



Turning Lead to Gold

by

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I know many people who are or fall into the grouping called LGBT category. The insanity committed by one deranged person in Florida some days ago will go down in America's history books as a record until it is topped by another.

Violence is a communication about a lack of communication. Could this massacre be reduced to a simple case of poor communication? If that's the case we can look back at history and lament the loss of lives in all conflicts as just that.

Let's take a closer look. I think it is safe to say that when we feel anger we have two basic choices. We can turn it inwards or outwards towards another person. Of course, there are consequences for both. Anger-out equals' aggression, anger-in equals' depression. That's simplistic of course, but it is more true than not.

In the mental health field we provide pills for both directions. These pharmaceutical aids can also be found on the streets in great abundance. Karl Menninger, at a meeting I once attend years ago, he called those pills, "Don't give a damn pills." He lamented later, "What America needs is a *do* give a damn pill!" I always remembered that remark as I found it clever. Now reflecting in the light of the incredible violence that we see around our world, I think his remark was prophetic. No less than Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, told us to: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:31)

Our history is full of directives, suggestions, and encouragement to be kind and excepting of one another. We don't do it! We don't get it! And we won't! Why?

There's a short answer and a longer answer. The short answer is that other people piss us off, and we want to hurt them for doing that to us. The longer answer as usual, can provide more insights and ultimately raises more questions. Let's go back to my remark that violence is a communication about a lack of communication.

I am not a hand ringing pacifist or a person known for humming Kumbayah when times get tough, and feces are in the fan. I was reminded of the truth of this when the other day some irresponsible nitwit drove a golf ball through my window. He looked over at me when I was yelling at him about what he did, and about the responsibility he needed to take for his actions. He simply drove off! That was a direct assault on me and mine. My yelling reaction was understandable but I never thought about digging out my Glock and putting more holes in him than the golf course he poorly played.

So I grumble around the house after being assured by the manager of the golf course and the police that, in fact, I was impotent. Swallow it down, suck it up and put out a few hundred bucks because of somebody else's stupid actions.

Most all of us were raised with the idea of taking responsibility for our own actions. It's the golden rule isn't it? One should treat others, as one would like others to treat oneself. This magnanimous thought has been twisted like a corkscrew. And for many it translates like this. You mess with me, and I'll mess with you even more!

More times than not these days we turn gold into lead, as our way of communicating about the inequities of our fellow man. If you look and listen closely many of us try to contain ourselves by internalizing our aggressive feelings.

One of the things that I know is true, at least in my experience, is that the goal of life is balance. The good Lord had a slick design when he made us. People are supposed to let things in and out. Simple. When you think about it there's a lot of truth to that.

If we, as a class of life repudiate this simple little fact first we will get sick and then we will die (sooner rather than later). The answer to obstruction is circulation and so it is with our human design. Circulation is part of the key to finding balance in life. When I lose my balance physically, psychologically, spiritually or even on an intracellular level the answer to this is usually compensation of some sort. When my muscles ache I need a personal or professional touch to ease the pain. When I

hurt psychologically I long for some sort of solace from people, special books or the unrequited love of a special pet like a dog or cat.

When somehow we find ourselves or perceive ourselves as unable to find that homeostasis, pressure builds within our system. Indeed, the goal of life is balance. When we are confronted with the increasing imbalance, the pressure within us seeks expression. The more we are able to hold it in the greater the pressure will be. I often say to clients in this regard, “Your need to be strong is your greatest weakness. Let it in, and let it out”.

My kind, understanding insurance broker found a different, unique way of addressing the pressures of the day. Periodically he dresses up like one of the knights of old. He runs around attacking similar clad people with sticks of various sizes and shapes, beating on them whenever possible. Let it in, let it out, dress up, beat up, and later have a beer seems to be the magic formula for dropping stress and tension with this creative solution.

But how does that relate to all the violence that goes on around us each day outside and within us? What could have been done to predict, and maybe even stop the attack on the Pulse nightclub gay bar in Orlando? Most of us have enough trouble monitoring our own gauges, let alone watching those of others. We do it with our families and friends but that’s about the limit in our fast track society.

We’re told to notify authorities if we see an unaccompanied bag at the airport. On the other hand, we’re raised with the idea it’s probably better to mind our own business and adopt a philosophy of the song Que Sera, Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be).

We are all victims of the horrors and the insanity in our society. It happened once to those who died in the hail of bullets fired by Omar Mateen. It continues to happen, and build stress and pressure within us over and over as we attempt to process and except this unacceptable, increasing reality in our life.

What we must do is to realize a basic principle in karate, before I deal with anyone else, I must first find balance within myself. Finding that balance comes with a heightened sense of awareness, first of yourself and then of those around you. We need to come out of the psychological trance that protects us from seeing and feeling that which is unacceptable to us. We must address the natural tendency to not see what we can’t afford to see. The opposite of denial is awareness.

We need to be become even more aware when we interrupt the natural desire for balance within our system and with those around us. We need to live the words and not talk to talk.

When my daughter graduated from high school the other day I told her to remember the Goodfield dictum or motto, “Be open, be honest, be loving, and be free and let no person transgress with impunity.”

I equally admonished her that life would not become easier or simpler if she followed this advice, but she would live her life in the here and now with all the good news and the bad news that implied. This is life, let it in — let it out, and let it be and maybe, just maybe, we will get the lead out of our Golden Rule.

Ref.: Wikipedia
Bible Mark 12:31



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