

Complexity Resists Control – So Become More Complex

Have you ever tried to use finely instrumented computer? Fly a plane? Manage the sound mix of 20 microphones at a live concert?

What about hitting a nail with a hammer?

All of these activities involve the use of tools, but the first three are far more complex than driving home a nail.

Complexity makes control more difficult. This is true with physical tools, and it is also true with humans.

The first three tools I mentioned are so complicated because they involve many, many parts, while a hammer can very easily be broken down into its components. Like simple tools such as hammers or levers, “simple” people are people who are one-dimensional. Sadly, they are prone to manipulation by people who are good at taking advantage of their patterns.

If you wish to not be controlled, you should aim to become as complex, as complicated, as nuanced, and as difficult to categorize and understand as possible.

Your sources, resources, inspirations, ideas, influences, and origins should boggle the minds of every would-be manipulator and authoritarian in the world.

How can you do this?

Speak more than one language. Adopt more than one culture. Heed the words of multiple wisdom traditions and religions. Read lots of books (some from obscure authors). Soak yourself in histories of yesterday and long ago.

Don’t limit yourself to one career (or source of income). Don’t stay in one place for too long – or, if you do, don’t maintain just shallow relationships. Don’t associate with just one kind of person or viewpoint.

Don’t take the same paths. Grow. Expand. Try new things. Evolve faster than them.

As the poet Wendell Barry wrote:

***“Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.”***

- *Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front*

Or as Carl Jung once said:

“Resistance to the organized mass can be affected only by the man who is as well organized in his individuality as the mass itself.”

- *The Undiscovered Self*

Originally published at JamesWalpole.com.