

Stupidity IS THE STATE

IN WHICH YOU REFUSE, FOR WHATEVER REASON, TO THINK. A PERSON WITH A BIG BRAIN THAT WON'T USE IT HAS NO ADVANTAGE OVER A PERSON WITH LIMITED COGNITIVE ABILITIES. LOOK AT THE PO'BUCKERS OUT HOLLERING PRAISE FOR TRUMP OR PUTTING ON ANGRY TOWN-HALL FACE AT A TEABAGGER RALLY; WHEN YOU REFUSE TO QUESTION YOUR OWN ASSUMPTIONS, THEN THAT FREAK IS YOUR EQUAL. THE FACT THAT HE IS YOUR EQUAL BECAUSE YOU ARE SLACKING RATHER THAN HIM BEING SMART IS IRRELEVANT, FROM A RESULTS POINT OF VIEW.

THE THING THAT MAKES MOST SMART PEOPLE STUPID IS ARROGANCE. WHEN YOU BEGIN TO THINK THAT THE FACT THAT YOU ARE SMART IMPLIES THAT YOU ARE THE SMARTEST OR EVEN THE ONLY SMART PERSON AROUND YOU, CONGRATULATIONS, YOU ARE NOW AN EXTRA IN THE MOVIE DELIVERANCE. LIKEWISE, WHEN YOU DECIDE THAT YOUR SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM IS SUPERIOR TO ANY OTHER SOLUTION BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT YOU THOUGHT OF IT MEANS THAT YOU ARE A DUMBASS. USUALLY THAT ISN'T A CONSCIOUS PROCESS...WHEN AN ALTERNATE IDEA IS EXPLAINED TO YOU, YOU LISTEN WITH THE INTENT TO SABOTAGE IT OR PICK IT APART TO DEFEND YOUR OWN CHERISHED NOTION.

THE PEOPLE - IN MY OWN EXPERIENCE - THAT ARE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO THIS TRAP ARE THOSE WITH PROFESSIONAL STANDING. DOCTORS, ENGINEERS, NARROW-FIELD TRADESMEN, AND TEACHERS AT HIGHER EDUCATION LEVELS ARE IN FACT THE MOST OBVIOUS EXAMPLES (THOUGH IT IS OF COURSE NOT UNIVERSAL IN THOSE FIELDS).

YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL WITH THIS, AS A DOCTOR THAT HAS BECOME STUPID CAN BE WORSE THAN NO MEDICAL CARE AT ALL. LESS VISIBLY, A STUPID ENGINEER OR TRADESMAN CAN ALSO BE A THREAT TO LIFE AND LIMB. WORST OF ALL, AN INSTRUCTOR THAT HAS ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BECOME STUPID IS CONTAGIOUS.

ODDLY ENOUGH, LAWYERS SEEM TO BE LESS LIKELY TO FALL INTO THIS TRAP, MOSTLY BECAUSE THEY ARE NATURAL SCHEMERS AND HAVE NO TIME FOR THAT SORT OF THING. THEIR ARROGANCE IS INSTEAD REFLECTED BY THEIR ALMOST-UNIVERSAL POOR TASTE. ANYONE WHO HAS EVER SEEN HOW A LAWYER DRESSES WHILE ON VACATION WILL KNOW PRECISELY WHAT I MEAN.

THERE IS NO UNIVERSALLY-APPLICABLE SOLUTION TO THIS. EACH PERSON HAS TO FIND THEIR OWN WAY TO NOT BE STUPID. PERSONALLY, I ALWAYS ASSUME THERE IS SOME DATA THAT I DO NOT HAVE, AND I GO INTO A SOLUTION ASSUMING THAT IT IS FATALLY FLAWED. THEN I TRY TO FIND THE FLAW. WHEN I AM LISTENING TO SOMEONE ELSE'S SOLUTION, I TRICK MY OWN EGO BY ASKING "WHAT PART OF WHAT THEY ARE DESCRIBING CAN USEFULLY MODIFY MY PLAN? ASKING THAT MEANS I HAVE TO LISTEN TO THEIR IDEA FOR WHAT IT IS, AT WHICH POINT I OFTEN FIND THAT THEIR IDEA WAS BETTER AS A WHOLE...AND IF NOT, THEN THERE'S ONE AVENUE THAT CAN BE CLOSED OFF. BUT THE PLAIN FACT IS THAT I DID IN FACT LISTEN. I ACCEPTED DATA CONTRARY TO MY OWN PERSONALLY-CHERISHED IDEA.

OF COURSE, THIS WORKS FAR BETTER IN THEORY THAN IN PRACTICE, AT LEAST AT FIRST.

~ Doktor Howl
who hates you