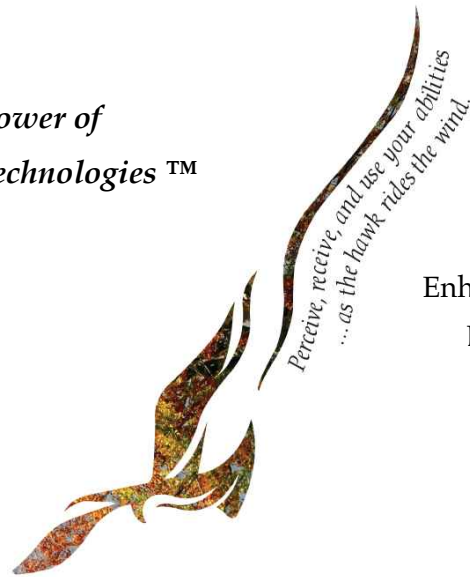


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Edited and published by Joel P. Bowman and
Debra Basham for SCS Matters, LLC
December 2012

Welcome ...

Here is your *Beyond Mastery Newsletter* for December 2012. This newsletter may be duplicated and distributed to those who share an interest in Energy Medicine, neurolinguistics—especially Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP)—and spirituality.

Additional copies of this newsletter may be downloaded at the following link:

www.scs-matters.com/beyondmastery/Newsletter-Dec12.pdf

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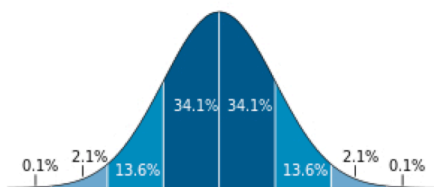
<http://scs-matters.com/newsletter-archives/>.

This month the featured articles are “Who’s Afraid of Vilfredo Pareto?” by Joel; “Hilgard’s Medicine,” by Debra; “Aren’t You Glad That’s Over...,” by Joel; and “Room at the Inn,” by Debra.

Who’s Afraid of Vilfredo Pareto?

Vilfredo Pareto was a nineteenth-century Italian engineer, sociologist, economist, political scientist, and philosopher. These days we’d be hard pressed to find someone who could think so clearly about so many subjects. He is best known these days for what we often call the 80/20 Rule, which is also known as the Bell Curve or “Pareto’s Law.” Pareto developed the “Law” named after him following his discovery that, in the Italy of his time, 80 percent of the land was owned by 20 percent of the population.

We have since discovered that Pareto’s Law has a wide variety of applications. Whether you are measuring height, weight, intelligence, or land ownership, the result will be a bell-shaped curve that goes from the least on one end, to a bulge in the middle, and the most on the other end. Here’s a typical Bell Curve:



If we were interested in the height of members of a population, for example, we would find a few really short people and a few really tall people. Most people would be in between and close to the middle of the curve: of “average” height. The same is true for intelligence as measured by “IQ” (Intelligence Quotient) tests, which may not say much about an individual’s capacity for success. “Success” probably requires a separate Bell Curve (in addition to an “operational” definition).

Statistics is not my favorite (or best) subject, but I have always thought that this concept had special significance. We (pretty much all of us) tend to lump people into either/or categories when we really ought to be putting them on a Bell Curve. In the ‘70s, one of the battle cries of the feminist movement was, “Men are pigs.” In NLP terms, that is an “unwarranted generalization” because it implies *all* men. When men are measured on a “Piggishness” Bell Curve, a small percentage of men might be extremely piggish, while at the other end of the scale, tendencies toward piggishness would practically disappear.

Another NLP question we could ask would be, “What exactly do you mean by ‘pigs’?” In the saying, “Men are pigs,” the term is designed to *demonize* men rather than point to or indicate specific behaviors. What specific behaviors lead to that conclusion? For each behavior that might be mentioned (tendency to be sloppy comes to mind), you would need a separate Bell Curve. In the case of sloppiness, extremely sloppy would be at one end of the scale (if you’re old enough to remember “The Odd Couple,” think “Oscar Madison”) and really neat (think “Felix Unger”) would be at the other. A vast majority of men, however, would be somewhere in the middle of the curve.

Most of the labels we put on people—Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Jews, Italians, Native Americans, Immigrants, Democrats, Republicans, Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, and Whatever—are unwarranted generalizations. Just as the number of things *all men*

really do have in common is limited, the same is true for all people sharing the principal characteristic of the label.

With the rise of what might be called “social consciousness” in the 1970s, unwarranted generalizations about individuals were often countered with the question, “And what else?” If someone were called a “homeless bum,” the listener who wished to expand that view to see a “bigger picture” could say, “And what else?” How many things come to mind? Was “veteran” on your list of what else? A significant number of those who are currently homeless in the U.S. are veterans—from Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and a variety of other conflicts. Each has a story that includes a lot more than “homeless.”

The upcoming “Holidays” for you might be “Christmas,” but the main feature of the Holiday Season for others is something else. A long time ago I wished a boy about 10 in my neighborhood a “Merry Christmas.” His reply was, “We don’t celebrate Christmas in my house. We celebrate Hanukkah.” I told him he was lucky because he had 12 days of celebration, and Christians had just one. The lessons for asking, “And what else?” sometimes come from the mouths of babes.

Remembering Pareto’s Law and asking, “And what else?” will greatly expand your idea of the possibilities that await you. The upcoming Holiday Season provides an ideal opportunity for all of us to become more aware of and appreciate what’s possible for us in the years to come.

Hildegard's Medicine

It seems like much of my focus in life has been around health and healing and hospitals. When I was little, I thought I would grow up to be a nurse. However, expecting my daughter, Stacey (high school in 1966) moved my life along another road. My educational forum would be the University of Life. Over the years, I have sometimes experienced pain around all of that, feeling as though doors were not open to me because mine was a nontraditional path. At the current time, I am quite relieved my work has been (and continues to be) outside of the institutions. Even my ordination allows me to minister in a church without walls.

Recently I have been reviewing all of this from an even more expansive lens as I have been reading Victoria Sweet’s book, *God’s Hotel: A Doctor, A Hospital, and a Pilgrimage To The Heart of Medicine*. Dr. Sweet worked at San Francisco’s Laguna Honda Hospital, a facility that just a couple of decades ago was still more the model of care from the Middle Ages than modern medicine. When she arrived there, Laguna Honda was nearly as ancient as the medicine Dr. Sweet studied while earning her Ph.D. in history and social medicine. Much of her studies were around the amazing life work of (now Saint) Hildegard von Bingen, a twelfth-century German nun.

While many people remember Hildegard as mystic, theologian, and composer, *God’s Hotel* also contains a wonderful snapshot of her premodern medicine. You come to realize Saint Hildegard was also a first-rate health-care guru who understood not only disease, but also and more significantly, healing.

After spending a year in Europe reading Hildegard’s medical journals (in their original Latin), Dr. Sweet returned to Laguna Honda Hospital, where she was assigned to work in the “dementia” ward. What we study changes the world we see. Victoria Sweet had now been educated in the old ways—including the work of Dr. Philippe Pinel. In the early 1800s, Pinel had become interested in those patients for whom, “the memory was impaired, the feelings quenched, and the intelligence enfeebled or extinct.” Pinel named this condition *démence*—dementia.

Her patients whom she believed actually might have Alzheimer’s disease (characterized by neurofibrillary tangles in the brain), she used drugs. What she mostly saw was what she had learned from premodern medicine: the actual medical reasons for the loss of faculties including: “strokes, head trauma, syphilis, mercury poisoning [for treating syphilis!], alcoholism, errors of regime, and trials, disappointments, and privation.” (p. 162)

In the days before “activity therapy” was necessary to get patients moving around, Laguna Honda was an amazing place where patients found meaning as they worked in the gardens, the greenhouse, the kitchen, and the laundry. As they tended to the plants and the animals, people found medicine and healing that was not from drugs and surgery. Dr. Sweet was not against drugs or surgery, she just realized there was *more*.

I am not one of those who are busy wishing for the good “ole” days. I do, however, offer thanks for this doctor who was inspired to look beyond this tiny window called modern medicine and the even smaller window of “health care.” As we anticipate the amplified changes sure to come our way in the new year, join me in holding open the window in our hearts for all doctors to rediscover the amazing truth expressed so clearly in *God’s Hotel*: “Because caring was what created the personal relationship between patient and doctor. And that relationship was the secret of healing” (p. 82).

Aren't You Glad That's Over...

I don’t know about you, but I’m very glad that the recent election in the U.S. is essentially over. I say “eventually” because the outcome of a few of the contests is still being debated, but the vast majority of contests have been decided. Instead of political ad after political ad, we can now watch the dust settle.

I am old enough at this point to remember a lot of U.S. elections. I was still very young in 1952 when Adlai Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower ran for president, and I may have been unaware of the tenor of political advertising in those days. For one thing, it

is more difficult to shout in newsprint than it is on TV and the Internet. I started following elections fairly closely in 1960, when John F. Kennedy ran against—and defeated—Richard Nixon, so I have seen a lot of “politics” and political advertising over the years.

It seems inherent in political contests that politicians will attempt to define themselves as “The Good” and define their opponents as “The Bad.” For one reason or another, it seems to me that the labeling of the opposition has become worse during the past several political campaigns. The previous labels of “Good” and “Bad” had been at least partially connected with “reality” in that what was defined as “good” and “bad” were connected to specific facts. That no longer seems to be the case.

I really don’t know the reason for that. The kind of “demonization” of one’s political opponent that occurred in the past two elections seems new. When Lyndon Johnson used the “Daisy” ad, which featured a young girl playing with a daisy while a nuclear explosion occurs behind her, to warn voters what would happen if Barry Goldwater were elected, it was based on things that Goldwater had said that most voters were already familiar with.

The big change seems to have started with the “Swift Boat” ads George W. Bush ran against John Kerry in 2004. The ads were counterfactual. Kerry had been awarded a Silver Star for bravery in Vietnam, and the ads accused him of cowardice and dereliction of duty (see <http://bit.ly/c1cIrS> for details). After that, those creating political ads (and identifying those responsible for the ads would be a complete article in and of itself) have felt increasingly comfortable to run fact-free commercials. One campaign advisor was quoted as saying, “We’re not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact-checkers.”

What occurs to me is that such a philosophy runs counter to something said by author Byron Katie in *Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life* (see <http://amzn.to/Z99hp7>): “When you argue with reality, you lose—but only 100% of the time.” Katie is, of course, taking a longer view than simply an election cycle. She would doubtless say, “If you win an election based on a lie, what have you really gained?”

It seems to me that the way forward—not only as individuals, but also as a culture—is to base our decisions on as many “facts” as we can muster, even as we acknowledge that we don’t know everything about the planet we live on. Medical opinions presented as fact, for example, fluctuate with the seasons. What is a “health” food, and what isn’t? What’s the best way to treat a sprain? Medical opinions stated as fact influence beliefs, and an underlying fact is that beliefs influence outcomes.

Beliefs, however, can’t undo facts. If it is a “fact,” it will hold up regardless of the belief. And that’s a big clue. Most of the time, the evidence for whatever interests or concerns you is available. It is a matter of looking for it from an unbiased perspective. Now that

the election is over, those of us in the States have the opportunity to take a good, unbiased look at a variety of things—such as global warming, recreational drugs, immigration policies, international trade, tax codes, and military “challenges” (Iran, North Korea, and Syria come to mind)—from a fact-based perspective.

In many cases, a more peaceful world is simply a matter of being willing to ask the question, “What’s more important—Reality or my belief?” It is a simple matter, even if not an easy one....

Room in the Inn

One of the most significant memories I have growing up is how my parents, former migrant workers themselves, opened our doors and gracefully set another place at our table. No, as worldly possessions, we did not have much, but we shared what all we did have. This month many Christians will be thinking about the story of Mary and Joseph having been given space in the stable. The message is usually that there was no room in the inn. However, what you can focus on is the truth: their needs were cared for!

I was thinking about this having been true for me throughout my life as well. Things were not easy for my mom and dad. When I was young, my dad drank too much. I have written previously shared about the Christmas my dad’s boss provided the only Christmas presents for my two sisters and me. I was an adult before I realized these were his children’s *used* toys.

Many thoughts and prayers are with the folks out East who are still in such vulnerable states following Hurricane Sandy. Tonight I saw a news story that reminded me how true it is that crisis does not create character—it reveals it. The story was about service station owner, Richie Dodd. Richie found a way to put a copper tube down into the gas tank and, using a hand pump, he has been selling gas to his neighbors. Gas to run generators to provided enough heat to protect people from being dangerously chilled. Gas to cook food for families. The truly amazing thing about this story is how, in a world where “what the market will bear,” has been the rule of the game, Richie Dodd is selling that gas at the same price he was before the storm!

What do you think lets some people live with such integrity and open-heartedness? Is it in the genes? Does it flow from our upbringing? Can you predict which individuals will and which ones won’t reflect the highest human qualities of compassion when compassion is so needed? While we may never know the definitive answers to these questions, one thing is certain. Richie Dodd and my mom and dad knew what it was to live by the Golden Rule.

I wrote about Victoria Sweet’s book, *God’s Hotel: A Doctor, A Hospital, and a Pilgrimage To The Heart of Medicine*, in my other article this month. Were you aware the root of the word hospital is hospitality? The

root of hospitality is *hospes*, which can mean either "guest" or "host." Dr. Sweet writes of a tender encounter with a visitor of one of her patients. Lorna May had been a caregiver for a great aunt. Now the tables were turned and Dr. Sweet was the caregiver for Lorna May's brother-in-law. Jesus has been quoted as having said, "Whatever you do for the least of these you do for me." This is the teaching behind hospitality, the idea that any person could be the Christ.

That is what I realized in that moment with Lorna May. I, too, would go from being a host in the hospital to being its guest; I, too, would become a patient. Although sobering, that was the essence of the matter.

The reality that hit Dr. Sweet was the fragile truth of our impermanence. Given the normal playing out of life, every doctor *will* become a patient. Every infant *will* become an elder. Every caregiver *will* need care.

It was the measure of the Golden Rule and a good, selfish Golden Rule: Do unto others as you want them to do unto you because pretty soon they will be doing unto you, directly or indirectly.

"Nearly every religion, regardless of its age or range of geographical influence, emphasizes the ethical principle known to Westerners as the Golden Rule." (*The Complete Idiot's Guide to World Religions*, Brandon Toropov and Father Luke Buckles, p. 337-338)

This evening I was reading an online newsletter about disasters. "Think about it—what would you do if your home burned down or if the tree in your yard blew down, turning your home into scrap lumber? Or if you had three feet of mud and sand in your living room? Sure, the odds are that nothing like that will happen, but if you are one of the affected, statistics don't matter very much. If something should happen, even a little advance planning can make an enormous

difference." You might agree that the advanced planning that can make the greatest difference is not about food or water, gas or oil. It is not about those things that can be lost. What really makes the greatest difference is the character you reveal. We do not know what stressors we will face in the coming year. We do know we are faced with choices about the kind of person we will be in the world.

And although I never heard it talked about, the longer I was at Laguna Honda, the more sure I was that its first principle was not medicine, nursing, or a balanced budget, but hospitality in the sense of taking care of anyone who knocked at the door because—it could be me. It was me.

We can be honest with ourselves as we reflect on a very important question: If Joseph and Mary knocked on your door, I dream of a world where they would hear you say, "Welcome! There is room in the inn."

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