

## Happiness Loves Company

Where does it lie—without or within? First I will tell you in one way, as opinion and fact, then in a better way, as a story:

I used to believe the fact, and had not a clue...for we are all told to believe in facts. What is worth? Worth is the amount you are worth! That, is the fact. The guilty fear which answers our feelings of inadequacy and emptiness, expressed as an endless reactive hunger, the will to incorporate objects and property, an accumulation accomplished via behavioral externalization of the cumulative functioning of the lower intestine, demonstrated as *a quest to accumulate*: things, honors, money, needful friends and other external "rewards"—was once a very good idea. Nature was the enemy, and anyone who thought otherwise was soon swallowed into her inhuman abyss, never to return...but now, the situation has changed. If, you are willing to spend the time, and "sacrifice" a few of the very least valuable imitations of worth, those things erroneously known as "luxuries," you may find the base currency of a new value system is now yours: *time*. Once you have gathered a pocketful of what is the "coin" of this new realm, you quickly discover that what was touted as valuable, the incessant gathering of things, once a necessity borne upon the back of suffering, hunger and real need, has become the essence of struggle itself. A new situation has emerged with a new edict: *Time is all things*. Time is value. Watch as the world suffers, wrenching its ugly spirit ever round in jerking fits, as a stupid bloated dog, slathering and twitching, begging and killing for another scrap of meat, *it does not need*.

The two things our faltering human community requires, defines itself by and understands best, are the worth of its guilty pain, and the value of one who will administer healing balm and sympathy, rather than an answer for their chosen misery. To consume the world under a guilty pall is exhausting, and although most would shun another view, I will present one. I am too weak to offer a hand to the drowning, so, I hope you can swim.

Time is all things...if you have enough, you have everything. What if, you could change the past? It seems impossible, and perhaps irrelevant, but, if you think for a moment, you will find that the past is nothing but a concept, and a vital concept indeed!—because the past is utterly essential for our survival, as it defines the present! Each moment, our past, in the ontological, phylogenetic and evolutionary senses, is what *mediates* the portion of affect assigned to experience from limbic (and even more basic structures) to provide *quality* to experience (Norman, 2013). Many theorists consider the neocortical store to be the physiological substrate by virtue of which the past gains long-term ontological representation (Gazzaniga, 2009, p. 331). The neocortical store is consolidated each night in dreams to contain new material as encoded memory traces, mediated by affective subcortical (limbic) structures, in a process not unlike that of day-world reality recognition and definition (Norman, 2013; Stickgold et al., 2001). To be plain: During the day, we define the present by way of the past, and by night, we define the past by adding experience from the (recent) present. So, if we could change the past,

all the world would change right alongside of it! Time is all things! Change the past and the entire of our experience would be completely altered, both internal and "external"—as our inner perceptions are the only thing we ever really experience, the external world as we perceive it would be completely redefined in the same instant! Remember: the past mediates affect, and affect defines reality. Look back through this archive or ask me for citations, papers and specifics. The bottom line is that we may alter the activity of the specific brain circuitry which gives quality to experience, and, redefine... everything (Norman, 2013 re-polarization). We can recreate the world, rebalance the basic level of dopaminergic systemic predominance and neuropeptide activity to create co-anesthesia, free undifferentiated libido, free the energetic and creative potentialities within the spheres of experience and sublimation alike, and become—everything! This poetic statement, "become everything," is not so obscure as it seems, remember: affect is experiential quality and definition, so in a literal sense, you create, and become all the world! I am entitled to say as both a poet and a scientist—*you become, and create...everything*. Then, but one thing is needful. Here, it reads better as a story:

### ***Happiness Loves Company***

Abraham was not happy, and so had many friends. He had a job he was loathe to work, a family from which he withheld his love, and himself at the captain's chair of a ghost ship amongst clouds, and he was like many, and so had many friends. He and his friends were together often, and found much comfort in the sharing of their unjust misery. Often the intimacy of this sharing was so warm, such a forgiving and cherished friendship emerged, which listened only to embrace, so listened tastefully. "I too feel the weight, and am ennobled to know you, a hero who speaks quietly and but little, and so endures our hidden burden in dignity." We who have friends share the acquired taste for our misery.

Abraham was selfish and found he needed more than the warmth of such dear friendship. His misery would not be consoled or stilled, even in this tender cup, and so he looked over himself to God and prayed, "I am empty dear Lord, and can not quench myself in my pity, and find even those like me who I love, not enough to quiet my empty pain. I am close to blackest despair, and seek your wisdom and love; for I shall find another path to see you, and we will surely meet." God knew Abraham was close to blackest despair, and this gave God hope for Abraham, as one so low is most ready to climb. Only the desperate are willing to see hope lies opposite their shadow. Who else would leave one so like themselves?

Hearing Abraham's black prayer, a prayer of hope, God was touched. God drew Abraham's soul close to His breast. He is a vain and lonely God, a great, needy and cruel God, and hence a compassionate God. He found Abraham as a single grain of sand from a thousand beaches in every time, and He drew him near so He might know him. A man's soul is as vast, black and bright as the universe, and so is a very small thing to God. God found Abraham and heard him, so He bestowed his wish, and gave Abraham happiness.

Abraham awoke with a fearful start, quivering with fear to know it was true: he had known God! He saw the reflection he drew from his mirror and was horrified. He called himself all filthy names, and all manner of black curses and hideous oaths fell from his own lips, to his own ears, and he knew: He was a lie! He spat upon the mirror and wept bitter tears for himself, and so seeing this, broke the mirror with his fist. Blood ran down the length of his arm and he cursed God. "You filthy wretched liar, I am not happy!" The room shook with cruel laughter and the mirror began to vibrate, and its broken shards ran about like mad insects, furious and somehow cruel and malevolent, until they too gave voice to their contempt for Abraham, and began to laugh at him as well! One stung him and then another took a piece of flesh and spat it into his horrified face and began to laugh! Now all the shards seemed to be of one terrible mind and fell upon him, laughing and chewing out plugs of his skin and showering him with his own flesh, insects gleefully scorning him in a filthy shower of his own flesh and life's blood. Bloody and oozing from thousands of wounds, the wounds began to see him, each now shown with a sparkling eye, a droplet atop a splinter of glass which rose forth as a crystal needle from each, and each alike topped with its clear shining bead, a thousand single, laughing, seeing, knowing splintered eyes. Overcome, mad and crying out in the bitter anguish of the defeated, his strength was spent and so finally, Abraham collapsed.

When he awoke he discovered the mirror was whole again and he was both in it, and looking at it, tears falling from his eyes, his wounds were gone and his laughter resounded along with God's, a cruel wonderful laughter which makes the birds jealous enough to sing, and so be exalted in beauty. Now Abraham was free and joyous in all things and thoughts. His step was easy as his tears, and he held no high aspiration or gloomy duty before himself. He could not stand the profusion of his joy, and wanted others to understand and share it with him. He became still more joyous at the thought, and it seemed he might burst from only knowing within himself. He heard a sad voice, the voice of God come to him and say, "Abraham be careful, for all gifts are not for all men." "But surely God is mistaken to caution me such, or He would not have made my happiness so great, or my joy so restless," thought Abraham. So Abraham went to share his happiness.

Abraham set forth to see his family and bring word of the new happiness God had given him. Abraham's family was surprised to see him home before the week's end, as it was his habit to come home only on those two days when it could not be avoided. His sons saw him enter the foyer unexpectedly, and were visibly shaken. White faces cast downward glances and few words hurried the two away to warn their mother. Soon the family was together in the living room to see the cause of the trouble, but a strange man sat loosely in their father's chair, owned their father's hands and arms, but gestured in ways alien as the damp eyes which drew one fondly in. A new trick? Abraham began, "I have spoken with God and have learned the secret of happiness, which I want to share with you." Looks of disbelief were turned inward, a stifled gasp of relief was suspended in the air along with a question mark, and the family dared to look up. He who has hated no longer holds the torch, and so they looked upon him and were less afraid. Abraham thought, "Good, they may yet hear," and spoke, "Yes you have heard the words rightly spoken, I am different am I not? I am happy! I know I may seem strange and over-joyous

but please hear my words, for they are the words of God. We need never repeat the pattern of our misery, but may instead see ourselves for what we are, and laugh at our attachment to all things past and sick, to disown the broken, sad and loathsome self amidst laughter. May we create ourselves again, and in change might we find happiness, and in change be made anew! All is ours to see, discard and renew." The boys looked, and his wife squinted. Their looks were unfamiliar upon those faces, but all too familiar on his own. A new and terrible gleam came to his wife's eye and his sons smelled what was surely a scent never before known, a scent other than the stink of hate and the sting of abandonment to all hopeless, stranded, frozen places which went with it. What was this look of happiness but weakness! Now they came at him alive and hungry as he had never known them before, their words tore into his flesh and their hate and fear filled them with new life! He had never known them so alive and radiant and he saw they refused his words, but no matter. Perhaps he and God had done this small thing. Perhaps his family was now liberated too? They had never seemed happier than in consuming him, and so he snuck back late that night and stole behind the curtain to hear. And so he wept. They were not happy, but now knew only what he had allowed them, and turned the "gift" upon each other, as hate set the two boys, each against the other, and the mother, now encouraged to wickedness, sought to exhaust the two lions for her blood pleasure. They refused his words, as they were taught to refuse him, and he wept the lonely tears of happiness.

So Abraham went forth to share his happiness. His oldest friend of forty years, the lamp of whose sorrow had kindled friendship's warmest glow and tenderest salvation, Frederick was the kind fount of both laughter and tears, his true friend. Frederick opened the door but knew not the man who God had touched with happiness. Abraham spoke, "Frederick, God has given me a gift of the greatest value. I am happy, and wish to share this wisdom and pain with you, so we might partake together in life's greatest joy!" Frederick was at once afraid his friend had gone mad, but knew enough to know there was much he did not understand, and so held his tongue and bade Abraham continue. "Please tell me this secret and I will join you in your happiness from God." Abraham replied, "The secret is terrible in its hope, and you may suffer to hear it, but soon the dawn will fill your heart with a sweetness that will make the angels jealous enough to fly up and show themselves above you, and so be exalted in beauty. Please hear my words for they are the words of God: We need never repeat the pattern of our misery, but may instead see ourselves for what we are, and laugh at our attachment to all things past and sick, to disown the broken, sad and loathsome self amidst laughter. May we create ourselves again, and in change might we find happiness, and in change be made anew! All is ours to see, discard and renew." Frederick heard his words and they sunk into him as the hot stones of boiling truth, and the words of God. He began to tremble and shook slowly, as a bridge in a wind twists did he suffer the truth of happiness. A vibration came over him, much as it had Abraham, and like a scarlet blossom his face was first flushed then swollen with blood, until his eyes protruded, and the vessels in their whites burst. As Abraham left Frederick's home, he heard the agony and madness beset his friend to its full measure, and laughed God's evil laugh. God heard Abraham's laughter, and was afraid.

The next day Abraham returned to visit his friend, and found him rocking back and fourth on the ground muttering, unaware of Abraham's presence. Abraham shouted, "Frederick awake! The day is a laughing prayer, and we are the sacred whisper which is its coming! Awake!" Frederick sprang to his feet pointing a shaking crooked finger at Abraham, "You call me an error, a mistake, a fake and a liar! You who say the past is not to be honored, say I am a forty year error, a falsehood, a misery without cause and betray both me and God, who would never permit me born to such a lie!" Abraham said, "Friend, it is true! You and I are a mistake until we betray our misery. A mistake causes its misery, and wears the years away in wretched obedience to duty as if virtue had other than wings to tempt us! We owe no duty to our mistakes, they are not virtues! You are ridiculous and erroneous and hilarious as God and I see you now and forever, you are now as you have always been: Free!" Frederick attacked his friend of forty years and fell at his feet, his anger spent upon himself, his face frozen in the half grimace of stroke, forever numb and mutilated. And so Abraham wept the bitter tears of his happiness, and its sorrow.

That night the sorrow of Abraham's lonely happiness was too great, and again he called out to God in blackest despair. Again God heard his hopeful prayer from far away fly up on the wings of despair. A broken soul hopes highest and leans least on its shadow. Only truest despair no longer finds comfort in its misery, and wants to leave a shadow so familiar. So God heard Abraham's soul call out as a single grain of sand on one of a thousand beaches throughout all time, and God drew Abraham's soul to His breast so He might know him. A man's soul is as an endless black fire aglow with the tender light which surrounds all of eternity, and so is a tiny thing to God. God listened as Abraham spoke, "God you have shown me my ridiculous self and all of hope and change which laughs, and is itself again. I am myself happiness, but can give no happiness to my family or friend. I am alone in joy which brings ruin to all those who will not accept it. I am weeping in my lonely over-full happiness, a tragedy born of laughter whose words bring despair, and despair alone to all who do not hear them well." God replied, "Yes Abraham as you have seen it is a terrible cruelty to inflict happiness on one who is not strong enough to withstand it." In earnest consternation Abraham inquired, "So why in your godly wisdom did you inflict this treasured happiness on me?" God considered his answer carefully. Anyone who knows Him knows God is extremely clever, and that there is more than a bit of the devil in Him. Knowing Abraham as he knew himself God said, "If you wish I will restore you and your world to its previous state of blissful misery and friendship, and you shall awake with no knowledge of these events, save the one truth that you, Abraham, have created Me. All will be as before. Or, if you wish, I will allow you to stay here with me in happiness, but I must confess, I gave you happiness so I would have someone to share it with. Abraham, can you forgive me?" God knew, that Abraham knew, that happiness is always changing and has few companions, but likes to travel in pairs. The happiest men have created themselves, and often must create their friends as well, and so long to be alone together with God. Likewise Abraham knew the way to a lonely, vain, needy, laughing God's heart is to understand Him with laughter, so he answered God's plea for forgiveness with the highest understanding and respect saying, "Of course I will forgive you because as you know, in my heart I am all but too happy to know you better."

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