

When Faith Doesn't Work – Consider the Benefits of Theofatalism

A New Therapy for Serenity and Inner Peace

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PREFACE

It seems that all the creatures on earth do what they gotta do. I need to learn and to report what I have learned. This work is the culmination of several decades learning to survive and even grow through the most stressful experience anyone can suffer, untimely loss of a beloved spouse. That occurred on September 3, 1985 when I watched my wife die untimely at age fifty-two after living ten years with the threat of breast cancer. When my traditional family belief system provided no comfort, I entered therapy for complicated grief, death anxiety, issues in aging, and depression, which started me on a pathway I could never have imagined. My first therapist suggested that I do some journaling between sessions, which eventually grew into a formal search for information on mental health. Through three decades and publishing several books, I developed a belief system that helped me make sense of the ubiquitous suffering among all of God's creation. This free ebooklet is a short discussion of my work leading to a new form of counseling I call © Radical Accommodation Therapy. I offer it to suffering souls and professional therapists with hope that it will be useful to others who may feel abandoned and betrayed by traditional beliefs about how the world works when it does not work as expected. Namaste.

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INTRODUCTION

Life is not an easy matter. You cannot live through it without falling into frustration and cynicism unless you have before you a great idea which raises you above all kinds of perfidy and baseness.

Leon Trotsky

Religion helps some people navigate life, but what if it fails to deliver? Where do you go when you are suffering, and you realize God is causing the suffering? A potential problem is the loss of resilience normally provided by faith among those who are religious but not spiritual. Poet, Robert Frost observed that it is hard to get into this world and hard to get out and what lies in between makes no sense. The Buddha observed that suffering is the normal state of human existence, which is caused by discontent. In his old age, Oedipus could say suffering and time had been “instructors in contentment.” The first century Stoic, Epictetus said that adverse events do not disturb people, but their opinions about it does. There are countless ways thoughts cause people to suffer; some are real, and some are unreal. If thoughts control actions and reactions, what controls thoughts? When we find out that the world does not possess the value or meaning that we want it to have or that things do not work the way we expected, some people may find themselves in a crisis. People suffering such a crisis may seek professional help for their disrupted lives and, when they do, therapists may diagnose a psychopathology which is not appropriate, when the underlying issue is a problem with God. Here is a new beneficial therapy for such cases. Know this truth, and it could set you free.

The psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) included a category entitled Religious or Spiritual Problem (ICD-9-CM, V62.89) For the first time, there is acknowledgment of distressing religious and spiritual experiences as nonpathological problems. According to its author, Dr. David Lukoff, this category can be used when the focus of clinical attention is a religious or spiritual problem. Examples include distressing experiences that involve loss or questioning of faith, problems associated with conversion to a new faith, or questioning of other spiritual values which may not necessarily be related to an organized church or religious institution. (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 685)

Dr. Lukoff notes: “Spiritual distress is the state in which the individual experiences or is at risk of experiencing a disturbance in a belief or value system that is the source of strength and hope. The most important task is to give people in spiritual crisis a positive context for their experiences and sufficient information about the process that they are going through. It is essential that they move away from the concept of disease and recognize the healing nature of their crisis.”

Plans do not work out, people disappoint and die, and life is not fair. The earth is a very violent place. The assassinated Beatle, John Lennon said life is what happens as you are making other plans. Tribalism and competition – us vs. them - are part of human nature; winners and losers, wars and revolutions are bridled only by government, and that not very effectively. Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and many other therapies were developed to help people deal with life traumas. Such mind treatments have their place, but they are insufficient and unavailable for many sufferers. Why they, along with prescription drugs, work for some and not others is unknown. For some suffering people, rational preemptive suicide seems to be a way out. Public-private attempts to understand and prevent

suicide are still in the incipient stage. There should be a better way, and maybe there is, for suffering souls to accommodate the world as it is when that is necessary to survive.

Jungian analyst, Dr. James Hollis wrote, "Depression, loss, disease, war, poverty, betrayal, angst, murder, fraud, theft, grief, and so on are part of the human condition from which none of us is exempt. But to move beyond a posture of outrage (and impotence) at life's suffering, we are called to ask another question: to what present task is this swampland calling me? Asking this question moves us from a posture of victim to engagement with the unfolding of our destiny." (*Swamplands of the Soul*, 1996) Hollis says we can live without happiness, but not without meaning in our lives. It is precisely our mortality that makes our need for meaning necessary. Still, the opposing view of Nihilism claims there is no meaning in life, it just is whatever it is. Life is a struggle between joy and despair, love and fear, trust and betrayal, and then you die. Life always is fatal. We all must navigate white water on the way to our waterfall. Nietzsche said, "Those who have a why to live can bear with almost any how." This work offers a reply to the "why" of life.

There is a belief that offers to make sense of the apparent nonsense and suffering in the world. If suffering in life cannot be avoided, at least it can be understood, and with understanding there may come acceptance and inner peace.

DERIVATION

Theofatalism is belief in the triune prime force in the universe that Generates, Operates, and Destroys everything material and immaterial from atoms to galaxies according to its will, i.e., GOD. As such, it is assumed that nothing happens among all sentient beings outside the will of GOD. This belief system may help people feel good inside whatever happens outside - or not. Theofatalism provides a solution to the ubiquitous question of "why" that has been debated since the dialogues of Plato and Aristotle. Theofatalism is the ultimate absolute explanation for what is, what was, and what will be, from atoms to galaxies – no exceptions. Theofatalism has it all covered.

Theofatalism is derived by integrating three concepts:

1) the Hindu concept of Trimurti, i.e., the triune gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva recognized as the sources of creation, maintenance, and destruction of all things, These three sources are restated as generator, operator, destroyer. GOD

2) the concept of theological fatalism, i.e., the existence of an omnipotent power that determines all events past, present, and future, and

3) causal determinism which infers that all events and thoughts are caused by previous events connected in a perfect chain of necessary and sufficient events back to the first cause, which leads forward to the inevitability of all things.

Theofatalism consolidates these three precepts into the concept of GOD as generator, operator, destroyer, the prime force in the universe and whatever other universes there may be. Nothing, good or bad, material or immaterial, whether thoughts or actions, happens or does not happen without the will of GOD – Generator, Operator, Destroyer. This concept accommodates

all belief systems, past, present, and future as the GOD above gods. In theofatalism, the only plausible answer to “why?” is GOD’s will - from atoms to galaxies; no exceptions.

ORIGINATION

Life is a wonderful opera, except that it hurts.

Joseph Campbell

Theofatalism was developed by Lewis Tagliaferre while he was searching for emotional comfort after the untimely death of his wife in 1985. He thought he could not live without her and the lifestyle that she provided, and he was inconsolable. He made the living and she made the living worthwhile. When his traditional faith failed to provide any consolation, it felt like the earth was removed from under him and there was no firm place for him to stand. During the unspeakable grief after untimely death of his wife, British theologian C. S. Lewis wrote, “Nobody told me that grief feels so much like fear. There is not much danger I will stop believing in God. The real danger is that I will come to believe such terrible things about Him. Go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find. A door slammed in your face and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the other side. After that, silence. You might as well turn aside. Why is He so present a commander in our time of prosperity and so very absent in time of trouble?” (*A Grief Observed*, 1963) Indeed.

Tagliaferre felt betrayed and abandoned by withdrawal of the church support network he had trusted. His faith in the Lord and His people seemed to have forsaken him, just as the apostles ran away when Jesus was crucified. Even the pastor had no words of help after his wife died. His display of grief seemed to be contagious, and people avoided him. His subsequent loss of faith presented as anger, resentment, emptiness, despair, sadness, and isolation. Although he was an ordained deacon and Sunday school adult teacher, he found no peace in scriptures. So, he set out to find some way to survive the worst grief and post trauma shock imaginable. His life was shattered, and like Humpty-Dumpty, it could not be put back together again. When conventional therapies were exhausted, he expanded the search for inner peace through reading and journaling.

His research for relief spanned the fields of religion, psychology, sociology, cosmology, geology, anthropology, criminology, history, government, and more. He discovered life is hard and complex, and what comes after is indefinitely uncertain. Much of the time we are lost in the dismal states of disappointment, guilt, grief, betrayal, doubt, depression, anger, terror and the like. Life is a struggle between opposites including joy and despair, love and fear, trust and betrayal, and then we die. Theofatalism claims that any belief which denies this reality is false and delusional. A father of psychology, Sigmund Freud defined religion as: *A system of wishful illusions together with a disavowal of reality, such as we find nowhere else.* He viewed religious beliefs as fantasies that prevent people from coming to terms with how things really are. Tagliaferre concluded that a belief is needed which accommodates the truth of this definition yet does not destroy the basic human need for grounding in spirituality.

THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Evidence for theofatalism exists in various scriptures of both the Judeo-Christian and Muslim faiths. Christians may say God is in control without really asking what that means. You probably won't get this in church, but scriptures say the Lord does not just allow things to happen; rather He causes them, both good and bad. A few examples suffice:

“The Lord kills and makes alive; The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings some low and lifts some up.” (1 Samuel 2:6-7) “I make peace and create evil/calamity. I, the Lord, do all these things.” (Isaiah 45:7) “When a disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?” (Amos 3:6) “It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone's life is in his power.” (Job 12:10) It seems like this applied to Jesus also. “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39) We are the clay and God is the potter, making some for common use and some for royal use. (Jeremiah 18:2-6, Isaiah 64:8, Romans 9:12) The Quran says the same thing to Muslims; “No calamity comes, no affliction occurs, except by the decision and preordainment of Allah.” (S:64.11)

Famous swiss psychiatrist, Carl G. Jung (1875-1961) said, “Man's suffering does not come from his sin, but from his paradoxical God.” After all, it was God who created the serpent, gave Eve and Adam free will to fall for its temptation, and then condemned mankind by His own will. St. Clement of Alexandria (150-215CE) saw God as ruling with two hands, wielding the power of Satan in one and Christ in the other. If Satan rules the world, that must be the will of GOD, or Satan would be more powerful than GOD - which is impossible. You may not understand the full implications of this conclusion until you are impacted by it. The created has no power to control the Creator, and Satan could not create himself. Thus, not only suffering, but reaction to suffering must be God's will. This idea is threatening to established religious institutions, but the conclusion is inescapable when you really think about it. So, most people refuse to think about it.

The Bible also says it was God's will for some Jews to reject Jesus as Messiah and were destroyed by Rome. Their eyes and ears were closed so they would not repent and be saved, and that was their destiny. (Isaiah 6:9-10, Matthew 10:13-15, Mark 4:10-12, 1Peter 2:8) Also, God's will is invoked in daily living. “Go to now, you that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and make money: Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, which appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. Therefore, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” (James 4:13-15). “Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.” (Proverbs 19:21) Those who claim that thoughts control destiny so to control destiny control thoughts seem to ignore the contrarian wisdom of such scriptures. Man can move mountains and build and destroy cities, transplant human organs, and make smart phones, lie, cheat, and murder, but only by the will of GOD.

There are only three options: 1) God wants to relieve suffering, but He cannot, 2) God could relieve suffering, but He chooses not to, and 3) God causes suffering. Jung said, "God is the name by which I designate all things which cross my path violently and recklessly, all things which upset my subjective views, plans and intentions, and change the course of my life for better or for worse." Those who claim that, "God is love" (1 John 4:8) overlook that God also is a "raging fire." (Isaiah 30:30, Hebrews 10:37) Christians have been deluded with a one-sided vision of God. A new vision is needed to accommodate the real dark side of God.

This God is not one only to worship, but also one Jesus warned to fear. "Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him." (Luke 12:5) "It is a fearful/dreadful/terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:30) "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12) As with Job in the Old Testament, we must say, "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away...this is the day the Lord has made." (Job 1:20) This awareness can present a spiritual dilemma to the faithful, i.e., to continue living the illusion that God is only love, or to abandon it for indefinite uncertainty. So, where do you go when you suffer and realize God is causing the suffering? There is another option.

Modern churches all "proof text" scriptures, choosing only the ones for Sunday sermons that keep people attending and donating. The Bible says: "God is not the author of confusion." (1 Corinthians 14:33) Since there is confusion in the Bible and among various beliefs, Tagliaferre concludes that it must come from a higher power than any of them, i.e., the GOD above gods as posed by the late theologian, Paul Tillich. Ergo, theofatalism.

SECULAR COROLLARY

What is important in knowledge is not quantity, but quality. It is important to know what knowledge is significant, what is less so, and what is trivial.

Leo Tolstoy

There is no doubt that the mind affects the body and the body affects the mind, whatever the mind may be. Dreams reveal contents of the mind that are not accessible when we are awake. Recent discoveries in quantum mechanics and neurology imply that all actions begin unconsciously in the brain immediately before those events are executed in thought or action. A baseball batter has 0.6 seconds to swing or not at a coming fast ball. What appears to be conscious decisions are driven by unconscious resources – physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Since no one consciously controls the organs in their bodies, and the brain is an organ, it is reasonable to assume that the adoption of belief systems and all other thoughts and decisions are driven by forces beyond conscious awareness.

The brain, which controls behavior, is not a static construct. It changes in response to accumulated experience and influence, (called neuroplasticity) but apparently by some volition superior to human consciousness. This process is evident in the performance of a great musician, athlete, artist, author, or poet – or a mental patient, criminal or despotic dictator – leaders and followers, employers and employees. Existence of theofatalism itself - including your reaction to it - illustrates the conclusion. Nothing happens outside the will of GOD – in churches, schools, bedrooms, in hospitals, restaurants, on battlefields, in banks, theaters, prisons, parks, hurricanes,

atoms and galaxies – or anywhere. Tagliaferre intuited that the brain-body system in all sentient beings acts as if it has a mind of its own that is controlled by the universal triune energy of generation, operation, and destruction, which he called GOD. Thus, free will may be an illusion, necessary though the illusion may be at this stage of human evolution.

All actions, large and small, gestate in the subconscious mind before they become conscious. Like an iceberg, the conscious mind must go where the subconscious mind takes it. In this view, thoughts are the extensions of previous thoughts and, hence, are inevitable. Some examples follow:

Jeff Bezos got the idea for online retailer, Amazon.com, while driving cross country. Danny Thomas got the idea for St. Jude childrens' hospital while starring in television. Mark Zuckerberg got the idea that became Facebook while he was a sophomore in college. Bill Wilson got the idea for organizing Alcoholics Anonymous and wrote *The Big Book* after a delirium experience with The Oxford Group (now Moral Rearmament) during experimentation with The Belladonna Cure. Travis Kalanick got the idea for Uber while he was carpooling to work. Elon Musk got the idea for SpaceX rockets to Mars while building Tesla electric cars after he emigrated from South Africa by way of Canada. Jimmy Dean got the idea for a sausage business from his brother while he was a country music singer. Joel Osteen got the idea for his prosperity ministry, with no seminary training, after untimely death of his pastor father. Adolf Hitler got the idea for Nazism after failing as a student of architecture following combat service in WWI and caused WWII. Mark David Chapman got the idea to murder Beatle co-founder, John Lennon while he was living in Hawaii. Theodore John Kaczynski got the idea to drop out of society and live as a hermit in opposition to technical modernization, producing home-made bombs that killed three people and wounded eighteen, after earning a Ph.D. degree in mathematics and teaching at the University of Michigan. Helen Schucman got the idea for *A Course in Miracles* while she was a research psychologist. Taylor Swift got the idea to be a music star while she was in middle school. Sherwood Schwartz got the idea for the television sitcom, *Gilligan's Island*, from an assignment in creative writing while he was a student in New York. Kris Kristofferson got the idea to write country music while he was a captain in the army flying helicopters after being a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. Andrew Carnegie (steel) J. P. Morgan (banking), Cornelius Vanderbilt (railroads) and John D. Rockefeller (oil) all got ideas for building wealth while young men. So did Warren Buffet. Donald J. Trump got the idea of being President while he was a real estate developer, and Tagliaferre got the idea of theofatalism during several trips to Sedona, AZ.

These are examples of what renowned psychiatrist, Carl Jung called active imagination, i.e., thoughts arising from the subconscious mind. He wrote, "All the works of people (good or bad, important or trivial) originate in their active imagination." Napoleon said imagination rules the world. It is difficult to separate the imagination that creates art, music, and literature from that which creates religious faith. Churches are populated by people who believe God came to earth through the womb of a virgin, volunteered to be crucified to absorb punishment for the sins of his human creation, resurrected himself from death, and returned to heaven to prepare a place for his chosen people. (John 3:16, 10: 17-18, 14:2-3) Imagine that. Willis Carrier, inventor of air conditioning, said to be happy imagine the worst that can happen and plan to accept it. This is, of

course, a modern statement of ancient Stoic philosophy taught by Seneca and Epictetus. “Wish for things which happen to be as they are, and you will have a tranquil life.” This rule seems to be unimaginable if you are in acute distress. Imagination has no moral compass, so it must be modulated by some superior force for behavioral control, i.e., GOD.

For those who recognize spirit but cringe at religion, consider the concept of causal determinism. In secular terms, for anything to occur the opportunity must precede its recognition which must be followed by action, which must produce results regardless of outcome. All events in every life have a cause that is linked in a chain of events back to the First Cause, which makes everything inevitable. If any link in the chain were different, the outcome would be different. Here are some examples:

Modern smart cell phones can be linked back to the personal computer created by Steve Jobs (1955-2011) to manufacture of micro-chips by Andrew S. Grove (1936-2016) to invention of the transistor by William B. Shockley, Jr. (1910-1989) to information science developed by Claude Shannon (1916-2001) to fractal geometry explained by Benoit B. Mandelbrot (1924-2010) to the binary arithmetic developed by self-taught mathematician, George Boole (1815-1864) and back to discovery of the precious metals that make them possible. Digital video can be linked back to invention of “moving pictures” by Thomas Edison (1847-1931), back to the discovery of primary colors and the rare earth phosphors that make the visual displays possible, and all the events preceding and following. A flat tire can be linked back to the rubber manufacturing technology and discovery of rubber trees that came together with the nail that is linked back to metallurgy and the creation of iron deposits on earth. (By the way, tires are black from use of carbon black for strength and durability that replaced naturally white zinc oxide that was needed for making brass shells during WWI.) Growth in electric vehicle sales is linked to government mandates for higher mileage which is linked with perception of global warming, invention of electric motors, and the materials that go into them, plus discovery and generation of electricity to charge the batteries. Drug addicts can be linked back to creation of the natural plants and discovery of harvesting them and refining and distributing them. Trips to the moon and space exploration can be linked back to discoveries of Kepler, Brahe, Newton, and Copernicus, possibly even back to discovery of black powder in China. The Protestant Reformation and plethora of churches can be linked back to the thoughts of Martin Luther which can be linked to policies of the Catholic Church throughout previous centuries. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be linked back to Stoic philosophy. All in GOD’s will of course. Get it?

If any link in the chain of causality in the personal history of each person were different the outcome would be different, hence everything is inevitable and necessary, including getting a flat tire or breaking a fingernail. The same analysis of culminating causality can be applied to all inventions and wars, diseases, disasters, charity, politics, cosmology, marriages, divorces, and everything that occurs each instant of each life on earth, according to laws of science from atoms to galaxies and logical or illogical decisions and beliefs, right down to trimming your fingernails and brushing your teeth. Events today among all species on earth - including belief or rejection of theofatalism - are creating causal links moment by moment in the invisible chain of development reaching far into the inevitable future.

Shakespeare wrote in *As You Like It*, “All the world’s a stage and men and women merely are the players. They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts.” Epictetus wrote of acting in life, “For this is your duty, to act well the part that is given to you; but to select the part belongs to the author.” (*Enchiridion*, p7) You merely are acting a part in a play that is written by GOD. Albert Einstein said, “Human beings, vegetables, or cosmic dust, we all dance to a mysterious tune intoned in the distance by an invisible player.” Dr. Hollis wrote, “The great rhythms of nature, of time and tide, of fate and destiny, and of our own psyche move their powerful ways quite outside of our will.” (*Swamplands of the Soul*, 1996, p.124) The Bible says, “You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day of my life was written in your book.” (Psalm 139:16, TLB) It seems like our lives are scripted at conception, whether we like it or not.

You need not seek your purpose in life because you cannot avoid it. Someone said, “If you have a pulse, you have a purpose.” Consider the Himalayan snow leopard whose purpose seems to be eating mountain goats, and the mountain goat whose purpose is providing food for the snow leopard. After he was asked why he writes only horror books, Stephen King replied, “I have no choice because I cannot imagine doing anything else.” He is fortunate that so many people need to be horrified by his books. He must write them, and they must buy them. Your purpose apparently is to be who you are where you are when you are doing what you do and feeling what you feel. Even those in terminal life conditions are providing needs for personal services which sustains a purpose for the providers of those services.

By extension, everything from atoms to galaxies is fulfilling its purpose moment by moment. No exceptions. The earth is a very big place with lots of stuff going on and, like grains of sand on all the beaches or drops of water in all the oceans, each individual in all the species is both insignificant and indispensable while doing what it must. Theofatalism is that simple and that complicated because it explains the behavior of all sentient beings and everything else in the universe. This concept boggles the mind when you think about all the suffering of humanity. So be not dismayed if it is too much to swallow in one gulp.

All creatures on earth do what they are destined to do, each playing out the role they are given by GOD, the prime force in the universe – Generator, Operator, Destroyer - thinking and doing what they must even when it leads to their death or to the death of others. Randomness is overcome with essential causality, i.e., there are no accidents or mistakes, there are only predestined choices and inevitable consequences. All decisions are learning experiences. After a thousand experiments failed to disclose a material for his light bulb, Thomas Edison declared, “Now I know a thousand things that don’t work.” All in GOD’s will of course.

Thus, theofatalism cancels the need for remorse and regret for actions in the past because if they could have been different, they would have been different; the little things as well as the big things. GOD does whatever it wants with whomever it wants whenever it wants. Although praise and blame are necessary opposites, neither one is appropriate, but they must co-exist or it would be different. Theofatalism claims we are not accountable for what happens to us or how we react to it. But, guilt and remorse, like all emotions, must be necessary at this stage of human evolution or they would not exist. The created cannot control the Creator. We are the clay and it is the potter with power to make some for royal use and some for common use. (Romans 9:21) This is a non-negotiable fact throughout the universe. You can accept it or reject it, but you cannot change it any more than you can change the laws of physics. Despite this irrefutable

conclusion, many people are given the illusion of free will at this stage of human evolution. All in GOD's will of course (AIGWOC).

FIVE PRINCIPLES

From his research, Tagliaferre sees the emergence of a common thread leading to five principles of theofatalism. Principles can never be invented, only discovered. The principles of theofatalism are summarized here to stimulate readers to complete their full development by reading the books referenced, to learn them and to make them a part of living every day.

1. Absolute Predeterminism: Everything is happening as it must, or it would be different. The divine will of GOD the Almighty One cannot be disobeyed. It is the utmost arrogance and ignorance to assume that the creature can disobey the Creator, or the clay can control the potter...or the puppet can pull its own strings. Disobeying GOD's will is impossible.
2. Necessary Opposites: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction; as in physics so in human thoughts and actions. All energy of the universe is distributed about a neutral center like the air in a balloon, with equal power invested in opposing forces manifested in life events. Like a battery with two poles, energy is impotent until the two opposing poles are deployed. Since Homo sapiens manifest energy in thoughts and behaviors, they, and all material and spiritual forms, must conform to this principle of necessary opposites.
3. Unconscious Decisions: All thoughts begin unconsciously before they become conscious. All behavior is driven from unconscious forces among and within people who select options presumed to offer more valuable benefits than burdens. All options among choices are selected because the benefits are worth more than the burdens, even though they may be unconscious and seem to be unreasonable or even insane to a rational observer. There are no mistakes, only unconscious choices and inevitable consequences.
4. Indefinite Uncertainty: Life does not grant us certainty, only options and probabilities. Nothing about the future in human affairs can be forecast with accuracy, especially those things that we think we know for sure. The famous American philosopher and baseball star, Yogi Berra once said, "Making predictions is hard, especially when it is about the future." That awareness makes humankind feel anxious necessarily. To be anxious is to be human, because it is a normal reaction to the awareness of indefinite uncertainty.
5. Immaculate Immanence: GOD works a very specific plan for each material element and sentient being that forms a unique and necessary part of the whole universe. Most of human life is like assembling a jigsaw puzzle without the picture on the box. Each individual sentient being may be only one small insignificant piece, but a necessary indispensable piece or we would not be here. The whole picture composing each life becomes more apparent near completion as we take our place in it. "Immaculate" means without flaw or error and "immanence" means operating within, inherent, present throughout the universe. So, this is not the same god as the one in any holy books. It is the Generator, Operator, Destroyer of universes. GOD

Theofatalism also accommodates both acceptance and rejection of this reasoning and adoption of other belief systems. Everything must have its complimentary opposite as GOD never made any one-sided coins, i.e., up and down, in and out, sweet and sour, good and evil,

male and female, anima and animus, cold and hot, pessimism and optimism, content and discontent, creation and destruction, predator and prey, criminal and victim, love and hate, joy and suffering, sickness and health, rich and poor, pain and pleasure, positive and negative, light and dark, truth and falsity, first and last, win and lose, war and peace, birth and death, first and last, maze and labyrinth, order and chaos, optimism and pessimism, introvert and extrovert, random and destined, heaven and hell, trust and betrayal, Christ and Satan - as in the ancient symbol of Yin and Yang. And the biggest of all: creation and destruction. Apart from their opposites, everything is meaningless, like one hand clapping. We must live in a world of both benefits and burdens, all balanced in the universal One. F. Scott Fitzgerald said it is a mark of maturity to hold the opposites and still function normally – including acceptance and rejection of theofatalism - all in GOD's will of course.

THE SYMBOL



C. G. Jung said there is the thing and the symbol of the thing. Whereas the Catholic symbol is the crucifix and the Protestant symbol is the empty cross, the symbol of theofatalism chosen by Tagliaferre is the Chartres Labyrinth (ca.,1200) in which there is only one pathway for each animate being to follow. Jung said, “*The way is within us, but not in Gods nor in teachings, nor in laws. Within us is the way, the truth, and the life.*” (Redbook, p.231) The late mythologist, Joseph Campbell may have described this pathway in his instruction to “follow your bliss.” He wrote, “If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and

the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are—if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.” The Rev. Lauren Artress wrote, “Walking the Labyrinth has reemerged today as a metaphor for the spiritual journey and a powerful tool for transformation. This walking meditation is an archetype, a mystical ritual found in many religious traditions. It quiets the mind and opens the soul. Each step unites faith and action as walkers take one step at a time, living in trust and willingness to follow the life course set before them.” (*Walking a Labyrinth – 2011*) You can buy a labyrinth at www.bwatsonstudios.com.

Unlike the dead-ends and random pathways of a maze, which is intentionally designed to confuse and frustrate, the labyrinth has no barriers, there are no shortcuts, and it definitely is not a random walk, because everyone one must take the steps before them. We may stumble along the way and encounter dangers and stress, but the pathway ahead always beckons; begin and continue. The labyrinth symbolizes how we emerge from the source when spirits incarnate in the body and traverse through four stages of infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood and then after midlife we return to the source through four stages of maturity, seniority, contemplation and mortality. Four seems to be a significant number because it occurs 278 times in the Old Testament and sixty-one times in the New Testament. The four quadrants of a labyrinth symbolize the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of mankind. The walk of life traverses these four quadrants from infancy to mortality, each person on their own inevitable predestined pathway. They also represent the four functions of personality – sensing, thinking,

feeling and intuition - described by the personality model of C. G. Jung and implemented in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). For applications of the Jungian personality model in therapy, visit www.16personalities.com, www.personalitypage.com and www.mbtionline.com.

At the end of life, death may not be a tragedy, but a transition of eternal energy from the physical to the spiritual form— all in the process of becoming. Scripture says, “Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day...For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2 Corinthians 4:16–5:1) Dying is easy; trying not to is hard, painful, and expensive. Stanford University professor emeritus, Irvin Yalom described contemplating our own death in his book, *Staring at the Sun* (2009), as peeking in small squints through a dense filter and maybe not discussing it at all. Denial of death is a poorly understood defense mechanism, but it is real. So, many people cannot make a will or appoint someone with power of attorney to manage their affairs after they no longer can. The late founder of Apple, Inc. Steve Jobs observed that even those who think they are going to heaven don’t want to die to get there. His family said his last words were, “Oh wow, oh wow.” Anthropologist, Margaret Mead said, “When someone dies, we pretend nothing happened.” But something very big happens, and the world scarcely takes notice.

In the final steps of life, we must reconcile courage with surrender. The late psychiatrist, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross saw terminal patients walking through stages of shock, denial, anger, bargaining, and depression to reach acceptance of their final condition. In the end there is only surrender as nothing else matters. All beginnings come with endings. “Build your nest high as the eagle, and I will bring you down,” says the Lord. (Jeremiah 49:16) We may fight for immortality, but mortality always wins. Each of us is marked for tragedy. How we resolve this decidedly human complex of carrying out our daily lives while burdened by our inescapable mortality determines our essential character. James Baldwin wrote in *The Fire Next Time*, (1963) “Life is tragic simply because the earth turns and the sun inexorably rises and sets, and one day, for each of us, the sun will go down for the last time.” Sometimes, medicine just gets in the way of it. It is difficult for doctors, patients, and families to decide how much suffering is enough because we do not have a tradition to mark the beginning of dying. Treatment options increasingly are determined by financial considerations, insurance coverage, and government assistance unless families are united in their preferences. Sometimes, medical decisions become so contentious they end up in court. We need a ritual for death as a rite of passage, not as an ending, but as a passage from here to what nobody knows. It is the final exit from a pathway that each of us must walk through alone in our own time and in our own way. More people are choosing their own time and means of departure, and medical ethics and legislation are changing to accommodate them. Declining treatment, entering hospice, and refusing food and drink are reasonable choices for some. Several states have legalized physician assisted suicide. For more information visit, www.finalexit.org. In dying, as in living, people will walk the pathway of the labyrinth they have been given. All in GOD’s will of course.

CRITICISM

Religion is the opiate of the masses.”
Karl Marx

Hope is the worst of all evils for it prolongs the torments of man.

Every new idea must survive opposition and rejection before it is accepted. Criticism of theofatalism lies primarily in its apparent negation of conscious free will. Assumption of free will is the international basis for jurisprudence because without it there would be no justification for laws or their enforcement. Without free will, all actions would be robotic, and people could not be held responsible for the results of their uncontrollable impulses. All human governance would be impotent without assuming free will, and society would be driven by instincts alone. Apostle Paul wrote: "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." (Romans 13:1-7) "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right." (1 Peter 2: 13-17) Without assuming free will, the rule of law is made a mockery, and theofatalism is a one-sided argument for determinism.

Proponents of free will may argue that the negation of free will, or its falsification, would mean that God is a liar and not worthy of belief. Some scriptures claim free will is a gift from God, for it lets people love and obey Him because they choose to do so, under penalty of hell. (Matthew 22:37, Luke 12: 5, John 3:16,14:15). However, free will is negated in other scriptures, as Jesus declared to his twelve apostles, "You did not choose me, I chose you." "No one can come to me (Jesus) unless the Father calls/enables them." (John 6:44,65) The New Testament describes Christians as "the chosen" thirty-eight times. (Matthew 22:14, Mark 13:20, Luke 18:7, John 6:37,44,65, 15:16, 19, Acts 22:14, Romans 11:5, Ephesians 1:11) Thus, church membership apparently is not voluntary – unless it is.

Another criticism involves possibly confusing correlation with causation. Just because two events are related does not mean they are causative. For example, telomeres on the ends of chromosomes are depleted with aging. This could be a cause of aging - but aging also seems to be related to genes and environmental factors, diet, etc. Certain chemical changes in the brain are observed in people with depression, but whether they are the causes or the results of depression is unknown. In addition, experiments in quantum mechanics demonstrate that there is an instantaneous connection between subatomic particles no matter how far away they are from one another – what Einstein called "spooky things at a distance." Thus, correlations may well be causations while causations may not require apparent connections.

Consider this life story: Eckhart Tolle was born in Germany in 1948. His parents separated at his age of twelve, and his father self-schooled him in Spain. At age eighteen, he migrated to UK where he studied philosophy at the University of London. He suffered extended depression until at age twenty-nine he had a spiritual epiphany after which he migrated to Vancouver, Canada and eventually married an Asian woman. In 1997 he published his Buddhist-based book, *The Power of Now*, which sold only 3,000 copies. In 2000, the book was endorsed by Oprah Winfrey and became an international best seller, translated into many languages. Now, Tolle is rich and famous. Considering all the sequential events, this outcome is inevitable. If any link in the chain had been different the outcome would be different. There are countless examples like this in every life on earth. Whatever is must be necessary, or it would be different.

Jung defined events seemingly unconnected but causative as “synchronicity.” There may be no coincidences, only “godincidences.” Theory of electromagnetic radiation was extended by UK biologist, Rupert Sheldrake who has proposed the existence of non-material morphic energy fields to explain this phenomenon when it is observed between sentient beings. (*A New Science of Life, 1995*) If you are sensitive enough, you may feel this energy with loved ones or a pet. Extraverts draw energy from other people while introverts seem to recharge from within. Morphic energy may help to explain the lifestyle similarities seen in studies of twins who were separated at birth and in the illegal behavior of criminal gangs. Contagious ideas, called memes, may be driven by morphic energy. Since, according to the law of universal conservation, energy can neither be created nor destroyed, it follows that death of the body does not extinguish its energetic existence.

Theofatalism acknowledges the opposing views of free will and determinism as necessary opposites. But it postulates that whatever people believe or eventually discover, it is the consequence of the will of GOD – Generator, Operator, Destroyer. The renowned scientist Albert Einstein said, “Man can will what he wants, but he cannot will what he wills.” We have no free will, so we must believe in free will. Nothing happens outside the will of GOD, including the rejection of theofatalism.

A NEW THERAPY – FIVE STEPS TO INNER PEACE

The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.

Rabindranath Tagore

We are taught a formula for life that says, “do this, get that.” Sometimes it works and sometimes not. There is possibly no worse shock than to trust in a personal faith that is impotent when needed the most during the painful trials of life. Pain is essential for survival, pain is the tangible material that creeps into our mind and screams at us to recognize that something is terribly wrong. When things do not go as planned, what then? Living in harmony with the reality we do not create, that is the key. It follows from this discussion that to feel inner peace and serenity while living in the world as it is, one must employ ©Radical Accommodation Therapy in five ADTDA steps. There are only two rules to follow in their application to life: begin and continue. (*Disclaimer: This is not a substitute for qualified mental health care by a professional.*)

1) *Accept* what is moment by moment here and now, including your personal reaction, because it must be necessary or it would be different,

2) *Detach* from what you cannot change and wish was different, because it hurts too much not to,

3) *Transcend* the need for control because you don’t have any as the brain has a mind of its own,

4) *Don’t fight* with GOD because you cannot win – but if you fight that also is inevitable because you must walk the labyrinth you are given, and

5) *Assume* there are no mistakes, only predestined choices and consequences. Every decision is a necessary learning experience.

This new therapy comes with a single, but very powerful affirmation: ***GOD – generator, operator, destroyer - grants me willingness to accept what I cannot change, the courage and ability to do what I must, and the assurance that I am indispensable.***

Of course, this affirmation is easier to practice under mild stress than during a life-threatening situation. Implementing the steps is encouraged by praise, empathy, attention, and approval (PEAA), which goes a long way toward soothing the suffering soul. The transformation from infantile faith to mature reality takes a lot of patience and persistence and practice in all things – mild and severe. But the endurance can pay off in transforming the ego from selfish to selfless. Apparently, God wants a broken and contrite heart into which He can pour love and compassion for all sentient beings. (Psalm 51:16-18) Divine love cannot be known until the self is crucified. Jesus ordered his disciples to hate their families and even themselves and give up everything to follow him. (Luke 14:26) In response, the traditional hymn says, “I surrender all...” After all, that is the main goal, isn’t it – to detach from all desire, including the desire to detach, turning “my will” into “thy will.” To be patient under all circumstances and to accept all conditions as necessary factors in your training, that is wisdom. Resisting the inevitable is the root cause of pain. Jesus said, “The spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing.” (John 6:63) His response to adversity was radical acceptance. If someone slaps your cheek turn the other, if someone takes your coat give them your cloak also, if a soldier demands you carry his pack a mile carry it two miles, if someone borrows something do not demand it back, love your enemies, and do good to those who harm you. And, be thankful in all things. Tagliaferre proposes this form of new therapy may be a powerful advance in human evolution, i.e., “a giant leap for mankind.” But its discovery and use in counseling troubled people is, of course, the will of GOD, the generator, operator, destroyer of everything from atoms to galaxies.

APPLICATION to LIFE

Don't judge the day by the harvest you reap, rather by the seeds that you sow.

Robert Lewis Stevenson

"In spite of all my uncertainties, I feel a solidity underlying all existence and a continuity in my mode of being."

C. G. Jung

"The world is not something in which certainty is possible...and therefore you must learn to act on things which you still very much doubt."

Bertrand Russell

While hanging on the cross, Jesus lamented, “Why have you forsaken me?” If the Son of God felt abandoned in his peak time of need, what shall we make of this God who would sacrifice his only son to correct a decision He made to give mankind free will, knowing what the outcome would be? After his suffering, Jesus was immortalized and became the symbol of a religion that fails to bring serenity and inner peace to the world. Surely, God could have created a different kind of world if He willed. Or could He? Evil exists, and we must accommodate it as

being necessary, or it would not exist. We experience both benefits and burdens at the will of GOD – Generator, Operator, Destroyer. But, even burdens come with benefits. “We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3)

A letter to Jung from a former patient reads as follows: “Out of evil, much good has come to me. By keeping quiet, repressing nothing, remaining attentive, and by accepting reality—taking things as they are, and not as I wanted them to be—by doing all this, unusual knowledge has come to me, and unusual powers as well, such as I could never have imagined before. I always thought that when we accepted things, they overpowered us in some way or other. This turns out not to be true at all, and it is only by accepting them that one can assume an attitude towards them. What a fool I was! How I tried to force everything to go according to the way I thought it ought to! So now I intend to play the game of life, being receptive to whatever comes to me, good and bad, sun and shadow that are forever alternating, and, in this way, also accepting my own nature with its positive and negative sides. Thus, everything becomes more alive to me.” (*Commentary of the Secret of the Golden Flower.*) The Psalmist wrote, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil...” (Psalm 23:4) *A Course in Miracles* states, “What could you not accept if you but knew everything that happens is for your good? Disobeying God’s will is meaningful only to the insane. In truth, it is impossible.” The man who watched his wife drown and lost his house in hurricane Dorian and refugees who are driven from their demolished countries by civil war might find this idea difficult to accept. We may need a different outlook to make it through the walk of life we are given.

Mindfulness therapy claims that living in the past invites depression and living in the future invites anxiety – but if you must, you must. Living mindfully here and now moment by moment clears the soul from all manner of perfidy and baseness – if you can. Jesus instructed not to worry about tomorrow because the problems of today are enough, so why borrow trouble? It does not change anything, and worry can impact resilience needed today. However, Jesus sweat blood anticipating his suffering and death on the cross. All in GOD’s will of course. Poet, Robert Frost lost his wife and four children by his age sixty-six and lived to age eighty-eight to think about it. He said, “It is hard to get into this world and hard to get out and what lies in between makes no sense.”

One literary critic wrote, “Frost's best work explores fundamental questions of existence, depicting with chilling starkness the loneliness of the individual in an indifferent universe.” Frost wrote, “Lord please forgive my many little jokes on thee, and I will forgive thy great big joke on me.” His epitaph states, “I had a lover’s quarrel with the world.” The best meditation upon GOD may be that given to Moses: “I AM – here and now” because that is all we have for sure. (Exodus 3:14) Repeating that mantra sustains belief in the highest of the highest powers in the universe.

C. G. Jung said many of his troubled patients lost contact with whatever resilience was provided by their faith, and no one recovered who did not regain it, i.e., “they made peace with GOD.” “Be thankful in all circumstances because this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18) St. Paul wrote that to Christians who were being crucified for their refusal to worship Caesar. Perhaps he was aware that Greek philosopher Cicero said, “Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, it is the parent of all the others.” Despite their distress, or possibly because

of it, Paul instructed them to think of things that are “true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy.” (Philippians 4:8) We are not self-sufficient. We did not create ourselves. We may not even create our own thoughts. We depend on parents, friends, society, the earth, GOD, the universe and even the government to provide what we cannot provide for ourselves. BUT, what GOD gives it also takes away. All beginnings come with endings. Seeing with grateful eyes requires that we see the web of interconnection in which we alternate between being givers and receivers. The self-reliance so highly valued in our culture is based on the illusion of free will. “I thank whatever gods may be for my unconquerable soul. I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul.” BUT, from atoms to galaxies, nothing happens outside the will of GOD – including our thoughts about it and the poem, *Invictus*, by William Ernest Henley. Gratitude must be balanced with ingratitude and narcissistic entitlement, or it would not exist.

This outlook requires a personal transformation to accommodate the world as it is for every sentient being. Jung proposed the second half of life is preparation for the personal development leading to a transition from physical to spiritual that he called “individuation,” i.e., removing the dross of life to establish who you were born to be. He declared, “Those who look outward dream, those who look inward awake.” The transformation requires examination of the influence of your family, what you learned in school and the social environment, and your natural personality to uncover your authentic self – physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Telling our personal stories allows us to pay tribute to all the generous people in our lives – parents, teachers, coaches, friends, spouses, children, and siblings – who contributed to our journey on the labyrinth pathway of life. Because everyone sees the world through their own unique filter, there really are no completely authentic people having authentic relationships. Shakespeare penned this instruction by Polonius to Hamlet, “This above all: To thine own self be true, and it follows as night the day thou canst not be false to anyone.” This inner work is hard, but Socrates said the unexamined life is not worth living. Unfortunately, it may require the help of a therapist which most people never obtain. Whether you do or you don’t must be the will of GOD, of course.

Jung said, “The way to yourself is the longest way and the hardest way. Everybody would pay anything, his whole fortune, to avoid going to himself. Most people hate themselves, and for nothing in the world would they go where they are, where their native town is, because it is just hell. The dread and resistance every natural human being experiences when it comes to delving deeply into himself is, at bottom, the fear of the journey to Hades.” (*The Vision Seminars*, vol 1, p. 30) Jesus said the gate is very small and the road to it is very narrow so only a few ever find it. (Matthew 7:14) Buried in the subconscious is a person we really may not want to know, what Jung called the shadow. St. Paul lamented he was a “wretched man” because, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. I myself in my (conscious) mind am a slave to God’s law, but in my (subconscious) sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.” (Romans 7:23-25) Necessary opposites. Also, Paul was called to his ministry; he did not volunteer. Jesus declared, “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” (Acts 9:16) So, when you suffer, consider the source – GOD.

Further, Jung stated, “The greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally unsolvable. They must be so, for they express the necessary polarity inherent in every self-regulating system. They can never be solved, but only outgrown.” For many people, this means ignoring problems and going on with life as though nothing happened – seeking happiness

outside of themselves. Thus, the world is a mess. However, things are happening unconsciously inside that may display in unexpected ways outside. Celebrated author, Ernest Hemingway said, “Life eventually breaks everyone, and some people grow stronger at the broken places.” But some things that are broken cannot be fixed, so we have divorces, cemeteries, junk yards and prisons. Hemingway committed suicide. So did the classical artist, Vincent van Gogh who could not sell his 2,100 paintings during his lifetime. Now, they are worth millions each. He reportedly said, “To suffer without complaint is the only lesson we have to learn in this life.”

One might also mention the work of poet Emily Dickinson and novelist Jane Austen as examples of talents who were not fully recognized during their lifetimes. Newton’s law of gravity was not verified until seven decades after his death. (Need I say it? All in GOD’s will of course.)

The late British philosopher, James Allen wrote, “When, after much searching and suffering and sacrificing, the light of an eternal principle dawns upon the soul, a divine calm ensues and joy unspeakable gladdens the heart.” This awesome idea may be true or not, but nothing you can do will change the truth. Nietzsche said truth always is on the side of the more difficult. Instances of confusion are not uncommon among people who become dazzled by ideas too great or energies too powerful for their mental capacities to grasp and their personality to assimilate. Dr. Hollis wrote, “We are daily obliged to choose between anxiety and depression, which comes from being an animal who can become aware of just how thin the thread by which it hangs really is. (And wherever you go, you are there.)” (*Swamplands of the Soul*, 1996, p.103) This knowledge can be very stressful if you think about it. The universe is so big, and we seem to be small and powerless. Breakthroughs, like discovery of theofatalism, often are very acute and dramatic, initiating opposition and rejection even in your own thinking. It is dangerous for discoverers of breakthroughs to challenge established traditions. It possibly can even be life-threatening.

Most therapies imply that you can change thoughts to change feelings, (whatever “you” are) but what if “you” do not control your own thoughts (whatever they are). Mystical writer Abd-ru-shin (a.k.a. Oskar Bernhardt (1875–1941) who was big on free will, intuition, and personal volition declared in *The Grail Message*; (1941): “All teachings (thoughts, ideas, interpretations) were at one time willed by God, precisely adapted to the individual peoples and countries, and formed in complete accord with their actual spiritual maturity and receptivity.” Therefore, if you were raised in Italy you probably are Catholic, if you were raised in Tennessee you probably are Baptist, if you were raised in India you probably are Hindu, if you were raised in China you may be Buddhist, Taoist, etc. GOD assumes many different forms among all the cultures on earth, and it makes atheists also. Mother/Saint Teresa said, “GOD does whatever it wants with whomever it wants and (sheeple) all must take what it gives and give what it takes.” One theologian described God as a large cat playing with a mouse. (*Darkness Is My Only Companion*, 2015) We all must be who we are, saints and sinners, rich and poor, sick and healthy, predators and prey. Thus, theofatalism concludes that people and all other sentient beings must be robots of GOD, believing and doing what they must.

Concerning his discoveries in human psychology C. G. Jung said, “I do not have to believe because I know.” And so it is with theofatalism. Tagliaferre postulates in every life, there is only one way, GOD’s way. Whatever you do or don’t do, think or don’t think, feel or don’t feel, moment by moment and step by step is the only thing for you as there can be no other.

Theofatalism is the ultimate absolute infinite explanation for what is – from atoms to galaxies. Whether you believe this or not is the right choice for you also. As with the law of gravity, you can ignore it, but you cannot avoid your destiny.

There may be nothing new under the Sun; it is all there waiting to be discovered. However, painful spiritual enlightenment has been beneficial in healing deep psychic wounds. Dr. William Ferraiolo wrote, “Each of us is faced with a set of initial circumstances to which we did not consent. Events transpire within and without our bodies, and these shape us neurologically, biochemically, psychologically, and in innumerable other respects that determine our beliefs, desires, aversions, attitudes, proclivities, etc. These all jointly culminate in decisions and actions. Thus, one becomes a cheat, a liar, a coward, a hero, a stalwart, or what have you. To develop sincere appreciation for being born in a brutal world not of your making, to struggle and fail time and time again, to feel repeatedly lost, bewildered, frustrated, and hopeless, to swim in this ocean of misery, and, ultimately, to drown in it; this is the beginning of wisdom.” (*Meditations on Self Discipline and Failure*, 2017)

Beware of consuming too much knowledge. The great King, Solomon said it was chasing after the wind. “With much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.” (Ecclesiastes 1:17-18) What you don’t know cannot hurt you, ignorance is bliss, etc. C. G. Jung observed that some discoveries during mystical enlightenment produce ego inflation. “The inflation has nothing to do with the kind of knowledge, but simply and solely with the fact that any new knowledge can so seize hold of a weak head that he no longer sees and hears anything else. He is hypnotized by it and instantly believes he has solved the riddle of the universe.” Dr. Hollis says, “A problem occurs when the ego thinks it is separate from nature and nature replies, no you are not.” So, perhaps it is healthy not to think too much about GOD. One sage concluded, “Before enlightenment I chopped wood and carried water; after enlightenment I chopped wood and carried water.” Now, go outside and play, or do whatever you are called to do.

Note: While there are no drugs approved for treating religious and spiritual problems, herbal treatments are claimed to be helpful in soothing the troubled mind and restoring emotional equilibrium and cognitive clarity. Herbal remedies listed for mental health disorders include St. John’s Wort, Chamomile, Valerian, Ginseng, Kava, Winter Cherry, Ginkgo Biloba, Chinese Skullcap, Meadow Sweet, Bacopa, Hops, Passionflower and Licorice. Consult a doctor before trying any of these herbal supplements. For other nutritional supplements: Anne Procyk, ND, “Nutritional Treatments to Improve Mental Health Disorders: Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions for Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar & ADHD,” (2018)

DESIDERATA

Go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant for they too have their story. Avoid loud aggressive people because they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself to others you may become vain and bitter; there will always be greater and lesser people than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your career however humble, it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is. Many people strive for high ideals and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. (Those who matter will not mind, and those who mind do not matter.) Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and stars, you have a right to be here. And, whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God whatever you conceive Him to be. Whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams it still is a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy. Amen.

Max Ehrmann, 1927

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