

How To Live In a Nuclear-Armed World

I purposefully don't watch the news much. But since I heard that two of the world's most dangerous governments (North Korea and the United States) were threatening to use nuclear weapons against each other, I've dipped my feet back in.

We've seen saber-rattling and even real wars come and go. But when nuclear weapons are on the table for any side, it's a cause for concern.

This is nothing new. We've had to live through more than 70 years of constant threat that these weapons might be used. We've had more than a few close calls and almost-accidental-nuclear wars. And we've only had our imaginations to tell us how horrible these weapons - many times more powerful than those used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki - might be.

That should sober us. And it's almost a good thing that the current conflict between the North Korean and US governments are reminding people that these weapons exist.

But once you know that life-annihilating weapons exist **and** are in the hands of some of the world's most immoral people, what do you do? Knowing this throws a wrench into your worldview.

I'd humbly suggest that you keep calm and carry on.

In a way, there's no better way to say "f%&\$ you" to the powers that be and their disgusting technology of death than to live a normal, mundane human life.

The French existentialist philosopher Albert Camus said that you should live so free that your very existence is an act of rebellion. I agree. I also think that you should live so humanly that your very act of existence is an antidote to the inhuman (and there a few things less human than nuclear weapons).

Today I went to church, ate brunch with friends, took a nap, read, journaled, did yoga in a park, took a walk, and ate a delicious popsicle while talking to some local high schoolers about their future goals. The world may end soon enough, but I kept on living a human life.

I'll wake up tomorrow and get to work on a technology that may save hundreds of thousands of lives and trillions (yes, trillions) of dollars in wealth over the next century. Some asshat may decide to destroy the world in the next month, but I will act with the faith that it will be here in one hundred years.

It may seem oblivious and even willfully blind, but here's the thing: if people had lived this

way - building, trading, enjoying their own lives and respecting the lives of others - we wouldn't have to consider this question of nuclear weapons today. People with normal human concerns do not create nuclear weapons in the first place.

It's our own small inhumanities that create our great inhumanities. It's our small humanities that can save the world. If it's too late, it's too late. But I much prefer to play my music as the ship sinks than to let myself be ruled by fear.

One of my favorite essays on this topic is C.S. Lewis's "On Living in an Atomic Age." Lewis best articulated the spirit of what I'm trying to communicate here, and I owe him credit for this way of thinking about life in an atomic age:

The post [How To Live In a Nuclear-Armed World](#) appeared first on James L. Walpole.