

Love and Scandal ...

When I was 18, I read a number of quotes that made a deep impression ...

One was; 'The only way round a problem is ... through it'.

Another; 'To be a gentleman one must be a truly gentle man'.

And another that caught my eye:

'Love and scandal are the best sweeteners of tea'.

Many spiritual teachings, in both embodied teaching and in book form, suggest that spiritual progress can only be made if an individual stops being judgmental. For ordinary human nature though, this is virtually impossible.

We have to make judgements on phenomena we encounter - it is how we navigate our way through the world. If we fail to judge the speed and direction of a bus we may be crushed if we step in front of it. If we fail to judge correctly the suitability, or not, of individual's character when combined with our own, the resultant mess, disappointment or anger may cause a great deal of discomfort for others that we care for, as well as for ourselves.

however, to pre-judge; to be prejudiced and make an assessment prior to investigation ...

Prejudice, in my opinion, is the ugly face of mankind.

It is very difficult to step out of a cultural habit of making judgments and forming opinions of others before one has a full grasp of all of the facts available ... and yet, if we are to grow in understanding we must endeavour to make this orientation the tone of our path. I have observed over the years, my astrology students grow in confidence as they step out of the habit of forming opinions and into the light of being able to describe what they find without attaching a personal opinion to it.

When a person forms an opinion of another person, or circumstance, there is a possibility that the opinion may be incorrect if it is formed from a position of having missing information; any information. If you meet an adult who is unable to construct sentences coherently one might decide that the person is stupid, until one learns they have dyslexia and then, suddenly, the incoherence is explained and becomes perfectly natural; now we may possibly have a bright person who needs to be given a little more time and space in conversation and, oddly, when the dyslexia is known about, people do give them enough consideration ...

So, if we have enough insight into a person's background, a deep enough understanding of their history, their drives, their dreams, hopes, fears ... we can empathically walk in their shoes and it becomes harder to merely condemn them.

Are we able then to perceive gossips and opinion formers as clumsy linguists, who for some reason are either unable, or unwilling, to look deeply and enter the realm of wisdom and understanding. It might be possible that some souls choose such a path in order for those with an aptitude for wisdom and insight to become prompted to develop it within themselves. What can we learn from the crass and uncouth, the shallow and the prejudgemental ? What did we learn about ourselves from our condemnation of the rather dyslexic G W Bush ? Can we have Obama without first having George to react against ?

There are, approximately, currently 6.5 billion people on planet Earth, all with their own fingerprints, DNA, and their own personal perspective of life; their own unique lens on reality. The universe as seen from precisely their place, in each unique moment of time is utterly unique.

Perhaps the truth can only be known fully by blending together the sum total of all human truths, but even then, it still won't be a full picture of reality; The Truth !

A fox can hear a beetle walk across a carpet - I can't. A shark can easily detect the electrical field of other creatures - I can't. There are realms of perception, like a dog's hearing, that are way beyond my scope of comprehension. So, like frequencies on a radio's spectrum of stations, my consciousness can only tune in to the human stations, and then seems to often just be stuck on frequency 'Dave' ...

I find astrology is a good vehicle for enabling me to gain a glimmer of other lenses of perception outside of my own. Some of them so far removed from what seems to be my natural view of understanding that they seem odd, or strange at first. That first encounter with another's perception of life that is different to our own is often called by people, 'odd', 'strange' or 'weird'. Later, when we are used to the notion that other's realities are just as valid as our own, we may find ourselves calling them 'interesting', or 'cool', or 'amazing' ...

Perhaps people who call others odd, or strange, are just at the 'first glance' stage of experiencing realities other than their own and they need encouragement and friendly guidance; just as more experienced souls may once have done.

Linguistically, NLP tells us that humans tend to delete, distort and generalise information, especially in casual and informal conversation. It would take either too much effort, or an aspergers mind, to explicitly relate all of the detail, all of the time. And yet, as we may already know; if we leave details out we may invite the possibility of error.

One thing I've noticed is that a lot of people shorten their sentences, for expedience I guess, and sometimes this may convey something misleading.

For example, if someone says, 'Your jacket looks silly', the recipient may hear the words as if they are an authoritative statement of fact; the voice of the universe, or deity, or God has spoken: 'The jacket is Silly !'

However, the actual truth is that the sentence was not uttered by a god or a goddess or anything such like it; it was spoken by a human being, just another person among the other 6.5 billion on the planet.

In essence then, this means that the weight, or magnitude, of the words, 'the jacket is Silly', is not The voice of Truth, but it is merely 1/6.5 billionth of the truth. Such a tiny small fraction of the actual reality. In fact, including this fact (for it is a Dave opinion and nothing more) every opinion we cast is nothing more than, potentially, one six and a half billionth of the truth.

Seen like this, opinions become just like grains of sand; we can give them great weight in our hearts if we wish too – though we do not need to anymore. I sometimes advise people who are sensitive to criticism and take other's opinions to heart to silently, in their own minds, add the words, 'in my opinion', onto the end of people's sentences when they cast an opinion or declare something as if it is true.

For example, imagine someone saying the following statements out loud to you and you privately add on the words presented in brackets and hear it as if it is their voice saying it. Allow for a ten second gap between each example:

'Your jacket looks silly' (in my opinion ...)

'You are an idiot' (in my opinion ...)

'It will all go wrong, you'll see' (in my opinion ...)

'That song is awful' (in my opinion ...)

'You like them ? – they're rubbish' (in my opinion ...)

'They are all mad' (in my opinion)

By playing with the idea of adding the words, 'in my opinion', onto the end of their sentences, privately in your own imagination, the weight of their sentence is diminished and becomes much less authoritative. If you have a play with this, let me know what you find – I'd be really interested ...

Everyone forms opinions – and so they should if they are to continue their evolutionary line and ensure that they avoid the red berries or the grass with the path laid flat by the feet of a tiger ...

Perhaps then it shouldn't really come as a surprise to us that people form opinions, or that some are disposed towards making pre-judgements ... Maybe what really needs attention is our response towards these things. If we are upset by the malicious gossip or the slanders of others, why ... ? What is it about the temporary passing opinions of these people, among the 6.5 billion that we could possibly mix with, that at this time seems to important to us ?

How often do we find that, like raindrops travelling down a window, we may converge towards people and sometimes people diverge away from us and drift out of our lives altogether ...

Most of the people we worry about today may only feature in our story for a short time anyway. Our reputation, our standing among our chosen society is important , of course; no man is an island and the quote at the start of this ramble on love and scandal hits the mark for precisely that reason. It is important that we are included, accepted, admired even. To be accepted by oneself is possibly one of the cornerstones of social self-confidence. Others may hold this opinion, or that, but you know the truth within your heart; and if you are happy with your choices and behaviours then the light of that will shine through any cloud of doubt.

One of the great voices of social rebellion, Bob Dylan, once said, 'To live outside of the law you must be honest'.

A tenet of NLP is that the value of the individual is held constant, while it is only the value of their behaviour which may be questioned. In this sense, a 'naughty child' isn't bad child; they are a good child who did a bad thing. The value of the

behaviour is questioned but the child who performed the behaviour is always valued. Adopting this frame will yield the highest propensity for growth, healing, change and transformation.

My old NLP teacher, Michael Harrison, used to have, at the corner of all his training material, the axiom; 'Be ... because, you are'.

In kindness

David