

INBOX

Understand Scientology before dismissing it

Hey Ryan; chill out. ("Who asked Tom Cruise for advice," ODE June 30).

First of all, Cruise is not the one making the media circus — he's answering reporters, and he does not control what they ask.

And he has the right to an opinion. You can listen to it or not.

When Oprah spoke out against the beef industry, she got attacked. When Martin Sheen spoke out against the Iraq war, he got attacked. When Cruise speaks out against Big Pharma, he gets attacked. Why? Simple. Because these celebrities threaten multi-trillion dollar industries.

And no, I don't believe that natural vitamins are the only solution to postpartum depression. But consider the case of Andrea Yates, mother of five who drowned all of her kids while under the influence of Paxil. Or the case of the Australian mother who strangled her daughter while on Paxil. Or Chris Pittman, the 12-year old who killed his grandparents while on antidepressants.

By the way, Ryan, in terms of Scientology auditing: It ain't that expensive. My wife paid about 60 bucks an hour for auditing to overcome her postpartum depression, and overcome it she did, in less than 15 sessions. She became her radiant self again, and no drugs were involved.

Ryan, it's no wonder you think that Scientology is a load of BS — considering all you know about it is what you've clearly read at anti-Scientology sites. All you know about

it are lies and distortions. That's not research, that's just a quick fix of bigotry and hate.

So chill out. Nobody's telling you that you have to agree with Tom Cruise or embrace Scientology. But get educated. You have a readership, which means you have a degree of accountability and trust. Don't let your readers down by ranting about something you don't understand.

Greg Churilov
co-creator of the Scientology resource page liveandgrow.org

Failure to define "cultural competency" is disturbing

As a University of Oregon alumnus, I read with some disquiet about the University's Five Year Diversity Plan.

The most disturbing aspect of this plan is the purposefully undefined notion of "cultural competency." John Shuford asserts that this vague concept was left so because it "would not be appropriate for the drafters of the blueprint to impose a definition because that might have led to adverse responses by some" (ODE, June 30, "Diversity plan sparks controversy with faculty").

What? In other words, they didn't define the governing idea of their plan because someone might not like their definition? This, at a large university, is the actual response of a salaried member of the administration? They didn't do something that needed to be done because somebody might not like them for doing it? Good God.

The authors of the diversity plan are going to govern a large part of

University life based on an undefined concept, which they will get around to defining — if ever they do — at some equally undefined time down the road, if and when everyone promises not to get mad at them? No wonder the faculty is rebelling.

The unspoken effect of leaving this hinge concept undefined is to create a kind of loyalty test. The implication is, if you don't know what constitutes "cultural competence" you must be culturally incompetent.

As a person whose politics by and large would be considered liberal and progressive (though never Progressive, which is liberalism without the inconvenience of policy), would I have to trot out my Jewish wife in order to achieve "cultural competency"? Or would her Jewishness be considered of insufficient minority authenticity under this plan?

Would I be forced to put her aside and marry — pardon me, "partner with" — a Palestinian woman? A black man? Would my long-standing affection for the poetry of Garcia Lorca and Gwendolyn Brooks no

longer be enough to establish my "cultural competency"? Would I be forced to proclaim, with a straight face, that Nikki Giovanni is a great poet?

If the people behind this plan — which for all I know may be a fine plan if done properly — cannot find sufficient steel in their spines to go out on a limb and define "cultural competency," they have no business writing the plan in the first place.

Less and less, in society as well as in the University, are there people willing to take principled but intelligent stands on issues of importance. To do so requires careful thought, a mind willing to keep alive a little doubt in every certainty and, above all, the willingness to be wrong. If you don't define "cultural competency," you don't ever have to risk being wrong about it. But if you are not willing to take such a risk, you need either to excise the concept from the plan, or turn it over to someone who is willing to take the risk.

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CORRECTION

A graphic that accompanied "Diversity plan sparks controversy with faculty," (ODE, June 30) stated that Joe Wade was fired from the University in 1999. He was not fired. His position was changed from Director of Academic Advising and Student Services to Associate Provost of Student Affairs.

CLARIFICATION

In the same graphic, it says the University hired Elson Floyd to assess the racial climate of the University. This action was mandated in the court case Wade v. the University of Oregon, et al.

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