

The Think Club Quarterly

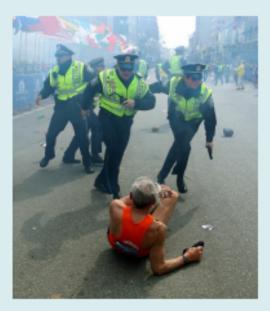
A Forum for Independent Thinking Volume 18.2 Spring 2013 \$250 Life Membership

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY -THE CHANGING PARADIGM

HOW TO MITIGATE HOME GROWN TERRORISM?

U.S. SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN ENERGY AND ITS CHANGING ROLE

> SHOULD THE US REMAIN WORLD'S POLICEMAN?



BOOK REVIEWS: *LEAN IN TENTH OF DECEMBER*



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Letters



I just read a couple of articles from the new issue of The Think Club. You managed to extract such wonderful life's lessons even from Indy 500! No trip or life's occurrence goes in vain for you - I am impressed. And your article about the neighbors was so hilarious I was laughing out loud :).... Thanks!

Irene Rudra Corpus Christi, TX

Thanks for writing against social engineering (Porn Goes Mainstream-The Think Club Winter 2013). Hollywood has been very successful in forcing the mainstream in accepting their norms as normal. Now the society ridicules them who cling to the old values and even punishes them by branding them as phobic and discriminatory.

Steve Elliott Indianapolis, IN

I enjoyed your articles on changing morality. I agree ... the standards of morality do change. This is alright with me as long as we do not hurt each other. Keep up the good work!

Judy Blake Fenton, MI

The THINK Club is published quarterly by The THINK Club Publications, a forum to encourage independent thinking among fellow human beings.

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Thinking Wildly

You never know when a moment and a few sincere words can have an impact on a life.

- Zig Ziglar

"Who you are is speaking so loudly that I can't hear what you're saying"

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all"

- Thumper from Bambi

"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you"

- Dale Carnegie

"I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university" – Albert Einstein

"Don't be embarrassed by your failures. Learn from them and start again"

- Sir Richard Branson

Four things come not back-the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity.

- Arabian Proverb

Life is like a grindstone: Whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends on what you're made of. -Anonymous

You can observe a lot by just watching.

-Yogi Berra

When small men cast long shadows the sun is going down.

-Venita Cravens

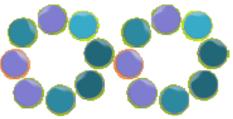
My peace of mind is often troubled by the depressing sense that I have borrowed too heavily from the work of other men.

-Albert Einstein

Now my own suspicion is that the Universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose.

-J. B. S. Haldane

Editorial



Three Steps to Mitigate Home Grown Terrorism

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

America is a land of immigrants and we should welcome skilled foreign born workforces in the U.S. We should also **give shelter to**" **tired, poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free**" **after a careful evaluation.** Unfortunately, many of the present-day immigrants are threatening us with home-grown terrorism.

U.S. counterterrorism policy has since 2001 focused

largely on killing terrorists overseas or preventing them from getting into the But the Boston U.S. bombings show how the diffusion of terrorist tactics easily transcends borders. Countering small groups of individuals inside the U.S. be a bedeviling can assignment. The bombing at the site of Boston Marathon not only killed the innocents, it brought a major American city to a grinding halt, causing tremendous economic loss

to the city and fear in people's hearts. The irony is that FBI was warned by several foreign nations about the two misguided Chechen kids who caused the mayhem using homemade bombs.

While it is not possible to stop these incidents from happening again, we can mitigate such future incidents by reforming our immigration policies and laws.

1. Traditionally, the United States grants asylum to people persecuted in their home countries because of their race, religion, nationality, or political beliefs. Many scrupulous enemies of America find this an easy means to enter this country with malicious intentions. They, in turn, instill hatred for America in their youngster.

Many of these immigrants despise the American way and are ignorant of American values and system. They isolate and shut themselves out from the culture of their adopted country and brainwash their children against America and Americans. The immigrants should be discouraged from living in an enclave where they reinforce their historic culture by actually shutting themselves off from the cultural norms and experiences around them. I do not want people to lose their historic culture. But I expect, if they want to belong here, to identify themselves with this country and make some

> effort to understand where they are and what that means to their children. 2. Another deterrent to

loyalty is dual citizenship. Whenever, a new citizen is naturalized, he or she takes allegiance to the United States and "renounces all allegiance and fidelity to foreign any prince. potentate, state. or sovereignty of whom or which the applicant was before a subject or citizen." Allowing multiple citizenship is allowing

someone to bear arms against the United States which is contrary to the oath they take when becoming American citizens..

3. We must also stop automatic citizenship to babies born to non-citizens living in America. Those babies, also known as anchor babies, are used by the parents to stay illegally in the U.S. This does not mean that all the parents of so-called anchor babies have bad motives, but it is an easy tool for disloyal immigrants to gain a foothold in the country they hate and ultimately want to destroy.

Our alien residency-and citizenship-granting processes are fundamentally flawed more than a decade after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It is time for an overhaul.

Commentary



21st Century School Violence and Causes

By Robert Bickmeyer

Violence will always be with us and will never be eliminated, but why does it permeate America's 21st century society in ways it never has before?

Let us focus on school and teenage violence. Since 1992 there have been at least 296 violent deaths in schools across the nation. How has our society changed? Who is at fault? Is it Hollywood and the entire entertainment industry, Democrats, Republicans, working mothers, deadbeat dads, divorce, schools or the media? Will our elected leaders in Washington stop using the tragic spree of school violence for political chicanery? Democrats, who accept millions of dollars in campaign contributions from Hollywood, blame guns. Republicans, who accept millions of dollars from the National Rifle Association, blame Hollywood. It is time our power hungry, selfish politicians do what is best for our country instead of their political parties. Congress must point the finger at Hollywood as one of the causes and demand that violence be curbed. About 80 years ago, Hollywood studio heads established the Hays Office and imposed a formal censorship code. Hollywood regulated itself to stave off censorship legislation by Congress. The Hays Office, operating for 40 years, did our country no harm, but dissolving it has done the U.S. irreparable harm as Hollywood has lowered itself into the gutter with unmitigated violence as well as out-of-control immorality.

It is time to reincarnate censorship of violence and immoral behavior in the entire entertainment industry, and that includes movies, television, videos and music. The television industry knows that viewers are influenced by commercials. Obviously, it is just as factual that they are influenced by program content.

When I was growing up, a Hollywood western might have shown about 100 Indians shot while encircling a wagon train and a few settlers taking an arrow in the chest. Never did I see one drop of blood. I recently saw a movie where a man was struck on the head with a toaster. He was pictured, not once, but three times laying unconscious on the floor with not one, but five or six streams of blood lining his face grotesquely. Realism you say? No shock! Why does Hollywood think they must shock us to entertain us? They are creating a sick society, immune to violence, thus more likely to act violently. It is Hollywood that is sick. Can't anyone stop them?

Many words offensive to minorities are deemed politically incorrect and are banned. These censorships are made with good judgment and are not considered violations of the First Amendment. Why then can't we use equally good judgment in our entertainment industry to ban violence, pornography and obscenities that are offensive to God fearing people? A giant step would be taken toward minimizing school violence and a multitude of other problems in our country.

Another contributing cause are those working moms who don't have to work, but do for selfish reasons, such as having their own career or a bigger house and assorted household goodies. I applaud and sympathize with those moms who must work because of despicable deadbeat dads or whose husbands are unfortunately unable to fully provide for the family. The most important career a mother can have is raising her children. The children suffer when tiny tots are raised by day care and teenagers receive no care. There is evidence that preschool children benefit from time with a stay-at-home parent. They have less anger and develop feelings of trust and security in the parent and are less likely to be disobedient and aggressive as they get older. Teenage girls get pregnant and juvenile crimes are committed mostly between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm on work days, when there are no parents at home.

Divorce has become too easy. If a marriage has produced no children I doubt that society cares if a couple rescinds their vows. However, those parents who put their own happiness above that of their children are most selfish. Children want and need both parents until about age 18. Children of divorced parents are often angry children and angry children are prone to violence. All 50 states must toughen their divorce laws whereby families cannot be easily torn apart on the selfish whims of one or both parents.

Speaking in Newtown, Conn., President Obama said, "We will be told that the causes of such violence are complex and that is true. But that can't be an excuse for inaction. Surely, we can do better than this." Yes we can. Officials have been unable to ascertain a motive for the Newtown killings. Having their names and picture on the front page of every newspaper and on nationwide television is the fame these nonentities seek, even in death. In fact, one killer of eight left a suicide note, reading, "Now I will be famous." This is true of the copycat crimes of other evil nutcases. We must prevail upon the media to withhold their identity. That will take away their motive. This action outweighs the public's right to know.

Humor



Air Dreams By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

The best part of a nightmare is waking up. This morning I had another pleasant experience of waking up to realize that my whole air travel experience, though very close to reality, was really a nightmare.

I was in line to board the airplane. The announcement came, "All the remaining passengers traveling in Cattle Class are requested to board now."Since I was holding an economy ticket, I approached the gate attendant and asked her, "Excuse me miss but I am holding an economy class ticket."

"In the wake of unreasonable demands by passengers of the economy class, we have decided to rename economy class and now we call it the cattle class. Our motto is simple, you pay up and we'll take you for a ride," she explained.

I meekly got into the plane where all the cattle class passengers were paraded past first class. The passengers in first class looked at us with disgust and disdain in their eyes. Soon the lead attendant announced, "The passengers in the cattle class will be chained to their seats and their mouth will be taped by trained flight guards, previously known as flight attendants. The directives have been designed to maintain peace and calm as a consideration to fellow passengers and to facilitate smooth movement of flight guards in narrowly designed aisles."

While being chained to my seat and before the duct being placed to my mouth, I had a few questions for the flight guard, "How come the seats are too narrow to accommodate my girth?"

She replied, "The width of all the seats are reduced by one-third to accommodate more needy passengers like you."

"One more question Sir!"

"I am not a sir, you can call me Ma'am," she interrupted me.

"OK Ma'am, I cannot move the window shade. Can you help me pull it up?"

"The window shades can be pulled open for two dollars upon sliding acceptable credit cards," She replied and quickly taped my mouth, "the same will apply to emergency oxygen masks which will cost ten dollars per drop."

She then brought an indemnity bond for me to sign guaranteeing no liability for the airline for any loss of life or limb functions. It further stated, "Passengers dying of lower limb thrombosis caused by restricted movement and cramped space will have to stay put until the plane reaches its destination." I had no other option but sign the bond.

Soon the captain announced, "Carry on items cannot exceed the size of a standard lunch box. There will be an additional charge of ten dollars each for carrying any computer or brief case. Passengers will be escorted to the toilet by flight guards for a fee, however the passengers are required to bring their own toilet paper."

Half way through the flight, another announcement was heard, "Ladies and Gentlemen! Very soon we will be serving in-flight food and drinks to our first class passengers. As for the cattle class, our flight guards will soon give begging bowls to you, one passenger at a time. You will then be allowed to beg for food in the firstclass cabin under proper supervision. We hope you are enjoying your flying experience with us, so far."

Some faint of heart passengers panicked and started thumping the floor and banging the seat. They were soon given FDA approved sedation pills courtesy of the airline to make the flight more bearable.

Finally, the announcement was made, "We have started our final descent to our destination. We hope that our valued passengers have enjoyed their flying experience. For the ones that don't, we have requisite experience and excellent lawyers to win any law suits. Our friendly air guards will be happy to brief you on our out-of-court settlement policies, if you so desire. And remember, we can afford better lawyers than you can. Once again, thanks for flying with us."

There was a big thud as the plane landed and I woke up to realize that my air travel was a nightmare.

Perspective



US Policy Toward the Asia-Pacific

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

China is definitely a power to reckon with in East Asia. It is a regional superpower, an economic giant whose influence is felt in all the countries of the region. According to predictions, China may soon surpass the U.S. as the greatest economy on earth and its military strength may match that of the United States.

The United States has realized this new reality, but its policies toward the Asia-Pacific

region is not realistic. The United States wants to be seen as Asia-Pacific an country. This sounds more like rhetoric than a credible identity. The truth remains that the U.S. is still preoccupied with the Middle East. It lacks the intensity to either meet the threat of North Korea or the influence risina of China.

Unlike China, the United States is not active in various regional dialogues

such as ASEAN. Its ties with the region have been overwhelmed by China's regional ties in security, economy, and trade. The credibility of U.S. policy toward the region is questioned by its own allies and partners.

The Asia-Pacific countries find that the U.S. is more interested in selective and issue-based matters such as human rights than making a deep dive into their regional dynamics and unfolding changes. This aspect of U.S. foreign policy toward the region has inspired skepticism The United States needs to exert itself as a resident power in the region going beyond verbal commitments to establish the reliability of its regional policy. China considers the U.S. policy in that region as confrontational and may force U.S. allies to make a strategic choice between the United States and China. If the U.S. does not project itself as a resident power any decision to side with the United States will be costly for the

regional countries which are already under China's influence.

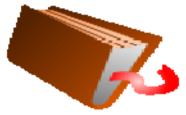
The United States must come to а mutual agreement with its allies forming regional а architecture based on long-term peace. stability, and prosperity the for region. Without а clear and common vision with quiding principles for the region. be it will impossible to overcome strategic

Handel Ha

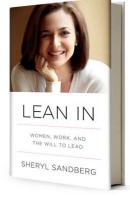
distrust.

The United States should take into account the concerns of its allies and partners and enhance its understanding of regional dynamics in East Asia. For that purpose, strategic dialogue with regional countries should be strengthened expanded. U.S. participation in and and contribution to multilateral forums (such as ASEAN) should also be encouraged. Only a true involvement and not symbolism will help the United States become a true resident power in East Asia.

Book Review



Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead Author: Sheryl Sandberg Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf 2013



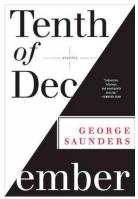
To help empower women everywhere to realize their full potential, Sandberg has opened up about her own career journey and lessons learned along the way. While the book is well-researched, its shining strength is the stories personal and anecdotes from both Sandberg and her friends and colleagues. Many books

by high stature men in business share leadership lessons learned but few (really none I can think of) share stories about having insecurities or feeling the guilt most working mom's experience at one time or another. Sandberg takes a lot of risk in this book with the clear purpose of making it OK to talk about the real issues women face.

The focus of this book is on individual women leaders and how they can reach for their aspirations – whatever those aspirations may be. It is not a book about what others can do to help women – corporate leaders, organization policies, government legislation and how men can help are all mentioned in the book and Sandberg clearly has views on all these topics. However, her focus is squarely on what women can make happen for themselves.

I admire Ms. Sandberg tremendously for the courage it took to write this book. Her message is long overdue and she delivers it in such a positive manner. She talks about the difficult line women in business have to walk and offers practical career advice. What I especially liked though is her message that moving forward is in the hands of the younger generations. Yes! They have come far from the days of their great grand mothers who didn't have the vote, but they are sliding backwards. If the current younger generations do not Step Up, they will continue to lose more ground.

Author: George Saunders Publisher: Random House 2013



(Reviewed by Amy Dale)

Tenth of December is George Saunders's fourth collection of short stories, although the first full book of his I've read. I should have read his work a long time ago.

While many of these stories exhibit his characteristic 'one-step-away-from-reality'

settings and characters, this collection is stunning for the deep and varied perspectives it offers. Each story is told by Amy Dale from the distinctive voice of one (or more) characters, and they could not be more deliriously different. Saunders is a shape changing ventriloquist, assuming the voices of various men, women, and children at will, bringing the reader right into the prefrontal cortex of some of fictions most memorable and bizarre individuals.

In "Tenth of December" Saunders weaves back and forth between the perspective of an old man with a brain tumor in the last stages of sanity and a young boy who is in tremendous emotional pain. The juxtaposition of the two voices is exquisite. In "Puppy" Saunders uses voice to explore class as he volleys back and forth between two women of different social spectrums. The mental commentary the two women create about each other is pointed, painful, and true. Saunders even explores how a single character's voice can change over time: in "By Chivalric Fiasco" a character ingests a substance that causes him to speak like a courtesan of middle ages. The drug wears off midway through a paragraph of internal monologue, and we get to witness the change on the page. Saunders is showing off, in the best possible way. Tenth of December left me speechless. Saunders breaks the rules of writing so effortlessly he makes me wonder if those rules ever truly existed. After reading Tenth of December, I am ready to rip up

everything I've ever written and start over, without the inhibitions this time. I regret it took me so long to sit down with a book of his stories, but I'm off to look for more.

Tenth of December

Foreign Policy



They Said it

Maybe we ought to consider a Golden Rule in foreign policy: Don't do to other nations what we don't want happening to us. We endlessly bomb these countries and then we wonder why they get upset with us?

-Ron Paul

As Putin rears his head and comes into the air space of the United States of America, where – where do they go? It's Alaska. It's just right over the border."

-Sarah Palin

Human rights is the soul of our foreign policy, because human rights is the very soul of our sense of nationhood. –Jimmy Carter

Military men are just dumb, stupid animals to be used as pawns in foreign policy."

-Henry Kissinger

Our foreign policy has made a wreck of this planet. I'm always in Africa... And when I go to these places I see American policy written on the walls of oppression everywhere.

-Harry Belafonte

Whatever it is that the government does, sensible Americans would prefer that the government does it to somebody else. This is the idea behind foreign policy.

-P. J. O'Rourke

Political society does not live to conduct foreign policy; it would be more correct to say that it conducts foreign policy in order to live.

-George F. Kennan

You know, one of the hardest parts of my job is to connect lraq to the war on terror

–George Bush

The purpose of foreign policy is not to provide an outlet for our own sentiments of hope or indignation; it is to shape real events in a real world.

- John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Well, human security is a concept that I am very committed to enshrining in American foreign policy.

-Hillary Clinton

No foreign policy - no matter how ingenious - has any chance of success if it is born in the minds of a few and carried in the hearts of none.

-Henry A. Kissinger

We spent a lot of time talking about Africa, as we should. Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease -George Bush

I would put our legislative and foreign policy accomplishments in our first two years against any president - with the possible exceptions of Johnson, FDR, and Lincoln - just in terms of what we've gotten done in modern history. But, you know, but when it comes to the economy, we've got a lot more work to do. And we're gonna keep on at it.

-Barack Obama

But obviously, we've got to stand with our North Korean allies."

–Sarah Palin,

Foreign policy is like human relations, only people know less about each other.

–Joe Biden

I readily admit I was not an expert on foreign policy but I was knowledgeable and I didn't need a man who was the Vice President of the United States and my opponent turning around and putting me down.

-Geraldine Ferraro

Current Affairs



U.S. Energy Self-Sufficiency and Its Changing Role

Since the end of the World War II, the U.S. has been heavily dependent on gulf oil. As a result, that weighed heavily on its foreign policy creating a dilemma and uncomfortable situations for the U.S. Thanks now to improved fracking techniques, the U.S. can exploit its vast shale oil and gas deposits. According to Dieter Helm, an energy expert at Oxford University, "In the U.S., shale gas didn't exist in 2004. Now it represents 30% of the market."

According to recent study by the Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Centre. "If all the known shale gas resources were developed to their commercial potential in North America and other new fields, production could more than quadruple over the next two decades, and account for more than half of U.S. natural gas production by the early 2030s." All indications are that the U.S. is on course to be the world's biggest supplier of oil and gas within a decade.

This will certainly give an unprecedented leverage to American foreign policy as many nations who dictate terms based on their fuel reserves will see their influence diminish on the world stage. That includes the monarchies that have thus far withstood the Arab spring. Their persistence has depended on a historically high oil price and western (mostly American) backing. Both of those conditions are now in question.

To tell the truth, America has nothing in common with those monarchies. It will be a great political and financial relief for the U.S. to pull out its troops and ships from the gulf region. Of course, it will not happen overnight, but it is bound to happen sooner than later.

The U.S. disengagement will certainly create chaos and a vacuum in the area as a variety of

religious and tribal forces will vie to replace the present kingdoms and regimes. A lot will depend on whether the new biggest customers for Gulf oil, China and India will assume America's role in patrolling the tanker routes.

The United States will also be tested on its policy towards Israel in view of the new reality. Will the U.S. still feel a need to risk it all to support Israel or will it abandon its alliance with the Jewish state?

Russia will be another loser as its remaining influence in Europe is largely dependent on its energy reserve and its frequent threat to shut off the energy supply to the needy countries. Russia is already feeling the direct impact of the new reality. Development of its Shtokman field – believed to be one of the largest gas fields in the world – deep under the Barents Sea, has been shelved, because its intended customer, the US, now has its own homegrown source of natural gas.

With peace of mind and less need for policing the world, the U.S. will be able to concentrate more on infrastructure and innovation That is good news. All the indications are that the twenty-first century will still belong to America.



Point

Great Power Brings Great Responsibility By Bala Prasad

Great power brings special responsibility. They are granted the legitimacy to exercise power on the global stage but the price is a willingness to act consistently for the common good of all, of course with their own self-interest in mind.

When political considerations are paramount, every action has two equal sides supported by two equally good groups of people. In the end, it is impossible to determine right from the wrong. But let's not dwell on the geo-political situation. We cannot always get what we want but we must always act, even if we do not know what the right action is, we must do something.

From extensive world travels it is clear that people who need help all over the world cherish just a few things: peace, food, basic health care and security. Not western society, who fortunately have everything, but millions of people in sub-Sahara Africa who have to migrate from place to place, from year to year. Where does their food come from? Health care is non-existent. Forget about clean drinking water. What happened in the Sudan and Darfur regions are small examples of similar situations around the world. God gave us affluence and riches to do something worthwhile.

We have done so. Some of the scrooges of the past are gone forever. There are no more diseases like plague or smallpox. The incidence of Malaria and Kalazar are vastly reduced as is the incidence of tuberculosis. Clean water is much more available now than just fifty years ago, thereby reducing the incidence of cholera. Peace reigns in many parts of the world. South African apartheid is gone. Sudan split and is relatively peaceful. The Russian Empire broke down but managing with a semblance of peace.

How did all this happen? The food supply got better because of better seed, better irrigation, better harvest, better storage, and better transportation. Americans were the leaders in these positive efforts. With one super power left, it becomes our responsibility and we have risen to the challenge. A natural disaster struck Haiti – we were there. Coal mines were flooded in India, nuclear disaster struck Russia and Japan, food shortages threatened famine – we were there. This is our obligation. We have to be the policeman of the world as we are the only one left standing to assume the role. The nay-sayer will always claim we could have done more. True, but no matter how much we do, that will always be the claim.

Should we be the policeman of the world? Time has framed us in this picture, front and center. With the possible nuclear Armageddon between North and South Korea, who is left to deal with war-torn regions liked this and bring peace to the world. We must try, only we can.

Counterpoint

US Can't Be World's Policeman By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

The USA can no longer continue to act as world's policeman. It is not possible financially or manpower wise to stretch our presence in 200 countries around the world, especially knowing that most don't share our principles and values.

The U.S. has spent trillions of dollars in the Middle East while, at home, we have \$11.959 trillion in debt which comes to about 75% of GDP. While we are financially bleeding at home, the U.S. military has a total of over 700 military bases in 130 countries around the world. it is estimated that it costs about \$100 billion a year to maintain these bases. Total military spending by the U.S. government is nearly equal to the combined military spending of the rest of the globe. Meanwhile, the federal government is literally drowning in debt.

The fact remains that he U.S. military is spread so thin right now that they could not even respond adequately if a real threat did emerge. Trying to be the police of the world is not only incredibly costly, it is also strategic suicide.

Why in the world do we still need huge contingents of troops in Germany and Japan? It is funny when people talk about us pulling out of Afghanistan or Iraq, because we never even pulled out of Germany or Japan after World War II. Once the U.S. military gets boots on the ground somewhere, they very rarely ever leave.

It is about time that nations like Japan and Germany learned to defend themselves. Everyone knows they are protected by U.S. nukes. So why do we have to station so many troops in both countries?

We are expending so many resources patrolling the streets of Iraq and rounding up goat herders in Afghanistan that we aren't even preparing ourselves for the real threats. If World War III does break out in the coming years, it is probably going to be the United States against an allied front of Russia and China. But we aren't preparing to fight that war. Instead, Bush and Obama have been slashing our nuclear arsenal to the bone as they obsessively hunt for "boogeymen" in the caves of the Middle East.

In each case, the United States' ability to influence events is shrinking. We should accept the reality that this country can't police the whole world and must be more prudent about which issues are vital to its national interests.

History Trivia



Hollywood Isn't Nations Mother

By Robert Bickmeyer

"Movies in schools can help children learn," states my encyclopedia. And no one is more aware of a movie's ability to teach or influence than the moguls of La La Land. Hollywood, once considered an entertainment industry, has degenerated into what appears to be a coalition with an agenda to brainwash America on social issues and to pollute society with the lowest form of immoral acts.

Through questionnaires, Smith College's Center for the Study of Social and Political Changes and the Center for Media and Public Affairs, compiled a mass of data on the social attitudes of 149 writers, producers and directors of 50 top grossing films. Over half of them profess no religious belief, compared with only 7 percent of the general population. Fewer than 6 percent attended church or synagogue at least once a month, compared with 52 percent of Americans. Obviously, their values can be expected to be more depraved.

Many years ago it was taboo for unwed couples to live together. Unfortunately, Hollywood portrayed this as a normal and acceptable lifestyle and it became so. Now, in movies of today, couples who have just met quickly hop into bed. In your local cinema it is not unusual to find pornography, obscenities, glorified violence, reverence for the gay lifestyle and history revised. In the futuristic movie "Judge Dredd" with Sylvester Stallone, police men and police women share a common locker room – another Hollywood brainwashing effort whereby there is no difference between men and women. Hollywood's propaganda reigns.

Leading their charge is Oliver Stone, who told 60 Minutes he was "Trying to reshape the world through movies." One historian called his conspiracy theory in the movie "JFK" a despicable fantasy. In "Nixon" his portrayal of President Nixon as a heavy drinker was a fabrication according to those close to Nixon. Stone's "Platoon" and "Born on the Fourth of July" were gross exaggerations and distortions of the truth attempting to show the U.S. military and our government in a poor light.

Hollywood's "Panther" was a two hour glorification of the Black Panthers, a group of drug dealing, racist, murderous gangsters. This was tantamount to glorifying the Ku Klux Klan, for heaven's sake. When I was growing up, a Hollywood western might have shown about 100 Indians shot while encircling a wagon train and a few settlers taking an arrow in the chest. Never did I see one drop of blood. I recently saw a movie where a man was struck on the head with a toaster. He was pictured, not once, but three times laying unconscious on the floor with not one, but five or six streams of blood lining his face grotesquely. Realism you say? No, shock! Why does Hollywood think they must shock us to entertain us? They are creating a sick society, immune to violence, thus more likely to act violently.

"Fly Away Home" was a brilliant, heart-warming family movie, with an old fashioned happy ending, but it had the liberal message I always expect, and usually find in Hollywood productions. The bright and perky 13-year-old daughter of divorced parents lived with her father and his livein girlfriend. This "modern" setting added nothing to the story that would have been equally exhilarating if the girl had traditional parents. And so, with another amazing movie, La La Land had scored another coup in its promotion of a liberal, immoral culture.

As the curtain rose on the 1996 Academy awards, there sat Christopher Reeve in his wheelchair at center stage. Reeve spoke sincerely of how Hollywood now often forsakes profit to present issues in its films. Who elected or appointed Hollywood to teach America right from wrong? We prefer to be taught morality by our parents, grandparents and houses of worship. We go to the movies to be entertained, not brainwashed. Hollywood isn't the nation's mother.

Dare I mention the word "censorship"? The Hays Office, for 40 years, imposed a formal censorship code initially adopted by the major Hollywood studio heads following the stock market crash of 1929. Hollywood regulated itself to stave off censorship legislation by the U.S. congress. The Hays Office did our country no harm, but dissolving it has done the U.S. irreparable harm as the entertainment industry has, since then, lowered itself into the gutter. It is time to reincarnate censorship!

Censorship is already employed. The advertisement of liquor and cigarettes is banned from television. Silent Night and other Christmas carols are banned from school "winter" programs – they are called winter programs because the word "Christmas" is censored. Many words offensive to minorities are deemed politically incorrect and, thus, are banned. These censorships are made with good judgment and are not considered violations of the First Amendment. Why then can't we use equally good judgment in our entertainment industry to ban pornography, obscenities and violence that are offensive to God fearing people?

The reincarnation of censorship, some agency similar to the Hays Office, would be a giant step in the right direction. We can only deal with Hollywood's continuing propaganda on social issues and revision of history by continuing to expose it.

It is amazing that our government has figured out how to shield our children from the dangers of prayer in school, but cannot figure out how to shield society from Hollywood's smut and ideology.



Lifestyle Major Behavior Problems Facing Our Teenagers At School

By Niru Prasad

Teen Violence, School Shootings, Cyber-Bullying, Internet Addiction, Bullying, TV Violence & Teen Suicide are some of the major issues that school going teenagers are facing these days of modern era.

Parents, teenagers and communities across the country are concerned with these issues, which are caused by a number of social, cultural, communal, economic, familial and individual factors. While it may be hard to change the nature of the Internet, TV or movies, there is always something that each one of us can do to reduce violence, prevent cyber-bullying and school shootings, reduce the rate of teen suicide and help develop a balanced use of the Internet and online gaming. Following is information about the underlying forces behind these teen issues and actions that each of us can take

Bullying and Violence on TV

What Parents Can Do:

- Learn about the meaning of the Internet for your children.
- Understand that most children do not just sit idly in front of the screen. Most often, they communicate, create, socialize, post photos, explore, listen to music, and learn.
- Understand that most children do not just sit idly in front of the screen. Most often, they communicate, create, socialize, post photos, explore, listen to music, and learn.
- Don't nag, blame, scold, prematurely threaten or demand that they must change.
- Observe your children with open eyes and an open heart.
- Do not discourage the importance of the Internet and other advanced technology as this is the world they are growing up in.
- Be genuinely curious about what draws them to the game.
- Figure out what actual games are played, and how. And the amount of time they spend playing, when and where and with whom.
- Learn how Internet and online games serve your child. What does she or he like about the games? What are the emotional and psychological allures of the games?

What might she or he be trying to avoid by playing the game?

- Try to agree on time limits with your child rather than coming up with your own limits.
- Discuss balance between online and offline activities, weekend vs. weekdays, etc.
- Learn about the rating of games for violence and offensive content.
- ▶ Install parental control when and if necessary.
- Consult with an expert, psychotherapist, or family counselor regarding your concerns.
 - Come up with a plan that includes clear limits on Internet use and consequences if terms of use are violated.
 - Consider a structured online Gamers Support Group which might involve a Harm Reduction type intervention.
 - In more extreme cases, consider residential treatment or outward bound programs (can be very expensive).
 - Violence and sexual crimes against women, children and vulnerable minorities.
 - Cyber-bullying is violence against victims over the Internet and cell phone technologies. This is an unfortunate natural offshoot of participatory digital culture, and must be addressed with the same seriousness of violence in TV shows and games.•

In summary

Violence in the media, whether it is reflected in music, games, cartoons, TV shows or movies, desensitizes children to the effects of violence, legitimizes and glorifies violence and can increase aggressive behavior or, at the least, increases tolerance and acceptance of violent and abusive behavior. After seeing violence on TV, cartoons, and playing violent games, violence offline seems "normal."

What Parents Can Do

- A child's bedroom should be free of TV and video game consoles, so you have control over the amount of time they spend on games and passive activity.
- Monitor the amount of exposure children have to violent movies, TV and video games.

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Problems Facing Our Teenagers

- Don't expose children under the age of 10 to ANY violent content in entertainment (this includes games).
- Watch age-appropriate shows together, as a family.
- Don't turn on the TV before school and turn it off well before bedtime.
- Check **www.movierports.org** for information on violence and sexual content in movies.
- Do not provide free and unmonitored access to the Internet for your child. Children need supervision and training to use the Internet safely. As they grow up, you can supervise them less.
- Keep the conversation active in your family about Internet safety, including cyber-bullying, sexting, gaming and violence online.
- Discuss how the content of media your family encounters does or does not reflect the values of your family.
- Teach your children age-appropriate critical thinking skills.

Violent Video Games & School Shootings



Facts

▶ The U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Army and law enforcement agencies use video games like "Doom" or Nintendo to train their people in the use of firearms.

- ► Lt. Col. David Grossman, a U.S. Army expert on the psychology of combat and author of the book, "On Killing," has illustrated how violent video games, in the hands of children, serve as "murder simulators."
- The 14 years old killer in the Paducah, Kentucky school shooting had never fired a real pistol in his life. Nevertheless he fired eight shots, five of them head shots, the other three upper torso shots, killing 8 children. Where did he get the skill and will to kill? Most likely from violent video games and media violence, pared with a lack of adult guidance.

In summary:

Violent video games can train our children to kill, glorify violence, desensitize them to suffering and legitimize and trivialize violence. One must remember that there are more significant factors, such as child abuse, domestic violence, gangs in the neighborhood, or growing up in a war zone, that are likely desensitize people to violence or increase violent behavior.

What Parents Can Do

• Discuss with your children why they like playing certain violent video games.

- Prevent young children from playing violent video games.
- Replace violent video games with non-violent, stimulating, exciting, educational and interactive video games, which are fun and challenging, enhance knowledge, creativity, curiosity and imagination.
- Work on and support legislation to outlaw the sale/display of violent video games in your community.
- Talk to your children about this issue and discuss your values and concerns with other parents.
- Teach your children how to define their values and how to make responsible choices that reflect them.
- Creating Balance between online and offline and between different kind of games is extremely important.

Facts

- Bullying is an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse. It can be done directly by physical or verbal attacks or indirectly by exclusion, spreading rumors, etc.
- Cyber-bullying is a growing problem among Middle and High School aged students. While it also occurs among College-aged students, for the most part young people have matured past cyber-bullying at that point.
- Bullies seek power through aggression and direct their attacks at vulnerable victims. In-person bullies often lose their popularity in high school and have a high likelihood of having a criminal record as adults.
- Girls are more likely than boys to be cyber-bullies, due to the verbal (non physical) nature of online communication.
- Girls' bullying is focused on social exclusion.
- ▶ 1 in 5 kids report being bullied or bullying. Every 7 minutes, a child is bullied in a school setting.
- ▶ While most teachers believe they always intervene in face-to-face bullying, only 25% of students report they have received teachers' help when they needed it.
- Cyber-bullying is, in many ways, a larger problem than face-to face bullying, for several reasons: Adults and peers are often not in a position to intervene, and victims' hurt is not visible as useful feedback for the bullies to experience as a "reality check." It is far too easy for cyber-bullies to convince themselves they are merely "joking." Some are surprised at the harm they cause, because the abuse did not feel "real."
- Those who are bullied sometimes learn to perpetuate the problem and become bullies themselves, simultaneously or concurrently. This is the cycle of victim-perpetrator that catches so many children and adults.

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Problems Facing Our Teenagers

 LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and intersex) youth are particularly vulnerable to bulling online and offline, due to the largely homophobic culture of mainstream America.

In Summary

Online bullying is a widespread and growing phenomenon, and offline bullying has always been and continues to be a problem. Bullying of all kinds peaks in Middle School and in most cases tapers off by College age, when students are more independent and more mature. Lack of coordination among school staff, parents and students make cyber- and offline bullying a continual threat to young people's confidence and safety.

What Parents Can Do

If Your Child is bullyied in Person

- Teach your child to speak up on behalf of those who are being bullied and against the bullies themselves.
- Teach him/her how to walk away from the bully and how to use assertiveness training. Do not confront the bully yourself.
- Talk with school staff about their policy on bullying and actions they are taking to make schools safe for everyone.
- If your child is bullied online:
- Work with your child to block the offending users.
- Let your child know you support them.
- Meet with school staff and make a plan to combat cyber-bullying.
- ▶ If the situation is serious, talk with the police. Cyberbullying is illegal, and in many states schools have the jurisdiction to provide consequences to bullies even if the abuse did not originate online.

Actions to take if your child is bullied online OR office.

- Demand that the school develop a comprehensive educational policy about bullying.
- Do not settle for the school simply sending the bully and/or the bullied to talk to the school counselor.
- Support and implement, if needed programs and activities that teach and reward acceptance of diversity.
- ➤ If your child is LGBTQI, help them find or start a support group, such as a Gay-Straight Alliance. There is safety in numbers and this can help combat feelings of isolation. Also, importantly, cohesion among students against bullying can change the culture of a school. This is particularly true of cyber-bullying, which is easier to stop than in-person bullying.
- Have your child see a counselor.
- If there is violence in your own home seek help immediately. Stop the cycle of violence by contacting social services.

Violent Culture



Facts

▶ Numerous researches have established the undeniable relationships between militarism, sexism, racism and violence within the culture.

- Principally, there is no difference between the state of mind that seeks to resolve international conflicts by force and the state of mind that seeks to resolve interpersonal or familial conflicts by force and the misuse of power.
- There is a direct link between the way in which we use power with our children, our significant others, our neighbors and our environment and what we teach our children about violence.
- Cultures in which young children regularly receive loving touch have lower incidents of violent crimes.
- Research done with psychiatrically hospitalized adolescents demonstrated a significant reduction of violent and sexual acting out when staff increased the use on non-sexual, affectionate touch with the teens.
- Fear and violent behavior have a direct correlation. Monitor media news presentations that capitalize on creating fear through undue sensationalism and manipulative means.
- In Summary

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Continued from Previous Page Problems Facing Our Teenagers

In Summary

The misuse of power through violent action is taught through and supported by culture. The United States is one of the most violent cultures in the Western world with more crimes being committed with guns and through violent force.

What Parents Can Do

- Get politically involved and find ways to promote more peace and harmony in the world of politics.
- Communicate with your elected officials, network executives, news editors and corporations regarding your opinion related to the perpetuation of violent values through the media.
- Educate yourself about gun control and use your vote to reflect you values.
- Expose your children to diversity and help them to develop empathy.
- Contact the Southern Poverty Law Center for materials and direction to teach tolerance to children in your community.
- Educate yourself with resources, such as of American Psychological Association (APA).
- Discuss this issue with your friends, co-workers, school administrators, children's coaches, teachers, religious leaders, etc.
- Teach and demonstrate peaceful conflict resolution.
- Discipline your children through non-violent means.
- Provide stories, books, movies, etc., that place a high value on treating others with tolerance and respect.
- Create a culture of respect in your home and larger community.
- Speak out against violent injustice.

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The Battle Is On for Chess King

Champion Vishy Anand Challenger Magnus Carlsen



Magnus Carlsen won the candidates tournament on April 1 of this year for the right to face Vishy Anand for the World Chess Championship in November later this year.

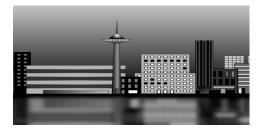
The 22 year old Carlsen and the 43 year old Anand have met many times over the board with Anand holding the advantage. In their last decisive encounter in 2012, Carlsen won a sparking victory over Anand.

Sent your comments to: The THINK Club, P.O. Box 451, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0451 Or email to: letters@thethinkclub.com

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American Scene



Home of the Exceptional

By David Beagan

What is the role of the United States in the world today? Is it still the leader of the world? American exceptionalism says that the U.S. has the specific mission to spread democracy and liberty throughout the world. Is this still true? Before pursuing that question further, let's take a side trip to a seemingly illogical expression that will ultimately shed light on the answer:

The exception proves the rule.

On the face of it, this seems contradictory. An exception disproves the rule, right? I had long ago heard that the real meaning of this was that the word 'proves' was used here in the sense of 'test.' So then, the saying was essentially, the exception tests the rule. But then I came to know the true meaning of this saying. It is not that the exception tests the rule. The real meaning is that the exception implies a rule. The mere fact of an exception means that there must be some rule. An example is in order. Consider a sign that says parking is allowed on Sunday. This implies that parking is not allowed on the other days of the week.

Now consider the U.S. Here are some facts that would seem to disprove present day American exceptionalism. One report last year had the U.S. ranked number 17 in education of its children. (Finland was first and South Korea second.). Many lament the lack of health care for all. With such riches, why can't America meet the medical needs of its citizens?

The U.S. is anxious to make war if the opportunity presents itself. With thousands of troops around the world. the U.S. has been in many skirmishes, as well as, two wars in Iran and one in Afghanistan.

The criticisms seem reasonable but it could also be noted:

1. In the U.S. all socioeconomic classes receive an education. Do other high performing countries achieve academic excellence at the cost of normal childhood development? Are kids burned out before they even get to college?

2. The U.S. spends more per capita on health care by far. We are willing to commit the resources, they just need to be properly directed.

3. What would the world be like without the U.S. there to police it?

Even granting a measure of validity to these criticisms, these exceptions prove the rule. The very fact that these issues are brought up as chinks in the American armor indicates much deeper strengths. The economic engine of the U.S. that has survived a huge problem in 2008. Dare it be said that American ingenuity and creativity is the envy of the world? A socio-political system that is the envy of the world because of the freedom and opportunity it provides.

What are the emerging arenas where America's world leadership will continue? Energy, computers, and war. With a stranglehold on these, that America is the de facto world leader is a fait accompli.

Energy is the necessary element to make the country go. And has in the past been somewhat of an Achilles heel. While there has always been coal and a bit of nuclear to keep the home fires burning, it has been oil where other countries have had the U.S. over a barrel. That is changing. The Department of Energy reported that the U.S. was a net exporter of fuel, for the first time since 1949. By one prediction, it will be a net exporter of oil by 2017. While the techniques for harvesting this oil have some controversy, does America really want to go back to paying others who are against American ideals.

Computers have continued their steady move to become embedded in the fabric of everyday life, in business and industry. The U.S. is the leader in this area which will become ever more important. An emerging battleground has emerged on the computer front. Cybersecurity is now an intellectual battlefield that is here to stay. Drone technology is just one area where computers have enabled a new battle front.

War which is still ultimately a boots on the ground endeavor, is nevertheless transforming into something else. As computer technology, as it does with everything else, plays an ever greater role in the war machine, cyber security will come to prominence on the battlefield. In fact, "battlefield" will become an outdated term -- or will be reapplied to fundamentally different kinds of situations. As the U.S. war machine has turned to squelching terrorism at home and abroad as well as preventing nuclear weapons from getting into the hands of rogue countries, the battlefield is much more dispersed across the globe.

With the energy and computer capability to make peace -- enforce peace if necessary -- the U.S. will lead the world where freedom will ring true for more people than ever before.

Mental Exercise



By David Beagan

Acronyms Deconstructed

NATO is an acronym, each of the letters stands for a word: North American Treaty Organization. Use the following list of 13 words to create three common acronyms. Each word is used in an acronym once.

Acquired	Light
Administration	National
Aeronautics	Radiation
Amplification	Space
Deficiency	Stimulated
Emission	Syndrome
Immune	

The small words like "and" "by" and "of" can be freely added to complete an acronym.

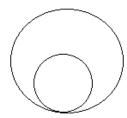
Tribond

Can you think of what these three words have in common?

Pine Kola Brazil

Soap Bubbles

A small soap bubble is inside a large soap bubble. The small bubble's surface just touches the surface of the larger and its edge passes through large bubble's center. If the small bubble contains one cubic inch of air,



how much air is outside the smaller bubble but inside the larger bubble?

Super Memory

Let's say a friend tells you to take a dollar bill from your pocket and read aloud the eight digits of the serial number. Then he tells you to read aloud any seven of the digits in any order. Right away he tells you the missing digit. Now he could have a photographic memory, but there is a way he could have done the trick without memorization.

Mystery Product

A certain company is in a building that seems an odd place for the headquarters of the company. If you went into this building to ask for a demonstration of the product they sell, they could not give a real demonstration of it. But they could demonstrate it in other buildings nearby. Every one of us has used this product.

Word Joining

You can join the word 'out' and the word 'come' to get a second word 'outcome.' Now join the following eight words into four words and create a sentence from them. Feel free to add in the words 'a' 'an' and 'the' to make the sentence.

all
house
over
school
stood
storm
wind
with

Answers

Acronyms Deconstructed

AIDS = Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome LASER = Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Tribond

Nuts: Pine nut, Kola nut, Brazil nut.

Soap Bubbles

Three dimensional objects of the same shape with one being twice the length of the other will have volumes in a ration of 8 to 1 (8=2 to the third power). So the large bubble will have 8 cubic inches – the 1 cubic inch of the small bubble = 7 cubic inches.

Super Memory

As you read the eight digits, your friend simply kept a running total of the numbers in his head. Then as you read the seven digits he subtracted each digit as you read it. His final answer is the number you left out.

Mystery Product

The ABC elevator company is in a single story building.

Word Joining

Overall, the schoolhouse withstood the windstorm.

Publisher's Desk

The Language of Non-verbal Communication!

By Bala Prasad



Imagine that you see two people taking. One is sitting with arms crossed. The other is tapping one foot very fast. How would you interpret their non-verbal cues? Maybe you've heard that actions speak louder than words. What you do may matter more than what you say. It also means that how you say something may matter more than what you say. What you do, and how you say something, is nonverbal language. It is a way of communicating that has nothing to do with the words you speak. Studies reveal that non-verbal communication conveys 93 percent of what you mean to say. In other words, when your expression says one thing and your words another, people believe the body language. We often show our feelings and attitudes through non-verbal cues. Some people believe that nonverbal cues are more reliable than the spoken word as a way of interpreting someone's true feelings or intentions. Certainly, these non-verbal cues help us get the right meaning. For example, body posture and walk tell us a lot about a person. Standing straight shows confidence. Slouching shows insecurity. It also shows disrespect - as if you don't care. Crossing your arms over your chest shows you have a closed mind - that you are uninterested in the opinion of others. It can be viewed as a confrontational stance - as if you are telling the other person, "I don't believe a word you say." It can also mean that you are protecting yourself. Arms at your side show openness.

Walking is body posture in motion. Your walk should be different at home than at work. At work, you should walk quickly – like you are ready and eager to work. At home, your walk should be relaxed, maybe even slower. You should not be in a hurry. Tone of voice tells us a lot about a person's attitude toward the listener, as well as the person's attitude toward a particular subject. For example, your tone of voice can relay that you are bored, or unimpressed. It can also relay skepticism. On the other hand, your tone of voice can express enthusiasm or excitement. Tone shows feelings and it should be constantly changing. We all adopt different tones for different contexts.

Physical distance from another person also tells us something about that person. There is an invisible line that surrounds each of us. We allow people we care about to cross that line. But strangers, or people we are skeptical about, are seldom allowed to cross that line – they're too close for comfort. At work, we probably would not allow too many people to infiltrate our invisible line. In our personal lives, of course, we enjoy hugs and kisses from those we love.

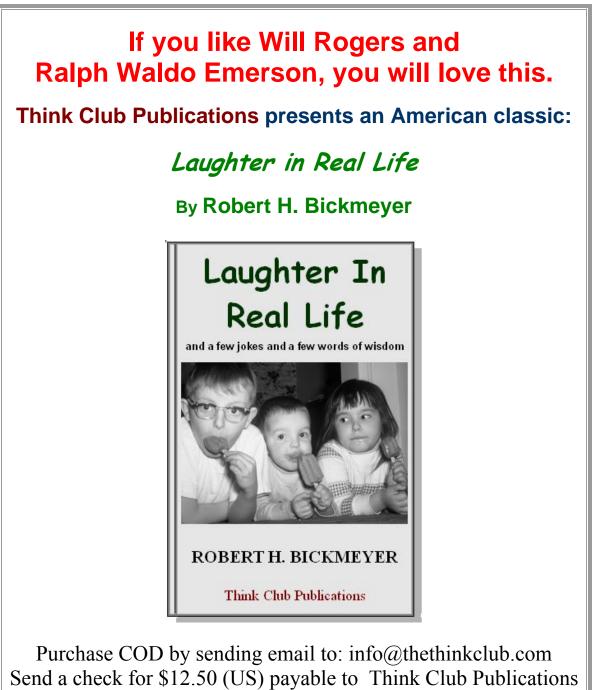
Hand gestures are also symbols. A handshake, in and of itself, is a well-known greeting. Even if we were among people who spoke a foreign language, a simple handshake would make us feel welcomed. A firm handshake reflects confidence, and sincerity, a flimsier one suggest nervousness. Body gestures are also indicators. Shrugging your shoulders tells people you don't know or don't care. Children often shrug their shoulders when parents ask them a question they don't want to answer perhaps out of embarrassment or shame. Of course, children who roll their eyes at their parents are also conveying a message without saying a word! Foot tapping shows impatience. Hands on hips shows frustration. A single nod of the head shows agreement without speaking a word.

Eye contact is an extremely important. When we look another person in the eye, we are telling them to trust us, no matter what we say. Sales people have probably perfected the art of looking people in the eye. It also shows you are interested in the other person. Looking someone in the eye and nodding during conversations tells the other person you want to hear what they have to say. If you can't look somebody in the eye, they will question your motives. They might think you don't care about what they are saying, or that you have something to hide.

You might not realize how much appearance tells others about you. If you wear dirty, sloppy clothes, that may reflect that you don't care – that you have little interest in yourself or the person with whom you are speaking. Employers may not think you will be a good worker. If you wear certain types of clothes, or certain types of jewelry, that may help you identify with certain groups of people, who share your cultural or socio-economic background. Think about how people dress at work. Lawyers wear suits. Doctors wear white coats. These indicators tells us who they are before they speak their first word. I have always believed that you can tell a lot about a person by how polished his shoes are!

A good role model for non-verbal communication is former President Bill Clinton. In his presidential debates, he would often shake his head at his opponent to convey skepticism. Or, he would signal attentive listening by putting his finger on his chin and nodding his head. This body language would also convey Clinton's willingness to consider the ideas he was hearing about. Clinton's hand gestures also conveyed what he was thinking – holding his two hands apart conveyed to the audience that he was serious about the issue he was discussing. Holding his two hands together, almost as in prayer, conveyed is thoughtfulness – or in some instances, his repentance. Next time you are in a gathering with other people, watch their non-verbal cues. And watch your own non-verbal cues as well. Do your cues say what you mean to say? Non-verbal language can easily become a habit for us – so let's make sure we are not giving the wrong impression by it!

Sincerely, Rala Prasad



At PO Box 451, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0451, USA

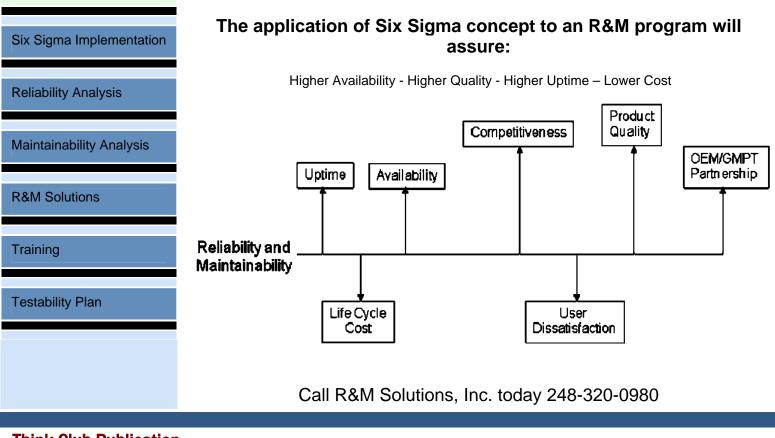
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