

A ROADMAP FOR LIVING: GIVE ME TWELVE  
MINUTES AND WE'LL MAKE 5, 6, 7 LOOK LIKE 1, 2, 3.

MAY 4, 1995  
ATHENAEUM SOCIETY  
PAUL D. GUFFEY

TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY KNOW WHERE MY HEAD HAS BEEN FOR THE LAST 47 YEARS, LET ME SAY THIS; CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, THERE'S A LOT OF SUNSHINE UP THERE!!!

ONE DAY YOU ARE BORN, ONE DAY YOU WILL DIE. TWO DAYS OVER WHICH YOU HAVE NO CONTROL. IT'S THE INTERIM JOURNEY THAT CONCERNS US, PERHAPS AS IT SHOULD. HOW PEOPLE MAKE THAT JOURNEY IS AS DIFFERENT AS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE. SOME MAKE IT STRAIGHT AND NARROW, SOME CURVY, SOME LONG, SOME SHORT, PLEASURABLY, MISERABLY, SOME BLINDLY !!! EACH TREK HOWEVER, CONTAINS DETOURS, SIDE-ROADS, AND DEADENDS. ALL TRIPS ARE UNIQUE ONLY IN PARTICULARS, IN GENERAL, WE ARE ALL TRAVELING THE SAME HIGHWAY. **THE FUNDAMENTAL DELUSION OF HUMANITY IS TO SUPPOSE THAT I AM HERE AND THAT YOU ARE OUT THERE.** ROAD SIGNS ARE PLENTIFUL, BUT MANY ARE WRITTEN IN CRYPTIC LANGUAGE. IT'S THESE GUIDEPOSTS THAT WILL CONCERN US TONIGHT.

LET'S BE CANDID- LIFE IS SIMPLE, IT'S THE LIVING THAT'S DIFFICULT. DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS !!! LIFE GOES ON DAY AFTER DAY; BUT TO LIVE, DECISIONS MUST BE MADE. SITUATIONS ANALYZED, GOALS MADE, SIGHTS SET. REVIEW, READJUST, RECONNOITRE. NEW GOALS, NEW VALUES, NEW KNOWLEDGE, NEW ROAD. LIFE GOES ON. NEW JOB, NEW BABY, NEW WIFE !! SAME WIFE!! LIFE GOES ON. WHAT WE NEED IS A MAP; A MAP WITH A LEGEND SHOWING ALL THE TOOLS THAT WE WILL NEED TO MEND, REPAIR, FIX, ALTER, WHATEVER CHORE COMES OUR WAY TO CONTINUE THE LIVING.

WE HAVE ACCESS TO SUCH MAPS-- THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS LISTS SOME 125 MILLION TITLES-- NOT COUNTING PAMPHLETS, ESSAYS, SHORT STORIES AND THE LIKE. YES, I'M TALKING ABOUT BOOKS. THE PROBLEM, OBVIOUSLY, IS WHICH BOOKS.

I'M SURE MOST OF YOU HAVE, LIKE I, AT SOME TIME IN YOUR LIFE MADE A LIST OF ALL THE BOOKS YOU HOPE TO HAVE READ BY A GIVEN TIME. AND PROBABLY YOU HAVE NOT MADE MUCH MORE OF A DENT IN THAT LIST THAN I HAVE. READING ABOUT WHAT OTHERS HAVE DISCOVERED ON THEIR JOURNEYS WOULD CERTAINLY ENRICH OUR OWN LIVES AND PERHAPS MAKE THE LIVING A LITTLE EASIER. IF WE ONLY KNEW WHAT TOOLS THEY USED, IT WOULD FACILITATE OUR TRIP.

LET'S APPROACH OUR PROBLEM OF WHICH BOOKS TO CHOOSE BY DOING THAT WHICH COMES NATURALLY, AVOID THE QUESTION ALTOGETHER. RATHER, LET'S DECIDE WHICH TOOLS WE WILL NEED INSTEAD.

THIS TASK IS EASIER THAN IT APPEARS, FOR WE ALREADY HAVE SOME "GIVENS": HOW LIVES ARE LED, REMEMBER. STRAIGHT AND NARROW, SIDE-ROADS AND CURVY, PLEASURABLY? LET'S USE THEM AS OBVIOUS STANDARDS AND APPLY THE APPROPRIATE BOOKS. OK YOU SAY, BUT STILL THERE ARE MILLIONS OF TITLES THAT WOULD FIT EACH CATEGORY. TRUE, BUT WE WILL APPLY ONLY A FEW.

FIRST, FOR THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW ONE MUST HAVE DISCIPLINE, LOGIC, HUMILITY--VOILA!! OUR FIRST THREE TOOLS! WHAT ONE BOOK TEACHES ALL THREE? I CAN THINK OF TWO-- SO LET'S LIST BOTH.

WITHOUT GOING INTO A REVIEW OF EACH, IF YOU WANT TO BE LED DOWN A DISCIPLINED, LOGICAL PATH, READ EUCLID'S ELEMENTS OF GEOMETRY-- ARGUABLY THE FINEST EXAMPLE OF A TEXTBOOK EVER WRITTEN. OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS OLD AND STILL USED-- WITHOUT REVISION I MIGHT ADD!! THE OTHER? ALBERT EINSTEIN'S 1905 PAPER, " SPECIAL THEORY OF RELATIVITY". DON'T EVEN ATTEMPT HIS LATER GENERAL THEORY. THOUGH I DON'T CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND IT FULLY, IT STRIKES ME AS DISCIPLINED AND LOGICAL. OH YES, LEST WE FORGET-- AFTER HAVING READ THEM, PUT THEM ASIDE, STARE AT THEM, DIGEST THEIR WORDS, YOU WILL FEEL YOUR HUMBLENESS.

SIDE-ROADS AND CURVES ADD PERSPECTIVE- OUR FOURTH TOOL. AND AN IMPORTANT TOOL IT IS, FOR IT ADDS DIMENSION AND DEPTH. WHERE DO WE FIND IT? POETRY--ANY POETRY. JOHN CAGE ONCE SAID," I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY, I AM SAYING IT, AND THAT IS POETRY". THAT IS ALSO DIMENSION AND DEPTH. OUR PURPOSE HERE IS NOT TO DEVELOP AN ANTHOLOGY, MERELY TO DEVELOP THE TOOLS. POETRY--ANY POETRY.

IS THERE ONE BOOK THAT WILL ACCOMPLISH THE SAME GOAL? TWAIN'S ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN. AGAIN, REVIEWS AND CRITIQUES OF THE BOOK ARE AS NUMEROUS AS ITS OWN PRINTINGS, THAT DOES NOT CONCERN US TONIGHT. READ THE BOOK, PUT IT ASIDE, STARE AT ITS COVER, PONDER ITS MEANING. I FIRST READ IT AS A BOY, I HAVE REREAD IT FOUR TIMES SINCE. EACH TIME IT ADDS NEW PERSPECTIVES.

FOR PLEASURE, OUR FIFTH TOOL, READ THE HOLY BIBLE, THE BHAGAVAD-GITA, THE TAO-TE-CHING. RELIGIOUS WORKS CANNOT BE CATEGORIZED WITH THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW FOR BY DEFINITION THEY ARE SPIRITUAL, NOT LOGICAL. ( BOY, THAT OUGHT TO GET SOME COMMENTS!! ) IF YOU READ THESE THREE LOOKING FOR SOME SENSE OF SALVATION, YOU HAVE MISSED THEIR BEAUTY, FOR IT IS THERE THAT ONE WILL FIND THE PLEASURE OF SALVATION.

THERE YOU HAVE IT FOLKS. FIVE TOOLS, SIX BOOKS, A LITTLE POETRY. IN A NUTSHELL, YOUR ROAD MAP FOR LIVING. ITS WHAT I TELL MY CHILDREN TO READ. I'M ALSO FOND OF REPEATING A BOB DYLAN LINE TO THEM THAT SAYS. "I WAS SO MUCH OLDER THEN, I'M YOUNGER THAN THAT NOW". ONE THING THAT I LEARNED IN COLLEGE IS THAT I HAD AN EIGHTH-GRADE EDUCATION; ONE THING THAT I HAVE LEARNED BY LIVING IS THAT EIGHTH-GRADE EDUCATION AIN'T SO BAD. MY HOPE IS THAT SOMEDAY THEY WILL COME TO THE SAME REALIZATION.

OH YES-- THE SEVEN. SEVEN LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIVE TOOLS AND SIX BOOKS. MAXIMS ATTRIBUTED TO OTHERS MUCH MORE ELOQUENT THAN I.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DELUSION OF HUMANITY IS TO SUPPOSE THAT I AM HERE  
AND YOU ARE OUT THERE. Yasutani Roshi

NO ONE'S MOUTH IS BIG ENOUGH TO UTTER THE WHOLE THING. Alan Watts

CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD, HOW THEY GROW; THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER  
DO THEY SPIN:

AND YET I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT EVEN SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY WAS NOT  
ARRAYED LIKE ONE OF THESE. Matthew 6:28-29

WITH ALL YOUR SCIENCE CAN YOU TELL HOW IT IS, AND WHENCE IT IS, THAT  
LIGHT COMES INTO THE SOUL? Thoreau

WHO IS THE POTTER, PRAY, AND WHO THE POT? The Rubaiyat of Omar  
Khayyam

THE SELF SAYS, I AM; THE HEART SAYS I AM LESS; THE SPIRIT SAYS YOU  
ARE NOTHING. Theodore Roethke

PEOPLE SAY THAT WHAT WE'RE ALL SEEKING IS A MEANING FOR LIFE.....  
I THINK THAT WHAT WE'RE REALLY SEEKING IS AN EXPERIENCE OF BEING  
ALIVE, SO THAT OUR LIFE EXPERIENCES ON THE PURELY PHYSICAL PLANE  
WILL HAVE RESONANCE WITHIN OUR INNERMOST BEING AND REALITY, SO  
THAT WE CAN ACTUALLY FEEL THE RAPTURE OF BEING ALIVE. J. Campbell