

“I am”

By

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“Conforming by nonconformity”

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Introduction

The author was born in Lancashire, England, in the late 1960s, over a decade before Margaret Thatcher closed the pits. His generation knew of the writer Barry Hines, and how Hines' Jud Casper replied to his younger brother, Billy, after Billy said he would not work in the local mine. Jud said they would not want him anyway, as the job required literacy skills, but cuttingly, and in a more stylistically accurate tone, he added, "they wouldn't have a weedy little tw@t like thee."

D.H. Lawrence wrote his classic, "Sons and Lovers," before Hines' time. It paralleled "A kestrel for a knave," quoted from above, by also powerfully covering mining. Mr Morel was one of its main characters: hard working, a man of few words, and head of his family. He appeared resigned to his endless cycle of toil, domesticity, and an absence of recreation.

The author was aware of such historic lifestyles, not least because his high school sat on coal, and the National Coal Board (NCB) was a major local employer in that parochial setting. Younger people are unaffected by these past realities.

Unfortunately, the passage of time, pacifies the power of such messages. Therefore (especially in developed countries) the young find that a life without choices, is an unacceptable reality. It is a nonreal existence, in equal but opposite magnitude, to the reality of their all-powerful entanglement with the Internet.

An interesting parallel would be to ask whether Second World War soldiers, felt not having to climb out of trenches, was something to feel lucky or entitled about?

Our modern profusion, of global media sources, has allowed the monster that is personality, to have decimated the value of having character, whilst increasing people's feelings of entitlement, not least in their "God given" rights, to display Hollywood originated characteristics, whilst the figurative miner, who did not want to be a miner, is further buried in the irrelevance of the past.

Beyond not wanting to mine, miners did not necessarily want to marry. But without social security, that meant cooking, washing, cleaning, etc., too, and without the modern help of things like electric washing machines. Also, who would

be looking out for the aging retired miners if they had no family?

In England, formal adoption procedures began in 1926. Couple that with the taboo that illegitimate children created, then the likes of Mr Morel had to marry to produce offspring. Even family sizes were not a choice, because contraception in those days, meant monasterial life or practising a “withdrawal” method. Fertile couples were likely to have children, whilst not having complete control over how many.

Celebrities, personalities, reality show contestants, Twitter influencers, etc., all help build a picture suggesting choices are increasing. Even the photonegative of the picture, presents more decisions, for example, dislikes, and things to find disgusting. After all, so much is so topical, it draws people in.

Some of these choices automatically define us. You could stop eating meat and be a vegetarian. Even without any action at all, choosing your gender identity these days, is a potentially instantaneous label creator. Of course, that was an unavailable choice to people in Mr Morel’s era.

Within modern cultures, societies, politics, and religions, you can have many picks. Maybe the film “Forrest Gump” is out of date. His mother said, “life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get.” There are a lot of people now, who would reject this metaphor, because they would want the description card, AND a Google search on possible allergens, AND the working conditions of the chocolate factory employees to be of sufficiently acceptable standards, before considering eating any of them.

It is the author’s purpose to show that these many choices lead to strong attachments, and ultimately a dangerous tack, because they become weaknesses, or “Achilles heels.” He thinks Jesus warned against this, as recorded by St Matthew.

Matthew 7:24-27 “The wise and foolish builders.”

In this passage, Jesus spoke about the risk of building your house on sand, because internal, intrinsic, or supernatural based identities, i.e. the more solid and independent ones, are less vulnerable to losses, whereas, strongly world-based ones that might be susceptible to external influences, are the houses on sand.

It is also recorded in the New Testament, that the Kingdom of Heaven is in your midst (or “within,” in other translations.) See Luke 17:21. What is intrinsically yours, or you, and not external, is better to build that house upon.

Although the author is technically a Catholic, it is important to note that he is not a Christian. He maintains that Jesus Christ was real, and existed, but he thinks connections made between Christ and God, were well meaning ideas aimed at drawing people to the religion. In fact, the author does not want to promote any religions. He talks about Jesus, because Christianity is by far the most prominent religion amongst the members of social groups and communities, that have been a part of his life.

Chapter one

It is reasonable that the author offers credentials before you continue. He wants you to have faith in his words that follow. After all, he lacks a humanities degree. All academics validate one another through such qualifications. They imply that certain books have been read and assimilated, whilst perpetuating their academia, their academic jobs, and occasionally producing an innovation.

The author is poorly read. He is a scientist with 18 years direct inner-academia experience. When he was 22, a colleague told him that “universities are a haven for the unemployable.” That became abundantly clear, through the author’s own example, and not just that of others.

His lived experience, as opposed to a read-out-of-books doctoral theories one, is his eligibility for sharing these words and ideas, and suggesting strangers finish his book. At 52, the author has been carefully studying life for three decades. Most of his contemporaries have been focused on common specifics, such as careers and families. That is what most people do.

With such major distractions, people do not necessarily, observe, broadly and fundamentally, and with care and commitment. Further to that, if you have no reason to do something, you are unmotivated. Motivations cause emotional drives. By just thinking something “sounds like a good idea,” you will not supply long-term energy.

An example of a distraction is when an interest is developed in a colleagues’ professional habits. A clear and likely reward from such a focus, is a possible ultimate promotion. That is in the realm of microcosms. This book covers the macrocosm.

However, people often want to understand hierarchies. Broadly speaking there are two types. Skills hierarchies, which are straightforward. They are less emotionally dangerous things to exist in, than the other type, i.e. power hierarchies. Life is more likely to approximate to the latter. In power hierarchies, the complexities of different characters and personalities can be almost baffling. And without your own basic life-fundamentals, that parents, schools, clubs, etc., should have instilled in you, then an ability to flourish in power structures, will be highly compromised.

At the age of eight the author suffered maternal abandonment, with its many, ongoing, and profoundly serious consequences. Not least, a complete nervous breakdown in his 20s, and the following serious psychiatric diagnoses, in this order; schizophrenia, psychotic depression, schizoaffective disorder, and bipolar disorder type 1.

The author now has good mental health. He is reluctant to say he has fully recovered, because he believes that theoretically, that statement can only be asserted moments before death. During the author's breakdown, his sense of identity was absolutely destroyed in every understanding of that statement. However, he found happiness in 2014, 22 years after his mental destruction, and he quickly remarried one year later.

His previous wife was domestically abusive, for example, she encouraged his gross over medication. She passed in 2012 after their 18 years together.

Herman Hesse in his famous quote from "Siddhartha," suggested wisdom cannot be imparted, adding that knowledge is different, it can be freely shareable and comprehended.

However, when someone tries to share wisdom, it sounds like nonsense to some.

“So why read further?”

When people who seek, look, and listen, are given enough time, they consequentially collect an amount of data that enables patterns to emerge. The ideas, behaviours, effects, and outcomes witnessed, that recur to greater or lesser degrees over time, may make some sense. Eventually, some seem more sensible or profitable, whilst others are the opposite. But even the latter are useful. They may become things to avoid.

Either side can be subtle, for example, attitudes and behaviours in people, as opposed to direct “do and don’t” rules, are the route. Therefore, a gradual presentation, to physically present and receptive people, typify this kind of teaching, furthermore, mixing with positive people, as opposed to the path-of-least-resistance easy to access types, is something people can strive for.

This book offers good pointers. The author holds two science degrees: a bachelor’s in chemistry, and a master’s in computing. The latter prompted his terms like “data.” He has considered the Bible

seriously, but not covered other humanity works. He tries to be strictly logical.

In recovering from his quarter century setback, grounded in a childhood and early “adulthood” completely left to chance, it is a clear fact that some people never become adults. In fact, the elucidation of the word “adult,” is a point of this book.

Returning to the data idea: the author suggests people should observe life, and if possible, observe themselves, too. No-one ever knows everything. Younger people often fail to realise that we never stop learning. Older people’s social media profiles, sometimes make a reference, to going to “The university of life.” Such people might write a book like this. One of them did: the author. Even the less analytical will see things others miss, and what one person misses, that might have been profitable, another person might have missed and lost nothing.

This is not academic, and excluding religions, there are no quick fix books. If there was, we would all have one, and the author would not have wasted his time writing this. There is presumably much overlap amongst the primary texts of the

main religions, for example, the core teaching of humility. But in the Bible specifically, St Paul has a metaphorical “quick fix” whilst on the road to Damascus (Acts, Chapter 9.) The author had a similar experience in his forties. He describes that personal “road to Damascus” moment, in less profound terms, as a paradigm shift, and he shares the essential substance of it on a later page in this book.

The Bible’s Narrow gate and Ten Commandments are a path, but richness either side of it is not necessarily ruinous. People get back on track. Some straying builds firmness of wisdom, because whilst compliance is safe, greater self-confidence stems from lived experiences that incorporate that richness, whilst banishing the banal.

Slavish obedience necessitates great trust, patience, and other virtues, because ultimately it insists life is more about a conceptual infinity to follow, rather than the now.

This book tries to guide people, with their own aspects of their own “data,” i.e., their life experiences. Manoeuvring the likely and certain things to come in life, is not an intended scope of

this text. Everyone has preferences, and other unique aspects anyway. Therefore, a general approach is required. All our differences lead to a fascinating world, whilst not necessarily being negative or dangerous. However, we all fear and/or avoid something.

Hopefully, we will reinforce our positive behaviours over time, and keep incorporating other ones, whilst reducing the negatives. That way we become more adept, wiser to pitfalls, gain trust in ourselves, and hopefully acquire faith, but not in a religion (though we can); but more in life, and beauty in little things, such as for starters, us all!

Chapter two

The introduction suggested that these days we might be led to become many more things, than was the case generations ago. For example, it is unimaginable that Lawrence's Mr Morel would have chosen his gender, despite the insistencies that some people today, in more liberal countries, have in that respect. And it is complex, and reliant on other people recognising the choice. For example, the psychologist Dr Jordan Peterson, of Toronto university, was an early challenger of those notions, and he ran into considerable trouble around campus because of his refusal to use what he saw, were the incorrect gender pronouns to address people.

In the author's hometown of Manchester, England, a huge number of people decide to follow either Manchester United or Manchester City football clubs. The former has a red strip, and the latter has a blue strip. Football is life to many, even without them physically touching a ball. They spend entire lives watching others play it. Public houses, particularly in the suburbs rather than the city centre, regularly feature groups of males discussing nothing but the game. They are often impassioned and very opinionated

discourses. Ignorance of the subject can literally be socially handicapping. If such features were compared against those of typical religious cults, a notable overlap would be evident. Whether a “red” or a “blue,” allegiances can be inherited in families. Whilst that implies less choice for some, the risk of social isolation makes group membership an obvious attraction for others.

A bizarre phenomenon occurred after the Manchester Arena bomb tragedy. The concert of the US singer, Ariana Grande, on the 22nd of May 2017, was most tragically ended by a suicide bomber triggering his device. He killed 23 people including himself, whilst physically and psychologically injuring hundreds more.

The author himself was once a victim of an assault. It led to him suffering very regular night terrors for years, but he cannot imagine some of the mental scars that would have resulted from surviving that concert.

After the concert there followed a public reaction, that in the author’s 52 years, he had never seen or heard of anything like before, because all over Manchester, people had (permanent) bee tattoos tattooed on their bodies. (The bee, or “busy bee,”

has been a symbol of Manchester's hard work ethic since the 19th century.) Whilst some of these symbols were small and discreet, others were quite large. Not all were particularly artistic, looking more like signs.

By chance, at this time, the author drove past a tattooist shop, and witnessed a queue of people emanating from outside of it, and to a remarkable distance down the road. It was obviously for bees, and completely unprecedented for such a business. Such queues have in the past, presumably been limited to the likes of concentration camps.

Many people showed solidarity by putting less permanent bee signs on the backs of their cars at this time. Such manners of display were not new, because backs of cars (at least in Manchester) showed "Child on board" signs for many years, then quite suddenly not. The implication of course, is that the driver is a parent, and therefore in the group of people who are parents.

Christians have been attaching fish badges on the backs of their cars, for much longer than people displaying indications of their parenthood status. The fish symbol existed in the early years of the

church. By displaying them outside a building, it was a covert sign telling other Christians that their brethren dwelled inside. Modern day atheists have occasionally reacted by attaching identical signs on their car rears, but for the important differences of their fishes having legs and the word “Darwin” in their bodies.

It is a fact that the backs of cars are used as spaces for personal announcements, often suggesting a proud group membership. It is also a fact that this cultural trend is relatively modern. The author gained his UK driving license in 1985, he has considerable motoring experience, and insists in the veracity of this statement. There was an earlier trend for Bumper Stickers in the United States, but statements like the classic “Shit Happens” were more typical.

After the desperately bad events at Ariana’s concert, the social reaction seemed to be part of a general compulsiveness, to gravitate towards the perceived good and wholesome. Topical popularity, enhanced through general publicity, just increases such urges further. And attempts of religions to wholeheartedly offer similar, fail, due to their over-involving complexities, and lack of online “with-it” factor.

The 21st century is the Internet age. It is no longer an age of fast food, but an age of fast food and I want it fetched to me. People expect quality without a wait. “Bang for buck” and “something for nothing” have broadened, for example, gaining an identity by virtue of acquiring a membership of a group is now an example.

During the 2020, worldwide Coronavirus outbreak, a soon to be centenarian, ex-army Captain called Tom Moore, embarked on a social media/internet fundraiser for the NHS. His goal was to cover one hundred laps of his outside space, during the so called “lockdown,” and to collect £1000 for NHS charities. In fact, he past £30,000,000, such was the popularity of his undertaking.

Donors almost became NHS appreciation society members. However, if achieving the maximum good was the sole point, then ironically, the UK government had already issued the NHS itself with a blank cheque, and with innumerable victims of the virus impacted in ways other than direct medical ones, a greater impact, or greater good, might have been possible with the sum.

A human herding like mentality was seemingly placing people in a bubble of goodness, rather than one of getting hands dirty and down to business. In other words, the final achievements of the cause, were not questioned before donations were made.

Chapter three

Developed capitalist countries often create groups that are essentially, displays of, or other expressions of loyalty; for products, hence the expression “brand loyalty.” Looking from 2010 onwards, a curious phenomenon evolved in Manchester, and although it is irrelevant, it surely manifested in many other places, too. German saloon cars became exponentially more popular, and consequentially, they had a strong presence on the road. Particularly, AUDIs, BMWs and Mercedes Benz gained a vogue status. In opposition to most saloon car manufacturers, these makers routinely installed powerful engines up to 6 litres in size.

With many people becoming environmentally concerned, some UK motorists regressed. In 60s and 70s America, a trend was to drive V8 saloons and fastbacks. They were collectively referred to as Muscle cars, and included classics such as Dodge Chargers, Pontiac Firebirds, Corvette Stingrays and Ford Mustangs. The latter is especially interesting, because it was remarketed in the UK at this time of interest, as an obvious alternative to the more powerful German cars.

Black or white were once the main colours of these cars, then, as if in a competing two-part biological system, one dominated. Consumers' colour options effectively mirrored the Ford Model T scenario, i.e., any colour "as long as it is black." Such powerful German cars looked menacing. Recognising that drivers increasingly liked to look mean, manufacturers made further adjustments. For example, chrome trims and badges became black, too, and bizarrely, their black on black was practically invisible. Previously silver/greyish looking alloy wheels were also blackened, and consequently made to easily highlight scratches received from rubbing curbs, etc. Worse still, these cars encouraged fast and antisocial driving habits in their owners.

With such desirability displayed daily, feelings of exclusion and inferiority nagged people to join the group of German saloon car owners. The arrival of the first credit score company advertisement, on UK national television, was contemporary with this. It looked like loan agreements for these cars, were indicative of the obsessions their owners had about keeping up appearances, especially when the great majority of these cars cost more than an average annual salary.

Not wanting to be outdone, the people who could not afford a newer example of these modern muscle cars, sometimes settled for a much older mechanical liability instead. The psychological problem with this and many similar behaviours, is that they are always linked to other people's opinions; very much including strangers and not just acquaintances. In other words, they highlight a reliance.

Especially younger people feel little reason to analyse their motivations. It can almost appear like a "herding instinct" is operating. Today's world is far from the one D.H. Lawrence described in *Sons and Lovers*.

Chapter four

Identity and identification are psychological ideas, whereas group membership may just be statistical. When the latter is linked directly with positive aspects of mental health, pride (or ego), self-worth; or it boosts self-confidence (whether denied or not), then it should be personally analysed, because the enhancing of any of those aspects, needs to be robust to attacks.

Maintaining an identity that emerged from chance circumstance, or fixed truths (such as being a man in the biological group of males) is an unnecessary acceptance of potential burdens. What is the point of bothering? Hopefully, this book has pointers helping to answer that.

Identities divide the world. Uneven distribution of natural resources, and widely varying climates will always cause imbalances, too. We can do something about the first one though. Emphatic individuals, who try not to maximise their own comfort, whilst improving themselves, might make small positive changes to the world. They realise we have one life. As in Susan Jeffers's message, in her book "Feel the fear and do it

anyway,” they exercise some trust and faith, and with or without identities, they act.

Through having group membership, you must hold the requisite criteria of entrance, and automatically have a high likelihood of overlap with others, thus you enjoy mutual validation. Significantly, many people increasingly crave validation. This century, a priority for acceptance and popularity, especially amongst younger people on social media, has become much more culturally significant.

Three identity groups follow.

- 1) The male subgroup, gay men, holds some members who continuously broadcast, that they sexually prefer other men. The rest of the subgroup do not; their sexual preference is not obvious from outside. People in the earlier half are effectively asking people, including strangers, to be receptive of their messages. It involves reliance again, plus feedback/validation. Unless you were an anarchist, you would not put out messages to invalidate yourself. In fact, psychological mechanisms such as

confirmation bias, may be lessening negatives.

- 2) German saloon car fans can be financially excessive, as stated, and they seem motivated by desires to impress strangers. Ironically, those overstretched budgets aim to fool us in to believing that they are rich. In truth, no-one cares, apart from likeminded people, and they are in the same group.
- 3) Veganism is becoming more common and talked about. A meme appeared on Facebook which makes a point about vegans. It pictures a face with pronounced blood vessels. A caption reads, “A vegan who has not told anybody they are a vegan for 15 minutes.” Whilst unfair, it is not entirely untrue.

Here are three questions:

- 1) What relevance have strangers got within my sense of self?
- 2) Can I become more independent?

3) Will I always need others to enable me to be who I want to be, or who I like being?

Associations lead to tenuous and potentially dangerous concepts of identity. If too much is assumed, then incorporated into to your identity, through the ramifications of who you mix with, you are dependant.

It is not unusual within groups of children, for one to be more magnetic. Being with such a person can make others assume they have acceptance. Whilst socially together, the positivity of such a “vibe” might boost self-worth, and consequently increase the time others may want to be with such a popular person. It is somewhat addictive though, and may compromise chances of personal growth, even leading to denial of the negativity.

Individuals have immunity to situations like this. They are “their own person.” It was mentioned before that this book is essentially an explanation of the word “adult.” “Individual” has mostly the same meaning.

Later in life, relationships such as marriages can be of these natures. But in his late teens, the author spent his first year of university in a manic like state with effortless social skills. Then his

mood plummeted, and two years of reclusiveness followed. Finding new friends was too hard, and he clung to two old ones. They were popular college personalities who did well later in life, especially one, who is now a successful international entrepreneur.

Driving home on the author's final student day, his fantasy that he must be special because he knew special people, began a path to complete erosion and realisation. Of course, his self-esteem vanished in sympathy, without those two physical presences. This was a major psychological blow, and coupled with other significant negative experiences, a nervous breakdown and further psychological annihilation resulted.

Just before returning home from university, the author began to develop a love for classical piano music, having had a chance exposure. He was aged 21 at the time. As his father was musical, he soon began to encourage this, even buying his son a digital piano. The author was working as a computer programmer. It was his best way of avoiding people. However, being tied to a computer screen all day, was not that different to looking at a coal face, like Jud Casper and Mr Morel.

This career attempt was very unsuccessful. After one year he changed jobs due to feeling psychologically bullied. Then after a further 18 months he quit his second programming job, with its significant bullying and stress levels. As he was developing psychotic signs, some of the bullying was probably imagined. That made little difference though, because stress does not care if the source is real or imaginary.

He lived with his mother and stepfather, who argued a lot. Without friends, and having a programming job, he was very isolated. There were about eight local bars around his home area. He used all of them to drink in, soon developing a very unhealthy habit. He drank every night, and swapped locations regularly, but over many months, strangers seemed to realise, that he was a loner with a bad drinking habit.

With other factors including unemployment, he ultimately became under psychiatry, and his psychiatrist labelled him schizophrenic. Thankfully, he was more treatable though, because it turned out he was depressed, and so severely, that it presented like paranoid schizophrenia.

Before seeing a psychiatrist, the author remembers a night in his mother's house. He burst out of sleep, realising that he did not know who he was. He had lost all his connections, labels, and identities. He was nothing, but the gigantic task of learning piano had started. Without it, perhaps his risk of suicide would have been high. His mother still says piano saved his life.

Ironically, as well as giving the author a personal career/skills hierarchy, studying classical piano started building some sense of identity back. This is where he had been before though, and previously, he had experienced people who had not held the same view of himself, that he held of himself.

With successes in grade music exams, he arrived in a competitive structure. Rarely, he would meet another music maker, but sometimes humiliation resulted from this structure. That was clearly worth analysis. Then he found that the better he got, and the increasing number of years he had played, he turned his playing into something commonplace that he just enjoyed.

Classical music can certainly involve competitive structures, but whilst that is unwanted, a more psychologically destructive total loss of skills can occur. The self-taught Russian genius, Sviatoslav Richter, is widely regarded as one of the greatest pianists of the 20th century. He died in 1997 at the age of 82. Before he died, Richter allowed Monsaingen to interview him on camera. This ultimately led to the production of the video, “Sviatoslav Richter the Enigma.”

In the video, we learn Richter lost his sense of pitch by a whole tone, which prevented him from playing. His last concert, a good while after his next to last, was given to a small private gathering on the 30th of March 1995. And having been so immersed in music, then no longer able to play, he appeared very depressed in this video.

The author’s first wife, Clare, developed a hearing problem that stopped her singing. She had been in demand as a professional singer and could also simultaneously play the organ. Sadly, during a considerably long hospital stay for septicaemia, Clare received Amakacin. It is a drug that can permanently affect your hearing; and unfortunately, that happened to Clare.

Years earlier she took the exam of the Licentiate of the Guildhall School of Music (LGSM) singing diploma. She was so good she received the college's silver medal, which only the best diploma performance of the year attracts. However, on discharge after the previously mentioned hospital stay, her singing was ruined: musically unpleasant.

Amongst all the spiritual ideas that Clare explored throughout her relatively short life, and starting with Catholicism in her youth, she was ultimately set on Kriya Yoga, which was first brought to the west by Paramahansa Yogananda. Clare eventually travelled to Germany for advanced instructions in it. Whilst amongst her temporary group of strangers in that country, one evening they were asked "what are you?" People began to answer, and everyone other than Clare had been saying, "I am" followed by something, like "a parent," or their occupation, etc. But Clare's answer proved final. It was clearly the sought-after one, because the instructor said, "that's it." Clare had said only "I am."

Chapter five

Originating in Christian theology, the seven deadly sins are pride, envy, gluttony, greed, lust, sloth, and wrath. In the book “Mere Christianity,” by the famous 20th century Christian apologetic, C.S. Lewis, it was suggested there is effectively one deadly sin, due to the other six being based on the one, i.e., pride. Lewis considered it to be the deadliest of the deadly sins.

Pride leads people to fight one another, and to despise one another. It can even exist at a national level, or it can be a feature of a group of any smaller size. It is a characteristic we hate to see in others, but particularly so when we perceive they have more of it than us. You cannot directly measure it, but it may be gauged comparatively.

If for example, a person seeks divorce as a solution to maintain their pride, then ipso facto their pride was more valuable than their marriage.

That example should hopefully be enough, because pride overlaps with almost everything that is bad in the world. It is found everywhere: in people, countries, football clubs, and ironically, in members of religions, etc., etc. The lack of it in

nature is part of nature's beauty, and the fruit of the figurative Tree of Knowledge, should never have been tasted, thus bringing it into the world. Everyone is guilty of this theological sin. Lewis said, whoever claims to have no pride, is very conceited indeed.

The life of Jesus Christ resulted in the formation of a religion centred around the opposite of pride, i.e., the virtue of humility (of course.) We can miss that all religions overlap on this aspect.

With Sigmund Freud, the concept of ego was suggested. It is much like pride, but whilst the latter is originally a religious idea, ego stems from psychoanalytical thinking, and it manifests in a similar way to pride.

People do not like egotists, as such the word is used as an insult. As with pride, we do not like seeing displays of ego. When two overtly egotistically people meet, especially if it is regularly, like in a work environment, then they might compete to discover who has the bigger ego. They might deny a competition, despite having spectators and any suggestions at all of childishness.

Often then, pride and ego are somewhat interchangeable, but where they differ and do not overlap, includes cases where having pride is generally, socially acceptable. These include situations like having some pride in your children, or a little personal vanity expressed via your looks, because looks, for example, are relatively harmless.

Chapter six

It is implausible that we would readily accept, identities we know of which to suggest predominately negative characteristics about us. Furthermore, if we did, we would be likely to deny the connection. In fact, if a frank statement, such as “I am a convicted criminal” is shared, it could quite easily imply elements of, humility, reflection, contrition, and acceptance, for it to have been voiced at all, because negative personal attributions can point to a depressed mood.

When we say to another person “I am a -” followed by some descriptive noun, it is usually a matter of indifference, or better. It is common in the UK, to say “I’m Okay,” in reply to someone making a general inquiry about you, even if you are bad. Our broader UK society does not expect people outside of closer networks, to share any negative information.

We even make inquiries about others, primarily to gain opportunities to boast about ourselves. In the author’s experience, the capitalistically more advanced culture of the United States, makes it easier to jump straight to the boast. At the time of writing, 2020, the American president Donald

Trump, was continuing to make personal and national boasts, on a regular, and international, basis.

The author met a lady called “Debbie,” through his local NHS mental health services. He was unemployed as it was after he left his second job. Debbie and himself were attending the local social therapy / community outreach service, and at this time, with Michael having a strongly honest tack, if someone asked him what his job was, he would actually say he was unemployed, then paint an even worse picture by saying he had been ill. Unfortunately, many people asked this. It is a hard question to avoid. Debbie chastised him for his excessively open, sometimes negative behaviour, so much so, that she taught him to begin to tell occasional lies.

No-one wants to be in the group of losers, and seemingly accept and identify with it. People want to be winners, and to identify with being in the employment/occupational group, that holds the greatest potential for societal respect. Of course, this book wants you to resist that, and not be motivated by respect. The ego, or our pride, wants respectability, but as has been covered, it is

a state of reliance. It needs what is outside of us, but “the Kingdom of Heaven is within.”

In 2020, Love Island presenter Caroline Flack, lost her television show hosting position after unwanted publicity around an assault charge against her, and she tragically took her own life. Bearing in mind again, that the author is not a Christian, he thinks fame and fortune are very linked, and can be interchangeable, as typified by this statement of Jesus’, “it would be easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle, than for a rich ‘man’ to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” Jesus also insisted that, “the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

You’d imagine that finding the internal, must be an easier prospect, when there are less external complications?

Chapter seven

It is fitting that this discourse is in seven chapters, because the number seven is special to the author. Many of the poems in his complete verse, considerably feature the number. It is present in forms, and more directly. Seven commonly represents completion. As well as having Seven Deadly Sins, Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, seven days in a week; seven is everywhere, and throughout the Bible.

This book has at least one thing in common with Susan Jeffers' "Feel the fear and do it anyway." The titles of each of those books, say such great amounts about their contents. However, people say "don't judge a book by its cover," but the author made that kind of judgement 30 years ago, and approached Susan's wisdom in the standard painful manner, the one many of us opt for?

Whether reading Susan's book would have generated sufficient motivation to cause actions, can never be known. In a similar manner, if someone reads this book, they may not be changed through an emotion, but going back to the author's earlier language style: people collect data, information, and experiences, and with

sufficient time, they hopefully recognise patterns in that data. The author's ideas are suggestions to spot. If we do not tune in, or are not sensitive to something, it could be unprofitably bypassed.

Most people eventually reach a workable way of thinking and viewing the world. However, the author still hopes, that his own message may be considered, and lead to useful ramifications for others, and earlier rather than later.

This requires faith and trust. Of course, the author thinks he is worth reading. These pages took a great amount of work. At the same time, the author also accepts that people perhaps half his age have already internalised all of this, or for some, rejected it.

The author was 45 years old before general people could no longer easily exploit him, threaten to take things from him, or control his anxieties.

When St Paul headed to Damascus (Acts 9) he changed in a moment. A similar thing happened to the author. Such things can happen in a moment because decisions happen that fast, and it must be decisions that are needed, in moderation though.

Importantly, rather than a religious conversion, a “paradigm shift” was a more accurate description of the author’s experience.

He suddenly realised, that all along, the only thing he had needed to be was himself. It followed that he must be the best person in the world to do that job, and he immediately realised that the same thing was a truth for every individual on the planet.

No-one could be better at being him than he was himself. At the same time everyone is different, but as such, a logic makes us the same, because we are equal, through sharing an equal difference. Groups and identities separate us. The author’s hope is that everyone becomes an individual. It was said earlier that this book explains what it is to be an adult. The core of adulthood is individuality, with outer parts mirroring our inners.

Jesus Christ said, “the Kingdom of Heaven is within.” This eventually made sense. It was even emotional for the author when it did. He had been to places, joined organisations, bought things, been with people, done things; then he found it, “under his nose.” He just could not see it before.

The author's wife, Michelle, has maintained there are too many choices today. That is also the author's view. Michelle would add, that having too many decisions leads to anxiety and stress. Return to D.H Lawrence, Mr Morel's choices were scarce, although physical hardships created different stresses.

With so many opinions big and small, many of which readily become identities, the adage "can't see the wood for the trees," and perhaps even, "chip off the old block," might now have a different interpretation?

Finally, the author likes to say Godspeed,
therefore -

“Godspeed.”