



Bringing the Vacation Spirit into Daily Life, by Robert S. Hartman

Our definition of value was that a thing was good if it fulfills its definition. The definition of a human being is in himself. Hence, a human being is good when he fulfills his own definition of himself. What does this mean? It means that he is morally good if he is as he is.

All the words of ethics mean this very same thing, this identification of myself with myself, being sincere, being honest, being genuine, being true to myself, having self-respect -- these words mean that I am as I am, that I am myself. This seems to be a very simple thing and yet it's the most difficult to achieve. For I can define myself in three ways: systemically, extrinsically, and intrinsically.

When I define myself systemically, I put up a system, I construct something as myself which I'm not at all. And you probably know some people in your acquaintance whose images of themselves are very different from everybody else's images of them. They live a construct. []

Also, a person can define himself extrinsically, as a member of some class. In our lives we are continuously in external situations, all kinds of situations, like now I am a speaker, then I'll be a listener, then an eater, and so on. I am a father, I am a commuter, I am a Rotarian, etc. I'm in the millions of situations in my lifetime. But do these situations add up to myself? []

Any extrinsic definition of myself is really not the definition of myself. In order to make the definition of myself I must neither construct myself nor even abstract from myself, but simply BE, namely, identify myself, as we said before, with myself. And this is the most difficult and the most important task of our mortal life. It is very difficult simply to be, to be natural and not to pretend, nor be proud nor ashamed of this or that. Sometimes we reach this stage when we "get away from it all" on vacations, to be alone with ourselves and to get acquainted with ourselves.

To be moral is, so to speak, to bring the vacation spirit into our daily lives. The moral, in this sense, appears whenever you cannot impress anyone either positively with your achievements or negatively with your failures. It is what makes children and dogs love you--if they do--and what makes your wife look at you when you are asleep.

Just to Be, in daily life, is highest maturity. Also it is very powerful for it brings into play the infinity of your intrinsic self. To scramble around in the treadmill of extrinsic value is not only immature, it is inefficient. It

shuts up your infinite powers and lets them lie idle. It prevents you from really Living.

--Robert S. Hartman, From "The Measurement of Value" [1]

Links:

[1] <http://www.hartmaninstitute.org/html/MeasurementOfValue.htm>

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