

NOTES BY MIKE GRAMMER: **CHAPTER 5--SPEAK TRUTH TO BULLSHIT, BE CIVIL**

89-90 top, a BS-er is a truth _____

- (a) Anarchist
- (b) Agnostic
- (c) Atheist
- (d) None of the above

90, emotional basis. She doesn't say it, but I infer that the emotions are negative ones of fear, anger, hate

Before we go further, I'm going to share a very old Chronicles/journal entry, so you can see where I was in thought so long ago:

** "truth is a drug". "The truth will set you free". Uh huh. Catchy phrases. Some "truth" in those phrases. But maybe not the whole truth. How about adding "drugs are dangerous. Freedom is dangerous"? I've been reading a terrific book by Stanley Bing called "Throwing the Elephant---Zen and the Art of Managing Up". It's about understanding and controlling your boss. And I have laughed my ass off. Because everything he says in there is so unabashedly true. How about the funnier movies? Never mind funny. How about the documentary movies of things that you know happened but weren't ready to face. Tears? See, truth IS like a drug. It's expensive. It's <rare>. It's harmful, in some ways. It plays with your mind. And the truth DOES set you free....or, maybe, it intensifies the emotions that you experience when confronted with it---or, for that matter, when dispensing it! But there is equal validity to Nicholson's famous phrase, "You can't Handle the Truth". Yeah. Most of us, I don't think we can, at least not in continuous, large doses. Truth is hard, it often involves admission of our own guilt, or weakness or inadequacy or mistakes, and it comes (like when I dissertized on ambition) with a known cost to the dispenser and receiver of truth. And it darned well is dangerous. Both from the point of view of what people do when their emotional responses are intensified and from the point of view that a) new and conflicting information often gets conveyed as a result, and a confused human is not a stable human and b) having heard a truth, a common result of that is that a decision is taken, and it can often be a decision taken without properly integrating the truth into the context that you've been living in up to that point. So, very like ambition, it'd be good if people were aware and conscious of the ripple effect. And used truth wisely. Don't go around being a compulsive liar, by any means, but it's too easy to use or say the truth and not think about what you're doing when you do so.*

I sort of summarize all this in another of my sayings. It is easy to say what is true. It is sometimes hard to give yourself permission to say it.

90 bottom, FOBLO—fear of being left out. Heightened by social media for sure, where everyone is compelled to post and you can't post (well, you can, but who does?) if you don't have an opinion. Logic tree—you always have to have an opinion

93, weaponized belonging. That's stunning. Love it!

93, critical thinking. Yep. This whole chapter, my close friends Lynn and Jon (who Deb has come to know very well also) would be all over this stuff. In fact, Deb, Lynn and me, along with 2 other friends, are doing a smaller group book study and currently starting into Peter Pomerantsev's This is Not Propaganda. And we're----right---here. I have summarized this in our group as succinctly as I can.

AS WE COME TO KNOW MORE, WE COME TO THINK LESS. I do worry and wonder whether young people are being taught the skill of critical thinking.

93-95, certainty and conformity, see my notes for page 33

96, civility is also, maybe, this. Learning to be, or being, right by entertaining the possibility that you are wrong. One of the real slippery parts for this is getting at this word "truth". Won't everybody's truth be a little bit different? I wrote a song on the last compositional album that I called "Snowflake Persona" thinking about this sort of thing. The only arena I think I am prepared to listen to the concept of a "universal truth" or "objective truth" is in science and mathematics...and maybe not even there.

98, venison. Yum. She's making me hungry! One of the 15 best meals I've ever had in my life was up the road in Edmonton. I was meeting a fellow wine geek who I had corresponded with on our electronic bulletin board for the first time and we were being hosted by another wine friend, Richard, who this fellow knew and who another friend of mine also knew. Richard hunted, killed and cured his own moose/caribou. 40 day aged, I think. My mouth still waters when I remember how good it was!

98, bottom, not a video game. No, I imagine not. My corollary is when I put my older nephew (and will soon my younger nephew) behind the wheel of my car for the first time. This was the first lesson. I said "help me with this math and physics problem. Think about the fastest you can run and you run into someone who isn't looking. The car, at its slowest, will go 3 times faster than you and weighs at least 15 times what you do. What would hitting someone with that equation in play be like? The first thing you do? You RESPECT the car and the damage it can do.

100-101, it is the terrible nature of the human condition. We really are addicted to hierarchy—to having a place to know and to having to know our place. We have enough trouble challenging other people's beliefs. How on earth are we supposed to muster the courage to challenge our own beliefs---if they are beliefs that have been absorbed by us rather than beliefs that we truly have thought, questioned and chosen our way to. We are back here *again*. Critical thinking means admitting the possibility that your answer isn't the right one. It means.....being.....L-E-S-S.

102, In my integrity. It's *such* an important thing. I have had to say this to more close friends than I think I should have, but if it's what they need to hear, I'm happy to say it. And I have, on a couple of occasions, needed to remind myself to apply it to me too. Here it is.

"You have so *much* of yourself to believe in. *Soooo* much. All *you* have to do is *believe*"

But in today's world, it's so very, very hard. The "mean girls" or "cool kids' clubs and such have been substituted for with a vengeance by any criticism or harsh words leveled at anyone on their twitterfeed or facebook page. More than ever, the phrase "my life is an open book" is a reality. What's one of the problems of an open book? A lot of people are allowing others to write the person's life story. Ask yourself this question. Is it becoming a social crime to be an individual? Think about your answer carefully

107, safe cultures. People won't take a chance if you don't give them one first.

Be warned—there *is* a danger to this---that consensus-building becomes the be-all and end-all of a group's ethos. That isn't healthy all the time. Consensus and conformity are *very* close cousins and health is best served by having....not *divisive* but "diversive" points of view.

107, leadership. I've shared this before with Deb, but another Chronicles entry---and the roots of it going back over 30 years:

"respect. It's like quicksilver. It is absolutely the hardest thing to find and the hardest thing to hold on to. Yet I think at some level, we all treasure it. As part of business school training, I took a good look at this once and came up with the "Ar-ar-ar-ar" model of leadership. You gotta like that, eh? Anyway, Respect brings Receptiveness to new ideas brings Response and change in one's own patterns brings Rewards, corporate and personal. So that obviously begged the question...what brings Respect? Well, I wound up boiling it down to 4 points. Now this is going back 11 years, so bear with me as I try to recharge the memory bank....let's see, 1) You have to care about the people you are leading...and they have to know it, know that they are listened to and that their input is important. 2) The knowledge that you are the right person for the job. A combination of trust...and I mean two-way trust, experience, self-confidence and personal charisma/savvy. 3) Clear communication of goals. 4) a unique stamp. This is the one that people often miss. If you're going to be an effective, a respected leader, you have to be at first instance a <memorable> one. You have to do things in a way, a style that makes people sit up and take notice. If you're never noticed, you can never be respected. Now obviously this is a very dangerous tightrope to walk, because it would be easy to "let your ego get in the way of your brains", but one has to start somewhere. Just remember that you'd be looking to blend in all the other things too. And don't get me wrong. You don't have to be <liked> in order to be respected. Think carefully about which it is that you are looking for. Being liked is a nice bonus when you're going after respect, but it's just that...a bonus. Sometimes, if you're looking to be liked, looking for respect can work at cross-purposes. Hey---that's probably why marriage needs such a constant effort and commitment....you <do> need to have both going in that particular relationship."

108, in a way, what I discovered above is the precursor or complement, maybe, to Carroll's comments. If you yourself show you can lead by way of a unique stamp, you encourage others to think this way too. My demi-famous quote. "Exceptions are the rules the exceptional people make"

English language. The most important? "Hello". You never know what voyages you can go on if you say "hello"---if you invite someone else to share your life. But "sorry"---when you mean it---is a close second.

109, the ADD example of word use. Double-down on that in the world where the acronym is king.

114-115, that part is certainly true---learned acutely while reading Yuval Harari. The human being is an animate contradiction.