

Imprinting, Taxing, Fearing



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"Finding the Challenges" is an original bi-weekly column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science and self-ordering phenomena. Archived columns can be found here. FTC-only RSS feed available here.

We are all alike, putting our pants on one leg at a time, breathing, eating, hearing hoofbeats, sleeping, procreating, escaping, succumbing, aging, dying. But this is only the physical. There is also the logical extent of each of our existential beings, that which by nature makes us all different. How do we get that way? Why are we afraid? Why are we afraid not to comply with the wishes of the other?

This week we will talk about the irrefutable fact that we are individuals, not a close order drill unit. We will touch on the current stink about the IRS, but we will see that the more of it that is revealed, the more it is the same old, same old. And we will examine the overarching, irresistible part of our being that is fear - what can we do about it?

Imprinting

When I engage a classroom full of learners, I try to make sure they see the basic dichotomy between the physical and the logical. Any system can be described physically by describing its people (roles), hardware, software, data, procedures, and communications. Every system has these, and everything is a system.

But each system has traits that make it different from every other system, increasingly different from even the replica set from which it comes. Two identical pick-up trucks roll off of the assembly line on one day. One came off at 2 pm, the second at 4pm. One is shipped to Nashville and the other to Las Cruces, NM. The first is bought by a country music star. The second is assigned to a traveling salesperson. And so forth and so on.

Everything from the day of the assembly line has conspired to make these identical trucks become different from one another. In human beings, the conspiracy begins sometime in the past of the ancestors of the parents of the human being. I will admit that the idea of cloning a Hitler, for instance, makes for a great thriller as with The Boys from Brazil. But

hardly anything could be farther from the likely truth.

The history of a human being is the logical description of that individual human being system. Who, what, when, where, why, how, how much, how many? Every person is a different who from combinations of other whos, arriving in the world at a unique time and place, already like a snowflake in his variety but unlike any other snowflake that has ever been. In fact, there is much more likelihood of two snowflakes being alike than there is of two humans.

Any human being lives a life of uniqueness. To deny any human being her uniqueness, her individuality is to blather like a fool against the inevitability of individuals. To cram people into packets and to school them on the common good is a vile crime against the obvious natural order. To put weapons in their hands and tell them they must kill their kin is an abomination.

There is an African proverb that holds that when a man dies, a library dies with him. That is only the smallest part, folks.

A few days ago, on the Internet, I was in a discussion with other people from the southeastern part of the USA, the part known for better or for worse as the Old South. Most of us in the discussion were from here (Kentucky for me) or had originated here. We all admitted that we were aware of the problems, foibles, and eccentricities, but we also expressed a deep love.

Then someone theorized that it was "imprinting." The child psychologist knows that very young children are learning machines and thus are deeply imprinted by their environment - they learn what they experience. As I began to think about that, I also thought about the things in later years that had nearly as large an effect on the formation of myself.

I was certainly affected by being born in Chattanooga, TN - to this day I love hilly towns with lots of vegetation and a deep green river through it. And I moved away from Chattanooga when I was four. But when I went back for the first time 50 years later, I knew my way around. So imprinting makes a lot of sense.

The encyclopedia I read about imprinting, however, stopped theorizing at early childhood. I think, however, that it goes on, for the rest of life. I was deeply affected by the next 18 years in Central Kentucky, and the summers that I always spent in Boston, MA with my mother's family. I was affected by my wife from Cincinnati and our time living there for my first job out of school, and for our becoming parents.

After that I was like a sponge at my job in Illinois, where I traveled much but had a tremendous and intense exposure to Chicago. And our second child and first owned home was part of that time.

Thirteen years later, after making another home in Denver, CO and another on a return to Kentucky, I lived in New York City, in central Manhattan, for 3 months. Each of these stops formed a major part of my psyche. There are other stops. A month at an Air Force base in Central Ohio, various summer jobs in various places, trips to new places in and out of the country have all made parts of me that I cannot be without.

Now, having seen my 70th year, enjoying our 8th year on a beautiful wooded farm, falling in love with my family more and more every day, learning to be a grandfather and a great-grandfather, I don't sense a stop in the imprinting. But I am in control. No matter how hard the priests of the power structure seek to convince me otherwise, there is no one else who could have gotten me to this point in my life. Others have surely helped and hindered. There are universal truths, but I am the pilot of this vessel.

Imprinting happened everywhere and at each time. It is the most common thing about people that they are wildly different from one another. Imprints are like dynamic fingerprints. Do not discount this, for yourself or for anyone else you may meet. Our greatest strength is in our uniqueness, far advanced from our ability to work in a collective of unexperienced, homogenized drones.

The Taxman Comes

It looks like I am going to have a rant about taxes in every column, but why not? Taxes are no more appropriate to a voluntary life, than would be paying organized crime for "protection," or giving the bully your lunch money every day at school.

Furthermore, there is a definite tie-in with the idea of imprinting. Wasn't income tax just like the wallpaper in the room where you had to take your nap when you were a toddler? And most of us started out with part-time jobs in school, where we had very little tax withheld and we got most of it back just by doing a little paperwork. We were like the frogs in pans of cool water on the stove. As children we saw our role models paying taxes without much fuss, and as young adults we were inured to a minor inconvenience.

But I'll tell you something else into which we were lured: the crooked political side of the tax masters. Part of the propaganda slant is that the last few weeks' revelations about the IRS's picking political winners and losers is the feigned horror as if this were something new and completely inconceivable under a public trust.

Read about the careers of Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and George Bush 43, then get back to me about the integrity used in deploying the IRS wrecking ball. The only qualities that exceed the malevolence of the Taxman are his incompetence and his willingness to serve underhanded aims of his master.

We are observing, not celebrating, the 100th anniversary of the income tax amendment to

the U. S. Constitution. The first ill-intentioned act of income taxation was the enactment itself – it was targeted at the rich, mostly to soak those whom we all love to hate, but also to make the rest of the sheep feel as though the taxman was still a good taxman for them. And to sweeten the pot, the first outright tax lie of the 20th Century was along for the ride – this income tax was to be repealed after the Great War was over. Surprise! Is the Great War still on? Why, yes, as a matter of fact, it is. Again, the frogs were tossed into the still-cool stew-pot.

Once you have convinced the governed that tax is necessary, you can move along to different story lines. After all, just having access to the wealth of the nation is not enough. You now have to have activities through which to launder the filthy lucre. You have to have Potemkin villages to make it appear as though the taxes are doing good.

Fear, the Great Motivator

We are imprinted with an instinct for fear, it is meant to be a short-term motivator toward immediate and attainable safety. We respond to fear at a level before rationale. We almost always respond with fight or flight. Either of these responses is meant to distance us or dispel the danger for the sole purpose of re-entering the zone of reason, the zone of orderly problem-solving.

Fear has often been called the greatest motivator, usually by people who use it against others, and who gain advantage through a reign of fear.

In nature, fear is meant as a temporary solution to danger. If the world was 100% dangerous, 100% of the time, we as benefactors of fear would soon burn out and succumb to the perils causing the fear. Fear would cease to be a motivator. There must be periods, with fairly stable predictability, of relative safety, during which we can revert to being rational.

Could this be why some seem intent on keeping us in fear constantly? She who is in fear constantly must relinquish the role of rational thinker. She must find someone else to do her thinking for her. She must surrender whatever personal power comes from rationality. And who stands enthusiastically by to receive this transfer of personal power – the impersonal addict for power, sometimes known as government, always known as the power structure.

Since we cannot reasonably believe that there is constant danger in nature, we must recognize that the appearance of constant danger must be manufactured. In fact we might have to concede that nature, while ever changing, is in a constant state of being nature – no danger of it being anything otherwise.

I admit that not knowing what's next can be scary, and it can be comforting to associate

with someone who seems to know what's next. But think about the people who want to rule your life. What is their motivation? Is their motivation the issue of your safety? Not likely. Then think about who really knows what's next. And who really knows what's next *for you*. If it's not you, why would it be anybody else?

Lastly, think on this: have you been imprinted with the idea of constant peril? Were you imprinted with a rational recognition that danger can exist in a world that is constantly changing? If so, were you also imprinted with the capability to use rationality to deal with all but the most immediate dangers, or were you imprinted to follow the leader, not to reason why, only to do or die, into the valley of death ... ?

Turning one's own imprinting into a set of strengths is the real trick of voluntarism. You must embrace the idea of your own differentness. The combination of imprints on your life and personality are unique. Once you deal with the immediateness of a danger, you must bring your wits to bear on your life. You can begin to recognize the false imprints, the other-motivated imprints, and the real imprints with real effect for you as an individual. This is not selfishness nor disregard for those you respect and love. Actually, if you are not capable of doing the rational thing, not capable of individual strength, not capable of rejecting the need for a powerful master, then what can you possibly think this does in a positive way for your respected loved ones?