Savvy Sunday Salutations: Welcome to another week with guest blogger Patrick Tulley; we had a great response last week (thank you for your interest). Patrick talked about Bullying, Self-Attack & Panic Attacks and toyed with the idea of how these individual elements can be linked (based on personal experiences); this week Patrick talks about Relationships, friendships & attraction and the reasons we get to interact with people. I am fascinated how people engage with one and another and always try to understand what is going on behind the scenes -so to speak; so it is no surprise I found this an interesting read.

(As always there is a pdf document at the bottom of the post for those who may find this a difficult read.)

RELATIONSHIPS, FRIENDSHIPS & ATTRACTION

An interesting conversation I had with a friend this week reminded me of a very difficult aspect of myself that I have began to surmount over recent years. That is of recognising my own qualities and weaknesses when interacting with other people, in particular with my friends and more importantly, my motives for having a relationship in the first place. Of course, the obvious reasons are for fun, sharing, intimacy and eventually love. However, there are quite a lot of historical and psychological decisions that go into choosing friends, more than I ever imagined at first. This is perhaps even truer when it comes to romantic relationships. Actually romantic relationships are probably the best and most fertile area you can explore about yourself and your choices in friends. I have talked about my time in therapy and so understanding my motives for relationships in the past has led me to having more fulfilling relationships now. I will add of course, that I still often struggle with these issues. So I am, for all intents and purposes a work in progress still.

Attraction

What attract us to others are many things of course and often seemingly complex. They can be historical reasons that stem from our childhoods, but they can also be cultural too. Lastly of course being beauty, often the strongest aphrodisiac when it comes to choosing partners, but often a feature we can apply to friends as well. These I would argue are the three factors that tend to govern our choices of friends and partners.
Culture

So what of culture? Well of course, there are many strands within culture itself. It might be religion, politics, music, language, clothes, lifestyle, national identity, sport or any combination of these things and more. Our inclusion within any of these cultural groups is often a reason why our friends choose us above others and vice versa. So what is culture? Now here is where perhaps I go out on a limb. Partly because I understand how important culture can be for people. But please bear with me, as I attempt to apply some philosophical thinking to it. All culture is made up and imagined. Culture only exists in our minds. It is neither tangible nor real like that of an object. It is quite simply a concept as such. Now that’s not to say that culture doesn’t have a big impact on people’s lives, it clearly does. Take any football stadium throughout Europe and you will see tens of thousands of people cheering manically for their football team. All of those fans at one stage in their life had to say, ‘I support this team’, but why? Well for many of them it was possibly an accident of birth. For instance if you were born and raised in the suburb of Moss Side in Manchester you’re likely to be a Manchester City fan. However, many fans made their choice of team based on their parent’s preference. Although I was born in Ipswich in the UK, I never recall living there, as I left within 18 months of my new life. My father carried on supporting them, so when I was of age, I too would become a supporter of Ipswich Town. An unlucky choice many of you may be chuckling. In all cases with all culture, we have to make a choice about which parts we like and which parts we don’t. More often than not the prevailing culture of where we live and whom we interact with, often dictate those preferences, but many of them we choose deliberately from our own predilection. Football teams, nations, fashion style, music genres and political ideology are merely concepts and do not exist as objective reality, say like the tree in your backyard does or the sand in the desert. Although I don’t think there is anything intrinsically wrong in making friends based on these concepts. Sharing a language has a practical application, but if we share a different language by choice but also have different languages culturally, how important is that a feature for our friends or lovers? So whilst culture may have some practical aspects to them, its worthwhile remembering they are just merely constructs of the mind. Finally asking yourself, how important is the concept I have in choosing great friends.
Beauty

Now much is claimed when it comes to beauty, so I want to be brief, as much of it correlates with what I said about culture. Beauty is certainly a powerful attractant in of itself. Much of this has to do with biology and a person’s capacity to bare or rear children. Biologically we are programmed to make sure our offspring have the best chance of survival. So having a beautiful partner will mean the same for our children. Like culture though, beauty is just an accident of birth. Either you have it or you don’t. Whatever the biological benefits, which really only apply to partners themselves and not friends. Whilst I don’t want to ignore its potency, how important a factor is it, when it comes to choosing a lifelong partner and in particular friends?

History

I touched on this topic in last week’s blog; in the final paragraphs about my relationships and how my childhood experience had influenced those choices. Without repeating what I said there again. If we are not aware of the impact our childhood experience had on us, we are likely to be making poor decisions, detrimental ones even, when it come to our own relationships of all kinds. Now this may not be strictly true, since if your experience was a good one, then you will be probably making better choices. The trouble with childhood experience though, is that much of it is unconscious. Very often, the child dissociates from incidents in their lives in order to cope better with traumatic events that happen to them. There is one way you can discern whether you are ignoring that history. Ask yourself how much does ‘culture’ and ‘beauty’ influence your choices’ in friends. Whilst I agree it is not empirical, it might provide you with some useful clues as to where your choices are coming from. If either or both of them dominate your choices’, I would suggest that you are indeed ignoring your childhood history. A history that probably doesn’t bear repeating itself, either for you, but especially for your children.

Culture and beauty tend to have this ability of patching up great holes in our lives that we acquired in childhood. Having said that, I am not suggesting we should be without culture or beauty entirely. I enjoy watching an exciting football match as much as I like wearing nice clothes too. I also like to be physically attracted to my partner as well. It’s only that, if we seek our life’s ‘value’ in only these areas, we are surly missing out on friendships of great depth, warmth, intimacy and joy. There are aspects to this that I would like to discuss further another time, but for now, why not explore this area of your life. I have posted links to two great books that can help you explore your childhood past more effectively. By no means are they definitive, but they will lead you to a better and more clearer understanding of yourself. As always, best of luck.

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Pdf document: Bullying, Self-Attack & Panic Attacks

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PATRICK TULLEY: PHILOSOPHER, AMATEUR WRITER

My name is Patrick Tulley. I am primarily a philosopher and an amateur writer but also have been a painter and sculptor in the past. My background has been quite varied, as I have lived abroad on and off during my 20's, been in a number of different professions throughout my life. More recently, I have been working as a private consultant within the public sector.

Since philosophy is my preferred interest; it is always something I rigorously apply to all my thinking and writing. Whilst I am knowledgeable about abstract philosophy, I am not particularly interested in taking that route. Philosophy is about the search for truth, it was always meant to be understandable by everyday people -this does not mean dumbing down the ideas of course. It just means I do not allow myself to get sidetracked by too many inconsequential arguments, often referred to as lifeboat scenarios. I tend towards the more Aristotelian and Socratic methods of philosophy, but I also have interests in Hume, Nietzsche and Rand. Philosophy has been a wonderful and fulfilling part of my life; it’s often been a very misunderstood subject -which I hope to discuss in future posts. I also enjoy reviewing art, literature, music and passing comments on culture, news and personal experiences that I have found both interesting and enlightening. I do not have a particular interest in politics – however; I may discuss my reasons with you sporadically throughout this blog. Overall, this is hoped to be a journal about a philosophical life. I hope you will enjoy my outlook on things and look forward to hearing your comments and thoughts along the way. I would also like to thank Ozlem for giving me this opportunity to have a voice on her blog.

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Disclaimer: whilst we (guest bloggers and I) do not set about to intentionally upset visitors to the site; I understand some of the topics discussed/raised may touch nerves. Please note I will do my utmost to screen these posts before I post them however; I do believe in freedom of speech and I would hate to limit someone because they think differently to me or have different values from mine. Therefore, I urge you to have some understanding and an open mind before jumping in and causing a scene without it being constructive. Like I said, Patrick and I do have difference of opinions and on most cases we agree to disagree but at the same time we also respect the others’ thoughts and views -after all we do live in a civilized world; with this in mind I hope we will have more cultivated and engaging discussions. One last note to all: Here on yikici I have aimed to keep posts and discussions clean; I am not a fan of words that are disrespectful and disparaging therefore, I will not condone its’ use here on yikici; I do hope you share my views on this –if not, at least can respect them.

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Thoughts and comments are encouraged as always.