

Essay 3

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Dissimulate relationship in social, emotional, and stability of well-being in cultural differentiation.

I begin this topic with background information. My family has been in the restaurant business for generations. Our social network consisted of business people from the service sector, purveyors, clients from multiple business ventures, entrepreneurs, and people of all varieties, from staff to dining out for a good time and great food. We employed many people from many cultural diversities, ethnic backgrounds, and others who were searching their interest for answers. Many of my beliefs originate within family structure, business relationships, and the ongoing interaction with customers and employees. Life for me was a closed society, pleasing others. I derived great satisfaction and accomplishment when we had a full house of customers who praised the staff and our food. Opinions were my source of information towards improvements in house, and suggestions concerning menu additions from customers that were well-bred, world travelers, and connoisseurs of fine food. This was my world for 30 years until my retirement in 2000 from the restaurant business.

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As a species, we compiled a history of negating our emotions and feelings. We place them in reserve without addressing their root cause. Society regarded emotions and feelings as erratic, self-absorbed sources of misinformation. Feelings can be defined as sources of information from our mind, body, and environment for us to analyze and draw conclusions through experience¹

My families origin are Yugoslavian. Our religious beliefs were Greek Orthodox. These two ingredients should foster an idea of my values and personality. If not, let me itemize, not in any grandiose context.

- ① Caring of others
- ② Supportive
- ③ Sensitive
- ④ Engaging
- ⑤ Curious
- ⑥ Energetic
- ⑦ Egalitarian
- ⑧ Emotional
- ⑨ Morally conscious
- ⑩ Rejection of rejection
- ⑪ Stubborn

¹ Jeanne Tsai, professor at Stanford University has revealed studies that cultural societies are more likely to express the specific emotions they value.

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Of course, the aggregation of these pieces lean towards profits, the end result. I ~~communicated~~, customers delivered. Rather simplistic by nature. Enter prison to my world. The melting pot of culture, ethnic background, race, and most of all the true nature of our species, our primitive side. Age in prison is a relative term. There seems to be no change in attitude, perhaps behavior due to medical conditions or realization of their actions but for the most part, you are who you are. For me, prison was and still is a catastrophic event.

The most damaging to my world was the reality that I was no longer in charge of me. This quickly took shape in the form of my place in their world. Everyone is equal in terms of moral actions, only the degree in which it was committed. But not all actions were voluntary, some just for fun, criminal, and others were out of passion, despair, and anger. Here's a surprise, some are actually innocent.

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Prison is like a bad suit of clothes. They don't fit, terrible color scheme, and are outdated. I was 52 when I came to prison. I was coming into a society who viewed me as an outcast. I didn't fit in on many levels. I had specific ideas of what life can be, should be and respected those of others. This is not the formula for survival. That is what prison is about, survival. To display emotions, be concerned or care for others is considered a weak individual by many cultures. Many viewed any kind of social well-being something they had to destroy emotionally and physically. They considered prison a game of wills. Who can control the other. Many people in prison feel that their own brand of living should be respected and tolerated no matter how disruptive this behavior is to the group as a whole. Since my incarceration, I have witnessed a change in the age of people coming to prison. They are younger, more violent, self centered, and disrespectful. A majority come from broken families or no families at all. They have been subjected to all forms of physical, sexual, and emotional abuses. They are not emotionally or socially adapted to cooperation in any form for betterment of self. They don't have the skills to make changes. Their world was confined to short term goals, immediate gratification, that lead to, take what I don't have.²

² Jean Twenge, a professor at San Diego University conducted online research that shows that the more hours of internet use are associated with lower well-being in children and adolescents, less curiosity, self-control, emotional stability, and are diagnosed with anxiety and depression.

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I feel Jean Twenge assessment is spot on. The introduction of tablets to the prison system along with contraband cell phones are only reinforcing this behavior. These devices are manipulated by prisoners with efficiency and grace and are a major source of communication on many platforms. They don't know how to verbally communicate and exhibit all the traits the professors research concluded.

Prison is a society unto its own rules. Scientifically speaking, society is defined as a reciprocal relation between individuals. This is a group of peoples who have, more or less, a conscious relationship with each other. But prison society is so dissimulated and complex that you can not base what is right or wrong solely on the laws of prison, but by moral social consequences only. The validity or moral ideals and the norms by which conduct is to be judged is guided by the need to survive! And this is formed by the here and now of any given situation, change who I am. Hide my true self.

There is a science to understanding ones emotions to survive in prison. Here are 5 identified skills.

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- ① recognize the emotions of others. Not just what they think, feel, and say but facial expressions, body language, vocal tones, and non-verbal signals.
- ② understand those feelings and determine their source, cause and effect.
- ③ label emotions with vocabulary
- ④ express our feelings with cultural norms and social content.
- ⑤ regulate emotions rather than (they) regulate us.

Ethics is the science which deals with right or wrong of human conduct. Its nature of morality and of moral obligations dictate that we find practical strategies for dealing with what we and others feel.