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Seven Ways School Has Imprisoned Your Mind

by Isaac Morehouse

Young America is suffering a quarter life crisis. The job market is in the dumps and has been for as long as millennials can remember. Twenty-somethings are anxious about the direction of the country. The more politically aware among their generation are on pins and needles about the looming presidential election.

If you are in that frame of mind, we advise embracing “the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,” as an old prayer puts it. The fact of the matter is that there is little you can do to sway the political course of an entire nation. Neither your vote nor your advocacy will determine who will win the presidency.

But that doesn't mean you are powerless. You can't hope to liberate a whole country, but you can do a great deal to liberate yourself. Doing so requires the other part of the Serenity Prayer: the “courage to change the things I can.”

The first step toward self-emancipation is certainly not supporting or opposing a presidential candidate. Neither need it be civil disobedience, evasion of government directives, or resistance to the authorities. There is much lower hanging fruit to be had than that.

The impediments to our freedom are not limited to the guns, handcuffs, and prison cells that threaten us with violence if we disobey the powers that be. We are also burdened with spiritual chains. These bonds are the self-limiting habits of mind and false

presumptions that weigh us down throughout life. They were fastened on our minds through compulsory schooling: by the state monopolizing most of our waking hours throughout our most formative years. The mindset installed by schooling makes things much easier for the government, which can rely on us to largely police ourselves. We have virtually been deputized as our own spiritual prison wardens.

So the first step to self-emancipation is what Zak Slayback, author of *The End of School*, calls “deschooling.” But this involves not just unlearning disinformation, but unlearning attitudes. Even if you have already shaken off the indoctrination, you may still be burdened with the conditioning you were subjected to at school. And that may be holding you back in your career and your life in general.

The good news is that these mental shackles can be unlocked, once you are aware of them. And doing so requires no political campaigning or confrontation with the authorities. This liberation is yours for the taking.

Here are seven horizon-limiting mindsets that almost everybody has picked up from their schooling to some extent.

1. The Conveyor Belt Mindset

“The conveyor belt does all the work. You just have to sit still and get moved to the next station. Everyone moves in the same direction. Everyone makes progress at the same pace, based on external factors like age.”

This supplicant mindset is poison.

In school you don't have to do much of anything to go from grade to grade. It takes a greater act of will to not move to the next stage. This mindset is

killing you. It places the locus of control outside of yourself. It lures you into assuming, so long as you obey the rules, you'll get handed the next piece of paper, promotion, or quality of life enhancement.

Get off the conveyor belt. It's leading you to soul-dead mediocrity and perpetual frustration and envy when you see belt-jumpers excel fast and free. Don't get mad. Join them.

2. The Permission Mindset

"Raise your hand and wait to be called upon. Get in single file lines. Even your basic biological needs cannot be met without permission. You get a hall pass to go to the bathroom. You eat only when scheduled."

This is what James Altucher might call the "Pick me!" mindset. It's the belief that your own desires and actions - your very freedom - is something conferred upon you by authority. It's waiting to get the call, hoping to get chosen for the job, anxiously awaiting the results and decisions of processes and actors over which you have no control. "If only I ask in the right way, they'll say yes!"

This supplicant mindset is poison. It's what opens the way for despots in society at large and desperation in your personal life. It's time to choose yourself. Don't wait for permission. Just do it.

3. The Student Mindset

"You are a student. Your task is to memorize what teachers tell you. This phase in life is for absorbing information through books and lectures. You study. You cannot try things in the real world until you theorize about them for a few decades."

"The student is not a practitioner. The student can't put ideas into motion until passing a test. Everything is pass/fail, not open exploration and experimentation. Everything has a grade. Students don't play. They don't work. They study."

Nonsense. Freedom comes from the complex creative interplay of doing and thinking in tandem. Play, work, and learning are not separate phases or activities.

You are not a student. You're a lifelong learner.

4. The Teacher Mindset

"You've graduated from studenthood. Your job is to have the answers and provide the structure. You must know everything and be the expert. Everyone's fate is in your hands. You must train them to do what they couldn't if left alone. You must grade them. They either pass or fail."

There's nothing inherently valuable in dullness, and nothing inherently dull in value-creation.

Real learning and living doesn't look anything like the teacher-student structure in schools. No one knows the answers. People have varying degrees of knowledge, ability, and skill, but learning is dynamic and respect must be earned by action, not given by title.

The sooner you can drop the teacher mindset the sooner you can collaborate with others, coordinate, persuade and influence. You aren't there to make people into the "right" shaped widget. You're one node in a network that has no standardized measures of success.

5. The Worker Mindset

"Work is for survival. It sucks. You must be coaxed into doing it. You studied to be able to work and now you work to be able to live. You do exactly what the boss wants you to do and no more. You get a specific job with a specific title and that defines not only your activities but your personality."

This approach to work is blind to reality. Work is not pain or dullness by definition. The best things in life require work. They're hard, but they're fun. Work isn't just a means to a dangling carrot, it's a process of discovery and fulfillment itself. But only when intrinsically motivated. You've got to choose your work.

Value creation is what matters, not a job. You may earn money any number of ways from any number of people, but the defining characteristic of the kind of work that earns money is that which creates value for others. There's nothing inherently valuable in dullness, and nothing inherently dull in value-creation.

6. The Recess Mindset

“Play is an escape. It’s irresponsible in excess. It must be limited. If you study and work hard enough you can earn some tiny shred of play.”

“Recess is vacation, summers off, weekends, retirement. It’s the belief that the majority of your life is drudgery endured for brief glimpses of freedom and indulgence.”

This mindset not only prevents learning or working from being joyful, it ruins leisure. The desperate week-long escape becomes a bender. A mere numbing of the senses to the reality of an unfree life, not a deeply fulfilling experience.

Seth Godin put it well when he said, “Instead of wondering when your next vacation is, maybe you should set up a life you don’t need to escape from.”

7. The Major Mindset

“What do you want to be?” “What’s your major?”

“Your interests must be career-ified and tracked. Everything must be given a title and every action must be a step in a clear path to that one thing that will define you.”

In reality your major doesn’t matter. What you want to be might not exist by the time you “grow up”. What makes you come alive probably hasn’t been invented yet.

Shed the pressure to find your calling and immediately plot a perfect path toward it. Instead, just don’t do stuff you hate. Everything else is fair game. As long as you’re not doing stuff that makes you dead inside, you’re moving closer to creating a life you love.

One Improved Unit

Maybe none of this applies to you. Perhaps you were unschooled or you were willful enough to pass through an entire childhood of schooling spiritually unscathed. Otherwise, personal freedom requires first facing up to the fact that you have been institutionalized, and then getting to work de-institutionalizing, or deschooling, yourself.

Only a people who first free themselves spiritually and

individually can hope to free themselves physically and as a society. It is impossible to liberate people, as Voltaire said, “from the chains they revere.” And the first order of business in improving society is, as Albert Jay Nock said, “to present society with one improved unit.”

Isaac Morehouse is the founder and CEO of Praxis. He is a member of the FEE Faculty Network.

question on banking

Walter E. Block

From: A

Sent: Wednesday

To: wblock@loyno.edu

Subject: bank notes

I agree with your follow-up to Response #7. (<https://www.lewrockwell.com/2016/02/walter-e-block/qa-walter-block/>) One must factor the intent of the bank when determining fraud. Given the potential dire consequences of FRB, a bank ought to warn a depositor of those consequences (losing everything in one’s account) every time he opens an account. And the warning ought to be in bold, large type with every statement.

Some years ago, I asked 10 people this question: “Who owns the hundred dollars a person deposits in a bank?” Two of the ten had worked in bank. One was a C.A. Several were engineers. One was a lawyer. All but the lawyer got the answer ‘wrong’. They thought the depositor was the owner.

If I were an absolute ruler, and powerless to yield my power in favor of libertarianism (I would be executed immediately by my Prætorian Guard), I would outlaw FRB and require that banks lend only the money of their shareholders. Depositors would be charged a market fee for keeping their money safe & secure. [Jim Grant points out that prior to 1935, if a bank looked shaky, the authorities would tap the shareholders directly for additional capital.]

It seems ludicrous to me that the general population is effectively forced into the lending business, about which most people know nothing. In the days of large

price inflation, no one in his right mind (except perhaps the criminal element) would keep large sums in a safe deposit box. Nowadays, with super low interest rates, I'm surprised more people aren't withdrawing their money. I expect that TPTB are anticipating a massive withdrawal, which is why they want to outlaw cash. Very discouraging.

Regards,
A

Dear A:

Thanks for your support. Who DOES own that money? The bank, unfortunately. Who SHOULD own it? The depositor, of course.

Best regards,
Walter [Block]

Keynes Must Die

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

In 2012, Barack Obama warned that the United States would fall into a depression if Ron Paul's plan to cut \$1 trillion from the federal budget were enacted.

Wait, I beg your pardon. It wasn't Obama who warned that budget cuts would lead to a depression.

It was Mitt Romney.

Romney went on to become the nominee of the self-described free-market party.

An ideological rout is complete when both sides of respectable opinion take its basic ideas for granted. That's how complete the Keynesian victory has been.

In fact, Keynesianism had swept the boards a decade before Romney was even born.

The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money, the seminal treatise by John Maynard Keynes, appeared during the Great Depression, a time when a great many people were beginning to doubt the merits and resilience of capitalism. It was a work of economic theory, but its boosters insisted that it also offered practical answers to urgent, contemporary questions like: how had the Depression occurred, and why was it lasting so long?

The answer to both questions, according to Keynes and his followers, was the same: not enough government intervention.

Now as Murray N. Rothbard showed in his 1963 book *America's Great Depression*, and as Lionel Robbins and others had written at the time, the Depression had certainly not been caused by too little government intervention. It was caused by the world's government-privileged central banks, and it was prolonged by the various quack remedies that governments kept trotting out.

But that wasn't a thesis governments were eager to hear. Government officials were rather more attracted to the message Keynes was sending them: the free market can lead to depressions, and prosperity requires more government spending and intervention.

Let's say a brief word about the book that launched this ideological revolution. If I may put it kindly, the *General Theory* was not the kind of text one might expect to sweep the boards.

Paul Samuelson, who went on to become one of the most notable American popularizers of Keynesianism, admitted in a candid moment that when he first read the book, he "did not at all understand what it was about." "I think I am giving away no secrets," he went on, "when I solemnly aver – upon the basis of vivid personal recollection – that no one else in Cambridge, Massachusetts, really knew what it was all about for some twelve to eighteen months after publication."

The General Theory, he said,

is a badly written book, poorly organized; any layman who, beguiled by the author's previous reputation bought the book, was cheated of his five shillings. It is not well suited for classroom use. It is arrogant, bad-tempered, polemical, and not overly generous in its acknowledgments. It abounds in mares' nests and confusions.... In short, it is a work of genius.

Murray N. Rothbard, who after the death of Ludwig von Mises was considered the dean of the Austrian School of economics, wrote several major economic critiques of Keynes, along with a lengthy and

revealing biographical essay about the man. The first of these critiques came in the form of an essay written when Murray was just 21 years old: "Spotlight on Keynesian Economics." The second appeared in his 1962 treatise *Man, Economy and State*, and the third as a chapter in his book *For a New Liberty*.

Murray minced no words, referring to Keynesianism as "the most successful and pernicious hoax in the history of economic thought." "All of the Keynesian thinking," he added, "is a tissue of distortions, fallacies, and drastically unrealistic assumptions."

Beyond the problems with the Keynesian system were the unfortunate traits of Keynes himself. I will let Murray describe them to you:

The first was his overweening egotism, which assured him that he could handle all intellectual problems quickly and accurately and led him to scorn any general principles that might curb his unbridled ego. The second was his strong sense that he was born into, and destined to be a leader of, Great Britain's ruling elite....

The third element was his deep hatred and contempt for the values and virtues of the bourgeoisie, for conventional morality, for savings and thrift, and for the basic institutions of family life.

While a student at Cambridge University, Keynes belonged to an exclusive and secretive group called the Apostles. This membership fed his egotism and his contempt for others. He wrote in a private letter, "Is it monomania – this colossal moral superiority that we feel? I get the feeling that most of the rest [of the world outside the Apostles] never see anything at all – too stupid or too wicked."

As a young man, Keynes and his friends became what he himself described as "immoralists." In a 1938 paper called "My Early Beliefs," he wrote:

We entirely repudiated a personal liability on us to obey general rules. We claimed the right to judge every individual case on its merits, and the wisdom to do so successfully. This was a very important part of our faith, violently and aggressively held, and for the outer world it was our most obvious

and dangerous characteristic. We repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were, that is to say, in the strict sense of the term, immoralists.

Keynes was 55 years old when he delivered that paper. And even at that advanced stage of his life he could affirm that immoralism is "still my religion under the surface.... I remain and always will remain an immoralist."

In economics, Keynes exhibited the same kind of approach he had taken toward philosophy and life in general. "I am afraid of 'principle,'" he told a parliamentary committee in 1930. That, of course, is the attitude of anyone who craves influence and the exercise of power; principle would only get in the way of these things.

Thus, Keynes supported free trade, then turned on a dime in 1931 and became a protectionist, then during World War II favored free trade again. As Murray puts it, "Never did any soul-searching or even hesitation hobble his lightning-fast changes."

The *General Theory* broke down the world's population into several groups, each with its own characteristics. Here Keynes was able to vent his lifelong hatreds.

First, there was the great mass of consumers, dumb and robotic, whose consumption decisions were fixed and determined by outside forces, such that Keynes could reduce them to a "consumption function."

Then there was a subset of consumers, the bourgeois savers, whom Keynes especially despised. In the past, such people had been praised for their thrift, which made possible the investment that raised living standards. But the Keynesian system severed the link between savings and investment, claiming that the two had nothing to do with each other. Savings were, in fact, a drag on the system, Keynes said, and could generate recessions and depressions.

Thus, did Keynes dethrone the bourgeoisie and their traditional claim to moral respectability. Thrift was foolishness, not wisdom.

The third group was the investors. Here Keynes

was somewhat more favorable. The activities of these people could not be reduced to a mathematical function. They were dynamic and free. Unfortunately, they were also given to wild, irrational swings in behavior and outlook. These irrational swings set the economy on a roller coaster.

And now we arrive at a fourth and final group. This group is supremely rational, economically knowledgeable, and indispensable to economic stability. This group can override the foolish decisions of the others and keep the economy from falling into depressions or inflationary excess.

You probably won't be shocked to learn that the far-seeing wizards who comprise Keynes's fourth group are government officials.

To understand exactly what Keynes expected government officials to do, let's say a brief word about the economic system Keynes developed in the *General Theory*. His primary claim is that the market economy is given to a chronic state of underemployment of resources. If it is not to descend into and remain mired in depression, it requires the wise supervision and interventions of the political class.

Again, we may safely reject the possibility that the political classes of the Western world embraced Keynesianism because politicians had made a profound study of the works of Keynes. To the contrary, Keynesianism appealed to two overriding motivations of government officials: their need to appear indispensable, and their urge to wield power. Keynesianism dangled these ideas before the political class, who in turn responded like salivating dogs. There wasn't anything more romantic or dignified to it than that, I am sorry to report.

By the early 1970s, however, Keynesian economics had suffered a devastating blow. Or, to adopt Murray's more colorful phrase, it had become "dead from the neck up."

Keynesianism could not account for the stagflation, or inflationary recession, that the U.S. experienced in the '70s.

It was supposed to be the role of the Keynesian

planners to steer the economy in such a way as to avoid the twin threats of an overheating, inflationary economy and an underperforming, depressed economy. During a boom, Keynesian planners were to "sop up excess purchasing power" by raising taxes and taking spending out of the economy. During a depression, Keynesians were to lower taxes and increase government spending in order to inject spending *into* the economy.

But in an inflationary recession, this entire approach had to be thrown out. The inflationary part meant spending had to be reduced, but the recession part meant spending had to be increased. How, Murray asked, could the Keynesian planners do both at once?

They couldn't, of course, which is why Keynesianism began to wane in the 1970s, though it has made an unwelcome comeback since the 2008 financial crisis.

Murray had dismantled the Keynesian system on a more fundamental level in *Man, Economy, and State*. He showed that the relationships between large economic aggregates that Keynesians posited, and which were essential to their system, did not hold after all. And he exploded the major concepts employed in the Keynesian analysis: the consumption function, the multiplier, and the accelerator, for starters.

Now, why does any of this matter today?

The errors of Keynes have empowered sociopathic political classes all over the world and deprived the world of the economic progress we would otherwise have enjoyed.

Japan is a great example of Keynesian devastation: the Nikkei 225, which hit 38,500 in 1990, has never managed to reach even half that level since. A quarter century ago the index of industrial production in Japan was at 96.8; after 25 years of aggressive Keynesian policy that gave Japan the highest debt-to-GDP ratio in the world, the index of industrial production is... still 96.8.

The United States, meanwhile, has had sixteen years of fiscal stimulus or preposterously low-interest rates, all of which Keynesians have cheered. The result? Two million fewer breadwinner jobs than when Bill

Clinton left office.

No amount of stimulus ever seems to be quite enough. And when the stimulus fails, the blinkered Keynesian establishment can only think to double down, never to question the policy itself.

But there is an alternative, and it's the one Murray N. Rothbard and Ludwig von Mises championed: the Austrian School of economics and its analysis of the pure market economy.

Against the entire edifice of establishment opinion, the Mises Institute stands as a rebuke. To the dissidents, to the intellectually curious, to those inclined to be skeptical of so-called experts who have brought us nothing but ruin, the Mises Institute has been a beacon.

We have trained an entire generation of Austrian scholars, journalists, and financial professionals. We put in the hard work so that when a catastrophe like the 2008 crisis occurred, an Austrian response was ready.

But with your help, we can do so much more. The Keynesians are pretending they have everything under control, but we know that's a fantasy. An even greater opportunity than 2008 awaits us, and we want to help guide public opinion and train a cadre of bright young scholars for that day. With your help, we can, at last, awaken from the Keynesian nightmare.

As the Korean translator of an Austrian text put it, "Keynes must die so the economy may live." With your help, we can hasten that glorious day.

The Benefits of Global Warming

by Butler Shaffer

No one ever heard of the truth being enforced by law. Whenever the secular arm is called in to sustain an idea, whether new or old, it is always a bad idea, and not infrequently it is downright idiotic.

– H.L. Mencken

Those with ambitions for power over their fellow humans continue to speak of the threats of "climate change" and "global warming" as though they were expressing revealed truths. Religious dogmas can

find their roots in *scientific* as well as *theological* thinking. Questioning either the "intelligent design" or "big bang" explanations for the origins of the universe can evoke angry responses from true-believers on either side of the issue. In the case of the High-Church Warmingists, a verifiable fact (i.e., increased temperature) is merged with an empirically unfounded assertion (i.e., human activity is the causal explanation) to provide true believers the rationale for their rule over mankind. Those who deny this article of faith are targeted for dismissal in academia and even televised weather shows.

I grew up in a Midwestern city that had been the southernmost reach of the glacier that once spread across most of North America. In my undergraduate years, the courses of study from which I learned the most were in geology. Among the many insights that contributed to my understanding was the knowledge that the Earth had undergone many fluctuations and variations in temperatures, plate tectonics, magnetic shifts, and numerous climate changes. It is difficult for intelligent minds to take seriously the idea that the extinction of dinosaurs in Antarctica was occasioned by pre-human beings driving SUVs or using aerosol sprays!

A much more personal awareness of my connection to mankind's history on this planet began when I contemplated how many *direct* ancestors (i.e., parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc.) I had in the past two-thousand years. My calculation excluded siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, and other relatives who were not part of the "but for" explanation for my existence. Two-thousand years is but a tiny fraction of the hundreds of thousands (or more) of years during which humans have existed. Using roughly thirty years per generation, I played out the mathematics of my genealogy (i.e., two to the sixty-seventh power) and came up with this number of *direct* ancestors I had in so short a period of time: 147,573,952,589,676,412,928 individuals – the same number you had during this period.

This number represents some ten to twelve billion times the estimated number of humans ever to have lived on this planet. Math, alone, confirms what being

members of the same species already tells us: we are all related to one another.

I recently had an even more powerful experience that confirms my ancestral connectedness to humanity. One of my daughters gave me a Christmas gift that allowed me to participate in a project that traced my distant ancestry through my DNA. A number of weeks after submitting a sample through which my DNA could be identified, I was informed of the routes taken by my ancient ancestors beginning some 50,000 to 60,000 years ago. From Africa to Asia, to the Balkans and Central Europe, and then, during the Great Ice Age, to the Iberian peninsula.

Because of the great sheet of ice that covered so much of the planet – and Europe in particular – this branch of my ancestry was confined, for thousands of years, to territory that we now call Spain. Upon learning of this, I was reminded of the ancient Cave of Altamaria, in northern Spain, upon whose walls can be found a variety of paintings of animals and humans. These walls also contain hand-prints placed there by some of the earliest of humans.

These handprints have long held a fascination for me. They have suggested a kind of spirituality – the kind that goes beyond religious doctrines – that we struggle so hard to express: a need for *transcending* our individual experiences, and to *connect up* with others and the rest of the universe. Religions; the sciences; poetry; our motivations for fame, success, even power; creativity; and so many other forms of human motivation, are underlain by this need.

The hand-prints that reach out in this cave from 15,000 to 20,000 years ago contain what may be the most powerful spiritual expression of our individuality: “I was here!” Were these people being driven by the same inner life-forces that cause people to make great discoveries, to invent, to compose music, to create and operate businesses, to design beautiful buildings, to produce statuary and paintings, to write novels that help us find meaning and motivations in the conditions of human existence? When I write my books and articles – for which Gutenberg’s invention provided me a far-reaching medium – am I saying

anything more than what my Altamira ancestors were saying with their hand-prints: “I was here”?

Such thoughts have meant more to my inner sense of being than does the mathematics that quantifies my relationships with these great-great-great-great-to-the-nth-power-grandparents. The names and faces of these people are unknown to me; only their hand-prints provide visual evidence of their existence. But they did provide me with their connection to my life: a shared DNA reminds me that, but for them, I would likely have had no life.

My understanding of the geologic history of our shared planet informs me that “global warming” – causing the retreat of the great sheet of ice that engulfed so much land – allowed for the expansion of territory and opportunities for the well-being of my ancestors. I doubt that there were any well-heeled, power-hungry Al Gores of their time warning them of the dangers inherent in the carbon footprints of their neighbors who sought a broader expression of living as human beings.

I also doubt that my ancestors regarded the warming of the planet as a threat. If they had the benefits of an understanding of the Earth’s inconstancy and variability, they may likely have regarded the ensuing warming of the planet as just another period of change that might prove life-enhancing. I suspect that they would not have defended the restricting ice as a desired status quo condition to be protected from human action.

Implicit in the Warmingist theology is the arrogant assumption that there is some objectively “correct” temperature at which the Earth “should” function. Can such a position be sustained by any evidentiary criteria, or is it but another instance of the arbitrariness of standards announced by those who insist on controlling their neighbors? Addressing the question from a biological perspective, Brother Mencken asks: “Who will argue that 98.6 Fahrenheit is the right temperature for man? As for me, I decline to do it. It may be that we are all actually freezing, hence the pervading stupidity of mankind.”

In my ancestral hand-prints and my writings, I find

a shared "I was here" message that celebrates – rather than condemns – what it means to be human. To simplistic minds challenged by the uncertainties, complexities, and inconstancies of life, the enjoyment of power over others will be regarded as necessary for stabilizing their world.

To reinforce the listing of the cardinal sins they wish to control or punish, the Warmingists remind us that our actions have consequences. As a general proposition, they are correct. Helping students become aware of this truth was a core principle of what used to be celebrated as a "liberal arts" education. But in an age in which politically correct ideologies have so infected academic life, the tools with which the Warmingists operate tend to be quite superficial.

Richard Weaver's classic work, *Ideas Have Consequences*, extended the principle into the realms of philosophy and ideology. At a time when socialists and other central planners ask us to substitute their illusions for the informal and spontaneous orders that sustain us, it is timely to recall the consequences of political systems and programs that did so much to destroy the lives of so many. The Soviet Union, Maoist China, Nazi Germany, and the present difficulties now being experienced by people in Venezuela, provide some of the most familiar examples of the consequences of empowering a few to dominate and rule the many by force.

The global warming that melted the great ice sheet that confined my Iberian ancestors, allowed them to move into other regions in Europe, thus enhancing their opportunities for living well. Perhaps there is a lesson for us all in this example. Will "global warming" have consequences? Of course, it will, just as did earlier periods of "global cooling." If the planet is a living system – as I believe it to be – then we should accept fluctuation and variation as expressions of what it means to be alive.

As with my ancient ancestors, our mutual descendants may benefit from global warming. Just as central Europe and Scandinavia became available for earlier expansions of life, our posterity may find heretofore frozen territories becoming available to them. Perhaps

such places as Greenland, Siberia, and Antarctica might become sites for human beings to live well. Who can effectively argue with such a possibility?

VISION

By Leonard E. Read

Note - Frequent readers of BANKNOTES are aware of my relationship with Leonard E. Read and my admiration for his works during his lifetime. In the following issues I will be sharing his book, VISION, one chapter per month. It was written in 1978. What a privilege it was for me to know this great man! – R. Nelson Nash

Chapter 12

ASLEEP AT THE SWITCH

When they are asleep you cannot
tell a good man from a bad one.

-ARISTOTLE

The metaphor, "asleep at the switch," means "not alert to a duty or opportunity," the sense in which it is here used.

No one remembers falling asleep! The moment of dropping off is lost to us; we only remember coming awake-if indeed we ever do awake! As to duties and opportunities unlimited-no person has awakened to more than an infinitesimal few of them. Those of us now asleep at the switch either have never awakened or, if temporarily aroused by this or that, have since lost interest and fallen back into a lifelong slumber. This appears to explain why so many of us are dead to the world of wonders, to the exciting duties and opportunities of our earthly existence.

When it comes to liberty, all but a few are asleep at the switch, dead to this remarkable wonder that opens the door to opportunities unlimited. Why this plight? What should we do about it? These questions need serious examination.

John W. Burgess maintained that mankind did not begin with liberty but, rather, that mankind acquires liberty through civilization. Liberty is but the flowering of human ascendancy in virtues and principles. The first

known civilization emerged in Sumer about 5,000 years ago. Liberty, as we think of it, was no more in the minds of earlier mankind than the free market or private property or limited government or air conditioning or harnessed electric energy or millions of recent phenomena. Prior to Sumer, mankind had not become civilized enough to acquire liberty.

A civilized person, according to my ideal, must recognize that man is at once a social and an individualistic being. Thus, he must not only be self-responsible but, at the same time, understand that he owes to others no infringements on their rights.

In a word, the truly civilized person is a devotee of freedom; he opposes all man-concocted restraints against the release of creative human energy.

The civilized person realizes how incorrect it is to think of freedom as synonymous with unrestrained action. Freedom does not and cannot include any action, regardless of sponsorship, which lessens the freedom of a single human being. To argue contrarily is to claim that freedom can be composed of freedom negations, patently absurd. Unrestraint carried to the point of impairing the freedom of others is the exercise of license not freedom. To minimize the exercise of license is to maximize the area of freedom.

Ideally, that is, in a civilized society, government would restrain license, not indulge in it; make it difficult, not easy; disgraceful, not popular. A government that does otherwise is licentious, not liberal-and a people who permit this are not quite civilized.

To illustrate uncivilized actions: Those in "the Third World," that is, the people in the impoverished or underdeveloped countries, with a few notable exceptions, are asleep at the switch. As a consequence they starve by the millions. Asleep to what? Not only to how the free and unfettered market works its wonders but also to the reasons why government should be limited. They are miserable. That's one side of the uncivilized coin.

The other side is just as uncivilized. American politicians observe the plight of these people. Their conclusion: "We must save them!" By demonstrating

how to overcome their poverty? By teaching them how to save and accumulate capital and to freely trade and compete? No, for these dictocrats haven't the slightest idea themselves as to this, the only remedy. They are unaware of the differences between liberty and slavery. So, what is their solution? Confiscation! They *coercively* acquire dollars by the hundreds of billions, every dollar taken from the fruits of our labors and *gratuitously* passed on to these victims of underdevelopment. By any reasonable definition, such action is uncivilized. Merely bear in mind that mankind acquires liberty through civilized actions, and it is obvious that such give-away programs destroy the very foundations of liberty.

Examples abound of smaller but comparable "programs" emanating from federal, state and local governments. Observe this sequence:

1. Governments, having no money of their own, must first coercively take away in order gratuitously to give away.
2. That which is coercively taken away is the source of our livelihood.
3. There cannot be life without livelihood.
4. To the extent that livelihood is taken, to that extent are citizens deprived of life.
5. These deprivations diminish individual liberty-liberty being the flowering of civilized individuals.
6. Give-away ""programs" quite obviously put the cart before the horse-cause and effect in reverse.
7. Those thus engaged are not awake to the duties and opportunities liberty opens to human beings. They are, indeed, asleep at the switch!

Of the two questions to be answered the first is, why this devastating plight? Why are so many dead to the wonders of liberty? These persons cannot remember falling asleep. Perhaps they never were awake and, thus, are sound asleep to mankind's high purpose-individual evolution and the liberty to act creatively as one pleases. They are in the same plight as were the ancients prior to Sumer, the first known civilization. Nor should we be surprised at this seeming delinquency, and for at least two reasons:

1. Evolution is a very slow process, gracing only a relative few since Cro-Magnon man of some 35,000 years ago.
2. Were we to collapse the eons of time since life first appeared into a single year-a comprehensible span of time-human liberty had its inception only 3Y2 seconds ago. It is the newest of all politico-economic concepts, opening the way to duties and opportunities: creation at the human level. Little wonder that only a few have the slightest idea as to what liberty is all about. The millions-and understandably-asleep at the switch!

There are, of course, numerous levels or depths of sleepiness. They range from sound asleep to drowsiness to catnaps to half awake. By the same token, awareness of liberty ranges from zero to brief glimmers to rather profound understanding.

What do people do when asleep? A few are sleepwalkers but, mostly, they do no more than *dream*. And a dream, as related to this thesis, is a pipe dream: "a fantastic idea, vain hope, or impossible plan...." I must conclude, therefore, that all the "plans" or any fraction thereof which are inconsistent with civilized actions-the fountain of liberty-are no more than thrusts from primitive antiquity. They are *imagined* utopias or paradises-various forms of Shangri-La!

Wrote Goethe: "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." The millions who are asleep at the switch and who dream and unknowingly pave the road to their own slavery actually think they are as free as the few who are partially awake and have some understanding of liberty. The millions who falsely believe they are free are enslaved by a dreadful ignorance: *not knowing their plight but not knowing that they know not!* Attempts to sell liberty to these millions are as fruitless as trying to sell a course in physical fitness to a corpse.

The second question would seem to be, what are *we* to do about this plight? However, this is neither a *we* nor a *wee* problem. Instead, it is an *I* and an *Infinite* problem.

What, then, am I to do? Spend my time and energy trying to awaken those who are asleep at the switch as most freedom devotees are doing? Or, shall I take that seldom traveled uphill road that leads to my own awakening? These are my choices; it's one or the other! My decision to take the latter course is founded on several observations.

1. Who among all the people inhabiting this earth have I been commissioned to save? Only yours truly, an answer with which no one will disagree. Try to find an individual in this or any other country who believes my role is that of his savior. Not one, and that's the way it should be!
2. What if I were to take the other course-awaken a person asleep at the switch? What is his reaction to being yelled at, to setting him straight?
3. Get off my back!" U Shut up!" "Leave me alone!" "Mind your own business!" "Who do you think you are?" "These reforming tactics spawn adversaries and antagonists, never friends or seekers of one's light. Again, this is the way it should be. Erroneous methods only multiply existing errors.
4. What is the right method? Rather than wasting one's energy vainly trying to improve others, it is *to better one's self!* Why is this a civilizing procedure that spawns liberty? Because coming awake to liberty is exclusively a personal achievement. Human betterment in this aspect of life has as many points of origin as there are human beings. I cannot originate improvement in you or you in me.
5. Wrote Edmund Burke: "Example is the school of mankind; they will learn at no other." This wise observation applied no less to Burke or Socrates or Emerson than it relates to you and me.

Merely note how many of us still seek the tutorship of these seers, and of numerous other individuals who have been and are way out front in their intellectual,

moral and spiritual enlightenment. Those who seek truth are attracted to exemplars. All history attests to this law of attraction the drawing power of excellence. The school of mankind to which Burke refers issues no degrees and has no graduates. It is, instead, perpetual progression-self-dedication for life!

The few who really count in advancing civilization and liberty are those who are alert not only to their duties but to opportunities unlimited. They are those rare persons not asleep at the switch. May their tribe increase, for your sake and mine!

The World in the Grip of an Idea

by Dr. Clarence. B. Carson

There is hardly a person to be found who will avow utopianism as his belief. In common usage, a utopian is one who is impractical and unrealistic. To name the idea utopianism is to risk trivializing it. If the idea were named utopianism it would become an idea among ideas. It would become an idea to be examined, to be debated, to be scrutinized, and quite possibly to be refuted.

Such treatment, the adherents of the idea apparently resist. They resist it by focusing upon the method for realizing it rather than the animating idea. The idea itself must be an unchallenged good. The animating idea is the root of a secular religion, the leading secular religion of our time. It catches up myriad vague longings set loose by the decline of religion, or more precisely it provides a faith with credible promises for those who no longer believe the promises of their traditional religions.

These two paragraphs are extracted from Dr. Clarence B. Carson's book, *The World in the Grip of an Idea*. That *idea* is Socialism or any of the variations of that idea such as Communism, Fascism, etc. All of these "isms" are nothing more than examples of mankind's attempt to "play god in the pagan sense of the word." In the Bible, the book of Exodus tells us very plainly that God is a jealous God. He won't put up with such nonsense — and so, they all fall apart over a period of time. However, history clearly demonstrates that mankind in his hubris just can't get this fact established in his mind. — *Nelson*

Nelson's Live Seminars & Events for June & July 2016 <http://infinitebanking.org/seminars/>

Hillsboro, TX - Nelson Nash Live Seminar

June 11, 2016, Contact Charlie Jackson for additional information. 254-582-3565
nancy@bcbstexas.com

Oakland, CA - Nelson Nash Live Seminar

July 8-9, 2016 Contact Jim Kindred for attendance information: jim@yourfamilybank.com

Nelson Nash Live in Kelowna, BC, Canada for an Agent-Only Seminar

July 14-15, 2016, Please use this link to register:
www.mcguirefinancial.ca/agent-training/
The event is open to life licensed Agents only.
Contact Jayson Lowe for additional information:
jayson.lowe@mcguirefinancial.ca

Fort Worth, TX - Nelson Nash Live Seminar

July 23, 2016 For registration information, please contact Julee Neathery at 817-790-0405
julee@bankingwithlife.com
<http://jamesneathery.com/>

Nelson's Favorite Quotes

"At the beginning of the dynasty, taxation yields a large revenue from small assessments. At the end of the dynasty, taxation yields a small revenue from large assessments." — Ibn Khaldun

"There is a limit to the taxing power of the state beyond which increased rates produce decreased revenues." — Calvin Coolidge

"Another difference between death and taxes is that death is frequently painless." — Anonymous

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- [Mark Mappa - Glenview, IL](#)
- [Jim Oliver - Bonita Springs, FL](#)
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- [Robbie Schilly - Festus, MO](#)
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