

February 2023

VOLUME XIV, ISSUE II

# PEGASUS

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CAUX ROUND TABLE FOR MORAL CAPITALISM NETWORK LOOKING AT BUSINESS ABOVE THE CLUTTER AND CONFETTI



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# Introduction

This issue of *Pegasus* continues our efforts to put “moral capitalism” in perspective, given the uncertainties of our times. What should we mean by “moral?” My religion or your religion or no religion at all? What is the place of self-hood in morality? If we are here, is it not right for us to take care of ourselves? But at what cost to others? The physical cosmos is silent on all this, so we must puzzle it out for ourselves and in community with others.

We are mindful, though, that getting a better handle on the “moral” demands of a moral capitalism is not enough. It also remains to be practical and constructive in the world of things and the realities of persons, whether we like them or not.

But as many writers and experienced executives have written with heartfelt passion: leadership starts with vision and meaning; having purpose in your mind and courage to act in your heart.

In this issue, we send for your consideration thoughts from Michael Hartoonian on can freedom have any meaning without morals or can morals be possible if we are not free? Michael is challenging us to think again about the good life – what can it be and how can we live it, if we want to?

Secondly is an essay of mine motivated by reflections on Confucius and the place of “manners” in our lives. Good manners were most important to my grandmothers and to my mother-in-law, Mrs. Ta Thi Nhu. Manners, good or bad, reveal our moral compasses and situate ourselves with others. Manners, perhaps, are of even more importance in leaders. Consider the case of one Donald J. Trump.

I wonder how many of our disagreements, hurt feelings, angers, fears and more would be assuaged if we all were more respectful, considerate and well-mannered?

Lastly, we include some thoughts from Harlan Cleveland, an American official and former dean of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, on how to lead. His advice is, really, to think comfortably with complexity, accept the burden of freedom, while finding a road map for morality and have good manners.

*Stephen B. Young*  
*Global Executive Director*  
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# Freedom and the Moral Imperative

Michael Hartoonian

*Freedom can only be gained through virtue...but  
Freedom is a requirement for moral responsibility.*

*-Immanuel Kant*

## Introduction

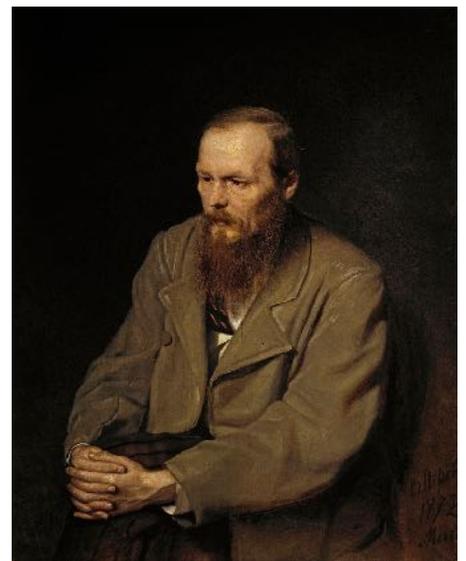
There is an elegance in the design that Immanuel Kant discloses in constructing the connection between freedom and morality. The created design is part reason and part emotional, part Enlightenment, part Romanticism. It is, as wisdom goes, a tension within the one and the many, an argument between ends and modes of conduct. It is, as stated by Fyodor Dostoevsky in *The Idiot*, a submission of self to experience, love and compassion for the other and the realization that living is a constant struggle to squeeze meaning out of every moment, regardless of the degree of suffering. What is this connection between freedom and morality? Is the primary value freedom or virtue? To address these questions, we need to read the text behind the text. Dostoevsky, perhaps the greatest novelist the world has ever known, might help in the translation.

## Connections

As our circulatory system is the river of existence within our bodies, our moral system or lack thereof, is the river of living either a purposeful or meaningless life. Given this **choice**, we often cry, like Eve exiting the garden, not so much because we are dying, but because we never lived. Living is different from life. Life is simply discomfort and stress, without much purpose. As Shakespeare said, “What is a man, if the chief good and market of his time be but to feed and sleep? A beast, no more.”

Living means a moral connection to purpose, identity and happiness. Life is only the opportunity to find your way, your Dao or Tao (Chinese/Japanese), meaning the natural order or potential (way) to gain the wisdom to understand the difference between life and living – discomfort notwithstanding.

Turning to Dostoevsky, we can entertain several points of wisdom that suggest linkages among the Caux Round Table principles, the necessity of having a moral compass and the creation of wealth, where wealth is understood as excellence in conduct and character. I might suggest that Dostoevsky manifested many of the attributes of a moral capitalist



Fyodor Dostoevsky

not because he oversaw a company, but because he understood the characteristics of leadership that few leaders, as he observed, possessed. These characteristics indicate the only way that wealth can be created, along with its by-product – capital – moral; institutional; human; intellectual; personal; and social. Here again, note the similarities between the Caux Round Table Principles for Business and Government and Dostoevsky’s principles of living and thus, seeing wealth where others see only poverty:

- Understanding that self-pride leads to isolation and isolation is damaging for life and commerce.
- Knowing that the moral compass is necessary to achieve freedom.
- Learning that your freedom should not be spent on trying to please others.
- Loving others and being empathetic not only creates wealth, writ large, but such conduct ironically runs the risk that one might be seen as an idiot.

There is a counter-intuitiveness in these attributes, as there is in the disciplines of religion, economics and philosophy. But it’s in the disclosure of the text that we can read the wisdom behind the words.

### **Looking in All the Wrong Places**

Looking at personal and institutional life, absent attention to the “wisdom behind the words,” is counter-productive. For example, people all over the world are interested in having better schools and they attend to the matter without consideration to the text behind the words and focus exclusively on the school – teaching methods, class size, more technology, etc. Some even come up with meaningless dictums like “children first.” Yet, reading behind the text will tell you clearly that to the degree you put children first, to that same degree, you will corrupt them. Besides, the slogan is a lie and children know it. Throughout the world, who has the poorest diets? The worst healthcare? The deepest poverty? Are the most abused? That’s right, children!

If we really want better schools, we need better families. The script behind the words makes this clear. Education, like commerce or any human endeavor, is a team sport. Education must be writ large. Every role, whether parent, teacher, business or government leader, carries attending responsibilities and if those responsibilities are not attended to, morality will atrophy and institutional capital with it. Schools can never be improved without improvements to all institutions thus connected – home; school; government; businesses; infrastructure; and the application of those principles delineated above. Even when one asks a realtor where to purchase a house, she will say, “Consider location, location, location.” Why? Simply because location defines connections; namely, a sharing of the moral infrastructure. In such a place, there exists an operational conception of reciprocal duty. That is, people have a better understanding of their family and community roles and the responsibilities connected to those roles. One would reason: I’m a parent and because of this role, I’m accountable to my children, as well as the children of others because we all occupy a similar present reality and will inherit the same future. We acknowledge a generational covenant and conduct ourselves accordingly.

## **Freedom, Wealth and Morality**

Freedom is always a dependent variable. It's a manifestation of contextual elements and limitations. Many Americans state with pride that, "I live in the land of the free!" But how free are you if you can't walk through your parks at night? How free are you when your personal budget forces you to pay for healthcare, in lieu of food? How free are you when you don't have the education and skills to hold a job or understand the political and economic landscape of your larger community? How free are you when you have no clue of your personal, family or community responsibilities? Most people throughout the world are not free because they refuse to do the intellectual and moral work necessary to achieve even a trivial degree of freedom. Freedom is never given. From the "laws of nature" to the immoral laws passed by unscrupulous "leaders," people are in chains of ignorance. It is only those who understand the link between freedom and morality who can create wealth – the excellence of character needed to live in harmony and happiness.

## **The Ethical Individual and the Moral Market**

There is a deep understanding that the moral capitalist possesses the understanding of relating the synergy between ethics and morality. You can't have one without the other. Only the individual can be ethical. An ethical decision cannot be delegated. It belongs to the person. If you attempt to pass it onto another, to your children, to the excuse factory of your mind, in the end, it will destroy you. However, an individual can never be moral alone. Morality is defined as a **free** will connection between and among people – a team sport played by ethical individuals who form the only kind of team capable of creating wealth.

Again, we see the link between the moral context and the place where the individual has the opportunity of freedom – if the opportunity is taken. As should be clear from historical and empirical evidence, there is no way to be free absent ethical individuals living within the moral context. This is where the stories we tell ourselves, about ourselves, are embedded always within the larger narratives created by a culture that works to disseminate virtue onto the next generation. But this situation is not a given. It is an earned goal achieved only by rightful (accountable) conduct which possesses the ability to see with sensitive eyes the fulness of what it means to be human.

*Michael Hartoonian is Associate Editor of Pegasus.*

# What Good Are Manners and the Moral Sense?

Stephen B. Young

We all want to matter. Sometimes, I think our yearning to find “meaning” and “purpose” in our lives is just another way of expressing our need to matter. If we matter, we have justification for being here. We are not just casual accidents brought into being by a silent and mysterious cosmos, unplanned and unnecessary to the order of things. We may matter only to ourselves, but do so with much uncertainty and despair.

To matter is an environmental reality. It is to be constructively present in creation, to have importance. For us humans, to matter most is to be recognized as a social circumstance, wherein others determine whether or not we matter and how much we matter. It’s very hard to matter when separated and sealed off in isolation. Then, “mattering” becomes just thinking and talking to ourselves about ourselves, a very narcissistic enterprise, with existential sadness as its inevitable poor response to our emotional hopes.

To matter is to engage with others. Our capacity to do so is innate, but so many times, we let that capacity dissipate and leave us feeling of no consequence. That feeling gives rise to much resentment, anger, alienation, depression, self-mortification and dependency on those we don’t trust and a need for power over others. It is that need for power which undermines happiness and justice and subverts the common good.

Fearing that we don’t matter encourages us to be domineering, to act as if we are in charge and can boss others around, to humiliate them and exploit them in a public performance of our “mattering.” Such unsatisfying pseudo-mattering is frequently seen in business and government. It creates unpleasant alternatives to moral capitalism and moral government.

## Manners

Manners facilitate mattering. Treating others with good manners demonstrates that they matter. When others treat us with good manners, they prove to us that we matter.

In his book, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke (then considered a Whig or liberal, in his thinking) saw the connection between “manners” and restraints on power, avoiding abuses thereof:

*It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force or opposition, it subdued the*

*fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance and gave a dominating vanquisher of laws to be subdued by manners. But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd and antiquated fashion.*

Now, following Burke, we might conclude that the current “culture war” in the U.S. is a struggle about correct “manners” to uphold the power of one social regimen, an aristocratic one, over the thoughts and behaviors of a “lower” class.

The terms of struggle were succinctly put by Hillary Clinton when she was running for President in 2016:

*“You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump’s supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right?” Clinton said. “The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic—you name it. And unfortunately, there are people like that. And he has lifted them up.”*

Donald Trump was an easy, but fair target of such a critique. He is an uncouth, unmannerly man; vulgar and crass; opinionated and self-promoting.



When, shockingly, the uncouth Trump won the 2016 election, a hue and cry was immediately vocalized by his opponents that he and his values should never be “normalized” in an interesting deference to the concept of good manners as a restraint on abuses of power, a la Burke. The “bad mannered” Trump was believed to be a threat to democracy.

The more recent crusade of progressive reformers to “transform” the U.S. into a more inclusive society has centered on reforming manners to impose a new social code for interpersonal engagement, one that is not sexist, racist, xenophobic – “you name it.” This crusade has brought about our current bitter disagreements over free speech or politically correct speech, canceling the speech of those which is said to be inherently harmful, hateful, an act of violence or otherwise threatening to the “safe social spaces” of those who already feel that they don’t matter, that they are not seen or rightly respected or are not welcome in a particular setting.

Stanford University promulgated (but then withdrew) a code of manners for the proper use of language, approving some words and forbidding the use of others.

The University of Southern California's Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work has decreed that the word "field" should not be used for the following reasons:

*We would like to share a change we are making . . . to ensure our use of inclusive language and practice. Specifically, we have decided to remove the term "field" from our curriculum and practice and replace it with "practicum." This change supports anti-racist social work practice by replacing language that could be considered anti-Black or anti-immigrant in favor of inclusive language. Language can be powerful and phrases such as "going into the field" or "field work" may have connotations for descendants of slavery and immigrant workers that are not benign. . . . In solidarity with universities across the nation, our goal is not just to change language, but to honor and acknowledge inclusion and reject white supremacy, anti-immigrant and anti-blackness ideologies. . . . We are committing to further align our actions, behaviors and practices with anti-racism and anti-oppression, which requires taking a close and critical look at our profession—our history, our biases and our complicity in past and current injustices.*

This disdainful prohibition of a word is quite similar to my Edwardian grandmother, Miriam Morris, enforcing on us grandchildren at the dinner table in her home a distinction between language fit for the dinner table and language for use outside the home and not in the presence of family.

I can easily imagine grandmother Morris, an admirer of Dwight D. Eisenhower and his very middle class wife, Mamie, referring to Donald Trump as "most unattractive; I would not want him at my dinner table."

One can easily conclude that the #metoo campaign of several years ago was a demand for better manners from men in their relationships with women. The calling out of "toxic masculinity" and "misogyny" attempts to reform the "manners" of men through shaming and the holding up of new, correctly contrite, behaviors. The current insistence on the "proper" use of innovative pronouns to respect gender fluidity is a similar demand for changes in our thinking about sexuality – using manners to change belief systems.

Similarly, with respect to race, the demand for "anti-racism" on the part of those born with white skins is designed to sequester them far away from the "manners" presumed to be associated with the power conferred on them by "white privilege" and "white supremacy." Anti-racism, thereby, uses manners to disestablish such "white privilege" and "white supremacy." Classes in "anti-racism" are training sessions for the acquisition of better manners. Diversity, equity and inclusion programs hope to bring such better manners and more – sanctions for recalcitrance – to employment.

So, in our contemporary American struggles over social and cultural power, just as Burke noted over 200 years ago, manners have a role in constraining power. Of course, the cut to the chase issue in such cultural and social power struggles is: who gets to call the tune to which we all must dance?

A probable short answer is: those who run the institutions of culture and education get to call the tune. In today's America, the would-be transformative tune-callers have gathered in universities and colleges, teachers unions, major media and entertainment companies and the Democrat Party.

## What Are Manners?

Burke referred to manners as “pre-contractual,” another keen insight into human nature. Manners are relational; they are social actions. Manners act as informal contracts between two or more parties. In my grandmother's house, our manners were our side of an implicit contract with her – we behaved as she taught and she reciprocated with gracious hospitality, warm affection and comfort in her home.

Manners are my way of saying “you matter to me,” an opening to a relationship. We must note that manners do not necessarily create relationships between equals. Far from it. Manners, in most cultures, smooth the relationships between higher and lower statuses, restraining both from abuse and disrespect of the others.

Manners are a means of diluting the temptations of “othering” – the dismissal of others as not mattering at all, as suffused with worthlessness.

To me, a notorious current example of very bad manners is Harry Windsor's book, *Spare*. In it, he puts before the world his personal “othering” of his father, his brother and his family as people who do not matter to him and so should also be “othered” by us, as well.



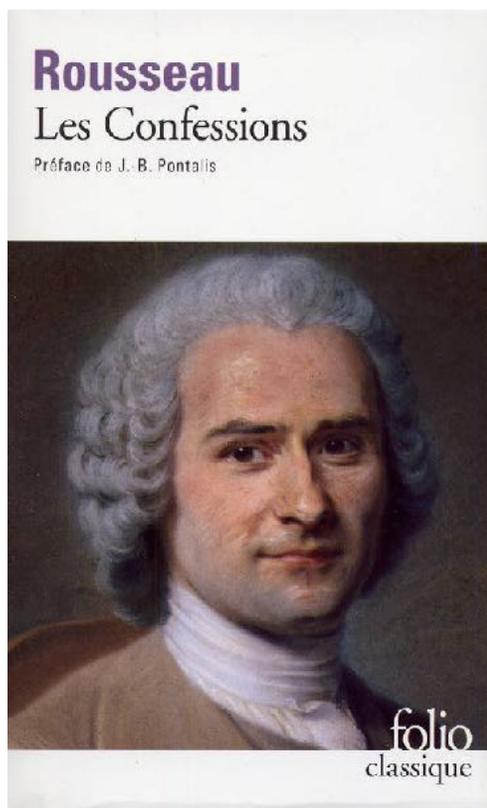
Of interest is his rejection of the formal and quite officialized manners of the royal family as the principal grounds for his and our disdaining them. One example: what should have been the proper manners for Harry, as a young boy, during the funeral of his mother? What manners should his father have deployed when telling him that one morning of his mother's death? What manners were most appropriate for his family and their servants to use with his wife, Meghan?

On the point of good manners, just how unmannerly have the British tabloid press been with him and his family? Are good manners ever an appropriate expectation to have for any tabloid newspaper or similar media outlet? Those media have prided themselves on being “unmannerly,” to the delight of their readers. This is a social contract between the paper and its readers to mutually honor a different standard of politeness and respect.

Now, in addition to saying “you matter to me,” good manners simultaneously are your way of reciprocating that “I matter to you.”

Yet, as in the case of Harry Windsor, bad manners can also be an attempt to announce that “I should matter to you.” As Peggy Noonan wrote in the Wall Street Journal, in his book, Harry was weaponizing his personal experience of pain and fear to force himself on his family and the public: “I have known pain, you must bow before me.”

Noonan commented that “The forces of modernity have washed away the old boundary between public and private. It isn’t good. It’s making us less human, even as we claim to be more sensitive.” Noonan here is speaking about good manners used in the public sphere of our communal lives.



Harry Windsor’s *Spare* was foreshadowed in 1782 by the publication of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*, one of the books which laid the foundation of personal rage, animating the destructive leftist movements (including national socialisms) of recent centuries.

For Confucius, manners – what he called propriety – were the essential constituent of any good society. When asked what made for social order (governance), he replied tersely: “The lord lords; the minister ministers; the father fathers; and the son sons.” For Confucius, the “name” assigned to our position in society – a lord; a minister; a father; a son; a mother; a daughter; a soldier; a baker; etc. – denominated our duties, in other words, specified the proper manners for us individually to use with others.

Given the current revival in the U.S. of racialism as a legitimating discourse regime, it is important to draw upon non-white European authorities on the importance of manners. Thus, reading Confucius educates us to the human universality of the importance of manners. Refutation of the trope that manners and etiquette are only incidents of a disgraceful way of thinking and behaving – that of “whiteness” – is necessary for a correct understanding of the human condition and its requirements for civilized living.

On propriety, Confucius insisted that:

*To subdue yourself and return to propriety leads you to that virtue which makes us most morally human. [Therefore] Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety.*

*It is by the rules of propriety that character is established.*

*Respectfulness without propriety become laborious bustle; carefulness without propriety becomes timidity; boldness without propriety becomes insubordination; straightforwardness without propriety becomes rudeness.*

He was aware, though, that propriety could be a false front, in some. He insisted that genuine propriety – meaningful propriety – only came out of those who had internalized that “virtue which makes us most morally human.”

He advised that when you go far from home, behave to everyone there as if you were receiving an important guest in your home. Adding that, if you can always reverentially order your own conduct and be respectful to others and observant of propriety, then “all withing the four seas will be [your] brothers.”

When asked what was the most important word to live by, he replied simply, “reciprocity.”

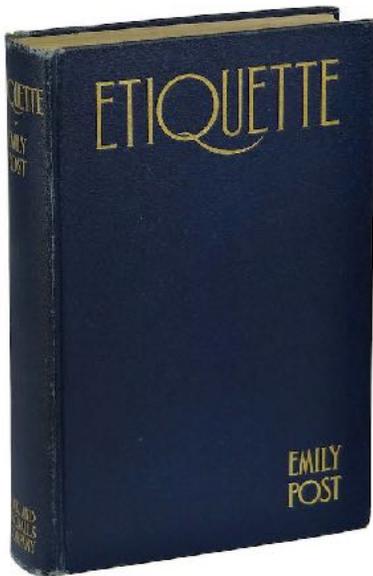
In the language of contract law, manners create expectations in others of just how we will treat them going forward. Manners give rise, then, to a reliance interest – our confidence that you will act as you have promised and therefore, putting me in a position to reciprocate, with good faith and goodwill, in anticipation that you will then reciprocate similarly with me in the future.

In every contract, the parties matter to one another. The importance of one is validated by the reliance of another on their keeping their promise and delivering the expected performance. That is why what are called contracts of adhesion and contracts with a sole seller or supplier can be one-sided, reflecting the superior market power of one party. That party that can impose terms can marginalize the ability of the other to “matter.” As it is said: “Make him an offer he can’t refuse.” Such contracts are not made at arm’s length. They often lack fairness and become extractions of rents above a competitive market price.

For my grandmother’s generation and social class, proper manners were also called “etiquette.” Etiquette was a set of “dos” and “don’ts”, rules for interpersonal exchanges of pleasantries or for more serious matters, like wedding invitations and introductions on formal occasions. Under grandmother’s supervision, my mother made her “coming out” as a debutante, an experience consumed by sharp attention to the etiquette appropriate for that

social rite of passage for a young “lady.”

The rule book for Americans in grandmother’s day was Emily Post’s *Etiquette*, published in 1922, just as successful capitalism was financing a large middle class and a very self-confident upper class, all very bourgeois and enjoying habits of conspicuous consumption. Last year, two of Emily’s great-great-grandchildren published the centennial edition of her social manual. They dedicated their edition to “all those who take care with each other and in doing so, make the world a better place.”



They quote Emily answering the question: “What is etiquette?” as saying, “Whenever two people come together and their behavior affects one another, you have etiquette ... it is not some rigid code of manners; it’s simply how persons’ lives touch one another.”

The current edition of *Etiquette* maintains that: “Good etiquette rests on a foundation of consideration, respect and honesty.”

Confucius admonished us that in our deportment and manner, we keep from violence and heedlessness; in regulating our countenance, we keep near to sincerity; and in our words and tone of voice, we keep far from lowness and impropriety.

The many round tables of the Caux Round Table over the years have amply demonstrated that the personal traits of consideration, respect and honesty are universal across our species. We may express them differently to align with our culture or immediate compadres, but we still express something of the universal in our contextualized words and behaviors. Each of us can even learn how to express consideration, respect and honesty in the particularized manner most comfortable to people not of our own background and upbringing.

Consideration is to think of others, as well as yourself, before acting, cultivating an awareness of the people around us and our impact on them.

Secondly, with respect, we honor others, “not necessarily because of any special talents, qualities or ideas they may have or because we like or understand them, but simply because they exist. By choosing to show respect for others, ourselves and the world we live in, we make choices based on our personal impact and when we choose actions that positively impact others, we build relationships.”

Yet, most importantly, etiquette and manners demand respect for oneself, as well. Genuine good manners come from self-assurance and poise. Insecure people can fake the personal

sincerity, which is to inspire their manners, but their hypocrisy will be palpable most every time.

Respect for self aligns with respect for others, in particular, when we are modest and reserved, refraining from the imposition of our worries, vulnerabilities and issues on others. Humility comes more easily when we are comfortable with ourselves.

Thirdly, the centennial edition of *Etiquette* asserts that “In honesty, we find both truth and the ability to build trust by being sincere.”

Peggy Noonan, in a recent commentary, agreed with a friend who said, “Most of the forces in the world are pushing toward exhibitionism and calling it honesty. The assumption is that if you keep things to yourself, you have something to hide.” Noonan wrote that, to the contrary, you can be reserved out of a sense of your own value and self-respect. Your deepest thoughts and experiences are part of your dignity. You share them as a mark of trust and true intimacy. That is proper etiquette, being aware of circumstances and deciding wisely what of you to put before the others in your relationships.

“Manners,” we read in the centennial edition, “are the behaviors that when executed well, can demonstrate the principles of consideration, respect and honesty. What lies beneath manners and is more important than external behaviors is sentiment – what we wish to convey to others.”

Another way of talking about etiquette was used by Frank Buchman, who founded Moral Re-Armament (now Initiatives of Change) from which came the Caux Round Table in 1986. He said: “Remember – when you point your forefinger at someone else, you are pointing three fingers back at yourself.” What is in you is the sentiment which you express in your behaviors. Manners keep the fault-finding of the pointing fingers in reciprocal balance.

Other advice to us on etiquette from the centennial edition:

*It can be hard to channel your most gracious self when you don't feel like you have much agency or you aren't feeling particularly grateful.*

*Whatever the situation, coming from a place of I can, I will and I'm grateful can put you in a great mindset to solve problems and interact with others in ways that build relationships. (And building relationships is the basis of social and political justice)*

*When used to judge or critique others, etiquette ceases to function as a useful guide and manners become effectively useless. (consider the beneficial impacts if all users of social media had good manners.)*

*Good etiquette always begins with awareness ... awareness of all the contributing*

*factors in a situation.*

*It is in our explicit behavior with others, often through our manners, that people recognize the values and principles that motivate us. (and thus we start to matter with them)*

*Etiquette is a practice which becomes a habit.*

Emily Post put great emphasis on our skills of conversation. When situations are complicated; important; emotional; intense; difficult; when others are rude, “we can use politeness as a tool to help us dig into those uncomfortable or difficult moments and work our way through them with consideration, respect and honesty.” Life is ripe for miscommunication, frustration and hurt. Then, etiquette is a tool for bridging gaps. Etiquette, in conversation, pairs speaking with listening. Your listener is showing you consideration and respect and is seeking to learn more, to come closer to the truth or at least your truth.

She reminds us that etiquette builds out our narratives. It is our performances in front of others that shape our ways through life. What image you put forth, how you appear, count for much in building relationships and securing the trust so necessary for your individual happiness and for your social and political successes. “Honest, ongoing self-assessment is a critical skill for making choices about how we present ourselves.”

Confucius advised us that: “See what a person does; mark their motives; examine in what things they rest. How can one conceal their character?”

## **Manners and the Moral Sense**

Confucius advised us to learn where other people “rest,” for there can be found their character. So, we can well ask where is the resting place for manners? I suggest that in English, Confucius’ idea of “rest” includes nuances of well-being; undisturbed; unthreatened; being installed; secure; peaceful; at home with yourself.

Is it not the place where we “rest” the very place where we make our decisions? If so, then where we should rest is somewhere within us, not outside us; a place we artfully decorate and where we find refuge from the world; a place from which we venture forth; a place which can make us happy or sad, wise or stupid in our conduct; the storage room for our agency as human persons.

Thinking of the interior place where we can ‘rest,’ I personally like the Chinese concept of *xin* – or “heart/mind” – because it dynamically integrates in one psychic function what we in the Greco-Roman tradition keep separate: reason and emotion.

Another ancient Chinese thinker with keen insight into human nature, Mencius, said, “That whereby man differs from the lower animals is but small. The mass of the people throw it away ...” Here, he refers to our ability to have a “resting” place, open to thought and morality.

Mencius insisted that humans possess a moral nature so that “if they are well fed, warmly clothed and comfortably lodged, without being taught at the same time, they become almost like beasts.” Our natures need to develop a power to make good decisions.

Mencius even had a recommendation similar to one of Emily Post’s: don’t be too judgmental of others. Mencius observed that “reproving admonitions about what is good lead to alienation and there is nothing more inauspicious than such alienation.”

Aristotle wrote about our resting place in his works on ethics. Cicero did so in his treatise on duty, *De Officiis* and, from a stoic perspective, Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations*.

The Buddha’s “resting” place was mindfulness, from which faculty we can choose how to act, according to the Noble Eightfold Path. The open mind can steer one’s path away from confusions, misunderstandings and delusions. Mindfulness can bring one into dialogue with reality, with that reality which is presumed by our words to be true and even into communication with that reality which is beyond words.

The eight Buddhist practices in the Noble Eightfold Path are:

1. Right view.
2. Right resolve or intention: such an environment aids contemplation.
3. Right speech: no lying or rude speech; no creating discord in relationships.
4. Right conduct or action: compassion; restraint of egoistic impulses; seeking sustainable equilibrium.
5. Right livelihood: work which sustains what is wholesome in life.
6. Right effort: not assisting unwholesome consequences to happen; facilitating the flourishing of what is wholesome; working on self-control of passions and sensualities.
7. Right mindfulness: being always aware which weakens the more hidden power of unwholesome thoughts and emotions to take over and dominate the mind, speech and action.
8. Right concentration: intensity of mental focus on what is beyond words and generates insight.

Jesus presumed that we can be the masters of our fates, the captains of our souls.

Adam Smith analyzed our “moral sentiments” as the drivers of our actions.

Modern neuroscience speaks of the executive functions of our prefrontal lobes as the best

place for us to rest. If we rest in the amygdala, we make decisions based on self-preservation instincts of fear – to flee or to fight.

Charles Nelson, a professor of pediatrics at Harvard, studied, over many years, the personalities of some of the 170,000 orphans raised in institutions, not families, during the 1980s. Many of them developed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism and many other pathological behaviors. Such psychosocial deprivation has very negative effects on brain development and behaviors. Those children never found a good place to “rest.” Their childhood experience from age 8 to 16 led to truncated expansion of brain matter in their prefrontal cortexes.

Other research suggests that our ancestors, circa 70,000 years ago, began to grow more neurons in their frontal lobes and so were able to outcompete their Neanderthal cousins. A more developed frontal cortex permitted our ancestors to think better and become more sociable – forming larger groups to overcome threats and difficult living conditions.

David Brooks, who has written on happiness, concludes that our happiness results from interactions with family, faith, friends and work.

Thus, our moral sense, which permits us to be well mannered and at “rest,” should never be ignored or disparaged.

Our personal, individual “resting” place, to me, is more a dynamic mindset, with the notion of place only a good simile, reminding us that what is important to our manners is inside us under our control, not outside us in others or in institutions, powers and principalities, as the Bible puts it, absolutely beyond our reach and ability to influence.

That resting place of ours is also ours to design. It is a faculty which we can nourish or which we can degrade. It can flower, if properly watered and fertilized and give forth greatness or it can be left to wilt and turn us towards passive submission before whatever befalls us. Our resting place is an engine which we should thoughtfully and courageously construct, to the best of our ability. That engine powers what we do and so makes us who we are.

The first step in every design process is awareness: survey your situation, starting with self-awareness; accept realities; envision possibilities.

The design process is creativity in action, something different from using deductive logic to draw conclusions from a premise – to apply (impose?) a first principle on circumstances. Abductive reasoning is the reverse, starting with circumstances and devising a theory (principle) to explain them. Then, the theory can be tested against reality. This is the process of science – from facts to hypothesis, to confirmation of the hypothesis and then from the confirmed hypothesis (a reliable principle) via deduction back to factual reality.

Abduction is consideration of a mass of facts and allowing these facts to suggest a theory. In this way, we gain new ideas and new perspectives. Abduction is like making a diagram to connect dots. It is arranging isolated dots in patterns that can be beautiful.

The tactics of design thinking include: analogy; metaphor; juxtaposition; rearranging; reinterpreting; reimagining; improvisation; iteration (trying again and again); assessing and critiquing; and finally, enjoying.

With design thinking, we don't start from a given goal or objective and bend and twist to make it come true. Rather, we first shape goals and meanings and then work back from them to action in the here and now.

If we use design first to create a distinctive and happy "resting" place, shaping our character as a personal work of art, we can then set out from our "resting place" to shape the world around us, using our design skills.

The consequences of such personal commitment to design were well expressed in two poems, the first by William Ernest Henley and the second by Rudyard Kipling:

### ***Invictus***

*By William Ernest Henley*

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

...

*And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid;  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.*

**If—**

*By Rudyard Kipling*

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,*

*If you can dream—and not make dreams your  
master;  
If you can think—and not make thoughts your  
aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*

*If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it.*

## **Final Thoughts**

If we want to matter in this life, we should rest on our moral sense because that will empower us to deploy good manners every day and night and so become important to others. And they will become of relevance to us, as community comes into being.

And thus, we can become builders of civilizations.

And yet. And yet.

Ruin can seep in or when we are under stress or in despair, rush in to disturb our resting place and trash our design. Or keep us from recovering our self-assurance so that we will lose traction in designing and building out a good place for us to rest.

In his review of Harry Windsor's book, *Spare*, Dominic Green includes some passages which indicate that Harry had no place to "rest." We read:

*At William and Kate's wedding in 2011, "Harry" has a Jungian epiphany: It occurred to me then that identity is a hierarchy. We are primarily one thing and then we're primarily another and then another and so on, until death – in succession. Each new identity assumes the throne of Self, but takes us further from our original self, perhaps our core self – the child.*

*Life is a game of masks, of fictions refracted in the flash of desire. Harry's selfhood is fractured by traumatic grief. He cannot remember Diana, so he cannot sustain a single identity. "Harry" is "Spike" to his friends, "Harold" to his brother, sometimes "Haz" or "Hazza" to his girlfriends, "darling boy" to his father, "Prince Jackaroo" to some friendly Australians, "Scrawny" to the royal bodyguards and "Prince Thicker" to himself. With "a half dozen formal names and a full dozen nicknames, it was turning into a hall of mirrors," he says. "Self? I was more than ready to shed that dead weight. Identity? Take it."*

Currently, the culture among younger Americans has turned narcissistic. Narcissism dissolves the moral sense and prevents us from resting and keeps us in unhappy, restless, inner turmoil of dissatisfaction with life and with others, convincing us that we don't matter enough. That society is a prison and we are the inmates, deserving liberation to live on our own terms. As Rousseau complained: "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Narcissism often takes over a person's outlook on life, when feelings of being unworthy and inadequate are indulged, when we feel that we don't matter. Especially when we are young, narcissism can cripple our ability to build for ourselves a vibrant and life-enhancing moral sense.

In the U.S., the response to the Covid pandemic accelerated the spread of narcissism. A recent survey reported that more than 80% of public schools reported "stunted behavioral and socioemotional development" among students. Schools also saw a 56% increase in "classroom disruptions from student misconduct" and a 49% increase in "rowdiness outside of the classroom." Seven in 10 public schools reported increases in students seeking mental health services since the start of the pandemic.

These students, most likely, will not build for themselves satisfying resting places. They will experience friction in creating for themselves effective moral sense capabilities. Their lives, most likely, will be more lonely, sad and difficult. They will be restless, demanding of others and ill-mannered. They will have higher rates of suicide and substance addictions.

In the U.S., suicide was among the top 9 leading causes of death in 2020 for people ages 10-64, about one death every 11 minutes. Suicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and 25-34. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. In 2020, an estimated 12.2 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.2 million planned a suicide attempt and 1.2 million attempted suicide.

In the U.S., substance abuse is widespread among the young. Drug use among 8<sup>th</sup> graders increased 61% from 2016 to 2020. Half of all teenagers have misused a drug at least once. Of teenagers in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 62% have abused alcohol.

Manners and etiquette protect us by building relationships. Good relationships put in place defensive walls and moats around where we rest to prevent narcissism from seeping in or overwhelming our self-concept and its derivative mental operations. That is, of course, unless the person using manners and etiquette is a sociopath adept at deception and ingratiation. They can suavely use manners and etiquette to deceive us as to their intentions, their abilities and where they “rest.”

Not surprisingly, in this connection, Confucius advised that faithfulness and sincerity should be our first principles, the most important components of our mindsets.

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## **Harlan Cleveland on Leaders:**

1. Have a lively curiosity, an interest in everything because everything really is related to everything else and therefore, to what you're doing – whatever that is.
2. A genuine interest (it's hard to fake it) in what other people think and why they think that way – which means you have to be at peace with yourself, for a start.
3. A feeling of special responsibility for envisioning a future that's different from a straight-line projection of the present. ("Planning" is improvisation by the specialist on a general direction formulated by the generalist few.)
4. An attitude that risks are there not to be avoided, but to be taken. (The currently popular phrase "risk-averse" is not in the vocabulary of the executive leaders.)
5. The feeling that crises are normal, tensions can be promising and complexity is fun.
6. The realization that paranoia and self-pity are reserved for people who don't want to take the lead.
7. The quality of unwarranted optimism: the conviction that there must be some more upbeat outcome that would result from adding together the available expert advice. (The expert mode of thinking, a cocktail of gloom and reluctance, is the antithesis of the leader's mindset.)
8. A sense of personal responsibility for the general outcome of your efforts.



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