

A forum to encourage independent thinking

The Think Club

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Power of Language

Learning from Travel

Book Reviews

Killing Reagan

A Curious Mind

The Education of A Traitor

Humor: A Hero Is Born



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Political Correctness

Political Correctness doesn't change us, it shuts us up.

I believe that political correctness can be a form of linguistic fascism, and it sends shivers down the spine of my generation who went to war against fascism.

Political correctness kills discussion.

The two pillars of 'political correctness' are: a) willful ignorance b) a steadfast refusal to face the truth

I worry that we are approaching a time when that which is shocking is squeezed out by the Stalinism of political correctness.

At one high school down in California, five students were sent home from school for wearing shirts that displayed the American flag on the Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo.

All over the country, the term "manhole" is being replaced with the terms "utility hole" or "maintenance hole".

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, it is illegal for employers to discriminate against criminals because it has a "disproportionate" impact on minorities.

More than 75 percent of the babies born in inner cities are born to unmarried women, yet it is considered to be "politically correct" to suggest that there is anything wrong with that.

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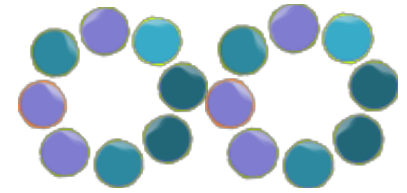
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Editorial



Tolerance in America

By Musafir

When I was leaving India for good in 1974, an average engineer there earned less than 1,800 US dollars per annum (\$1 was equivalent to 8 Rupees at the time). I made less than the average. It was the financial desperation that made me look outwards. I had the option to go to Gulf States, but I couldn't stand the thought of being treated like a second class citizen or losing the right to follow my religion freely.

Africa was out of the question since they were kicking the Indians out of there without mercy. Remember Idi Amin? I avoided England because the Indians in the seventies were looked down upon in Great Britain. My only two options were the United States of America and Canada. I chose the former as it presented a greater potential for fulfilling my dream, live comfortably and do anything that I wanted as long as it was legal to do.

I learned a lot about the intolerance that prevailed in the American past because the American educational system and literature didn't shield me from knowing about the injustice, discrimination and inequality that existed before.

I was shocked to learn about the mob lynching of Mormon founder, Joseph Smith; attempts to block immigrants from Catholic countries; the mistreatment of black slaves; burning of African churches and schools in the south; the federal Chinese exclusion Act of 1882; mistreatment and massacres of the Native Americans; forced internment of 120,000 Japanese by FDR; and denial of voting rights to black Americans and women. The list went on and on.

The abuse of women and discrimination of black Americans at work were very common in the seventies. I remember that women were caressed, pulled in bosses' laps and were subjected to various humiliations.

The black Americans were considered inferior to others. It was common to refer to easy-to-operate devices as 'nigger-proof.'

I saw the changes in the attitude of the Americans during my own life time. None of the above incidents is true anymore. The above mentioned social and workplace practices are not tolerated by the Americans. I have visited

numerous other countries on business and pleasure. I can say with confidence that the United States today is the most tolerant country on earth. I still find slavery in different forms in other parts of the world. It doesn't exist here in these United States.

History is an infinitely complex web of causations. We have only two choices; either obliterate them or obligate them. America chose the former and that is very obvious if we pay attention to the constitutional amendments, Civil Rights Acts and Voting Rights Acts. Here are a few examples:

First Amendment	Freedom of Religion, Press, Speech, Assembly, Petition.
Fourth Amendment	Search and seizures warrants requirements based on probable cause determined by a neutral judge or magistrate.
Thirteenth Amendment	Abolishes slavery, and involuntary servitude
Fifteenth Amendment	Prohibits the denial of the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
Nineteenth Amendment	Prohibits the denial of the right to vote based on sex.
Civil Rights Act of 1875	Barred discrimination in public accommodations and on public conveyances on land and water.
Civil Rights Act Of 1964	Prohibited discrimination in public accommodations, facilities and schools. Outlawed discrimination in federally funded projects.

So what comes next? Should we be satisfied with the progress already made or should Americans work harder to achieve higher goals? A great nation keeps moving forward learning from its past mistakes without agonizing over them.

Commentary



Seven Ways to Reduce Stress, Really

By Anil Shrivastava

I often find articles on ways to reduce stress in our life, which I always find complicated. Books, literature, the Internet and all kinds of gurus-of-the-month are full of suggestions and practices on how to reduce or, altogether, eliminate stress



from life. Aren't we tired of our smart relatives and friends lecturing us about yoga, meditation, Zen practices or going to a retreat in the Himalayas? Most of us have, probably, tried all the above and burnt tens of thousands of dollars in our pursuit of contentment. Despite all that, we still feel like a dog chasing his tail. Unfortunately, no one talks about simple everyday things that one could do to avoid stress and lead a happier life.

I do believe that most of the stressors in our daily lives are unnecessary, and that it can be eliminated by taking some simple steps. It can't be accomplished overnight — I've been eliminating stressors in my life for a while now, and I'm still not done. But I think it's a worthwhile goal.

Here are some steps that I have personally taken to avoid stress and lead a happier life. Yes, in some cases, it may cost some extra money, but haven't we already spent thousands finding happiness?

Avoid standing in line: Standing in line will squash anybody's energy and excitement.

No one wants to waste precious time by waiting. At times it is unavoidable, but here are my best tips to avoid standing in line.

Print out vouchers or tickets ahead of time. Many places not only offer a

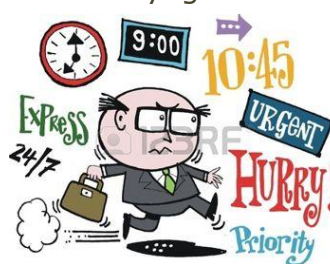
discount for advance purchase, but you will also be able to skip the ticketing line.

Register with the rental car company's loyalty program ahead of time. The programs are free and you can enter your information before you rent your car. This will allow you to skip the line and in most cases head straight to your car.

There are usually separate, shorter check-in lines for members of hotel loyalty programs. As a member there are benefits of a separate check-in line or e-Check-in.

Get as much done on the Internet as possible (if it's safe). Some examples are banking, bill payment, buying books or small gadgets.

Avoid connecting flights: Years ago I used to take connecting flights to save a few dollars. I realized that it was not worth it. One hardly gets enough time to catch the



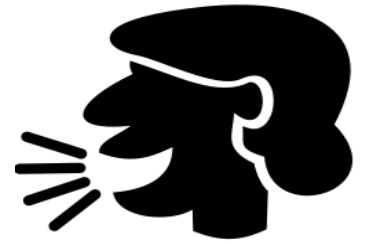
connecting flight. Go to any hub and notice the hapless passengers running to different gates or terminals risking a heart attack. I almost died of a

heart attack in Paris when I had to run for quarter of a mile to catch a flight to Strasbourg. Years later, I had had a similar situation in Minneapolis while catching a connecting flight to San Francisco. I then decided never to do that again.

Connecting flights are also frequently cancelled. It's taxing to get in line and wait for the agent to either assign another flight or ask to return to the airport the next morning. By the time your turn comes, you

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A Hero I Born

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

I think the exact moment Artie figured out that he was a cultural void was on his eleventh attempt to become a hero. He was trying to research Michelangelo when I suggested to him, "Artie, I think Michelob is just as good for the fame you are seeking."

Artie was an art history major. Half the time I had no idea what he's talking about. The only thing I understood was that he wanted to be famous as a hero. The truth was that I worried that someday Artie would be torn between his dream of becoming a hero and the reality of a low IQ.

I suddenly realized Artie's potential and said to him, "Bro, you are frivolous as a 25 dollars gift card from Niemen Marcus. You need a change of direction. There are other ways to become a hero."

"What other ways?" Artie wobbled his head in excitement.

"In order to be recognized as a frivolous hero in America, you need to fulfill two requirements. First, get related to the Kardashians and secondly, do something to deserve a congratulatory phone call from Mr. Obama such as changing your gender, declaring yourself gay or passing out in a brothel," I was drawing a blueprint for his fame.

"That's not possible. Man, an opportunity like that comes only once in a lifetime and Bruce Jenner, now Caitlyn and Odon have already accomplished those feats," Artie looked frustrated, "Moreover, you have to have a minimum worth of two hundred million dollars in order to trap any of the Kardashian chicks."

"Artie, no matter how much I try, you can still be dumb as a rock," I was getting frustrated, "If you don't pay attention to my playbook, you might

actually have to work for a living for the rest of your life."

Artie was scared at the prospect of working for a living, so he decided to pay attention to my plan.

"You can't become hero in a day. Look at Anwar Hadid. He made his mother Yolanda marry David Kardashian. Now, he is about to become an American hero. Eyes closed and face lifted, Artie leaned forward in his lousy seat as he had found the secret of becoming a hero

Artie immediately left for Armenia where he found Kim's long lost auntie. He proposed to marry her and bring her to America with him. Kim's auntie was skeptical first. Artie convinced her when he said, "Look, a chick over fifty-five has a greater chance of being struck by lightning than landing a man. So this is going to be your last chance to riches."

The Kardashian auntie married Artie and thus Artie's journey to fame started. Artie and auntie became frequent visitors to their famous relatives in the US. The news spread like wildfire and they were finally featured on *Keeping up with the Kardashians*.

Artie finally changed his gender and changed his name to Arday. Next, Arday declared herself a lesbian and started an affair with Kaitlyn (Bruce Jenner before the sex change). On an eventful day Arday (Artie before her sex change) got a phone call from Mr. Obama, "Arday, I am proud of your courage. You have set an example for millions of fellow Americans."

Arday (Artie) was an American hero, at last.

Perspective



Power of Language

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

If you do not have a powerful language skill your chances of success in the corporate world are limited. In my career spanning over four decades, I never met a successful senior executive who did not possess a powerful command of spoken English. Language allows us to communicate, but it also allows us to miscommunicate and misunderstand. The same system we use to express our most intimate thoughts can be frustrating when it fails to do so.

Many of the first generation immigrants in the American corporate world are either unaware of this fact or choose to remain in denial. They blame their limited career advancement on discrimination and their foreign accent. The fact remains that neither is true. Unfortunately, the enemy is within us and not without.

Contrary to the popular belief among many immigrants, a Lack of advancement is not limited to the newcomers to America by any measure. If we span across any office in the corporate world, we'll find that majority of the employees do not make it to the upper echelon. Only a few do. Those who make it to the top are generally more eloquent in their enunciation. Since they have more words at their command, they can express themselves more accurately and effectively. Let's not forget that words are the tools of thinking and expressing ourselves.

During the research for this article, I watched interviews and speeches of several American CEOs who were foreign born on You Tube. They all used the choicest words and proper phrases. Indra Nooyi, the Indian born CEO of PepsiCo used the following potent words during the first ten minutes of my observation with emphasis on correct syllables: vicariously (vī-'ker-ē-əs-ly), profound (prə-'faund), sustainable (sə-'stā-nə-bəl), transformation (tran(t)s-fər-'mā-shən), behoove (bi-'hūv, bē), meticulous (mə-'ti-kyə-ləs), environment (in-'vī-rə(n)-mənt). I can go on and on.

Similarly, Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft who is another foreign born used the following: inspiration (in-spə-'rā-shən), opportunity (ä-pər-'tü-nə-tē), unparalleled (ən-'pa-rə-'leld, -ləld),

multidisciplinary (mältē'disəplə,nerē), sensibility (sen-sə-'bi-lə-tē). Again, those are my observations during the first ten minutes of his speech.

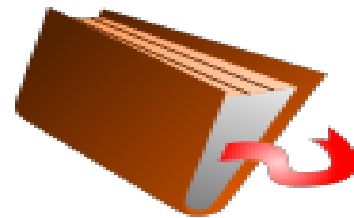
Having proper pronunciation of words is important to make our point across. I have personally come across executives having foreign accents. Jacques Nasser, CEO of Ford and Bob Lutz, Vice Chairman of GM are a few examples who come to my mind. They both were excellent communicators. The problem is that we fail to differentiate between accent and phonetics. Mark Twain said, "I have traveled more than anyone else, and I have noticed that even the angels speak English with an accent."

Not understanding the phonetic structure of a word makes us emphasize on wrong syllables. This can be very confusing to the native listeners whose ears are tuned to certain sounds. Let us examine the word 'perimeter' as an example. Phonetically, the emphasis should be on the following syllables, puh-rim-i-ter. I remember, back in 1985, I had to give a presentation to some General Motors' executives on robot perimeters. I kept on pronouncing the word as Payree-meter. To my embarrassment, the executives didn't know what I was talking about. My boss called time out and took me outside and coached me on how to pronounce it correctly.

Though I am not a fan of using unnecessary cliché, jargons and slangs, we must know how to use them in our communication at the appropriate time to make a point. One should keep away from using lengthy and literary English in business meetings as they don't jive well (pardon the slang) in every situation. Below is list of slangs that people relate more easily in the corporate world. Remember, these are just a few examples. Most of the expressions are industry specific and situation specific. The idea is to make yourself heard and understood.

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Book Review



A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life

Author: Brian Grazer

Publisher: Simon & Schuster 2015 (321 pages)

Grazer describes very interesting anecdotes about Hollywood personalities and his own association with Ron Howard. He presents a great insight about the movies they have produced together such as Night Shift, Splash, Apollo 13, The Da Vinci Code, and Beautiful Mind (2015).

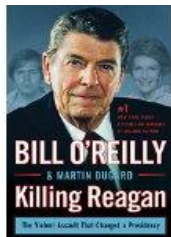
He is very compelling in describing how he managed to get personal audience with great Hollywood producers and other famous personalities. His persuasion is worth emulating. He credits his success to his listening skill, little talking and low expectation. Grazer managed to have interviews with a lot of great personalities including Fidel Castro, Senator John McCain, President Obama, Michael Jackson, Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, Norman Mailer, Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, Jim Lovell, Veronica de Negri, Edward Teller, Carlos Slim, F. Lee Bailey, Gloria Allred, Kate Moss Oprah Winfrey, Princess Diana, and President George W. Bush. He labels all his meetings as "curiosity conversations."

The only weak point of his book is that he forcibly tries to credit curiosity for all his and his acquaintances' success. He makes an uneasy effort to make curiosity a neology. Grazer fails to convince his readers that curiosity is the key to success. He is a great story teller and should have kept the scope of the book to just that. -
Reviewed by Anil Shrivastava "Musafir"

Killing Reagan: The Violent Assault That Changed a Presidency

Author: Bill O'Reilly

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co. (336 pages)



I was shocked to read *Killing Reagan* as the conservative talk show host O'Reilly presents him as dumb, forgetful and a hen-pecked husband of Nancy Reagan. Nancy Reagan is

depicted equivalent to Lady Macbeth, an ambitious woman who used Reagan to achieve the best in life.

Nancy Reagan always consulted horoscope readers and astrologers before taking any decision. As a matter of fact, Nancy ran the country as the clueless and oblivious Ronald Reagan stayed out of touch and confused.

Regan was always snubbed by Nixon who viewed him so dimwitted that he discouraged Regan in joining the Republican Party. When Ronald Reagan went to Brazil, he made a toast to Bolivia. Reagan lost his hearing, but pretended that he could understand the conversation of his advisors. He had an onset of Alzheimer in his second term and was incapable of running the country. His advisor even prepared to ask him to resign, but Nancy insisted on keeping him in the office. She fired Regan's advisors and ran the country on her own whim.

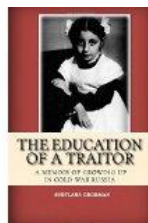
Among the most scandalizing materials in the book are the early sections which show Reagan to be sexually very promiscuous, a callous cad robbing young starlets of their virginity. In the book, his sexual encounters went on not only between marriages but in the early years of his marriage to Nancy — including literally as Nancy was in labor giving birth to their daughter.

Surprisingly, O'Reilly does not mention Reaganomics and trickle-down-effect in much detail. I thought that that was the highlight of Regan's presidency along with the fall of the Soviet Empire. -**Reviewed by Anil Shrivastava "Musafir"**

The Education of a Traitor: A Memoir of Growing Up in Cold War Russia

Author: Svetlana Grobman

Publisher: Musings Publishing. (308 pages)



First, let me just say that I could not put the book down - and it's not just a figure of speech, I really was coming back to it every free moment I had. From the start, I was swept away by the story told by this precocious youngster. The matter-of-fact tone, coupled with sober naiveté and with a good measure of self-deprecating sense of humor took me by surprise, a subdued and serious "wow" kind of surprise. I could

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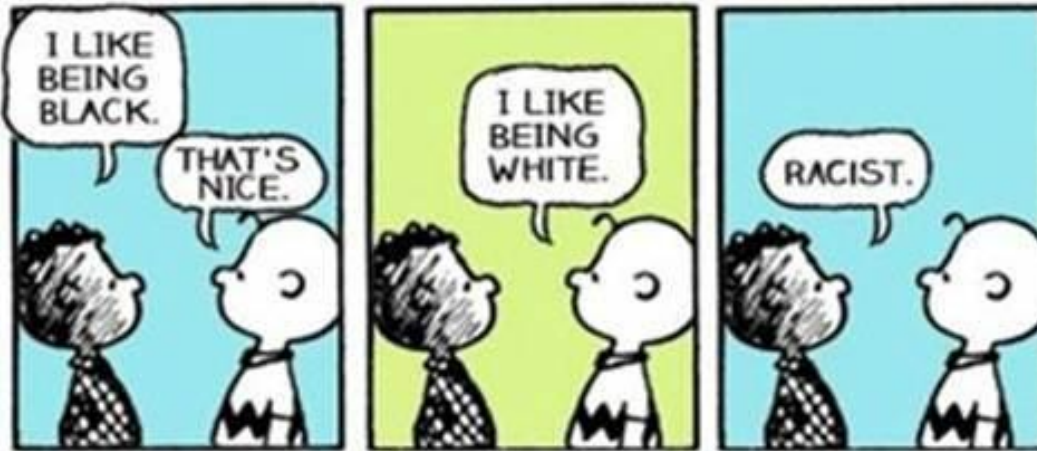
Vis-a-Vis



Stop Whispering and Start Asking

By Roop Raj

"Are you Indian?" Believe it or not, I am asked that question quite often in whispers.



We are so afraid to offend people that we have almost stopped posing questions to others. In my opinion, squashing curiosity and whispering around other people is the opposite of engagement. We need a lot more engagement today than doing delicate dance on egg shells. I feel blessed to have grown up with my immigrants parents. They taught me to ask questions when I didn't understand something. "Ask politely", my mom would remind me. "Treat others like you would want to be treated. "So, I want people to ask questions."

I wasn't afraid of asking my Jewish friends about what the Menorah represented or what Yom Kippur meant to them. My friends would ask me if we really worshipped cows as Hindus.

"No!" I would explain "India was a poor farming country and the cows and their offspring were used to till the fields. They lived on the land with the families and gave milk to the villagers for nourishment. So, they were respected and not killed."

I answered that question back in the early 90's when I was at Troy High School. That was a time when asking questions were allowed. Now, the thought of asking that question would instill apprehension and the fear lest we look prejudiced. How strange is that? It would be insensitive to ask that question, in some people's eyes, but people ask questions because they are curious and not prejudiced.

Our political correctness has gone too far. It's PC on steroids. If we want to learn about each other, we have to start asking questions. We have to stop whispering and start talking. That's where a conversation starts. And that's



where understanding begins. So let's start asking each other about who

we are even at the risk of sounding politically incorrect.

Current Affairs



News and Headlines You Probably Didn't Miss

Compiled by TheThinkClub

Mystery monkey caught on camera scaling Chinese apartment building

CHANGSHA, China, Dec. 1 (UPI) -- A loose monkey being sought by authorities in China's Hunan Province was caught on camera scaling the side of an apartment building to elude pursuers.

UK man petitions to rename railway station after Kanye West

CANTERBURY, England, Dec. 1 (UPI) -- An English man has set out to show his admiration for American hip-hop artist Kanye West by starting a petition to name a local train station after him.

Police: Motorist sipped beer in traffic next to marked patrol car

ORLANDO, Fla., Dec. 1 (UPI) -- Florida police said they arrested a motorist accused of enjoying an ice cold beer in full view of an officer driving in a marked patrol car.

Salmon swim across Washington state road in heavy rain

OLYMPIA, Wash., Dec. 1 (UPI) -- A Washington state motorist captured video of salmon swimming across a road amid flooding from heavy rains.

South Dakota ghost town drops in price to \$250,000

SWETT, S.D., Dec. 1 (UPI) -- The real estate agent seeking to sell the ghost town of Swett, S.D., said the 6.16-acre property dropped in price from \$399,000 to \$250,000.

Canadian brothers rescue bald eagle, snap quick selfie

CHELMSFORD, Ontario, Dec. 1 (UPI) -- Two brothers who came across a bald eagle in a

trap in Ontario, Canada, freed the bird and snapped a quick selfie with the iconic raptor.

Arizona man picks up girlfriend from prison in stolen truck

TEMPE, Ariz., Dec. 1 (UPI) -- An Arizona man was arrested after attempting to pick up his girlfriend from prison in a stolen vehicle.

Australia wins the Netball world championship

It was almost history repeated for the Australian netball team as they met the New Zealand silver ferns once more in a high pressure netball final. Unlike the Commonwealth Games though, this time around after once more going in to extra time, the Diamonds defeated their arch nemesis.

7 reasons why women cheat

You've probably heard that men cheat for physical reasons, women for emotional reasons. Sure, there's some truth to that, but when we asked real women around the country to share why they strayed from their boyfriends, we learned they had a whole host of explanations -- from bad kissing to sheer revenge. Read on for the truth about why women have given in to temptation.

Why do fingers wrinkle when they get wet?

We know you've asked yourself that question in the headline and common knowledge dictates that the reason your fingers look like prunes when you're in water for too long is that the skin absorbs water.

Former Clinton intern becomes a porn star.

Azerbaijan wins Eurovision Song Contest

A Strained Relationship Eases Between Kobe Bryant and Philadelphia

Point

Iran Nuclear Deal Is Good for the US

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

The United States entered into negotiations with one prevailing goal: to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. After months of negotiations, we now have an agreement that will do just that. The deal severely restricts Iran's nuclear program to only energy-grade enrichment, eliminates much of the country's uranium stockpile, retires most centrifuges and gives International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors more access in Iran than in any country in the world. Most importantly, under this deal, Iran can never have a nuclear weapon.

Iran conceded to these terms after the success of crippling international sanctions. Relief from those sanctions will be introduced gradually, only after Iranian compliance is verified. And should leaders fail to comply at any point, those sanctions will automatically snap back into place.

The sanctions' effectiveness depended on a coalition that included China and Russia. The agreement is deemed positive by all members of the coalition, China and Russia are unlikely to simply return to business as usual. The formation of the P5+1 negotiating countries — China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, plus Germany — was a unique historical moment.

There is simply no acceptable alternative to this deal. It's why, despite all the criticism, no viable substitute has been offered. No one likes working with enemy nations, but deals like these aren't necessary among friends. It's understandable that much of the apprehension over these negotiations has to do with Iran's history, and certainly, the past must be taken into account — it's also why there is such high emphasis on verification. But we must not allow history to be the obstacle in working toward a better, more peaceful future.

These choices are never easy, but after more than a decade of groundwork, the best and right path is now clear.

Counterpoint

Iran Nuclear Deal Is Not Good

By Bala Prasad

In my opinion Iran should not have nuclear weapon for two main reasons.

First, spread of mass destructive weapons can never be justified, and leaving these weapons in the hands of dictators should never be allowed. People who have followed Iranian politics for last half century should remember that it has always been bloody and brutal. It was so in the time of the Shah and it continues to be so today. Their leaders' rhetoric against the world and brutal suppression of their own people is surpassed in its harshness only by North Korea.

Second, you cannot put more power in the hands of a bully with checkered past, especially when he is answerable to no one. Some people might say that the present President Mr. Rohani is less strident than his predecessor Mr. Ahmadinejad. But nobody should be fooled by the splitting of hair. Real power is, and will remain, with the supreme leader Mr. Khamenei and there never has been any suggestion that he is a wilting rose.

And then there are peripheral developments. We are awash in news that Saudi Arabia is in the market for nuclear arms. This desire will certainly increase many folds if their religious — and thereby political — archrival manages to have one. Where will it stop? Eventually dictators from all over the world will want them. And when countries that have nuclear materials or nuclear know-how are disintegrating, how difficult can it be for the desirous parties to acquire them? Look at Pakistan. With real power in the hands of the generals, and poverty so horrendous, how long can they safeguard their nuclear weapons against the might of Saudi financial overture? This is how the Iranians got them to start off with.

People might say that Iran has done no serious damage to the USA, so why oppose their desire to have anything they want? Why be the policeman of the world? Remember, we are the major benefactors when disaster strikes any part of the world. Furthermore, Iranian bombs are more able to hit other places on the face of the earth before reaching us. An obvious target will be Israel. Not too far behind will be countries that are inhabited by different religious sects than Iranians.

All these points are moot. Iranians will never have a bomb that they can deliver, the Israelis will see to it. They'll do whatever it takes to deny Iran nuclear power because their survival depends on it. After all, they did not allow Iraq of Saddam Hussein to have nuclear power for the same reason.

Useless Historical Facts



When Albert Einstein died, his final words died with him. The nurse at his side didn't understand German.

The Nobel Prize resulted from a late change in the will of Alfred Nobel, who did not want to be remembered after his death as a propagator of violence - he invented dynamite.

When George I became King of England in 1714, his wife did not become Queen. He placed her

The magic word "Abracadabra" was originally intended for the specific purpose of curing hay

The British did not release the body of Napoleon Bonaparte to the French until twenty days after his death.

John Glenn, the American who first orbited the Earth, was showered with 3,529 tons of ticker tape when he got back.

Catherine the First of Russia, made a rule that no man was allowed to get drunk at one of her parties before nine o'clock.

Julius Caesar wore a laurel wreath to cover the onset of baldness.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, never phoned his wife or his mother, they were both deaf.

Queen Victoria was one of the first women ever to use chloroform to combat pain during childbirth.

Sir Winston Churchill rationed himself to 15 cigars a day.

The word 'denim' comes from 'de Nimes', Nimes being the town the fabric was originally produced.

Marie Currie, who twice won the Nobel Prize, and discovered radium, was not allowed to become a member of the prestigious French Academy because she was a woman.

It was quite common for the men of Ancient Greece to exercise in public .. naked.
Iceland is the world's oldest functioning democracy.

Adolf Eichmann (responsible for countless Jewish deaths during World war II), was originally a traveling salesman for the Vacuum Oil Co. of Austria.

The national flag of Italy was designed by Napoleon Bonaparte.

In 1849, David Atchison became President of the United States for just one day, and he spent most of the day sleeping.

Lifestyle



The Use and Abuse of Cell Phones Among Teenagers

By Niru Prasad



As time progresses, the use of cell phones have become a part of our life among all age groups. The mobile phone has become the favored communication toy for the majority of American adolescents. Cell-phone texting has become the preferred method of basic communication between adolescents and their peers, with cell calling a close friend. Here are some statistics about adolescents and texting (DisciplineForTeens.com., n.d.):

- *typically send and receive 60 text messages a day*
- 15% of adolescents who are texters send more than 200 texts a day, or more than 6,000 texts a month
- Males typically send and receive 30 texts a day; females typically send and receive 80 messages per day
- Half of adolescents send 50 or more text messages a day, or 1,500 texts a month, and one in three send more than 100 texts a day, or more than 3,000 texts a month

- Older females who text are the most active, with 14-17 year-old females typically sending 100 or more messages a day or more than 3,000 texts a month
- Adolescent texters ages 12-13 typically send and receive 20 texts a day

Advantages of Using Cell Phones

Some advantages of using cell phones are:

- This is a good way to connect with your family, friends, and children.
- In case of emergency one can always contact the police.
- If somebody is experiencing an acute medical emergency, emergency medical services can be reached.
- If teenagers are involved in a motor vehicle incident.



Disadvantages of Using Cell Phones

Some of the disadvantages of using cell phones are:

- Mobile phone use while driving may cause accidents due to inattention and blindness.

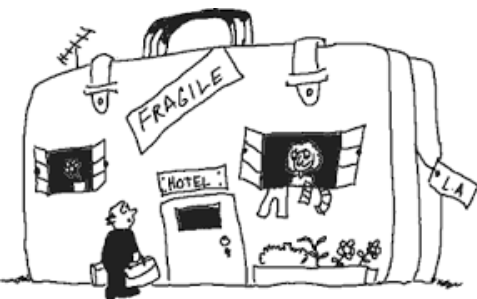
Continued on Page 16

Seven Ways to Reduce Stress

are totally exhausted. If it's a late evening flight, you have to pay for your own accommodation. The airlines usually find excuses such as weather related delays to brush off their responsibility. Additionally, there is the hassle of calling hotels, finding a good rate, taking shuttle to the hotel, packing, unpacking and then packing again to catch the plane early in the morning. Imagine going through security again.

Even if all goes well, there is a good chance that you'll lose your baggage. The whole experience will certainly make you sympathetic to the Syrian refugees.

Avoid living out of a suitcase: This is another stress creator.



When I plan travel, I make sure that I stay at a place for at

least 4 days before moving to another destination. Lifting suitcases, looking for clothes and toiletries and packing, unpacking every day can take years off one's life and fun out of travel.

Avoid misplacing things: Misplacing things can be very frustrating especially when one has to rush to get somewhere. It's very common to misplace keys, glasses, pen and medicines. The solution is to make sure that you have a definite place to store each item where you can find them when needed. This needs discipline. For example, I know that I will keep my pen, glasses and cell phone only at certain places in my home. I have a place for everything. I go an extra length to make sure that they are at the right place even if it means waking up in night and walking to my car, in case I left them there.

Avoid rushing to an appointment: This is another source of stress. I always reach to my appointment place at least ten minutes before the scheduled time. I mean at the place of meeting not the parking lot.

It can be traumatic to rush to the appointment and run to the office to find out that you missed it altogether. You should also provide margins for traffic jams and detours.

Avoid changing service providers: I have no tolerance for strangers working in my home. I feel ill at ease as I have to be always on guard and being on their beck and call. I can't stand drilling and reshaping my walls every month or so. Moreover, I don't feel comfortable in my own home when the strangers gaze at me while I try to mind my own business.

Changing service providers frequently adds strain to living only to realize later that the previous provider was not that bad. Moreover, there is always a learning curve involved in operating a new system. By the time one gets familiar, it's time to change the provider again. Such people go through this gyration every so often and choose to live with anxiety.

Avoid arriving in an unfamiliar town after dark: It is always unsafe to arrive after dark in an unfamiliar territory. Things can get worse, if English is not spoken there. This happened to me in Barcelona, Zurich and Toulouse. The taxi drivers did not speak English in those places. I couldn't communicate with them and I had no idea where they were taking me at night.

I don't believe that a stress-free life is possible, but by carefully avoiding pressure situations and changing certain habits, we can soften the blow. May peace be with you!

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Power of Language

Business Lexicon	Descriptive Meaning
Key take away	The actual point is
Action items	List of tasks to be done
Key competencies	Skill levels of people
Bring to the table	Provide supporting information
Circle back	Talk about this later
Drill down	Find a solution
Leverage	Use a finding to get more
Low hanging fruit	Get first what is more beneficial
Piggyback	Combine efforts with other projects
Seamless	It will work without difficulty
Stakeholder	A person or a group concerned
Synergy	Work together to get results
Bang for the buck	Benefit from the effort
Ramp up	Increase the speed of work
Game changer	Changing the current methodology
Show stopper	Obstacle that will ruin the project
Food chain	Standing in the organization
Value added	Does have benefit
Unsustainable	Not possible to continue or maintain

Not using proper prepositional phrases or not using them at all is a big drawback in spoken English. Prepositional phrases convey the meaning eloquently and are easy on ears. I have noticed that the newcomers to the United States are mostly void of this skill. I have heard expressions like, "increase the heat or air condition" or "Don't see directly" instead of saying "turn up the heat" or "look away." As a result, we mostly get stuck or stutter when it comes time to express

ourselves. We should be using prepositions like around, away, down, in, into, off, on, out, over, and up with verbs more often.

We also must be familiar with certain Latin and French words and phrases to add color to our spoken English. In my opinion, using Latin and French words (and pronouncing them correctly) is equivalent to highlighting words in a written communication. Here is a list of some Latin words that are used in the corporate world (Ref. The 20 Best Latin Phrases for Business Leaders, Forbes, August 7, 2013).

Bona Fide: In good faith

Caveat Emptor: Let the buyer/seller beware

Ibidem: In the same place

Ne Plus Ultra: Nothing more beyond

Per Se: Through itself

Post Hoc: After this

Pro Rata: For the rate

Q.E.D: What was to be demonstrated

Sanctum Sanctorum: Holy of holies

Vox Pop: Voice of the people

Here is a list of essential French terms used in American businesses:

à propos: Regarding or concerning

avant-garde: Cutting edge

Cache: A collection of items stored in a hidden place

carte blanche: Unlimited authority

Clique: A small exclusive group

Fait accompli: Accomplished fact

Faux pas: False step

Forțe: Strong point

Impasse: A situation offering no escape

Laissez-faire: Freedom in business

savoir-faire: Know how to do

tête-à-tête: Private conversation between two people

vis-à-vis: Face to face

Again, one size doesn't fit all. Every specialty has its own terminology. The lawyers, engineers, doctors, all speak their own language. We must pick up the popular words used and understood in our own professions. We are coming out into a tough and tangled world. Those who are well equipped will survive. An intelligent argument, will give you a better chance of success. In such a challenge, a sharply accurate knowledge of the correct expression is invaluable.

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American Scene



Being the Best

By David Beagan

I have always remembered a story about a dirt-poor Apalachian individual. When asked why he thought he was better than his black neighbors said, "If we can't be better than them, who can we be better than." This stark admission plainly reveals what I think is among the most fundamental aspects of human nature. No, not racism, but something even more fundamental. Everyone has a basic psychological need to be better than someone. And the more people you are better than, the more rewarding it feels.

The existence of this need brings understanding to a variety phenomena of human behavior, and yet I don't ever remember reading or hearing about it as such. I as far as I know, there is no name for this.

It reveals itself in countless little details of life. From Garrison Keillor's tongue in cheek description of Lake Wobegon as a place where, "... all the children are above average" to the highest form of compliment, "he is one of the best players in the world." Remember the license plate, "My kid is an honor student." Then there were the plates in response, "My kid beat up your honor student" and "my dog is smarter than your honor student."

People say, "What is unique about my story is ..." followed by whatever the speaker thinks makes them special. This is just another way of thinking of oneself as better than others.

In television shows, you routinely see one or more characters who play the stooge. We like that because we know we are smarter than the stooge. We know we are better than the stooge. This brings us comfort and makes us feel good. Apparently, scriptwriters instinctively know this and frequently use it to good advantage to make shows popular.

On the other side of the coin, people react negatively to someone who has an unfounded air of superiority. "You think your better than me," said with a healthy amount of disgust is an oft heard phrase.

This need to be better than someone extends to one's larger social units. I remember seeing a scene in a television program where a grandfather had a heart to heart talk with his granddaughter after she had been in trouble for some bad behavior. He told her, we are Bravermans (family name) we don't act that way. He was invoking family pride

of being better than all those families who accept that kind of bad behavior.

Turning to the arena of sports and games, how can we account for their popularity? For most, the act of winning is an arbitrary accomplishment. Winning a ball game, prevailing in a board game, becoming the champion of anything is not of any intrinsic value. Yet

the legendary Vince Lombardi said, "Winning isn't everything, it is the only thing." And Bobby Fischer famously said on the Dick Cavette show, "I like the moment when I break a man's ego."

Sport is intensely popular because it gives you a chance to chase after the opportunity to beat an opponent demonstrating for a time your superiority. Not only that, but we can vicariously be winners by identifying with our favorite sports team. When our team wins the championship we are not just better than somebody, our team is better than all the others -- a whole city can spontaneously erupt in joyous celebration. The fact that the competition doesn't always pay off with a win, sometimes we lose, just further strengthens the drive to participate because as we know from behavioral conditioning, a behavior that is only sometimes rewarded is most strongly reinforced.

The basis of the most successful economic system ever owes its success to the need to be better than someone. In capitalism we yearn to compete, to win. At the most basic level we work to satisfy the basic needs of food, shelter, and health, but after that capitalism provides a chance to "beat the other guy."

In the United States long struggle with racism, there are certainly many reasons for its dogged persistence. But I think that perhaps the strongest reason for its persistence is that it provides a ready and convenient group for people to feel superior to.

Undoubtedly this drive to be better than others has strong survival value. Throughout the evolution of mankind, this trait was strengthened and reinforced because it drove people to do more to survive. But I can't help but wonder, wouldn't each of us be happier if we could overcome this. If our sense of well being was based more consistently on the simple things in life regardless of how that measures up against someone else?

Montague: So you say you are better than me?

Capulet: In fact, I do.

Montague: You lie!

Shakespeare, "Romeo and Juliet"

- Cell phone conversation distracts the driver's attention, increase reaction time, and reduce visual field attention
- Memory of visual inputs and response will be drastically reduced if the cognitive load increases when using cell phone along with driving.
- The same negative effects may also happen if the driver uses a hands free phone.
- Texting while at school, in the classroom or at home has recently become a major problem for parents as well as the students because they start lacking in school assignments.
- A lot of car accidents are due to the use of cell phones while driving.

Advice for Teenagers

Here is some advice parents can provide to their teenagers:

- Talk together as a family regarding cell phone over use and cyber bullying.
- Contact your child's school regarding blocking web sites that are not appropriate for teenagers.
- Set guidelines on when your child can use their cell phone.
- Parents can purchase a pre-paid cell phone and have their child pay for their share of the bill. Parents can always take the phone away if the rules are not followed.



Continued from Page 7

Book Review

relate to a lot of it (growing up at that same time in the Soviet Union), yet some of it was an alarming and disconcerting news to me - which just shows how much some of us didn't know about the treatment of Jews in those days. I felt overwhelmed by the fact how well Svetlana Grobman remembers her childhood, with all its milestones, with its understandable rebellion against her parents - trying to fathom the harsh realities of Soviet life as it related to her Jewish heritage, trying to delve into the forbidden history by questioning her grandparents; how her eyes slowly open and she perceives the seemingly unperceivable.

Even before I opened the book, its title jumped at me: the word "traitor" is so infused with potent meaning - we were all traitors if we decided to leave Soviet Union, for it was drilled into us that we were given free education and thus had to "repay" the country by never leaving... But in Svetlana's case this word takes on a much more explicit significance. Many of the episodes in the book were so poignant that it made my heart ache. But one of the most delightful was the experience at the Concert Hall - loved it. The description of the Soviet hospital - another very true-to-fact (yet far from delightful) example. Svetlana Grobman seems to have a knack for cleverly pinpointing the essence of things. A moving memoir. Loved it.

-- Reviewed by Irene Rudra

Mental Exercise

By David Beagan

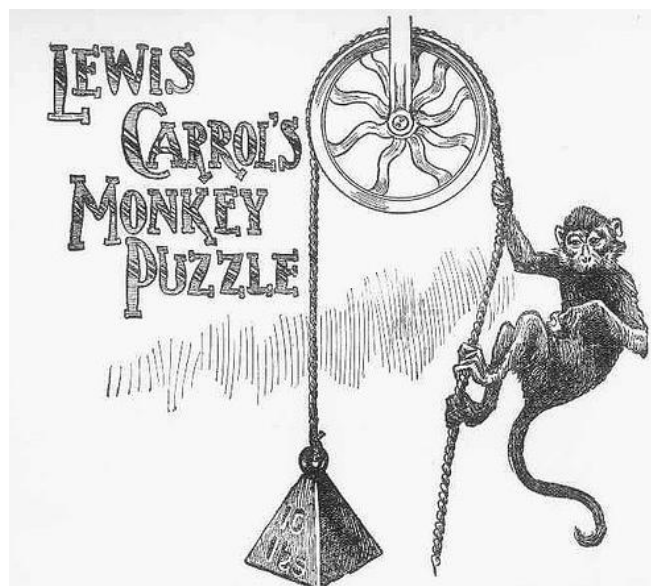


Cubic cubes.

You have eight cubes stuck together to make a large cube. There are many ways to break it into two pieces. For example, one way is to simply take a single cube out leaving the other seven behind. How many different ways are there? Only count the ways that result in two different pieces.

Drawing Straws

Four people draw straws each in turn. Whoever draws the long straw wins a prize. The first one to draw has a 1 in 4 chance of getting the long straw. If the first one doesn't get it, the second person's chances increase to 1 in 3, and so on. Question is, is it better to draw first, last, or no difference?



Rope Monkey

A rope passes over a pulley. On one end of the rope is a steel weight, on the other end of the rope hangs a monkey of the same weight as the steel weight. If the monkey starts to climb up the rope, does the weight go up or down or stay the same?

Wine Cost

Cork, bottle and wine costs 49 dollars. The bottle costs twice as much as the cork. The wine costs twice as much as the bottle. How much is the wine?

Sphere and Cube

A sphere and a cube of the same volume are sitting on a level table. Which one reaches a greater height?

Answers

Cubic cubes.

There is just one way to remove a single cube, whichever corner you remove it from the two resulting pieces are the same. Similarly, there is just one way to remove two cubes from the large one. The same for removing three cubes. Finally, there are three ways to split it into two pieces of four cubes each. This gives a total of six ways to break the large cube into two pieces.

Drawing Straws

There is no difference to drawing first or last. Imagine all four drawing straws, but they don't look at them yet. At this point, each person has a straw. Is there any advantage to being the first or last one to look? No.

Rope Monkey

When the monkey pulls the rope, the other end with the weight is now pulled upward by the monkey's weight its climbing force. The monkey is only pulled downward by its own weight, w , though, so the net force is upward. Therefore the weight will accelerate upward. The monkey is pulling down on the rope hard enough to pull itself up. This pulling action increases the effective weight of the monkey. The tension in the rope increases just enough to cause the weight to rise at the same rate as the monkey.

Wine Cost

The wine is 28 dollars.

The bottle is 14 dollars

The cork is 7 dollars.

Sphere and Cube

The answer that the sphere reaches a greater height can be intuited by understanding that a sphere of the same height as a cube fits inside the cube with room left over. This can be verified by calculation. Assume a volume of 1, which means the cube has a height of 1. From the formula for the volume of a sphere we can derive the calculation for the radius of the sphere: $\text{cube root of } (3/4/\pi) = 0.62...$ which is doubled to get the diameter of 1.24....

Publisher's Desk

American Criminal Justice System

By Bala Prasad

The American criminal justice system over the last 500 years can be divided into the Colonial Period (17th and 18th century), the Republican Period (from revolution for next hundred years), and the last hundred years. At no time was the criminal justice system an application of abstract principle but rather it was reactive to social structure and social norms. Public punishment was a necessary commitment of that philosophy. Public shame and redemption was more common than incarceration. Colonial justice system reaffirmed the community's religious aims and reflected popular culture.

The Industrial Revolution, which resulted in decline of homogeneous community, did away with colonial restrictions and resulted into alternate mode of social control. Enlightened political philosophy transformed the criminal justice system. A desire for human punishment replaced the desire for public retribution. By early 19th century, incarceration had replaced almost every other kind of punishment. The police force and the prosecutors were also a social invention of the period.

Subsequently social mobility greatly contributed to the climate of reform. Race, gender and class also had a profound impact on actions considered criminal, but slowly a higher level of gender and racial fairness came to the forefront. However the criminal justice system has always been and will always be marginal and cannot compete with the culture of the time. Crime problems flow mostly from the culture. It is part of us; our own society produces it - just like it produces the different political leaders at

different time. Both crime and criminal justice system are rooted in the society and move in tandem. It is part and parcel of the fabric of our society, and we are likely to move right along.

The crime and misery it brings both to the perpetrator and victim is a high price to pay for the liberty and prosperity of the society. Sometime justice is unfairly distributed; the crime always unfairly committed.

What propelled me to write this article was a news account that I read. A young woman was caught and convicted of a \$2,500 insurance scam. The judge gave her 5 years' probation. Since then, she has applied for jobs but never been hired because of the above mentioned felony conviction. The judge gave her the sentence he thought was fair. She did serve the sentence. The moral, ethical and judicial question arises - once she has fulfilled all that was imposed on her by the judge, does the society or the government have the right to deny her the opportunity to make a living? The lady took her case to the judge and he decreed that no one should have right to legally prevent anybody from making a living. Now the U.S. Justice Department is taking this case to a higher court asking for a reversal. Granted there are different degrees of felony - a first-degree murder conviction is different than the above case. But should there be situations in life, if you are barred from even simply a job like a health care giver, where for all practical purposes you can be incarcerated for your life?

Sincerely,

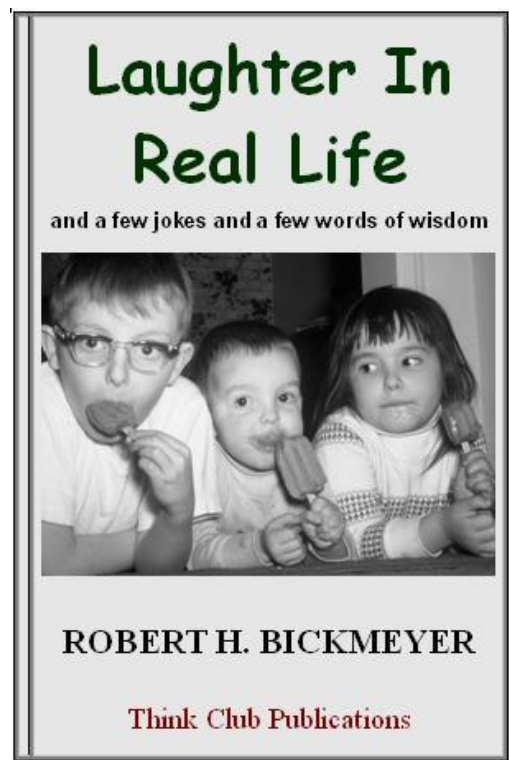
Bala Prasad

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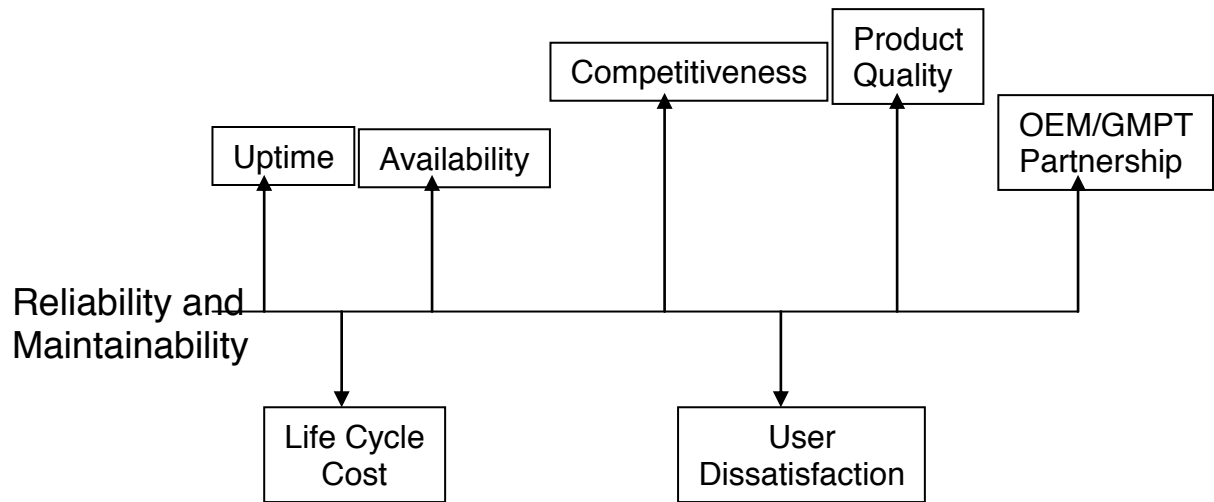
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