

Conquering boredom- what we need is each other

JESSE GURZYNSKI
Staff Writer

An old Tao saying goes as follows: The most obvious thing is the most difficult to see; therefore you need un-knowledge to see it. That is, that which you "know" is keeping you from seeing what you instinctively know. People have become so reliant on the great modern god of "fact" that they wait for scientists to tell them what they should know anyway, like human milk is better for human babies than bovine milk.

Here's the obvious: our environment is unnatural and unhealthy to our minds. There is even a scientific study that points in this direction, such as that outlined in the Jul/Aug 2001 issue of *Adbusters* magazine: "Each generation born in the twentieth century has suffered more depression than the previous one and since WWII, the overall rate of depression has more than doubled."

I'm not so much concerned here with depression as with boredom, but they're related in that they result from the same cause: our mediated environment. Our human-controlled environment is inherently boring by design. Everything is divided into spatial areas; classroom, supermarket, "living" room, road, etc. Each of those spatial areas is designed for one purpose and pretty much confines its usage to that singular purpose.

Suppose that you are drawing what you see in a natural environment. In nature there is infinite detail, so you must choose what de-

tails to include. If you are drawing a homogenized human environment (like an office) the detail that you include chooses itself, for there is a lack of any real detail. The indoor, and to a lesser degree the urban outdoor environment, is boring to our minds for lack of stimulation.

Bored as we are, we seek entertainment through the way that is provided to us, which is through the avenues of spending money. Everything in the advertisements that constantly bombard us is a promise of happiness through spending money. This being a capitalist system, the pursuit of our lives is money. Money does not bring happiness, however. Otherwise, why would expensive designer psychotropic drugs be so widely used among the wealthy?

What we need is each other; human contact is what keeps us together. We all live in private cages, isolation chambers that keep us separated even though we're mostly engaging in the same activity in our own private isolation chambers. From what I've seen, most people are distant even from those they spend time with. Why should this be the case?

Largely we spend our time in scheduled activities, many of which we particularly don't want to do. Our jobs are meaningless, done not because we want to do them but because the system doesn't let us get by without money. These jobs cut us off from engaging in activity conducive to personal growth, and they cut us off from meaningful contact with

other people.

I don't know all the answers. We are all extremely dysfunctional, bored, depressed, psychological wrecks; but we also share an amazing human potential for growth as individuals and as a society. You who are look-

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ing to make your life better, I'll tell you what I've found myself, and I'm sure you'll find for yourself as well, if you look. We need to communicate with other people. Just to be able to express ourselves to others is a great relief, but there's more.

I think that what we'll discover if we really start openly communicating is that all those things that we thought we were alone in are really shared thoughts and experiences; I really believe that deep down all of us humans are the same. This does not mean that I believe that we are not unique individuals, only that our human soul is universal. Love your fellow human, and love your world, for all are a part of you and you need them. Friends keep us sane.

Study abroad: Education and cultural experience in Florence and London

MAGGIE JIRASEK
Editor-in-Chief

Two Clackamas instructors, Jan Anderson and Eric Lewis, will be leaving for Europe this year in order to help American students to complete their studies in a foreign country.

Every year, the American International Field Service gives students the opportunity to study abroad and experience European culture. This year, Anderson, an English instructor, and Lewis, a psychology instructor, have been selected to teach abroad for an entire term. Lewis will be teaching in London in spring term and Anderson will be teaching in Italy in fall term.

"I think this is the most exciting kind of education because students get to experience a different culture and other ways of thinking," said Anderson. "It changes your outlook and it's a tremendous growing experience."

According to Lewis, the goal for him as instructor teaching abroad is to keep students who are in a foreign country on track with their education so they can graduate on time.

"I'm not teaching foreign students. I'm teaching students from Oregon or students who want to

study abroad," he said. "I will be teaching psychology and sociology."

The cost for students to study abroad for a term are not very high compared to the amount of money they would have to pay in their home country when attending a university.

"It's a very cost effective way to get a great education both in the classroom and culturally," said Lewis. "It costs around \$4,800 to participate in the program."

If you go to a university in Oregon, you are going to end up spending that money anyways. This way you get to study in London or Florence for a term."

Basic fees cover the plane ticket, tuition, room and excursions. Scholarships to students are available as well.

According to Anderson, students will be in class only four days a week and spend the rest of the time sightseeing.

"We will plan trips to all the incredible museums and historical sights," Anderson said. "In Italy, we will take the students to Pisa so they can lean with the tower."

For students who are interested in spending a term in London or Florence, contact Anderson at X2429 or Lewis at X2251.



12-stepping through Valentine's Day

With Valentine's Day looming on the horizon, I've been thinking about the pressure the holiday brings and what I can do to help

others get through it, short of chewing tinfoil. Now don't get me wrong,

I hate Valentine's Day this year. That's because I'm a poor sport. Next year might be different, but right now every heart-shaped box of candy in Fred Meyer's seasonal display aisle snickers at me when I walk past. Since I know full well that despite my outward derision I will make a last ditch effort to participate, I've learned it's important to set some sort of plan in motion early on. I also know I am not alone in this and would like to share the benefit of my experience with the rest of you. To this end I have created VD Anonymous, a support group for successful last-minute February dating. These are the

steps we took prior to last Feb. 15's 6:00 a.m. walk of shame:

1. We admitted we had no cash and were powerless in the



Marvin Baker
Guest Columnist

dating scene.

2. Came to believe that everybody else on the planet was holding hands to spite us.

3. Made a decision to turn our lives over to the advice of a friend we wouldn't dare trust the other 364 days of the year.

4. Made a fearful, last-minute search of our little black books for an alternative to step three.

5. Admitted to God, and our best friend during a drunken stupor, the lengths we were willing to go to get that return phone call from Elizabeth Hurley.

6. Were entirely ready to let Leatherface MD remove our physical defects if it would get

us past the rope at the nightclub so no one would see us on the street with our friend's girlfriend's cousin's big little sister.

7. Humbly asked our date to spring for the limo.

8. Made a list of all the exes we owed money to and where they were likely to be to avoid them and any potential injury to our odds of getting action.

9. Made direct amends and false promises to the one ex we forgot to check the whereabouts of.

10. Continued to check out the other guy's dates in hopes that what we came with wasn't

so bad after all.

11. Sought through prayer and Goldschlager to increase our semi-conscious state and the physical appeal of our "friend."

12. Having had a frightful awakening the next morning, we tried to carry our sorry asses with pride across her apartment complex parking lot, determined to extend this coming year's May-December fling into March.

I'd like to touch upon one more thing before cutting you loose. A lot of shaky relationships break up right after Valentine's Day, so this may be the opportune time to hit her up for that role-playing game of lucky burglar. It could add just the right amount of spice to a foundering relationship. Then again the suggestion might send her shrieking from your place in search of a cop, taking you off the market and setting her up for rebounder's heaven by mid-March. Suddenly the glass is half full. I'm telling you, it's an amazing program.



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