpersonal communication concepts that were mulling around in my mind at the time.

Now, while the specific influence and impact of my particular encouragement upon her persona is certainly arguable, I do believe she would agree that her vision of the world and universe has changed significantly since we met, and for the better as well, leading me to also believe that at least some of what I propose must be reasonable. It is this belief that drives me to attempt real communication with others in order to test some of these ideas and attempt to confirm, for myself, my feeling that, ultimately, there is indeed 'An Answer', if only on a purely intellectual level.

And now, many years later, with work and responsibility a distant memory, I finally find myself with both the ability as well as ample opportunity to finally pursue intellectual questions of the highest caliber with all the keenly intelligent, hopefully curious, individuals that abound in my life, only to discover that, ironically, it is their very own lives that pose the greatest challenge to our potential interpersonal communication.

It's not really all that surprising, that an endless stream of personal and family commitments, obligations, and responsibilities, along with the clearly understood and mandatory 'personal down time' required by everyone, between all of these other events, renders the possibility of even the briefest of encounters within which to truly communicate with any specific individual, close to impossible.

But to prepare myself in advance for those very rare occurrences when communication might suddenly appear possible, I have developed a few simple countermeasures to this very busy and enduring environment.

These include my compiling and maintaining a 'conversation starter list' currently composed of 100+ topics of various caliber and depth, depending on the specific individual involved, to help me recall that which I perceive to be the most critical, the most important or even just the most interesting ideas I'd like to discuss with each person should a few minutes ever appear out of nowhere within which to attempt real communication. Unfortunately this list continues to grow everyday as the addition of newly conceived and recorded ideas constantly exceeds any outgoing reduction from actual time spent in real communication.

There is, however, one exception - the list I maintain for my life partner. She, in true partnership style, makes every effort to provide sufficient time for me to carry-on with my many, often unfathomable, ramblings, smiling and nodding in agreement and interjecting relevant opinion

where appropriate before eventually returning to her own life interests and her own interpersonal communication challenges.

I have also started two additional lists: one titled "...So the Question is..." where I hold, what I find to be, intriguing questions to which I haven't yet confirmed a definitive or suitable answer along with a "Philosophy of Life" list where I hold bits and pieces of words, phrases and sentences that help define who I am and how and why it is that I think the way I do. As I don't expect to ever really be able to find sufficient time to discuss many of these ideas and concepts with real people in real time, it is mostly these formulations that will make up the majority content of whatever this document eventually becomes.

To that end I present, in the following pages and fully open for criticism, those ideas that I hold to be universally true and, at the same time, that I hope might stimulate the reader's own thinking about various topics of conversation.

This leads directly into my Rule of Life which attempts to correct an existing life rule along with, what I see are, several 1000's of years of misdirection which is no longer applicable or tolerable to the current and future human environments.

“The truth lies beyond the end of our noses, but, nobody knows what I mean”

Jim Bates
'Nobody Knows What I Mean'

Thought Two

The Golden Rule...Close But Not Quite

Many of us, particularly those with some kind of religious influence in our backgrounds, have been exposed to The Golden Rule or some such simile which states, in essence, to behave toward others in a way that you, yourself, would like to be treated. Superficially and as a basic concept this appears to be at least a reasonable approach to life's interpersonal behaviour and communications but I believe it has actually missed the mark entirely by making the initiator or Active Communicator (AC) in the exchange the most responsible and reliable judge of interpersonal communication success.

In other words, according to this Rule, YOU should behave towards others in a way that YOU want them to treat YOU which, in most cases, is probably going to turn out great for you. But this approach really doesn't give proper consideration to the other person's needs, desires or opinions...the individual I refer to as the Passive Communicator (PC)...which, if you think about it, are all absolutely critical for interpersonal interaction to achieve it's maximum, positive potential.

As an off-the-cuff example, consider a lecherous person...male or female. Strictly interpreted the Golden Rule tells them to treat others in such a way as to have others treat them in the way they would like - which, in almost all cases, would work very well in their own favour, but which would likely make others terribly uncomfortable. Of course, that kind of outcome is truly intolerable and should never be justifiable under any acceptable life Rule.

I prefer, instead, a new Rule which makes the passive party of the communication the only true determinator of what is acceptable to them and which alters the 'Golden Rule' to state instead:

“Treat others as THEY wish YOU to treat THEM.”

Although this may seem to be similar, it is actually diametrically opposed to the old rule. Interacting with others only in a manner consistent with how they wish to be treated creates a much greater chance of successful communication than attempting to convince them to treat you in a manner that you might prefer.

Careful consideration of various scenarios should reveal to the reader that there are indeed some individuals on this earth who prefer to be treated in a manner that might not be your own particular 'cup of tea' but which does, in fact, form an integral part of their own personal happiness.

This change of focus to the PC, however, does not demand nor require that the AC engage in continued communication if they themselves feel uncomfortable doing so but it does demand that the AC continue a particular form of communication only when they have received positive feedback that doing so is considered acceptable by the PC.

As a consequence of changing the focus of attention, this new approach gives us clearer opportunity to assign Right and Wrong labels to the communication actions in any given scenario based solely on the acceptance or rejection of the action by the PC.

For example, again considering the lecherous person, this new interpretation allows for the AC to continue their preferred form of communication with others providing that those others also like to communicate in exactly the same way. This then would make it Right to continue communication for both the AC and PC in that particular scenario. But, at the same time, it is critical to recognize that the interpretation also supports the rejection of that exact same communication action by those who do not wish to communicate in that manner thus making the exact same action Wrong in other scenarios.

It is only by taking into consideration the viewpoint of the PC that a single action by any active party can truly be viewed as being either Right or Wrong. It can never be left up to the AC to determine strictly on their own whether or not to continue or enhance the initial communication action.

For all scenarios, I see the PC as the sole decision maker for making the call on one of two possible scenarios...either 'I do like that' meaning they may like both or either the communication 'message' or the communication action accompanying it and, as a result, may respond positively ... or else 'I don't like that' meaning they don't like both or either the communication message or the communication action accompanying it and thus will respond negatively.

This initial response from the PC, in a sense, symbolically raises either a 'Right'...I like that...or a 'Wrong'...I don't like that...flag which then puts the onus back on the AC to modify their actions based on that response. An AC ignoring the Wrong flag and continuing the same degree, mode, or message in their communications with the PC, when they have already been clearly rejected is, most unfortunately, a widespread practice. In reality those unwanted, continuing actions simply ignore the concept of Right and Wrong completely and become, at a minimum, a real nuisance and potentially an actual criminal act.

This particular train of thought first arose in me from a keen interest I had in the various dialogues surrounding the now quite widespread "Me Too" movement including very public messages from both the accused...the AC...but also those from the accusers...the PC.

My primary focus here was to consider a clear and simple answer to the many "What are the actual rules?" questions I was hearing, posed mostly by those accused of inappropriate communication. Quite disturbingly, though, even some accusers seem to fall into a trap by actually considering that there must at least be a sliding scale of Wrongness that can be attached to a specific act itself. This approach, though, will never work since it is never the communication act itself but strictly it's interpretation and acceptance by the PC that makes it Right or Wrong in any given circumstances.

For example, is a friendly hug Right or Wrong?

We are all aware of many persons who, like myself and possibly the reader, believe a hug is a very loving expression of respect and sincerity while, at the same time, I am also keenly aware of individuals who consider a hug to be nothing more than an unwanted intrusion into their own personal space. As a PC in either of these cases, one should have the right to determine for themselves whether to respond positively or negatively to an attempted hug by an AC who should have no option but to honour the wishes of the PC.

Unfortunately I have seen, on far too many occasions, An AC belittle the resistance of those not comfortable with hugging by suggesting that they are simply being silly, or even worse, uncaring individuals...definitely an old Golden Rule approach...'I want to be hugged therefore I will hug you regardless of what you think'.

In fact, the true Rule surrounding any kind of communicative behaviour can be quite clear and simple...if the PC likes the communication method and/or message it is Right and if they don't like it, then it is Wrong. There is no magnitude nor sliding scale that need be applied to this Rule. Some PC may be perfectly okay and accepting of strong verbal or physical contact while others might be equally uncomfortable with a single word or even a glance. By recognizing that it is the response and not the action itself that is the sole determinator of Right or Wrong, we can allow positive communication to continue while stopping negative communication immediately before it can progress any further.

Introspectively throughout our lives, I believe we can all recognize that there are many actions we have all performed that, in all probability, would have been appreciated and accepted by each and every one we knew but there are also certainly actions we have all performed that were likely appreciated only by a much smaller minority. The communication process itself can never actually be found to be Right or Wrong. But the communication's validity must be viewed strictly through the reality of the PC if we are ever to determine its true correctness.

This new Rule, reduced to its simplest form, really becomes:

"Give your audience only what THEY want" Then you'll probably never be Wrong.

I believe we should all accept that seeking the maximum possible, positive, two-way communication is universally Right for everyone while, at the same time, we must recognize that unless the AC gives immediate and proper consideration to the receptiveness of the PC, true, positive, two-way communication may never actually occur.

“...but to live outside the law you must be honest”

Bob Dylan
'Absolutely Sweet Marie'

Thought Three

Right and Wrong...Can it Be That Simple?

Following directly from the new Rule, I now perceive the core of all human thinking and behaviour to be rooted in the very basic question of what is actually Right and what is actually Wrong, itself a seemingly complex question that has evolved into a contradictory, often inflammatory issue depending mainly on one's social, economic or cultural upbringing and outlook. But I do believe it is possible to discern an actual Right and an actual Wrong, within the confines of any given scenario, with a rather simple examination of our own reality.

The entire question of Right vs Wrong, in reference to either human actions or human thinking, really comes down to considering the impact, on a global scale, of any single, individual action when applied over the entire global population.

In other words, if everyone were to do IT and that would improve the lot of everyone, IT must be Right to do or if nobody did IT and that also improved the lot of everyone then not doing IT must also be Right. The corollary states that if everybody did IT and we all became worse off then IT must be Wrong or if nobody did IT and we also became worse off then not doing IT must also be Wrong.

The following summarizes the concept in chart form.

Question: Is IT Right or Wrong	If Everybody Does IT	If Nobody Does IT
LIFE WILL BE BETTER FOR ALL	It's Right to Do IT	It's Right to Not Do IT
LIFE WILL BE WORSE FOR ALL	It's Wrong to Do IT	It's Wrong to Not Do IT

The beauty of this approach, for me, is that, intentionally, there is no magnitude assigned to the Right or Wrong action implying that both murder and littering are, in principal, equivalent in terms of being Wrong actions since if everyone did either we would all be worse off and if no one did either then we would all be better off.

The implied equivalency between murder and littering is often a sticking point with people, many of whom seem to prefer a broader sliding scale of Right or Wrong, possibly in an effort to minimize the impact their own minor indiscretions might have on the world or to justify their actions by proclaiming 'If everybody else does It why shouldn't I' but, in reality, considered on a global scale, even minor indiscretions if performed by billions of individuals on an ongoing basis could impart tremendous disruption or even harm to the ultimate well-being of all of us and so, for me, all Wrong actions are to be avoided equally in the pursuit of global harmony.

Of course, life still provides plenty of opportunities to do Wrong stuff and trying to do the Right thing all the time can quickly introduce unanticipated and unwanted friction into an otherwise promising and developing two-way communication. But, for myself, at the end of the day, when I consider each of my actions in the shadow of this new global Right and Wrong, I am confident that the balance tips in favour of Right. And, although many individuals might possibly consider me to be '...painfully honest', I believe now that the more Right things that I do and the fewer Wrong things that I do contributes greatly to improving my own personal chance for stress-free living.

This basic concept of Right and Wrong now becomes a foundation upon which all other human actions can be aligned, although adhering to the principal itself is absolutely no guarantee of equality, fairness, Eternal Life, earthly reward or even ultimate happiness. It is only for each individual to be able to say 'I have done the Right thing' regardless of whether others know about it or even care about it, a definite challenge in our generally self-centric daily lives.

I have found it interesting, though, to apply this approach while assessing the validity of various presentations by all manner of religions, including fringe and fanatical groups, all government and commercial entities and even all love or hate groups.

For example, the basic message as I see it, presented in various forms and strengths, by each one of the above mentioned organizations can be summarized as follows:

"Look. We believe that Our Side have something....whether a product, an idea, a philosophy or lifestyle...(let's call it their message)...that We think You would definitely like if only You truly understood Our position."

Now this statement appears, on the surface, to be a very reasonable, considered approach for all of the above, even for those groups that we might intuitively feel are ultimately inappropriate. But, more importantly, we can tell immediately that this communication is going to run into trouble eventually because this is one of those "...Do unto others as YOU want...situations".

The real issues arise because of the focus on the active side of the communication which often, even after a polite 'No Thank You' response from the PC (and primarily as a consequence of us all being human), will almost always lead to the following paraphrased retort from any of these groups:

"Hey, excuse Us but You must not be listening closely enough to Us because it is our continued understanding that You still don't understand and accept our message. Therefore it now becomes necessary for Us to enhance our efforts to make You understand because We are clearly not expressing ourselves correctly or else You would have accepted our message by now."

It's relatively easy to see that this approach will quickly exceed all reasonable expectations on the part of the PC who may even have had enough curiosity and interest, at least initially, to listen to a quick representation of the Message being offered before rejecting it wholly or in some part. But in order for the AC to avoid being Wrong, once any type of rejection has been

issued, further unsolicited attempts to convert the PC to any of, say, a consumer, a voter, a member or some other entity, must cease.

I suppose this may all seem like pretty obvious stuff but, the new Rule, along with the global Right & Wrong thinking process, have become my yardsticks for the analysis of many complex issues and have given me a new found ability to identify possible solutions to global issues that had previously escaped me.

However, due to our continual bombardment by almost daily examples, I fear we may all be turning numb to the breadth and depth of Active-only based miscommunication that permeates every strata and corner of the globe today, with very few signs of abatement but with, unfortunately, many signs of increasing assimilation.

The only counter I, as an individual, can offer is to personally set my own global standard of Right and Wrong and ensure that I make every effort to lead by example. In addition, these basic principles, give me the tools to examine various real-life situations with an eye to determining which, in fact, are the Right responses which would ultimately support the continued improvement in global communication and harmony.

“...Don’t hate me now, but please believe, we both just teach the world a different way”

Jim Bates
'So Long'

Thought Four

Them vs Us...Must it Always Be This Way?

I have come to realize that, in general, half the population has really got it all wrong in their methods of pursuit for attentions from the other half. Whether it is the domineering Alpha approach to Active Communication of...Me Tarzan, You Jane... or the antithesis Omega approach of...R-E-S-P-E-C-T...both positions are really following the old Golden Rule directive of looking at the world only through the AC's own eyes in order to get individuals to behave in a manner in which one wants them to. And in doing so, we instantly create obstacles or lost opportunities in our efforts to achieve positive, two-way communications.

In similar fashion to the previous examples, both of these approaches eventually develop difficulties. Either increasing unwanted attentions directed towards disinterested parties or decreasing attention towards very interested parties can both lead to a potentially negative response from the Passive Communication side, a position that does not support continuing, successful two-way communication.

It's perhaps easiest to see and understand how the Alpha approach could quickly become troublesome for the disinterested PC but even the Omega approach has serious risks, namely, the AC failing to identify the positive interest of the PC to continue the communication process. I have yet to meet any individual who, in retrospect, doesn't now recognize the roots of positive, two-way communication with others that were missed entirely due to a misconception of how much 'distance' it was appropriate to maintain. And when the AC fails to communicate back the anticipated interest following a positive response, the PC often just gives up, at times interpreting the lack of further active communication as complete disinterest on the part of the AC. And although this particular kind of failure may be considered potentially less harmful overall than the more aggressive Alpha approach could become, it must still be recognized as a failure since the full potential of positive two-way communication, which I believe is universally Right, is not achieved.

But then what actually are the components of correct communication? And do they, or might they, change over time? Or, in fact, is it even possible to ever know this? One approach, I consider intriguing, is to look into our past...the very long ago past.

An interesting fact I have learned is that there is virtually no discernible genetic difference between modern humans and the first of those of our species, Homo Sapiens, that walked the earth some 200,000 years ago. Despite being roughly 185,000 years before the advent of

Earth's first civilizations, It is now understood that an ancient Homo Sapiens baby from that period, if somehow transported to the present and raised as one of our own, would end up being no different than your next-door neighbour and easily as intelligent as you or I.

But by imagining our ancestor's communication processes, during this very early period, I also see an excellent opportunity to examine human communication motives after stripping away many of our superimposed modern layers: Social, Cultural, Religious, Technological, Conceptual etc.

Now, granted, the gradual imposition of these same layers over historical time has clearly had an impact on our modern daily communication processes, allowing us the ability to add improved understanding and reason to our everyday, routine communication efforts. There remains, however, strong, often misunderstood and misinterpreted forces at work here as well.

Imagine, for a minute, that you live among the very earliest of our species, 200,000 years ago.

There are probably less than 1,000 of your kind scattered around, most unaware of the existence of their many brethren.

By now, you have mastered control over fire and have amassed an extensive collection of tools that allow you to successfully pursue both game and fish. You have not yet domesticated any fauna, nor do you cultivate any seeds but you can sew and stitch quite well given the rudimentary thread and needles available and utilize animal skins effectively as clothing. You are organized enough to collect and process local flora for consumption and to build semi-permanent shelters to stave off the local elements. You bury your dead (for yet unknown reasons) but don't yet draw on walls or make pottery or jewellery. You are nomadic by nature but prefer to stay in one place as long as possible...usually meaning until the available local resources are insufficient to support the existing number of inhabitants. Within this environment, life is reduced to the challenge of basic survival. What might your typical day look like?

Collecting and storing sufficient material to initiate and maintain fire would be high on your to-do list since this skill provides not only warmth and cooking potential but also increases protection from the many carnivorous predators whose territories are all around you. In addition, ensuring both an adequate food supply, including flora and fauna, and an adequate water supply would also form an essential set of tasks. Once your continued survival was addressed, more social oriented tasks would then need attention.

There would be humans of all different ages in your immediate 'family' to care for and to teach required skills although many would die early and the oldest of the group would likely be in his/her early thirties. Twenty-something's would be the leaders and 13 year olds would be new mothers and fathers. You definitely have the capability of both rudimentary speech and recognizable, repeatable gestures but you may or may not yet have a fully developed language.

As for routine work, in addition to the obvious tasks surrounding food collection and preparation, there would always be tools, utensils and weapons requiring repair or replacement, shelters needing fixing or improvement, physical injuries and wounds to be addressed and many changing preparations to complete for the unexpected, based on past experience. And although darkness each day would bring an end to most routine work, it would also bring heightened concern for deadly attacks from roving marauders both animal and humanoid.

And one last contributing factor...you, along with everyone else, plus every other living thing around you would be perpetually hungry. The amount of physical energy required to gather

and prepare various foodstuffs was only slightly less than the energy given up by their consumption and there would be many times when the proverbial cupboard was bare resulting in meal 'in-between' times of days or longer.

Protection, water and food would always be No.1, No.2, and No.3 on the "...what do I need today" list. Within this context let's try and examine Active and Passive Communication.

However, before we can even consider that, we must first understand the true initial roots of two-way communication which will take us much further into the past. Ever since the beginning of living cell reproduction via sex, some 2 Billion Years Ago, there have always been two very different approaches to communication...one male...one female. Today, we just happen to refer to the gender that can give 'birth' as female thus defaulting the other to being called male.

Scientifically speaking, there is still a considerable differing of opinion as to how the first disassembly of cellular genetic material, the sharing and recombination of those disparate strings and their subsequent inclusion in new offspring actually occurred resulting in what we now refer to as maleness and femaleness. But there is absolutely no dispute that distinct 'male' cells and 'female' cells eventually did evolve and continued a remarkable process that has, ultimately, resulted in the vast, global menagerie we have today.

Those male cells that were most successful in locating females and delivering DNA and those female cells that, likewise, were most successful in locating males and accepting DNA, were also most likely to pass on whichever DNA segments they had within them that led them to be successful searchers. I would speculate, though, that being female required a much more efficient production, conservation and utilization of limited energy since simply providing DNA material is clearly much less energy intensive than accepting DNA and then incorporating it into the manufacture and dispersion of an offspring.

I believe, therefore, that male cells, even after contributing DNA segments, would retain sufficient energy with which to continue seeking out additional DNA repository partners while, at the same time, once the DNA acceptance took place, female cells would have no reason for seeking additional DNA exchange, expending their energy, instead, on assembling and delivering offspring. Once that process was complete, however, female cells would be ready, once again to locate male cells and again receive DNA. At the opposite end of the scale, those male and female cells that had less, little or no 'interest' in exchanging DNA would shortly be completely overrun and would eventually disappear altogether from the existing biosphere.

This all does sound very clinical and impersonal but that is exactly as it must have been. At the cellular level there is no emotion or reason. These actions occur simply because of the instructions coded within the DNA strands themselves but, ironically, it is those same instructions that identify maleness and femaleness in offspring and it is quite simply the mathematics of probability which guarantee, that over extended periods of time, percentages of male and female offspring would approach a 50/50 result.

In the short run, though, environmental influences might easily favour a higher percentage either way while the physics of genetic randomness assures us that, rather than a simple 50/50 male/female dichotomy, there would always be a very wide 'gender' scale running from strict and absolute maleness through to strict and absolute femaleness, with all possible variant combinations in between.

The reader must understand that the basic genetic coding that created, reinforced and replicated those same gender determinators have existed since the very earliest intercellular communications began and have ever since been passed along through millions of generations all the way up to those of our own present day species.

I am pleased to see today though that, through the actions of many individuals and, as a consequence, those of select governments, we are finally seeing at least some initial recognition of the enormous width of the scale of human sexuality. Additionally, although the movement is small when considered on a global scale, it is still headed relentlessly towards the 'I will treat You the way You wish to be treated' end of the scale and away from the 'You need to think and act more like I do' end. This growing validation of the new Rule approach gives me hope.

(As an aside, I also find it interesting to consider that, as a result of the inherited genetic ladder and based on present day statistics, there was always some portion of even the earliest Homo Sapiens population that did not appear physically as the same gender that they felt internally. Of course there is no clear evidence of how the earliest LGBTQ individuals might have fared within their own communities but I would, again, surmise that the always critical completion of routine tasks, needed to ensure the group's survival, would somehow take precedent over most other concerns regarding differing physical appearances or contradictory social behaviour.)

For those earliest Homo Sapiens males, sex must have been just as pleasant 200,000 years ago as it is today so it is reasonable conjecture that early males sought out intercourse as often as their circumstances, and strength, would permit and that they were likely no less indiscriminate with respect to whom they would have intercourse with than today's average male. Remember 15-25 year olds ruled the 'world'. And, particularly in a world where life itself was likely lived fast and short, I once again surmise that sex followed a similar recipe, being conducted in a manner that could also best be described as fast and short.

The female's motherly instinct would also be virtually identical to that of most modern females and, with the extremely high death rate at that time, births would become an important goal and achievement while evolution would have assured that the most receptive females and most aggressive males successfully passed on their genes. And although there is no denying that there would definitely be emotional 'connections' among many early Homo Sapiens couples, we can extrapolate, by looking around today, that deep, emotional connections were not an absolutely necessity for males to seek communication with females. The physical drive alone would have been enough.

With no birth control of any kind, sex inevitably led to reproduction which, in turn, seriously impacted the female population to a much greater degree than the male population. As the males headed away from the camp for most of their required activities, primarily hunting and exploration, both of which could last for days, the females, out of necessity, remained behind to tend to their own young, and by association, the old and the infirm and, as a result, to also perform those tasks that were more camp-centric. Of course based on our new understanding of the width of the gender scale, there would also be some 'females' that hunted and some 'males' that remained behind in camp but, in general, task assignment would be largely gender-based.

But what does this all have to do with the Rule, Right or Wrong and communication?

Only that the same basic, human instincts that drove our ancestors many thousands of years ago are still living within our own selves and though we have all developed some degree of intellect that, as a default, attempts to draw upon our own personal ethical and moral code when attempting communication, there are strong, evolutionary threads unknowingly bringing pressure to bear on our most reasoned responses.

It is an important step to successful communication to be able to identify influences and contributors to our basic behaviours particularly when those influences are, for the most part, undetectable. And while it is always possible to add layers of reason and morality on top of our basic, instinctive behaviour, it is never possible to eliminate entirely the influence of basic human instinct on that same behaviour.

But the idea here is not to excuse modern, inappropriate communication as 'just a result of instinct' but rather to stimulate the reader's own thinking and permit the reader a greater understanding of all the factors that may become part of one's own successful two-way communication efforts.

When both Active and Passive Communicators have a clearer understanding of the motivations and influences of the other, the opportunity for successful communication increases dramatically which, in turn, is better for us all.

“The people that run this world don’t seem to understand...that a man wouldn’t mind the day, when his time on the Earth has passed and passed away”

Murray McLaughlin
‘Revelations’

Thought Five

Death...The Final Curtain Call

It should not be surprising that the topic of life and death itself is a very difficult communication to begin. It is also a very difficult one with which to achieve maximum, positive two-way communication since each human ‘decade’ has a very different viewpoint and experience with just what death and/or dying actually means. And even within given decades, viewpoints can vary from ultra-religious to ultra-scientific, making consensus often difficult if not impossible.

However applying the new Rule can simplify the issues involved and also provide an answer to the question ‘What is the Right behaviour to follow’?

First, we need to view all communication from the PC viewpoint or else, as we’ve seen, maximum positive two-way communication is just not possible. But the addition and influence of human emotion also can not be ignored...although, out of practicality and necessity, it must certainly not only be recognized but also controlled.

On the most personal level, many AC fail to consider the PC’s position regarding life and death because they themselves fear a loss, directly and negatively, affecting their own emotional state or otherwise. They, instead, take the position...“I’m going to do what I feel will be the least painful or the most beneficial emotionally for myself regardless of what you might think”... a stance that can easily be seen to be Wrong since if Everybody did IT the planet would be worse off and if Nobody did IT the planet would be better off.

We are also most fortunate indeed to be at a point in global human development where once again, many individuals, and, again as a result, some governments, are actually starting positive, two-way communications with their citizens and medical professionals with respect to life and are now recognizing the value of quality over quantity as well as, finally, giving proper consideration and respect to the rights and wishes of the PC. In our two-way communications, on this subject, it would appear that, globally, we are slowly moving away from an “I will do what’s best for Me” approach to an “I will do what’s best for You” approach, one that distinctly improves the global communication outlook and, once more, adds additional validation of the new Rule.

As part of this discussion I would, of course, be remiss if I did not include an examination of the medical profession, generally social masters of life and death, to gain a better understanding of their current responsibilities and obligations under the various oaths they may be required to take and how these oaths might be either hindering or contributing to an advancement in positive two-way communication.

It is noteworthy that, in 2017, there were still at least six completely different oaths administered by the various medical institutions found within the G7 countries alone. The primary reason for this variety of oaths and their differences is mainly their overall focus. Those that hold to the idea that the medical professional's obligation goes well beyond that of the patient's own wishes usually contain strict clauses forbidding certain life-terminating medical procedures such as abortion and euthanasia while those taking a more patient-centric viewpoint have either modified their oath's wording somewhat or eliminated the relevant clauses in their entirety.

An important point here is that, perhaps unknown to many people, almost all of these oaths undergo regular revision and updating based on the current local, territorial or global environments. At the same time, however, few patients ever have any clue as to which particular oath their own physicians have sworn.

But, in order to ensure the greatest opportunity for successful communication and as AC, why should it not be mandatory for physicians to advise first time patients of their own particular chosen oath? This revelation would then allow the patient, the PC in this case to, at the very least, be made aware of any particular impediments or potential conflicts in future communications that may be faced, decide if the AC truly represents the PC position and then accept or reject all or part of the AC message.

While a very determined individual could probably locate this particular information for their own physician themselves, I believe the AC really holds the responsibility for making their position known upfront, giving the PC the option to accept or reject it. Of course, to me, the best possible case would be if all the physicians of the world were able to embrace the new Rule and accept the stated wishes of their patients even over their own personal beliefs.

The World Medical Association (WMA) is presently the only medical entity that can rightly claim medical representatives from across the entire globe. Established initially on September 18, 1947, it has continually grown in composition and stature until it presently consists of 110 Nation Associations representing Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North and South America and the Pacific regions, comprised of over 10 million individual physicians. It's mission statement is as follows:

"The purpose of the WMA is to serve humanity by endeavouring to achieve the highest international standards in Medical Education, Medical Science, Medical Art and Medical Ethics, and Health Care for all people in the world."

While this is a very ambitious undertaking, it is also one that holds great promise for world-wide improvement in positive two-way communication, particularly with regard to life-related matters.

As recently as 2017, The WMA amended their originating document, called the Declaration of Geneva, but now known more familiarly as the Physician's Pledge, adding clauses requiring physicians to share their medical knowledge and expertise with colleagues and to maintain their own physical and mental health in order to better serve their patients. However, it may be surprising for the reader to learn that the well-worn phrase 'Do No Harm' does not appear nor, in fact, has it ever appeared in any medical oath anywhere; not even in the original Hippocratic

Oath we've become familiar with which, by the way, was not written by Hippocrates at all but some 100 years before his birth. "Do No Harm" appears to be just a layman's over simplification of the very complex issues involved and a concept that is, itself, fast disappearing from almost all modern medical oaths.

In fact the most patient-relevant clauses of the newest, amended, global Physician's Pledge say simply "The health and well-being of my patient will be my first consideration." and "I will respect the autonomy and dignity of my patient." The remaining eleven clauses of the pledge have little direct connection to the patient and deal mainly with the confidentiality of medical information, the universality of providing medical care regardless of gender, race, creed etc., the sharing and upkeep of medical knowledge among colleagues and the actual swearing of the oath itself.

This is most significant because, as we move towards the future, medical oaths are becoming distinctly less autocratic and Doctor-centric and are slowly adopting the 'Let's do what is best for You' approach leading to the recognition that life-terminating procedures at either end of the living spectrum may be valid when viewed in the context of the patient's own wishes.

I see this as yet another form of validation for the new Rule and envision a future where all medical decisions will be predicated on the wishes of the patient, the PC, rather than the Doctor, the AC. I also see a Doctor's entire obligation, under this approach, eventually becoming quite simply "End all patient suffering" whether that be from a simple hangnail or a progressive and terminal illness.

The clearest message that can be made here is for each individual to make absolutely certain that your own 'life and death related wishes' are fully understood among your peers well before your own two-way communication ability begins to fail or is rendered completely impossible by unforeseen circumstances.

“This conviction brought me, in the summer of 1978, to the Free Trade Unions - formed by a group of courageous and dedicated people who came out in the defence of the workers' rights and dignity.”

Lech Wałęsa
Polish Labour Organizer

Thought Six

I'm Okay Man...the Union has My Back

I don't believe there are many who could deny the enormous impact and influence that the formation of Labour Unions has had, and continues to have, on our planet. Without the introduction of labour unions, around 1810 in England, it's quite possible that most modern Corporations would be even richer today than they already are and that most of us would still be working excessively long hours for minuscule wages and few, if any, benefits.

But there are still many enclaves across the globe where any suggestion at all of this type of organization still brings, as a minimum, censure and ostracism all the way up to a good chance of imprisonment and even execution. I'd like to take a closer look at Unions, in general, in light of the new Rule and the Right and Wrong concepts introduced earlier.

It is not my intention at all to be dismissive towards the Union but rather to present those issues that I see as being detrimental to the real, potentially positive contribution of all Unions.

Given the theoretical best contribution possible by any non-specific Union, their mandates are, in broad terms, focused on seeking and ensuring labourers (and even a few levels of management in some cases) receive a fair deal from their employers.

This means, usually, the provision of a safe, harassment-free, working environment, fair remuneration for all work performed including some number of days (whether paid or not) when the employee is excused from being present e.g. vacation...sick... holidays etc., a fair and equal-for-all process for both the selection and hiring of new employees and the reprimand or termination of existing employees along with the joint oversight of an effective process for both employees and employers to discuss and resolve a wide variety of grievances that may be initiated by either side. In some situations, they may even be involved in defining and describing the actual work to be performed by unionized employees.

In return for this effort, the Union will usually collect fees from members to be used to implement and administer the stated provisions of their mandate. As well, they may point the employee towards third-party organizations administering various supplemental benefits for the employed e.g. health coverage, insurances, and retirement plans. Remember, we are considering the 'ideal' situation here.

The Union's sole responsibility, under these, circumstances, is not to the organization at all but strictly to the employees. But please note the plural.

It seems rather clear that the world would be a much better place for all if Everybody were to promote and comply with these basic employment concepts, making them universally Right by definition. As a further check, the world would, just as obviously, be a much worse place if Nobody complied, making it Wrong to not comply.

Where I see the difficulty arising is when the Union loses its focus to be for the benefit of ALL members and, instead, concentrates solely on the benefit to a single member only.

Now, on the surface, it would seem to be an intrinsic part of the Union's job to stand up, on occasion, for individual employees...and it definitely is. But I feel the point is missed entirely that ALL members are simultaneously paying dues and, therefore, always deserve full consideration. The well-being of all members must always be taken into account when examining and responding to any issue, even those issues that initially appear to affect a single member only.

To me, this concept is applicable to all modern labour organizations but, perhaps most notably, the teaching, the medical and the policing communities. Let's face it, if all the members of these three particular organizations were fair, honest, caring and respectful towards their students, patients and citizens, the world would immediately be a far better place and the work of their respective Unions could certainly focus on the welfare of all of its members and the public at large most of the time.

Now there are still many cases where the Union should and must provide individual attention and support to a specific member when circumstances dictate that it is both needed and fully justified. Even a cursory glance at today's headlines cannot fail to reveal that some Corporations, left to their own decisions, frequently ignore the most basic consideration of employee or even public welfare. Taking action against these improprieties, does directly support all Union members, as well as the public at large, because any successful resolution will inevitably improve the lot of everyone.

But in far too many instances, the Union still insists on representing and protecting the very worst of it's membership...members who's actions are in clear violation of, and in direct conflict with, the organization's own code as well as the behaviour of the vast majority of all other members. And, by aggressively defending these individuals and accepting, through their public support, these unacceptable behaviours, they not only do a grave injustice to the public at large but also to every one of their own members.

While few would deny the significant, negative impact that an individual teacher could bring to bear on either an individual student or even an entire class if they fail to consider the wishes and rights of the individual, the life or death decisions made by members of the medical and police profession may be considered as the ultimate negative impact on a specific individual particularly when those decisions are made without appropriate consideration, just cause or obvious reason.

Of course, we must also never lose an appreciation for the tremendous difficulty faced by members of either of these organizations in the many different situations they regularly encounter and, unfortunately, it is also an absolute necessity for us to expect that mistakes, based on the impossibility of perfection in every human decision, will always occur and that some lives will be lost prematurely. This risk is one that all societies will have to accept if we are

to continue considering these organizations and their efforts as essential for the ultimate overall benefit of all.

My caution is aimed squarely at the Union's blind support, given to the worst of the worst, without any regard for the message that this support sends to the rest of the membership and to the society as a whole.

It is already clear that, in many societies, confidence in both the police and medical professions has begun to erode at a time when the appropriate Union response to members' wrongdoings would have easily elevated respect, confidence and support not only for the Union's own actions, but for all of its members as well.

Let's take, as an example, the WhistleBlower.

The reporting of malfeasance or other wrongdoing by other members of the Union or even non-member employees of the organization is, based on our new criteria, clearly Right since if Everyone were to do it the world would be a much better place and if Nobody did it we would all be worse off. But the Union often finds itself in the position of supporting and defending those against whom these accusations are levied invoking their assumed responsibility to defend any member regardless of their actual culpability.

The real question here, directed to the Union and all of its members, is a simple one:

"Are you here to serve and protect society and your membership or to serve and protect only the individual?"

These two positions are in direct opposition to each other and cannot both reasonably be held by a single organization. But, if the Union is truly here to protect society as a whole and their entire membership, there needs to be a clear and substantial increase in the number of prosecutions of actual wrongdoers, along with clear Union support for these prosecutions to make this message ring true in the hearts and minds of us all. Otherwise most Union activity will continue to be interpreted by a majority of people as supportive primarily of its worst members and a clear hindrance to its best members.

Still there should be no expectation that unionized members must do without any of the support or benefits provided by the Union that were mentioned previously even including Union recommendations of suitable legal council.

However reason dictates that the Union should also be actively taking what ever steps are necessary to remove, from its membership, those individuals that bring dishonour to the expectations of the public and cast a shadow on the integrity of all other members. If everyone were to do this, the world would certainly improve for us all.

“Sex is funny and love is serious”

Stephen Jenkins
Lead Singer - Third Eye Blind

Thought Seven

Love and Sex...A Great Combination Plate or Individual Dishes?

I've never met a single person who hasn't loved someone with whom they didn't have sex and certainly many of those same individuals, if not all, would admit, at least confidentially, to having sex with someone they didn't truly love so I am somewhat at a loss to understand our obsession with equating love and sex and, in general, insisting that only some combination of both is the ultimate achievement of human caring expression.

I would also venture to say that no two topics have ever occupied the annals of human literature, art, music, entertainment and even modern day internet surfing to the extent that these two have. The implication here, to me, is that they are each, independently, a single most powerful influence on our daily lives including, of course, communication while at the same time reflecting a kind of unspoken 'verboten-ness' that actually prevents truly serious discussion taking place about either topic between most of us. And although we often use these terms as synonyms and interchangeably, rational consideration must reveal that the term love, as employed by most of us, really refers to the emotional side of the communication effort while the term sex specifically refers to the physical side.

While it might be uncomfortable for some to consider, accomplishing and satisfying the physical side of this requirement can be successfully achieved, not just in a very short timeframe but also with little or no residual interest or feeling, with a vast array of partners based on a personal set of criteria that may seem at first to be obvious but which is, in fact, difficult if not impossible to actually quantify while satisfying the emotional side requires a completely different set of criteria, perhaps more easily defined, but which will create an entirely different kind of bond that can last indefinitely, long after the individual involved has left our presence.

Now it would seem obvious that long before emotions first entered the picture, physical sex was sought out and accomplished, on a global scale, among our earliest cellular ancestors starting billions of years ago. One may also incorrectly consider it equally obvious that only when the brain sizes of Animalia species reached a threshold point was true emotion, and therefore true love and commitment, even a possibility. But complicating this rather simplistic approach is the concept of species monogamy, often used to measure human love and also often used as a signpost to proclaim our superiority over the lesser species.

In fact monogamy has little, if anything, to do with the development of emotional interest, attachment or human-like commitment among the world's species, revealing itself, instead, to be simply another evolutionary tool to advance the successful reproduction of species.

Perhaps surprising to the reader, over 90% of avian species, known to have descended from reptilian dinosaurs over 200 million years ago, are actually monogynous while only about 3% of mammalian species, rising from the ashes of the great asteroid impact that killed off most dinosaurs some 65 million years ago are actually monogynous. Brain size doesn't really seem to enter into the discussion at all.

And while the modern human race likes to consider itself as a monogynous one, over 30% of married individuals admit to having sexual relations of some kind with someone other than their partner during the time of their marriage while an even higher percentage of uncoupled individuals admit to doing this during the period prior to their final separation.

(Although entirely coincidental(?), I do find it interesting that a similar percentage of smokers trying to quit, some 37%, are smoking again within two years. It might appear that whether the influence comes from long established genetic instinct or more recent physical addictive pressure roughly one-third of us are unable to resist activity considered inappropriate by the remainder of our peers.)

The question remains, though, is this Right or Wrong and in what direction is the world moving?

It's easiest to answer the 2nd part of this question first as history shows us that 80% of older human societies were polygamous while the modern trend is definitely towards the monogynous end of the scale. Strictly speaking, there has never been any specific scientific reason for this although several theories do abound primarily related to the advantages of two-parent raising of offspring and, for humans, possibly the powerful and significant influence of religious upbringing. I would venture, however, that there are millions of single parents out there that would contend that they are definitely better off without the forced presence of their previous coital partners. And while the economics of two-parent households may be obvious, we all know that economics alone is never a sufficient factor to ensure the well being and future successful social integration of any of our offspring.

I consider this global trend towards monogamy more as a reflection of our changing approach to physical sex than any intrinsic increase in our own social moral standards. On average, individuals today are coupling on a permanent basis much later in life than ever before - much closer to 30 years of age for both men and women and this statistic remains consistently true across all continents despite the widely held belief that third world countries do not share our supposedly progressive attitudes.

If we think back to our earliest human ancestors, 30 was really an advanced age that many never reached so coupling well before this was a serious necessity to ensure the survival and growth of our species. Nowadays, with average global lifespans surpassing 70, the ability and opportunity for sexual experimentation in our early years may be leading us to an eventual '...Been There...Done That' conclusion allowing us to consider permanent coupling on a deeper, more emotional level rather somewhat later in life than the more instinct-driven physical coupling of long ago.

With respect to the new Rule and the baseline determinations of Right and Wrong that we've established, provided the AC respects and responds appropriately to the PC response to any communication attempt, all should normally be okay. I say normally because when we introduce a coupling environment to the concept of positive two-way communication, several things have clearly changed. There are both new commitment and new expectation factors at work on both sides and negative responses by the PC to normal communication efforts by an

AC may be interpreted as a permanent rejection of all affection and a signal that the usual expected communications are no longer desirable or acceptable. But though most of us have experienced the exciting and transitory nature of casual physical communication, it must be believed that it is the profound and enduring connection of emotional commitment that is, in the case of bonded couples, the only communication of true and lasting substance.

And whatever the reasons for it, later-in-life permanent coupling along with an increase in monogynous relationships would seem to bode well for our future as a species and as both of these trends will inevitably improve the outlook for all individuals, couples and offspring I see them as universally Right and in the best interests of our world as a whole.

“God Is Dead”

Friedrich Nietzsche
German Philosopher

‘The Joyful Pursuit of Knowledge and Understanding’, 1882

Thought Eight

Are We Alone at Last?

Considering, once again, the lives of our earliest human ancestors, it is not difficult to imagine that these highly intelligent pattern recognizers were able to observe, recollect and predict the repetitive nature of their own environment to a large degree whether that be the daily rise and setting of the Sun, regular monthly lunar cycles, quarterly seasonal changes or even annual rainy and dry spells. The real difference from modern man, of course, was rooted in the lack of rational, scientific explanations that were not yet available to those ancients.

Even today, when we are confronted by real world phenomena that we lack the knowledge or insight to fully comprehend or understand, we have a tendency to fall back on what we each can individually accept are the closest explanations we can find within the realm of our own belief systems, whether that be the existence of extraterrestrials, some form of psychic insight, possibly real magic, divine intervention etc. Thankfully, a rapidly increasing number of us are able to consider and deliver the interim response ‘I don’t yet know why or how this particular event happened but I’m pretty sure there is a rational and comprehensible explanation for what I just experienced’.

But early humanoids and humans had no scientific library of knowledge to fall back on and instead could rely only on their daily life experiences to try and provide explanations for the myriad environmental changes they faced but could not control. Did the rains perhaps imply that someone or something ‘up there’ was spilling water from a giant container? Did lightning imply that a massive flint was being struck starting fires on the earth below? Did the repeating patterns of stars in the night sky imply that there was something at the ‘controls’ making all those ‘fires’ move in predictable ways?

And just as with modern humans, some of those ancients, particularly those who had lived the longest, would have been a little better at recognizing these patterns, especially those patterns that repeated only after significantly long periods of time, giving them a seemingly magical ability to predict and forecast coming environmental events - an awe inspiring but critical skill in ensuring everyone’s survival in the harsh world that enveloped them.

However, even today with the availability of tremendous computing power we recognize that infallibility is out of the question when it comes to predicting nature and so early humans would have been forced to accept that ‘something’ that appeared to be more powerful than themselves and completely beyond their control was actually running the world. I believe this

interpretation is what first laid the foundation for the eventual development of religious beliefs on our planet. And as humans spread far and wide across the globe, passing down stories and beliefs between generations, with each telling slightly modified from the last, a vast array of speculation, superstition and happenstance, seeded with just enough validity to make sense, led our race to develop a myriad of explanations that allowed each disparate group to come to grips with the amazing and frightening experiences and events that affected them.

Eventually, as these groups grew in size and civilizations flourished, the most reasonable and 'rational' explanations for the unexplainable became the accepted, collective religious beliefs of the respective communities - beliefs still controlled and directed though by an elite segment of the society, but leaving each developing theology as different from those of other groups as were their social customs, tribal rituals and even physical appearance.

As civilizations collected more information and began to understand more about the true mechanics of life and living, polytheism was gradually replaced by monotheism, and the rapid advancement of scientific knowledge, over the last 5 centuries, definitely began to sway larger and larger numbers of our population away from the original concept of divine control although, today, we still find our world supporting some 4,200 different belief systems.

I do feel it is most important to note and recognize that after some 2,000 years, Christianity is still identified as the primary belief of roughly 2.1 billion people while after some 1,400 years, Islam is still practiced by roughly 1.3 billion individuals. What gives me hope, though, is that after only 500 years of dramatic scientific advancement, about 1.1 billion of us now find sufficient comfort within ourselves and our own lives to exist without the need to rely on 'something' out there watching over us.

Looking a little closer at the quote that began this particular Thought, what did Nietzsche actually mean when he proclaimed 'God is Dead'? Rather than the literal death of a sentient being, he proposed that the idea of a God was one that was rapidly disappearing from the minds of modern humans. Nietzsche believed there could be positive possibilities for humans without God and that relinquishing their belief in God opened the way for human creative abilities to fully develop. God, he wrote, would no longer stand in the way, so human beings might now stop turning their eyes toward a supernatural realm and begin to acknowledge the natural value of their own world and the natural abilities of the humans who occupied it.

And as greater numbers of people come to recognize the many degrees of hypocrisy that underlie most religious proclamations along with the recent exposure of a truly unforgivable 'Protect our own kind and the hell with our followers' attitude, it seems clear that the demise of historical religious supremacy has begun.

In the light of our new Right and Wrong interpretation, I am also convinced that as the global population accepts more responsibility for their own actions along with the consequences of those actions, without the magic of divine direction and control, the world as a whole will become a better place for us all.

“Musick has charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks or bend a knotted oak”

William Congreve
1670-1729
‘The Mourning Bride’

Thought Nine

The Universal Drug

As far back as I can remember I’ve always had a great fondness for music of many different styles and genres, but lately I’ve developed a keen interest in both the mechanics of its operation and the varied impact it has had and continues to have on the human global population.

It seems clear to me that music, in its many forms, is a truly unique entity that, unlike any other, is experienced and enjoyed, in one fashion or another, by every single human on the face of the Earth regardless of age, gender, race, social standing, belief system or even mental capacity. In fact, anecdotal evidence even suggests that fetuses and comatose patients both can be influenced positively by the introduction of the rhythmic patterns of external music.

At the same time, each of us may be captivated by sometimes diametrically opposed music styles and, even within a given genre, we may each dislike and discard 99% of what we hear as ‘not for me’ but still count among our favourites as few as one particular piece that somehow ‘just gets me’. I am intrigued by the almost mystical universality of music and as each individual can be affected on a most profound level by at least some of these rhythmic incantations, I see music as the most universal of all drugs, constantly adapting its own acceptance to individual tastes and weaving its way into our psyche, bolstered by the sometimes subtle and sometimes not so subtle feelings of pleasure and contentment it can evoke.

It is so powerful, in fact, that product and service marketers, who seem, to me, to best comprehend its true hidden potential, rely heavily on its subconscious influence to infect us with associative memories encouraging us to remember and select their recommendations even over our own rational preferences. And, in what might be considered to be its broadest and most global application, all nations of the world employ its fervour inducing effects to instill loyalty, pride and nationalism within their own populations through unique anthems taught at the earliest of ages and repeated countless times throughout our lifetimes.

But, oddly enough, considerable personal reflection of my own expanding musical preferences along with many discussions with others regarding their personal choices has failed to identify

even a single, unique factor that can be universally applied in determining what, specifically, makes any particular musical arrangement an actual preferred favourite.

Further complicating the subject is the realization that some listeners are completely comfortable with and acceptable of the various alternative interpretations of specific musical compositions whether performed by the original artist themselves or cover versions done by respectful imitators while others will reject any 'copy' other than the version they first came to know and appreciate as a poor and unacceptable duplicate.

Certainly, for many people, there are identifiable groups, composers, singers and songwriters that manage to create a plethora of musical output that pleases one's auditory palette. But even within these chosen favourites, it's often possible to find compositions that miss the mark entirely and fail to move the undying fan. And attempting to segregate and identify objective technical elements such as key, pitch, rhythmic beat and instrument selection or the arguably more creative and subjective tonal interpretations and lyrical contributions can not pinpoint any one element that consistently ensures a satisfactory experience for a given listener making modern smart-device application efforts, to develop intelligent and accurate musical recommendations based on the listener's previous selections, at best, a random shot-in-the-dark.

It is this undefinable, unpredictable, dopamine-releasing influence on our individual lives that fascinates me the most. However, even the physical mechanics of sound reproduction within ourselves has cased me to ponder what the future might bring.

The reader probably recognizes that sound, as we define it, is simply the compression of various media molecules that form a specific and unique pattern based on the originating cause. In other words, as an origin point vibrates, its physical expansion and contraction, as invisible as those oscillations might be to our limited vision, force the surrounding air to contract and expand in an exact, duplicate pattern creating waves that travel outward in all directions not unlike a stone tossed into a puddle of water.

If there is a suitable receiving device, a microphone or an ear for example, within an appropriate distance, usually referred to as 'within range or within earshot', those waves are redirected towards a suitable receiving mechanism, an eardrum in the case of the human, which, in turn, is forced to compress and expand, again in exact duplicity, to the originating wave pattern. In the penultimate step, these oscillations then trigger the generation of tiny electric currents and chemical reactions which travel through the neural networks of our brains to soon be interpreted in a manner that, as yet, is not clearly understood.

The tricky part here, for me, is the realization that up to this point in the process no actual 'sound' has even been generated. There are certainly measurable compression and expansion waves travelling through the air but just like the age old question "If a tree falls in the forest does it make a sound?" the answer is no...no sound is produced unless and until a suitable receiver is present to accept, interpret and actually create a sonic 'image' of the wave pattern that we then refer to as sound.

This is eerily similar to the realization that no effective communication can ever really occur simply by the AC sending out a message. There must be an available PC present to receive, interpret and respond for true communication to occur.

But once our neural networks have received sufficient stimulation to reconstruct the original outside wave pattern, sounds are indeed 'heard' and for anyone who has experienced the use of earbuds or hearing aids there is no denying that incredible ranges of real world sound

images can be duplicated by the tiniest of wave generators providing they are positioned close to our own internal hearing receivers.

And what could all this mean for the future of human entertainment?

When we examine the music process closely, it can be seen that no actual music is created at the source, nor is it created when it reaches our ears, nor when it hits our eardrum and not even when the first electrical impulses begin their journey through the neural highways of our brains. It is only when our minds have had the opportunity to direct and interpret those particular electro-chemical signals that music suddenly 'appears' within our heads.

And being a former audiophile with too much money and time on my hands, I have tried and tested a remarkably wide range of equipment and tools in pursuit of the perfect reproduction of musical performances only to discover that, just like the pursuit of all perfection, it was doomed from the very beginning, and, that contrary to the excited promises of many different sales personnel, nothing was ever quite good enough. There was always at least a little 'something' missing from artificial reproductions that prevented my being fooled into accepting them as truly real.

However, the world has changed since then and at an incredible pace. Today we possess tremendous knowledge of brain responses and the leading edge of technology is now redefining how our senses can be effectively stimulated to fool our brains into interpreting simulated phenomena as real. I believe it is only a matter of time, and not an excessively long time, that we will have the capability of 'injecting' wave patterns directly into our neural cortex to fool even the most sophisticated aural palettes into experiencing real world performances through entirely artificial means.

I definitely hope I am still around for that!

“...But arts and sciences should be like mines, where the noise of new works and further advances is heard on every side”

Sir Francis Bacon
1561-1626

Thought Ten

We Are All Born Artists and Scientists

It is often said, or at least implied, that we are all born ‘good’ without the burden of preconceived notions, anger or hostility, prejudice, hate and a whole raft of undesirable traits that soon can complicate our lives and interfere with successful interpersonal communication. To me this is undeniable and a testament to the proposition that, although it may yet take millennia to appear, there still remains the distinct possibility that this planet’s human race can ultimately achieve the global harmony sought after by the vast majority of its inhabitants.

Anyone who has had the good fortune to participate in the support and encouragement of an infant’s growth can certainly attest to their powerful curiosity to observe, explore, examine and learn from their environment and surroundings, starting from the very earliest of ages. This innate desire to recognize and understand the world around them, if sufficiently rewarded, can eventually provide them with the most invaluable tools with which to grasp and comprehend the incredibly complex lives they will lead.

Starting with an initial interaction and influenced through both positive and negative experiences, a toddler can quickly learn through self-experimentation what works best to create a desirable outcome and what is to be avoided. This represents the earliest beginnings of a truly scientific approach to life and one that actually takes very little external assistance to achieve - although some parents do seem to initially have a difficult time with the whole hands-off concept providing help whether required or not until such time as language development allows the child to directly reject assistance in favour of doing things all by themselves.

Eventually, though, the complexities of life may surpass the child’s own ability to easily understand the deeper, hidden meaning in many physical phenomena and without specific, external assistance geared directly to improving the individual child’s own level of comfort and understanding, the increasing confusion and errors in comprehension can, and usually will, lead to a growing general disinterest and even, potentially, abhorrence of science altogether. This loss of natural curiosity and wonder concerning how the real world works is potentially a great stumbling block to continued intellectual growth and the eventual mastery of one’s own environment.

Continued observation of infants and toddlers will, on other hand, also expose obvious creative or artistic activity which, in effect, is the antithesis to the scientific approach, encouraging more of an ‘anything goes’ approach where there is no specific right or wrong outcome to really

doing anything. Experimentation clearly still exists but now runs more along the lines of producing often surprising, alternative outcomes that can bring an equal degree of excitement and pleasure quite different from that of the more rigid scientific method. Feedback can also often be considered to be almost exclusively positive (unless it's the nearby walls that are used to creative ends) regardless of the perceived quality of production.

And as creativity, by definition, permits a wider range of outcomes without the risk of ever being truly wrong, its influence can often survive for a much longer period of time in a child's life than the stricter scientific requirement of needing to know exactly what you are doing in order to achieve a correct result. However, creativity too can eventually suffer a dismal fate if sufficient external assistance is not available to impart the necessary skills to enable an individual to advance beyond child's play to the level of successful expression of personal insights and feelings.

And while we each may see ourselves only as either artist or scientist, I believe that there will always be at least some of each of these forms of expression in each of us.

While exploring this idea of Art vs Science, I became curious to assess the expression of Art and/or Science as general life concepts and their potential application to various common professions that don't necessarily seem to fit either. Previously, I considered Art and Science as a dichotomy, a black and white, heads or tails type of condition which made them not only distinctly different but actual opposites of each other. Now I see each of them quite differently.

I accept Science, on the one hand, as actually a unique form of Art because it certainly requires extensive experimentation and a need for broad-based vision outside-the-box in order to see what others can't see BUT with constraints in its exactitude by a definable set of rules that must include the rejection of any outcomes that can not be reproduced when the inputs are of a controlled nature.

I accept Art, on the other hand, to actually be a form of Science, because it requires the need for keen observation of the world around us, multi-level experimentations and the willingness to accept potentially fluid outcomes that were not initially anticipated BUT without the need to constrain any activity based strictly upon known facts nor any requirement for outcomes to be reproducible even under identical circumstances.

This updated interpretation of Art and Science makes much more sense particularly when viewed in the context of modern human activity and though some individuals are clearly more comfortable with their artistic side while others are more strongly oriented to the scientific approach, I believe that each of us retains at least some portion of both throughout our entire lives.

Recognizing these dual natures also helps us to potentially communicate in different ways assisting us in eventually achieving the maximum possible positive, two-way communication.

A Few More Thoughts

The following comments, although related in some way to one of the specific thoughts presented previously, just did not seem to fit in smoothly with the rhythm and flow of the main conversation but hopefully will still be found to be worthy of the reader's additional consideration and reflection. They are arranged in the same order as the original text and are identified as being extensions to the original Thought 'X' by the addition of the + symbol.

Thought One+

(Every time I try to communicate.....Life Gets in the Way)

In addition to the lists I mentioned previously to help me organize my thoughts, an additional document, or spreadsheet actually, that I have found most useful for supporting my deteriorating memory is my Life Record that I began keeping a few years ago. I definitely encourage anyone who does not have a similar activity underway to begin one and maintain it. This sheet has been extremely helpful to me on many occasions and I often refer to it to figure out just where I was, both physically and emotionally at various stages of my life. I also love the memories it evokes each time I open it.

The column headings for this spreadsheet are my birthdays - September 23rd's - for each consecutive year of my life starting with 1950...my birth year...and continuing up to 2050...my 100th birthday. Each row, then, contains information that I deem most relevant to my own particular circumstances during that particular year...information that then allows me to accurately recollect details that I find are often too easily 'rearranged' with the passage of time, if not lost entirely.

At present, the following row information is collected and recorded, or in some cases, like ages, just duplicated forward, for the appropriate year:

Birth Day and Age I Turn on that Birthday
School Grade Started or Education Activity in Progress
Work & Work Location Details
Residence
Car That I Was Driving or Owned
Special Events (Marriages, Divorces, Graduations, Awards etc.)
Anniversary Year
Vacations Taken
Children/Grandchildren's Birthdays and Ages
Casual and Not So Casual Female Relationships

This whole effort began when I couldn't accurately recall my age at specific school grade levels, a detail which may seem unimportant to many readers but which bothered me sufficiently to kickstart this whole process. I started with one specific grade where I knew my age for certain and working forwards and backwards filled in the remainder. It was then relatively easy to add my various residence and work locations, special events, children's birthdays and ages as well as the car I was driving at the time and specific vacations I had taken. The farther back I went, though, the less I seemed to be able to recall but with the help of the information already in the chart, I began to fill in many of the missing details. These in turn reminded me of even more details that I happily added to the rapidly expanding record. Eventually it became populated with a such a significant amount of information that I now use

it much like a summarized diary to remind me of all the important people and events that made me what I am today. It can also sometimes be a little frightening, especially when I see the ages my children and grandchildren will be by the time certain age milestones, for me, have arrived.

But really, the most important entries became the relationships I had developed over the years with females. Being incredibly shy, awkward, and nerdy for most of my life, greatly limited my social interaction with the opposite sex particularly so with many of those whom, I now realize, were sending out unavoidable signals that I expertly managed to avoid.

I regretfully now acknowledge all those ladies who saw something in me that I failed to recognize in myself.

Thought Two+ (The Rule)

Originally, and for many years after, I actually referred to this concept as The Platinum Rule, seeing it as a clear and improved version of The Golden Rule and at that same time, by basing its new, revised wording directly on the original, used the phrase “Do unto others as they would have you do unto them” as an appropriate upgrade.

Since then, I have revised my own thinking in an attempt to eliminate any direct religious reference realizing that those that still believe could view this interpretation as blasphemous and those that don’t believe could reject it altogether as being too religious...neither outcome being one that I hoped for or intended.

By secularizing the phrase and referring to it now simply as the Rule, it is my hope that many more individuals can and will embrace it as the most reasoned approach to successful interpersonal communication.

Thought Three+ (Right vs Wrong)

One of the most universal Wrongs that most of us are consistently guilty of is speeding.

Although as reasoning humans we all understand the value and safety in establishing such limits, for many of us they always seem to require us to travel just a little bit slower than we feel is appropriate or justified given the environmental conditions in which we find ourselves at the time. And, as a result, we find ourselves driving anywhere from a few kilometres per hour over the limit up to a personally selected, arbitrary maximum below which we still feel comfortable and in control of our vehicles and our lives.

At the same time, those drivers whom we see exceeding our own chosen maximums are usually considered by us to be anywhere from simply impolite all the way up to negligent and reckless while their opinions of the rest of us ‘slow-pokes’ run all the way from our being just plain poor drivers up to being actual hazards on the road.

It seems rather obvious that this type of behaviour is going to continue for the foreseeable future and though crushing fines and vehicle impoundments for those dabbling near the higher end of disobedience might help to dissuade the rest of us from joining their particular ranks,

the generally low risk of ever being caught and the quite manageable punishments meted out for more minor infractions, do little to encourage our total compliance with posted limits.

But, once again, the future may soon be able to offer a solution to this issue as the approaching era of autonomous vehicle transportation holds the long term promise of, eventually, removing human control completely from the driving experience...perhaps not a bad idea given our most human tendency to abide by our own rules first and those of recognized authority second.

Thought Four+ (Males vs Females)

My efforts, throughout this writing, to propose, embrace and maintain gender neutrality to as great a degree as possible, stems from my own belief that, regardless of what published statistics might reflect, I find that a huge portion of our global population considers themselves to be gender-flexible meaning that they not only have a deeper empathy, sympathy and personal acceptance of the very wide gender scale that impacts the lives of all of our citizens but that they are also willing and able to recognize and accept the 'other side' of their own personalities...a realization that I see eventually leading to an increased tolerance of all the truly frivolous differences between us all.

As for the unconvinced remainder, I really don't buy the false bravado that often accompanies many of the naysayers and am constantly reminded of Shakespeare's great line "...the lady doth protest too much, methinks" (c1600 Hamlet - Queen Gertrude) whenever any individual proclaims or attempts to demonstrate their strict maleness or femaleness to the nth degree. I need to believe that, given time, they will all eventually come around to the correct way of thinking.

I feel very privileged to have known and loved a significant number of non-traditional individuals who, despite being wonderful people, found themselves often ostracized by many members of the society that surrounded them and sometimes, even worse, the very families that bore and raised them. This, of course, is completely unacceptable thinking and every effort must be made to try and positively influence this rigid opposition that, eventually, must concede that we are right, if we are ever to achieve global harmony.

On the other hand, I can not deny that I am a heterosexual male and so some parts of this effort may inadvertently reflect a gender bias that is instinctively inescapable for myself. However, it is my hope and expectation that the Reader will easily see that the most critical parts of this text are universally applicable across the widest possible gender scale.

Thought Five+ (Death)

As part of my own preparations for the inevitable end to the incredible run I have so far enjoyed, I have drafted, signed and notarized several Life documents that spell out my expectations and provide direction for certain specific actions under specific circumstances.

These include a complete Will & Testament, along with appropriate Powers of Attorney and Medical Responsibilities, a 'Please Pull the Plug' declaration and a work in progress dealing with assisted suicide preparations. Although there may not be an immediate or even foreseeable need for all of these, they represent for me a 'total package' that I believe should

be completed by every individual as soon as possible. However, many people just can not consider these as anything more than a time consuming annoyance that they will investigate at some time later feeling they are much too young yet to start thinking about 'that'.

But these documents are really much more for everyone else in our lives than they are for the actual drafter. They ensure clear instructions and directions are available for the professionals, explaining exactly what we want to be done under various circumstances and greatly reducing the potential for the introduction of negative communication between other family members at a time when emotions are likely to be running hot and when calm, clear thinking is being greatly challenged.

Thought Six+ (Unions)

When considering the role of the Union and it's positive or negative impact on our modern society, I was also struck by the similarity of the role of Opposition Parties to the elected Government of the time.

The essential role of any Opposition is really to hold the Government in check and protect the nation's population against any rouge action that might endanger the safety, liberty and rights of the citizenry. This expected and required interference to the Government's potential ability to do whatever it wants, whenever it wants is lauded by democracies around the world but is also the driving force behind the sometimes intense military repression seen in oligarchic or autocratic tyrannies.

But even in the most advanced democracies, Opposition can sometimes be perceived to act in a ridiculous and counterproductive manner, just like a Union protecting its worst members, when a proposed Government solution that actually benefits a large majority of the population must still be ridiculed and attacked simply because it was a Government idea. This has always bothered me.

And in response to Opposition of this nature, or quite frankly any kind, the Government then takes on the persona of an organization that never makes any mistakes, sometimes looking even more ridiculous, as both sides behave as if their populations were completely unaware of the lack of validity in either position.

And as the back-and-forth rhetoric continues with increasing reliance on suspect or erroneous 'facts', regardless of which political parties happen to be in whichever position, the population begins to lose confidence in the overall process, just as they do when the Union supports its most criminal members, and the entire nation faces an increasing risk of polarization, lack of confidence in formerly sound principals and disillusionment with available options and alternatives. At that time, they may turn instead to more radical political positions and philosophies most of which carry along with them unforeseen consequences of a much graver nature than the general population can immediately grasp.

This seemingly inevitable erosion of support for intrinsically sound and positive institutions, both Union and Government, could be the wolf in sheep's clothing that will eventually make all other dangers to global harmony pale in comparison.

Thought Seven+ (Love and Sex)

At the ripe old age of 5, my heart was stolen for the very first time. She was a friend of my oldest sister and probably 9 or 10 years old herself. Of course, I really didn't understand anything at all at that age...all I knew was that for some unknown reason I really wanted to hang around her - a possibility that within a matter of minutes of our first encounter became an obvious impossibility as her mannerisms and conversation quickly showed that she was likely thinking of me to the exact same degree as she did about the ants crawling around on our driveway at the time.

Ever since then, whenever I met girls, ladies or women who immediately captured my 'heart' as well as my attention, I instantly became a reflection of that 5 year old boy all over again; unable to speak coherently, desperate to know what I should do or say next, assuming immediately that even her most positive and aggressive, manoeuvring was just her 'being nice to me' and expecting any moment that, given the opportunity, she would most likely reject any advance I might make regardless of how 'gentlemanly' it might be. Since rejection, ridicule and the subsequent embarrassment were among the highest items on my personal list of things to avoid at all costs, I almost always kept my distance, remained polite and instead attempted to be an interesting conversationalist.

But now, approaching 70, I do finally realize that interesting conversation was probably not exactly what most of them had in mind nor the most they were prepared to do for me in order to gain my seemingly neutral attentions. Today, I find myself imagining the opportunity to say to each and every one of them "I think of you fondly and often and I hope you think well of me"

Realizing, in hindsight, how instrumental the right two-way communication process would have been for both of us to achieve the best possible outcome in each of the respective circumstances, made me think a lot about interpersonal communication and helped to enhance my desire to more permanently record my viewpoint, one that I hadn't yet seen expressed elsewhere.

Thought Eight+ (Are we alone?)

Up until age seven, I don't recall having any specific religious inclinations either way and simply went along with whatever the rest of my family was doing or saying at the time. However, with the death of my father, at the shockingly young age of 39, my life turned into a quest to find answers that no one seemed prepared or able to answer to my satisfaction.

I read the Christian bible extensively, which I do credit for instilling in me at least a decent respect for the opinions and treatment of others but which I found sadly lacking in understandable and acceptable explanations for the death of my father as well as a host of other worldly phenomena that fired my curiosity and demanded clarification.

Turning then to science, suddenly opened up an entirely new world for me...a world that slowly began to make perfect sense to me and one that offered rational, comprehensible explanations for the confusing array of life experiences invading both my physical environment as well as my numerous contemplations as to what might eventually be possible.

I feel fortunate now that I've never lost my original interest in religious interpretations of the universe we inhabit but, at the same time, thank science for the ability to comprehend their true origins and provide me with the optimism that, eventually, we can all reach the same conclusions.

Thought Nine+

(The Universal Drug)

Music has always been my first emotional drug of choice ever since my sister gave me my first 45 RPM record for my 12th birthday...Locomotion by Little Eva. Since then, as both my sisters outgrew their various 45 and LP collections, I became a most willing recipient of their discards and after my sisters headed out into the world with their new husbands, I was further exposed to my mother's personal taste in music for many years after.

The result of all this became my retention of a broad musical palette that makes me include on my list of all-time favourites, compositions from classical composers, swing arrangements from the '40s, early, middle and late rock tunes, folk ballads and I've even come to love some of the most current offerings...although my old fogey ears will sometimes cause me to repeat my own mother's musings concerning my teenage musical tastes that '...they all sound the same to me'.

And where, as a teenager, I might hear a favourite song on the radio once a month or perhaps if I was lucky twice in a couple of weeks, and then take the same amount of time to perform sufficient chores to earn the funds to procure the actual record in order to listen to it repeatedly, modern streaming services now let me gather and enjoy only my absolute favourite tunes, from any era, virtually instantaneously for literally pennies a day.

There is no more relaxing environment for me than to be 'plugged in', headphones on, wine glass at the ready, listening to the various playlists that technology has delivered into my hands. And if all goes according to plan, I will continue to wrap myself within this extraordinary experience, every day, for many years to come.

Thought Ten+

(Art & Science)

I had a lot of fun with this topic particularly because I feel very strongly that I am, personally, 50% Artist and 50% Scientist. My creative side comes out mainly in my music and my songs, but I'm not bad at interior decorating either and any one who has known me for more than a few minutes has likely caught a glimpse of my scientific side. This personal dichotomy led me to ponder several real-world professions and how their approach to problem solving might be described in terms of Art and Science.

First are the truly pure research scientists who deal mainly with hypothesis, experimentation and repeatable outcomes. They lean toward developing theories and attempting to prove them correct. But they also benefit from a certain creative approach needed to imagine the unseeable world of elementary particles and forces as well as the unfathomable vastness of our own, single universe and the distinct possibility of many others.

Next are the professional engineers, great scientists communicating through proven formulas, able to successfully predict desired outcomes from a specific set of facts, who are rooted in

the real world and very much less interested in theories but also requiring enough artistry to imagine and create workable solutions to newly found problems as well as inventing innovative solutions to already known problems.

Then come the physicians, clearly scientists, considerably less experimental by nature, though still relying somewhat on theory and proven solutions and requiring a higher degree of artistry most notably when existing 'proven' solutions are no longer working or when particular circumstances render them inappropriate.

Then there are the lawyers, great verbal artists who must clearly be creative when approaching each and every critical communication but who are also constrained by huge volumes of facts which they must employ in order to argue their cases.

Then musicians who, although they also employ well established facts like clefs, notes, scales and time signatures must rely even more heavily on creative interpretation and composition in order to constantly develop and present a unique and pleasing product.

Finally we have the truly pure artist who utilizes very few facts, such as media and colour but who through tremendous, unlimited creative effort is able to produce an almost infinite number of outcomes even when using the exact same facts.

This hierarchy is simply my way of noting what I see as an obvious link and necessary cooperation between Art & Science across all peoples of the world and the reader is encouraged to reflect upon many other circumstances where this may be equally applicable.

Final Thoughts

If you've managed to get this far, I must definitely award you the ultimate Gold Star for your demonstrated interest and your Herculean perseverance but, most of all, for your incredible patience in 'listening' to me go on and on concerning topics that, unfortunately, I feel I will likely never have the opportunity to discuss with any one else as completely as I have been able to do with myself during this writing.

And though I know that a very small number of individuals will ever actually see these words, this effort has, once again, managed to provide me with many hours of personal entertainment and, more crucially, an opportunity to ponder and contemplate, to a much greater depth, a broad range of issues that just rarely seem to come up in the routine conversations life insists we all conduct.

I wish to express my most sincere thanks to you for the time you have taken to share this journey with me, and, despite the fact that most people hear me communicate a general aura of blatant pessimism, I do hope you've been able to firmly grasp my true, innermost belief in and continuing personal efforts towards a true, lasting global harmony.

It will come.