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This is not a work of fiction. This is my experience with predatory creatures who use religion for profit.

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INTRODUCTION

What is yoga and why is it psychological torture? Well, first of all, in my experience, the untruths, half-truths and manipulations that have been institutionalized for centuries for the benefit of the Hindu religion have not been in my best interests. To say the least. More on this later in this book. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, religion is: "(1) belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshipped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe; (2) expression of this belief in conduct and ritual."

Secondly, anything that puts you down is emotional abuse, even if done lovingly. Psychological torture techniques include humiliation and inducing fear. For example, an ashram is a celibate community, residents are humiliated and shamed for their desires by being told that they are 'indulging' in the senses. The reason you have reincarnated, according to the fundamentals of Hinduism and its offshoot Buddhism is for no other reason than you are a sense indulgent loser. You desire communication, companionship and sex. Otherwise you wouldn't have been granted this life opportunity to give money, your time and energy to an organization that is only interested, ultimately, in your addiction to their distractions, prayer, chanting etc, from the pain of the consequences of believing and buying into their doctrines.

The [Anxiety and Phobia Workbook](#) says the basic healthy human needs are communication, com-

panionship and sex. Those who don't get their needs met become anxious, those that stay anxious long enough become depressed and those that stay depressed long enough suicide. Oh.

There are 4 branches of yoga and all fall into the definitions of alternative physical or psychological medicine. "Alternative" medicine is often based on metaphysical beliefs and is frequently anti-scientific. Because truly "alternative" medical practices would be ones that are known to be equally or nearly equally effective, most "alternative" medical practices are not truly "alternative," but quackery. - Robert Todd Carroll, the Skeptics Dictionary

From 1988 to 2003 I was part of a community of yoga, based out of Yasodara Ashram at Kootenay Bay B.C., Canada.

This religious organization was headed up by a woman, Sylvia Hellman, an immigrant to Canada from Germany following the second world war. While working at an explosives factory in Montreal she went to Rishikesh in northern India, and through Swami Sivananda she was initiated in the Hindu Saraswati order of monks and changed her name to Swami Radha. She was then dispatched to start an ashram (celibate and renunciate monastery) in Canada in the 1950s. This she did by running yoga 'teacher' courses at \$6,000.00 a pop and with donations and volunteer labour. She, like the yoga teachers currently, had no qualifications in adult education, physiology,

kinesiology or physiotherapy. She taught ha-tha and kundalini, through reading about it, what she sold was her seductive, charismatic, narcissists charm. The teacher courses were later renamed to 'development' courses because you are anxious and depressed because you call yourself names like undeveloped, so you had better take a course in development. Hence the target market of people in transition, blaming themselves for random life loss events and the rejections of others.

Dr David Burns in his book Feeling Good discusses rejection and how its never your fault. People have 3 choices, he says, if you have some character flaw like picking your nose in public or scratching your Brazilian. They can accept you as you are, be assertive and speak up about how they feel, or reject you. No ones has secret mind powers to control others choices. But for \$6000.00 the ashram sells you become someone different that will magically influence others to like and accept you because if they don't you are a piece of shit.

Fast forward to 1988. The ashram had bought houses in several cities, as well as the land and buildings next to Kootenay Lake, installed volunteer resident rent-paying yoga teachers who charged for classes. This is when I showed up after dumping daily pot to manage child abandonment anxiety looking for alternatives. I was given distractions but not a cure. In fact, religion causes anxiety and uses distractions (chanting, prayer, standing on your head etc.) which provide temporary relief, rinse repeat, a nice little addiction cycle for profit. The relief provided by the

distraction can be so profound it's called a 'spiritual experience' by various religions. Corner drug dealers are selling exactly the same temporary relief thing with the same demonstrable ruthlessness.

Typically, I was the cult recruiter's target market. This I learned much later from [Janja Lalich](#) author of [Take Back Your Life: Recovering From Cults & Abusive Relationships](#). Smart, educated, high-income earner and in transition.

I didn't tick all the boxes exactly but they could use my volunteer ethic as an unpaid heavy labourer if I couldn't afford their \$6,000.00 residencies. They offered instant friendship, instant acceptance and the narcissist stare, that unblinking look of mother love usually meant for bonding with your kid and seducing your lover. The look that evolution has created to perpetuate the species that stimulates hormones and bonds with the opiate receptors.

I was hooked.

Then, life happened. My new wife was diagnosed with Huntington's disease, sentenced to slow and always terminal brain death, she ended our relationship, her millionaire farmer conservative father didn't like liberal artists and threatened to cut her off, as he did to her mother when she was diagnosed. Her Mom moved into the city and like a lot of Huntington's patients, ended her own life. Mom walked in front of a bus when the money ran out. My best friend entered hospice with skin

cancer and my brother stroked out from brain cancer. I was devastated.

The ashram had nothing to offer when I asked for counselling, community and care, they exist to consume not give. Overvalue, undervalue, dump, smear. The narcissist M.D. I went from a 'being of Divine Light', an initiated yogi, to 'we're not taking his calls.' I was moved to the expense side of the ledger. Again, I was devastated.

This is the story of my deprogramming from the notion that I was a loser and only Divine Intervention could save me for a price...just one more 'development' course, my recovery using the tools I was given freely by the medical system and the main deprogramming tool I discovered by accident while on the net one day while researching the creator of [REBT](#) and the grandfather of cognitive therapy: The Case Against Religion by Albert Ellis Ph.D. In it he debunked irrational thought that had been used to keep me anxious, hostile and depressed and in slavery, my entire life. I include it in its entirety and as a framework for this book much in the same way as it presented itself in a series of 'aha' moments over 6 months study and reflection.

"Central to REBT's teachings is the ancient psychological insight of Epictetus, who said, "What disturbs men's minds is not events but their judgments on events." That idea helped REBT become both an effective, evidence-based psychotherapy and a philosophy of living" - [Will Ross](#)



THE PURPOSE OF YOGA

The purpose of yoga, like all religions, is greed.

To get what?

The narcissist's agenda.

Look good in bed first and foremost.

To manipulate others

For their time money and energy (labour)

To USE them.

All couched in the language of service (karma yoga) to burn your past life loser karma

The serious fanatics, like the religious ones who sexually abuse kids, become the initiated.

The celibate swamis. They abuse EVERYONE. Lovingly.

Yoga is like smoking, don't do it around me and don't do it around kids

Most of the swamis I met were smokers.

Often they offer powers, often power over life and death, these morons will promise anything, to the vulnerable suffering from the harshness of the world looking for nicer friends then rape their bank accounts and their bodies. The target market.

Why do I need to be liked and accepted by people who don't like me?

Why do I need to be liked and accepted by bullies?

Why do I need to be liked and accepted?

If I'm not I'm no damn good and life is awful alone?

Is there any evidence for that programmed belief?

No.

Other people's likes and dislikes only describe them.

The fact you prefer chocolate over strawberry doesn't describe me or affect me.

Saying that being alone is awful is saying I will die from it.

Am I dead?

Or do I now have the alone time to pursue my interests and hobbies and meet nicer friends, that don't bully me with bronze age bullshit promising magical powers.

If you want to look good in bed, go to the gym. See a kinesiologist.

If you want physical therapy see a physiotherapist.

If you are lonely, depressed and anxious there are cures for that. Many free.

There are no such things as instant friends instant therapy instant health.

Someone at the carnival is trying to sell you some snake oil.

THE MYTH OF ADDICTION

When I started in yoga, I was told that the reason we take on life, reincarnate, is because we are addicted to the senses.

I just read some articles on the 'addiction cycle'. I had googled the term. Suggestions as alternatives to drugs and behaviours to increase dopamine included yoga and meditation. It is true that clients are often sent to do these practices by cognitive therapists until they fully understand that anxiety and depression are consequences. Consequences of self-calling themselves nasty names, like 'addicted', along with demanding certain outcomes, no matter what, typified by using words like 'must' and 'should', 'terrible' and 'awful'. Usually, it takes about 6 months of therapy then you are cured. You know how you got depressed and how to get undepressed.

'Behavioral Addictions are when an individual does something even if they know it's wrong and will likely lead to negative consequences. These can include Porn Addiction, Drug Addiction, Gambling Addiction, Food Addiction, or even Internet Addiction - Google results.

Ya, not so much if you take out the religious moralizing.

Change some words such as addiction to distraction. 'Behavioral distractions are when an individual does something even if they know it sometimes has negative life consequences so they don't

overdo it.' For instance, it's OK to have a drink. Overindulgence in feel good behaviors is a consequence of calling your self nasty names. Such as addicted. Or diseased, as in the AA religion Kool-aid.

The question remains, distraction from what? The consequences of calling yourself a loser, calling others losers, calling the world terrible and awful and saying you can't stand it. By simply asking yourself is there any evidence for these beliefs, and there never is any, then replying with a rational response such as 'I highly prefer to have what I want, but I don't HAVE to'. The brain chemistry changes with as much effect as Prozac according to Dr. David Burns quoting studies done at Stanford at the cognitive lab in his book *Feeling Good the New Mood Therapy*.

'Doing something when you know it's wrong' gets changed to 'doing something to deal with the pain that has sometimes unwanted consequences.' It's ok to not enjoy pain and it's self-helping to deal with that. Having a choice of techniques includes not causing the pain in the first place. Or putting up with it and ignoring it, like if you lose an arm, do everything you can to deal with it, then ignore it and focus on something more satisfying. You may not have as many choices but you still have some.

For example, yoga increases dopamine levels the same as food, sex etc. But it has consequences of costing a lot of money and having to drink the religious Kool-Aid, or risk being banned by the yoga community. Or you could just go for a walk, talk to strangers and ask for what you want.

Communication, companionship and sex are the usuals. All jobs are gained by asking a stranger for what you want. Easy Peasy with a little practice. It's adult behaviour to endure short-term pain for long-term gain.

I attended meditation classes, mindfulness, chanting and silent what have you's. No one can tell you what meditation is other than ignoring the world and its concerns through some concentrated distraction. Or you can deal with your lost arm, capacity, lover or whatever and then ignore it and seek satisfaction in other ways. The key is 'What Good Can I Make of This'. I may not have a lover currently, but until I do, and I will, I can focus on hobbies I enjoy. I may not have a job but I can focus on doing a thorough satisfying search.

The purpose of life is satisfaction.

It is not wrong to seek satisfaction. You are not broken. You don't have a disease that requires expensive snake oil psychological religious quackery 'treatments' and groups. Millions of people quit alcohol every day without joining a religion or drinking a Kool-Aid for the financial profit of some organization. They simply make different choices with different consequences. If you find you prefer a group then go see these Smart Recovery guys.

Here are the choices that get everyone into trouble. Yoga, AA and other religions have a financial interest in making sure you keep making these choices. The REBT self-help form is a way out.

Free of charge. Dr. Michael Edelstein in his book [Three Minute Therapy](#) offers excellent solutions as well.

The Three Majors Musts

We all express ourselves differently, but the irrational beliefs that upset us can be placed under three major headings. Each of these core beliefs contains an absolutistic must or demand. These three majors musts can be summarized as follows:

I. I must do well and win the approval of others or else I am no good.

Summary

Inflexible

Places unrealistic expectations on oneself

Over-concern with others' opinion of oneself

Self-worth measured by achievement and popularity

Non-self-accepting

Sub-beliefs

I must have love and approval from everybody.

I need someone to love me.

I must not do anything that would cause others to think less of me.

I must be competent and successful.

I must have an important skill or talent.

I must successfully avoid unpleasant or undesirable situations.

Unpleasant and undesirable situations upset me.

I can't control my emotions in difficult situations.

I must avoid dangerous or life-threatening situations.

If I do encounter such situations, I must worry about them to make them go away.

I must think, feel and act the same as I always have.

My past has such a strong influence on me that I cannot change.

I must find order, certainty, and predictability in life.

If I don't find these things, I cannot feel comfortable or act competently.

I must depend on other people because I can't depend on myself.

I must rely on superstition and religion especially in difficult times.

I must understand the secrets of the universe.

I cannot be happy unless I understand the nature and secrets of the universe.

I must rate myself as either "good" and "worthy," or "bad" and "worthless."

To be "good," and "worthy," I must be competent, successful and popular.

If I am not competent, successful or popular then I am "bad" and "worthless."

I must never feel depressed, anxious or enraged.

Emotional Consequences

Depression

Anxiety and/or panic

Self Downing

Behavioral Consequences

Risk-avoidance

Shyness

Procrastination

Unassertiveness

Workaholism

II. Other people must do "the right thing" or else they are no good and deserve to be punished.

Summary

Inflexible and unrealistic

Assumes one's authority over others

Assumes a clear-cut difference between right and wrong

Assumes one's ability to inerrantly differentiate between right and wrong

Places oneself at the center of the universe with others catering to one's needs and wants

Leads to conflict with others who also see themselves as the center of the universe

Non-accepting of human fallibility

Sub-beliefs

Everybody should treat everyone else (especially me) in a fair and considerate manner.

If they act unfairly or inconsiderately, they are no good.

If they act unfairly or inconsiderately, they deserve to be punished.

Society or the universe must ensure that they get the punishment they deserve.

Other people must not act incompetently or unwisely.

If they act incompetently or unwisely, they are worthless idiots.

If they act incompetently or unwisely, they should be ashamed of themselves.

If they act incompetently or unwisely, they should expect none of the good things in life.

Talented people must use their talent.

Everyone must reach their potential.

People who don't live up to their potential have little or no value as human beings.

Other people must not criticize me.

If they unjustly criticize me, they are no good and don't deserve anything good to happen to them.

Emotional Consequences

Anger, rage or fury

Impatience

Bitterness

Resentment

Behavioral Consequences

Aggression and violence

Bigotry and intolerance

Bullying

Nagging

III. Life must be easy, without discomfort or inconvenience.

Summary

Inflexible and unrealistic

Over-estimates one's right to a trouble-free life

Under-estimates one's ability to cope with adversity

Non-accepting of life's vagaries

Sub-beliefs

Things must go the way I want them to go.

I need what I want.

It's awful if I don't get what I want.

I must constantly worry about life's predicaments.

I must control, avoid or change life's predicaments.

I must make myself upset over life's predicaments.

Making myself upset gives me the power to control, avoid or change life's predicaments.

I must avoid, rather than face and deal with, life's difficulties and responsibilities.

I must not be inconvenienced or made uncomfortable.

I cannot discipline myself.

I can't stand the present pain that is necessary for future gain.

It must be easy to change things that I don't like.

Difficulties must not exist.

I am powerless to change my circumstances.

Any effort to change my circumstances is pointless because it is doomed to fail.

Justice, fairness, equality, democracy and other "right" values must prevail.

I can't stand it when my values are trodden on.

All problems must have a perfect solution.

The perfect solution to all problems must be found.

It's awful if a perfect solution can't be found to my problems (or those of people I care about).

I must not die prematurely.

I should be able to live forever.

It's terrible that I will one day die and no longer exist.

It's terrible that people I love will one day die and no longer exist.

My life must have meaning and purpose.

a. If I can't create meaning or purpose for myself, the universe or something supernatural must provide it for me.

I must not experience depression, rage or anxiety.

I must not have psychological problems.

I must not be institutionalized.

I couldn't stand to be institutionalized.

I could never recover if I went "crazy."

Emotional Consequences

Low frustration tolerance

Self-pity

Depression

Discomfort anxiety

Behavioral Consequences

Procrastination

Shirking

Drug and alcohol abuse

Overindulgence in "feel good" behaviors (e.g., overeating).

REBT SELF-HELP FORM

What is the situation that you are upset about?

Answer: People were/are... then a list...mean to me... self-centred... inconsiderate with intent... family was/is physically/emotionally abusive...restraining orders issued.

What are the unhealthy negative emotions that you are experiencing?

Answer: rage, depression, anxiety, hurt, guilt, and jealousy.

What self-defeating behaviours would you like to change?

Answer: withdrawal, unassertiveness...overeating

What demand are you making about the situation?

Answer: I must not be criticized... others must do the right thing at all times... treat me fairly... be nice to me or else you are a rotten horrible person...a moron. Life must be pleasant and convenient or I can't stand it.

Dispute: where is it written that others must? Where is the evidence that I can't stand it?

Rational Belief: they are that way so they must be that way...they aren't ALL bad, THEIR INCONSIDERATE BEHAVIOR IS A PAIN BUT it's NOT AWFUL. I'm not going to die from it...a bad act does not make them a bad person... there is no law that says others must...just because I prefer not to be criticized does not mean that I must not be criticized.

What are your new healthy negative emotions?

Answer: annoyance, concern and sadness.

What are your new self-helping behaviours?

Answer: talking to strangers and asking for what I want.

Warning: This form should not be considered a substitute for individualized treatment with a mental health professional. If you are seeing a counsellor or a therapist, it is recommended that you print this page and discuss your responses with him or her.

Designed by Will Ross © 2006

[Return to www.rebtnetwork.org](http://www.rebtnetwork.org)

So, I'm sitting in the family therapist's office, raging at the world and this clown likes Survivor 'reality' TV for fucksakes, I can tell right away this is another in a long list of these offices, starting

in my very troubled childhood, of incompetent social workers. This guy is obviously another moron.

Ya, no.

"Just consider yourself an orphan" he says. This floors me. How did he know?

This is emergency psychiatric care at the Rockyview hospital, they got me in to see Dwayne Johnston and past the 6-8 month wait list that they call mental health treatment in this province, Alberta, with the highest suicide rate in Canada. My new wife, with the onset of Huntington's disease had become unstable, her cult recruiter 'minister' aka donation aggregator, [Fred Aford](#), had got divorced recently and he decided my annoyance at his furfooting around our relationship should be called abusiveness and I should go away so he could move in. Her millionaire father agreed. The undervalue, dump, smear technique of ending relationships commonly employed by narcissists.

So people, even ill people having con-artist narcissist extramarital affairs have a right to live with whoever they want. I left everything to her as she was suffering a truly horrible slow brain death, she was going to need resources. I was age 50 and physically healthy, so I moved to a small, cheap, squalid apartment with hookers in the basement and lost my house, my painting art studio, my picture framing home-based business and my wife. In many ways my self-esteem and identity. I got a transitional needs job answering phones at a limo company and found a gig economy job photoshoping tits for advertisers. Any port in a storm, sailor.

I found an internet girlfriend for some pleasant distraction company until she announced she would like me to move in with her in Australia, and pee in her mouth. Instead, I joined the bluegrass association and met Brenda who began to call my poetry, flowers, one true love preferences 'vanilla' and announced she'd like things more forceful and more anal. Ouch.

I couldn't love bluegrass with its American evangelistic [Ricky Skaggs](#) agenda and I couldn't love giving and receiving anal pain with Brenda and me in dog collars, (that's what they do after church) so I dropped music as a hobby and took up the camera, finding a real involving interest that became my predominant art form.

So, serial loss. I became so anxious I didn't want to leave the house ever again and I cried for 6 months straight. I had sought help from the [Huntington psychiatrist, Dr. Trew](#), as my brother had just brain tumor stroked out and my oldest friend Tref (Terry) Burnett was in a hospice with no skin or eyelids from his sun and cigarette addictions. The psychiatrist informed me he was a Deacon in his church and I should find purpose in God through the losses. So basically he was another cult recruiter preying upon his patients, trolling for souls with cash to 'save'.

I called the Crisis Center where I used to volunteer when I was a kid and was told I was 'just lonely'.

I sought help from the grief counseling at the hospital, more ordained incompetents, but the re-

ceptionist was no fool, she booked me into the emergency psychiatric thingy and here I was, staring at Dwayne and Not Happy, to put it mildly.

'I bet you are telling yourself you can't stand it,' he said. It was my mantra, thousands of repetitions a day. All my life. How did he know?

When you tell yourself you can't stand it you are saying you will die from it.'

'Are you dead?'

I burst out laughing. This was my Good Will Hunting moment, where Robin Williams says, 'It's not your fault.'

'Your family abandoned you emotionally at birth, your friends aren't your family, so just call yourself an orphan.'

'You don't fuck around, do you?' I said. 'We don't have people come back forever, dependent for life on therapy,' was his response.

The difference, in my opinion, between evidence-based psychology (the evidence is I'm not dead) and religious woo-woo is that these guys, the former, are governed by Do No Harm and when folks don't come back they like that, it's called a cure.

Woo-woo religions don't particularly care if they meet your needs for psychological and physical safety. In fact, the opposite is true as they want you to keep coming back, hurting seeking relief (distraction-based such as prayer, chanting, what have you), so they can rape your bank account and fuck your kids.

Based on the evidence of reading the news lately, 250 assorted kids bodies in a mass grave at a Catholic residential indoctrination school for First Nation kids forcibly taken there by armed police. This went on for generations so I suspect we are just getting started with the grizzly discoveries of the religious horror show. Also, watching the movie Spotlight, the Oscar-winning film (best picture, best screenplay, 2015) based on the story of how the Boston Globes' reporting team in 2002 exposed the Catholic Church's cover-up of child sex abuse by its priests. The Globe won a Pulitzer in 2003 for public service for its coverage of the issue.

So after 6 months of visits with Dwayne, homework, study and practice I knew how I got depressed and anxious and how to get myself out of it with that little form thing at the top of this page. Sometimes 10 times a day, but it beats being depressed.

Dwayne Johnston did what my father was supposed to do, he took away my fears. Then taught me how to do it for myself.

So happy self-help-fathers day to me.

TRAITS OF LOSERS (ACCORDING TO THE ASHRAM).

Let us look at the main psychotherapeutic goals. On the basis of twenty years of clinical experience, and in basic agreement with most of my professional colleagues (such as Brasten, 1961; Dreikurs, 1955; Fromm, 1955; Goldstein 1954; Maslow, 1954, Rogers, 1957; and Thorne, 1961), I would say that the psychotherapist tries to help his patients to be minimally anxious and hostile; and to this end, he tries to help them to acquire the following kind of personality traits:

Self-interest. The emotionally healthy individual should primarily be true to himself and not masochistically sacrifice himself for others. His kindness and consideration for others should be derived from the idea that he himself wants to enjoy freedom from unnecessary pain and restriction, and that he is only likely to do so by helping create a world in which the rights of others, as well as his own, are not needlessly curtailed.

Self-direction. He should assume responsibility for his own life, be able independently to work out his own problems, and while at times wanting or preferring the cooperation and help of others, not need their support for his effectiveness and well-being.

Tolerance. He should fully give other human beings the right to be wrong; and while disliking or abhorring some of their behavior, still not blame them, as persons, for performing this dislikeable behavior. He should accept the fact that all humans are remarkably fallible, never unrealistically expect them to be perfect, and refrain from despising or punishing them when they make inevitable mistakes and errors.

Acceptance of uncertainty. The emotionally mature individual should completely accept the fact that we live in a world of probability and chance, where there are not, nor probably ever will be, any absolute certainties, and should realize that it is not at all horrible, indeed such a probabilistic, uncertain world is most conducive to free thought.

Flexibility. He should remain intellectually flexible, be open to change at all times, and unbigotedly view the infinitely varied people, ideas, and things in the world around him.

Scientific thinking. He should be objective, rational and scientific; and be able to apply the laws of logic and of scientific method not only to external people and events, but to himself and his interpersonal relationships.

Commitment. He should be vitally absorbed in something outside of himself, whether it be people, things, or ideas; and should preferably have at least one major creative interest, as well as some outstanding human involvement, which is highly important to him, and around which he structures a good part of his life.

Risk-taking. The emotionally sound person should be able to take risks, to ask himself what he really would like to do in life, and then to try to do this, even though he has to risk defeat or failure. He should be adventurous (though not necessarily foolhardy); be willing to try almost anything once, just to see how he likes it; and look forward to some breaks in his usual life routines.

Self-acceptance. He should normally be glad to be alive, and to like himself just because he is alive, because he exists, and because he (as a living being) invariably has some power to

enjoy himself, to create happiness and joy. He should not equate his worth or value to himself on his extrinsic achievements, or on what others think of him, but on his personal existence; on his ability to think, feel, and act, and thereby to make some kind of an interesting, absorbed life for himself.

These, then, are the kind of personality traits which a psychotherapist is interested in helping his patients achieve and which he is also, prophylactically, interested in fostering in the lives of millions who will never be his patients.

Now, does religion by which again, I mean faith unfounded on fact, or dependence on some supernatural deity help human beings to achieve these healthy traits and thereby to avoid becoming anxious, depressed, and hostile?

The answer, of course, is that it doesn't help at all; and in most respects it seriously sabotages mental health. - [Albert Ellis](#)

IRRATIONAL IDEA NO. 1

Irrational idea NO. 1 is the idea that it is a dire necessity for an adult to be loved or approved of by all the significant figures in his life. This idea is bolstered by the religious philosophy that if you cannot get certain people to love or approve of you, you can always fall back on god's love. The thought, however, that it is quite possible for you to live comfortably in the world whether or not other people accept you is quite foreign to both emotionally disturbed people and religionists.

- [Albert Ellis](#).

The ashram capitalized on this irrational idea, and the religionists solution, using [trans-personal psychology](#). 'THERE ARE PARTS OF YOU THAT ARE BROKEN AND PARTS OF YOU DIVINE. YOU MUST KILL RUTHLESSLY YOUR DESIRES AND 'SELFISH' PARTS.' Never mind the rational response that those parts might come in handy, or I might change my mind. I don't think it's even possible to kill parts of yourself.

IRRATIONAL IDEA NO. 2

Irrational idea No.2 is the idea that you must be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects, otherwise you are worthless. The religionists say that no, you need not be competent and achieving, and in fact can be thoroughly inadequate—as long as god loves you and you are a member in good standing of the church. But this means, of course, that you must be a competent and achieving religionist—else you are no damned good. - [Albert Ellis](#)

IRRATIONAL IDEA NO. 3

Irrational idea No.3 is the notion that certain people are bad, wicked, and villainous and that they should be severely blamed and punished for their sins. This is the ethical basis, of course, of virtually all true religions. The concepts of guilt, blaming, and sin are, in fact, almost synonymous with that of revealed religion.- [Albert Ellis](#)

IRRATIONAL IDEA NO. 4

Irrational idea No. 4 is the belief that it is horrible, terrible, and catastrophic when things are not going the way you would like them to go. This idea, again, is the very core of religiosity, since the religious person invariably believes that just because he cannot stand being frustrated, and just because he must keep worrying about things turning out badly, he needs a supreme deity to supervise his thoughts and deeds and to protect him from anxiety and frustrations.

IRRATIONAL IDEA NO. 5

Irrational idea No. 5 is the idea that human unhappiness is externally caused and that people have little or no ability to control their sorrows or rid themselves of their negative feelings. Once again, this notion is the essence of religion, since real religions invariably teach you that only by trusting in god and relying on praying to him will you be able to control your sorrows or counteract your negative emotions. - [Albert Ellis](#)

THE CASE AGAINST RELIGION - ALBERT ELLIS

Before we can talk sensibly about religion or almost anything else we should give some kind of definition of what we are talking about. Let me, therefore, start with what I think are some legitimate definitions of the term religion. Other concepts of this term, of course, exist; but what I am talking about when I use it is as follows.

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, religion is: "(1) belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshipped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe; (2) expression of this belief in conduct and ritual."

English and English, in their Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms (1958), define religion as "system of beliefs by means of which individuals or a community put themselves in relation to god or to a supernatural world and often to each other, and from which the religious person derives a set of values by which to judge events in the natural world."

The Columbia Encyclopedia notes that "when a man becomes conscious of a power above and beyond the human, and recognizes a dependence of himself upon that power, religion has become a factor in his being."

These, then, are the definitions of religion which I accept and which I shall have in mind as I discuss the religious viewpoint in this paper. Religion, to me, must include some concept of a deity. When the term is used merely to denote a system of beliefs, practices, or ethical values which are not connected with any assumed higher power, then I believe it is used loosely and confusingly; since such nonsupernatural system of beliefs can more accurately be described as a philosophy of life or a code of ethics, and it is misleading to confuse a believer in this general kind of philosophy or ethical code with a true religionist.

Every Atheist, in other words, has some kind of philosophy and some code of ethics; and many Atheists, in fact, have much more rigorous life philosophies and ethical systems than have most deists.

SOMEONE IS RELIGIOUS

It therefore seems silly to say that someone is religious because he happens to be philosophic or ethical; and unless we rigorously use the term religion to mean some kind of faith unfounded on fact, or dependency on some assumed superhuman entities, we broaden the definition of the word so greatly as to make it practically meaningless.

If religion is defined as man's dependence of a power above and beyond the human, as a psychotherapist I find it to be exceptionally pernicious. For the psychotherapist is normally dedicated to helping human beings in general, and his patients in particular, to achieve certain goals of mental health, and virtually all these goals are antithetical to a truly religious viewpoint.

Let us look at the main psychotherapeutic goals. On the basis of twenty years of clinical experience, and in basic agreement with most of my professional colleagues (such as Brasten, 1961;

Dreikurs, 1955; Fromm, 1955; Goldstein 1954; Maslow, 1954, Rogers, 1957; and Thorne, 1961), I would say that the psychotherapist tries to help his patients to be minimally anxious and hostile; and to this end, he tries to help them to acquire the following kind of personality traits:

Self-interest. The emotionally healthy individual should primarily be true to himself and not masochistically sacrifice himself for others. His kindness and consideration for others should be derived from the idea that he himself wants to enjoy freedom from unnecessary pain and restriction, and that he is only likely to do so by helping create a world in which the rights of others, as well as his own, are not needlessly curtailed.

Self-direction. He should assume responsibility for his own life, be able independently to work out his own problems, and while at times wanting or preferring the cooperation and help of others, not need their support for his effectiveness and well-being.

Tolerance. He should fully give other human beings the right to be wrong; and while disliking or abhorring some of their behavior, still not blame them, as persons, for performing this dislikeable

behavior. He should accept the fact that all humans are remarkably fallible, never unrealistically expect them to be perfect, and refrain from despising or punishing them when they make inevitable mistakes and errors.

Acceptance of uncertainty. The emotionally mature individual should completely accept the fact that we live in a world of probability and chance, where there are not, nor probably ever will be, any absolute certainties, and should realize that it is not at all horrible, indeed such a probabilistic, uncertain world is most conducive to free thought.

Flexibility. He should remain intellectually flexible, be open to change at all times, and unbigotedly view the infinitely varied people, ideas, and things in the world around him.

Scientific thinking. He should be objective, rational and scientific; and be able to apply the laws of logic and of scientific method not only to external people and events, but to himself and his interpersonal relationships.

Commitment. He should be vitally absorbed in something outside of himself, whether it be people, things, or ideas; and should preferably have at least one major creative interest, as well as some outstanding human involvement, which is highly important to him, and around which he structures a good part of his life.

Risk-taking. The emotionally sound person should be able to take risks, to ask himself what he really would like to do in life, and then to try to do this, even though he has to risk defeat or failure. He should be adventurous (though not necessarily foolhardy); be willing to try almost anything once, just to see how he likes it; and look forward to some breaks in his usual life routines.

Self-acceptance. He should normally be glad to be alive, and to like himself just because he is alive, because he exists, and because he (as a living being) invariably has some power to enjoy himself, to create happiness and joy. He should not equate his worth or value to himself on his extrinsic achievements, or on what others think of him, but on his personal existence; on his ability to think, feel, and act, and thereby to make some kind of an interesting, absorbed life for himself.

These, then, are the kind of personality traits which a psychotherapist is interested in helping his patients achieve and which he is also, prophylactically, interested in fostering in the lives of millions who will never be his patients.

Now, does religion by which again, I mean faith unfounded on fact, or dependence on some supernatural deity help human beings to achieve these healthy traits and thereby to avoid becoming anxious, depressed, and hostile?

The answer, of course, is that it doesn't help at all; and in most respects it seriously sabotages mental health. For religion, first of all, is not self-interest; it is god-interest.

The religious person must, by virtual definition, be so concerned with whether or not his hypothesized god loves him, and whether he is doing the right thing to continue to keep in this god's good graces, that he must, at very best, put himself second and must sacrifice some of his most cher-

ished interests to appease this god. If, moreover, he is a member of any organized religion, then he must choose his god's precepts first, those of this church and its clergy second, and his own views and preferences third.

NO VIEWS OF HIS OWN

In a sense, the religious person must have no real views of his own; and it is presumptuous of him, in fact, to have any. In regard to sex-love affairs, to marriage and family relations, to business, to politics, and to virtually everything else that is important in his life, he must try to discover what his god and his clergy would like him to do; and he must primarily do their bidding. Masochistic self-sacrifice is an integral part of almost all organized religions: as shown, for example, in the various forms of ritualistic self-deprivation that Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, and other religionists must continually undergo if they are to keep in good with their assumed gods.

Masochism, indeed, stems from an individual's deliberately inflicting pain on himself in order that he may guiltlessly permit himself to experience some kind of sexual or other pleasure; and the

very essence of most organized religions is the performance of masochistic, guilt-soothing rituals, by which the religious individual gives himself permission to enjoy life.

Religiosity, to a large degree, essentially is masochism; and both are forms of mental sickness. In regard to self-direction, it can easily be seen from what just been said that the religious person is by necessity dependent and other-directed rather than independent and self-directed. If he is true to his religious beliefs he must first bow down to his god; to the clergy who this god's church; and third, to all the members of his religious sect, who are eagle-eyedly watching him to see whether he defects an iota from the conduct his god and his church define as proper.

If religion, therefore, is largely masochism, it is even more dependency. For a man to be a true believer and to be strong and independent is impossible; religion and self-sufficiency are contradictory terms.

Tolerance again, is a trait that the firm religionist cannot possibly possess. I am the Lord thy God and thou shalt have no other gods before me, saith Jehovah. Which means in plain English, that

whatever any given god and his clergy believe must be absolutely, positively true; and whatever any other person or group believes must be absolutely, positive false.

Democracy, permissiveness, and the acceptance of human fallibility are quite alien to the real religionist's since he can only believe that the creeds and commands of his particular deity should, ought, and must be obeyed, and that anyone who disobeys the is patently a knave.

Religion, with its definitional absolutes, can never rest with the concept of an individual's wrong doing or making mistakes, but must inevitably all to this the notion of his sinning and of his deserving to be punished for his sins. For, if it is merely desirable for you to refrain from harming others or committing other misdeeds, as any non-religious code of ethics will inform you that it is, then if you make a mistake and do commit some misdeeds, you are merely a wrong-doer, or one who is doing an undesirable deed and who should try to correct himself and do less wrong in the future. But if it is god-given, absolute law that you shall not, must not do a wrong act, and actually do it, you are then a mean, miserable sinner, a worthless being, and must severely punish yourself (perhaps eternally, in hell) for being a wrongdoer, being a fallible human.

Religion, then, by setting up absolute, god-given standards, must make you self-deprecating and dehumanized when you err; and must lead you to despise and dehumanize others when they act badly. This kind of absolutistic, perfectionistic thinking is the prime creator of the two most corroding of human emotions: anxiety and hostility.

If one of the requisites for emotional health is acceptance of uncertainty, then religion is obviously the unhealthiest state imaginable: Since its prime reason for being is to enable the religionist to believe a mystical certainty. Just because life is so uncertain, and because millions of people think that they cannot take its vicissitudes, they invent absolutistic gods, and thereby pretend that there is some final, invariant answer to things. Patently, these people are fooling themselves and instead of healthfully admitting that they do not need certainty, but can live comfortably in this often disorderly world, they stubbornly protect their neurotic beliefs by insisting that there must be the kind of certainty that they foolishly believe that they need.

This is like a child's believing that he must have a kindly father in order to survive; and then, when his father is unkindly, or perhaps has died and is nonexistent, he dreams up a father (who may be a neighbor, a movie star, or a pure figment of his imagination) and he insists that this dream-fa-

ther actually exists.

The trait of flexibility, which is so essential to proper emotional functioning, is also blocked and sabotaged by religious belief. For the person who dogmatically believes in god, and who sustains this belief with a faith unfounded in fact, which a true religious of course must, clearly is not open to change and is necessarily bigoted.

If, for example, his scriptures or his church, tell him he shalt not even covet his neighbor's wife let alone have actual adulterous relations with her! he cannot ask himself, why should I not lust after this women, as long as I don't intend to do anything about my desire for her? What is really wrong about that? For his god and his church have spoken; and there is no appeal from this arbitrary authority, once he has brought himself to accept it.

Any time, in fact, anyone unempirically establishes a god or a set of religious postulates which have a superhuman origin, he can thereafter use no empirical evidence whatever to question the dictates of this god or those postulates, since they are (by definition) beyond scientific validation.

The best he can do, if he wants to change any rules that stem from his religion, is to change the religion itself. Otherwise, he is stuck with the absolutistic axioms, and their logical corollaries, that he himself has initially accepted on faith. We may therefore note again that, just as religion is masochism, other-directedness, intolerance, and refusal to accept uncertainty, it also is mental and emotional inflexibility.

In regard to scientific thinking, it practically goes without saying that this kind of cerebration is quite antithetical to religiosity. The main canon of the scientific method as Ayer (1947), Carnap (1953),

Reichenbach (1953), and a host of other modern philosophers of science have pointed out is that, at least in some final analysis, or in principle, all theories be confirmable by some form of human experience, some empirical referent. But all religions which are worthy of the name contend that their superhuman entities cannot be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, felt, or otherwise humanly experienced, and that their gods and their principles are therefore distinctly beyond science.

To believe in any of these religions, therefore, is to be unscientific at least to some extent; and it could be contended that the more religious one is, the less scientific one tends to be. Although a religious person need not be entirely unscientific (as, for that matter, a raving maniac need not be either), it is difficult to see how he could be perfectly scientific.

While a person may be both scientific and religious (as he may be at times sensible and at other times foolish) it is doubtful if an individual's attitude may simultaneously be truly pious and objective.

In regard to the trait of commitment, the religious individual may for once!--have some advantages. For if he is truly religious, he is seriously committed to his god, his church, or his creed; and to some extent, at least, he thereby acquires a major interest in life.

Religious commitment also frequently has its serious disadvantages, since it tends to be obses-

sive-compulsive; and it may well interfere with other kinds of healthy commitment such as deep involvements in sex-love relations, in scientific pursuits, and even in artistic endeavors. Moreover, it is a commitment that is often motivated by guilt or hostility, and may serve as a frenzied covering-up mechanism which masks, but does not really eliminate, these underlying disturbed feelings. It is also the kind of commitment that is based on falsehoods and illusions, and that therefore easily can be shattered, thus plunging the previously committed individual into the depths of disillusionment and despair.

Not all forms of commitment, in other words, are equally healthy. The grand inquisitors of the medieval catholic church were utterly dedicated to their holy work, and Hitler and many of his associates were fanatically committed to their Nazi doctrines. But this hardly proves that they are emotionally human beings.

When religious individuals are happily committed to faith, they often tend to be fanatically and dogmatically committed in an obsessive-compulsive way that itself is hardly desirable. Religious commitment may well be better for a human being than no commitment to anything.

But religion, to a large degree, is fanaticism which, in turn, is an obsessive-compulsive, rigid form of holding to a viewpoint that invariably masks and provides a bulwark for the underlying insecurity of the obsessed individual.

In regard to risk-taking, it should be obvious that the religious person is highly determined not to be adventurous nor to take any of life's normal risks. He strongly believes in unvalidatable assumptions precisely because he does not want to risk following his own preferences and aims, but wants the guarantee that some higher power will back him.

Enormously fearing failure, and falsely defining his own worth as a person in terms of achievement, he sacrifices time, energy, and material goods and pleasures to the worship of the assumed god, so that he can at least be sure that this god loves and supports him. All religions worthy of the names are distinctly inhibiting which means, in effect, that the religious person sells his soul, surrenders his own basic urges and pleasures, so that he may feel comfortable with the heavenly helper that he himself has invented. Religion, then is needless inhibition.

Finally, in regard to self-acceptance, it should again be clear that the religious devotee cannot possibly accept himself just because he is alive, because he exists and has, by mere virtue of his aliveness, some power to enjoy himself. Rather, he must make his self-acceptance utterly contingent on the acceptance of his definitional god, the church and clergy who also serve this god, and all other true believers in his religion.

If all these extrinsic persons and things accept him, he is able and even then only temporarily and with continued underlying anxiety to accept himself. Which means, of course, that he defines himself only through the reflected appraisals of others and loses any real, existential self that he might otherwise keep creating. Religion, for such an individual, consequently is self-abasement and self-abnegation as, of course, virtually all the saints and mystics have clearly stated that it is.

If we summarize what we have just been saying, the conclusion seems inescapable that religion is, on almost every conceivable count, directly opposed to the goals of mental health since it basically consists of masochism, other-directness, intolerance, refusal to accept uncertainty, unscientific thinking, needless inhibition, and self-abasement. In the one area where religion has some advantages in terms of emotional hygiene that of encouraging hearty commitment to a cause or

project in which the person may vitally absorbed + even tends to sabotage this advantage in two important ways: (a) it drives most of its adherents to commit themselves to its tenets for the wrong reasons that is, to cover up instead of to face and rid themselves of their basic insecurities; and (b) it encourages a fanatic, obsessive-compulsive kind of commitment that is, in its own right, a form of mental illness.

If we want to look at the problems of human disturbance a little differently, we may ask ourselves, what are the irrational ideas which people believe and through which they drive themselves into severe states of emotional sickness?

EXPLORING THE QUESTION

After exploring this question for many years, and developing a new form of psychotherapy which is specifically directed at quickly unearthing and challenging the main irrational ideas which make people neurotic and psychotic, I have found that these ideas may be categorized under a few major headings (Ellis, 1962; Ellis and Harper, 1961a, 1961b). Here, for example, are five irrational

notions, all or some of which are strongly held by practically every seriously disturbed person; here, along with these notions, are the connections between and commonly held religious beliefs.

Irrational idea No.1 is the idea that it is a dire necessity for an adult to be loved or approved of by all the significant figures in his life. This idea is bolstered by the religious philosophy that if you cannot get certain people to love or approve of you, you can always fall back on god's love. The thought, however, that it is quite possible for you to live comfortably in the world whether or not other people accept you is quite foreign to both emotionally disturbed people and religionists.

Irrational idea No.2 is the idea that you must be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects, otherwise you are worthless. The religionists say that no, you need not be competent and achieving, and in fact can be thoroughly inadequate as long as god loves you and you are a member in good standing of the church. But this means, of course, that you must be a competent and achieving religionist else you are no damned good.

Irrational idea No.3 is the notion that certain people are bad, wicked, and villainous and that they

should be severely blamed and punished for their sins. This is the ethical basis, of course, of virtually all true religions. The concepts of guilt, blaming, and sin are, in fact, almost synonymous with that of revealed religion.

Irrational idea No. 4 is the belief that it is horrible, terrible, and catastrophic when things are not going the way you would like them to go. This idea, again, is the very core of religiosity since the religious person invariably believes that just because he cannot stand being frustrated, and just because he must keep worrying about things turning out badly, he needs a supreme deity to supervise his thoughts and deeds and to protect him from anxiety and frustrations.

Irrational idea No. 5 is the idea that human unhappiness is externally caused and that people have little or no ability to control their sorrows or rid themselves of their negative feelings. Once again, this notion is the essence of religion, since real religions invariably teach you that only by trusting in god and relying on praying to him will you be able to control your sorrows or counteract your negative emotions.

Similarly, if we had time to review all the other major irrational ideas that lead humans to become and to remain emotionally disturbed, we could quickly find that they are coextensive with, or are strongly encouraged by, religious tenets.

If you think about the matter carefully, you will see this close connection between mental illness and religion is inevitable and invariant, since neurosis or psychosis is something of a high-class name for childishness or dependency; and religion, when correctly used, is little more than a synonym for dependency.

In the final analysis, then, religion is neurosis. This is why I remarked, at a symposium on sin and psychotherapy held by the American Psychological Association a few years ago, that from a mental health standpoint Voltaire's famous dictum should be reversed: for if there were a god, it would be necessary to uninvent him.

If the thesis of this article is correct, religion goes hand in hand with the basic irrational beliefs of human beings. These keep them dependent, anxious, and hostile, and thereby create and

maintain their neuroses and psychoses. What then is the role of psychotherapy in dealing with the religious views of disturbed patients? Obviously, the sane and effective psychotherapist should not as many contemporary psychoanalytic Jungian, client-centered, and existentialist therapists have contended he should go along with the patients religious orientation and try to help these patients live successfully with their religions, for this is equivalent to trying to help them live successfully with their emotional illness.

Dr Albert Ellis is a scholar who holds a Ph.D. degree in psychotherapy.

HOW TO BE 'CREATIVE'

Put-Downs for Profit

I was just followed on Medium by Jen Gippel Ph.D. The good doctor has several suggestions for being creative and somewhere in there I saw something about getting in touch with your soul.

Ya. Nope.

It's very simple if the religion is stripped out of it.

We evolved from the jungle using our over-anxiety and over-imagination to overestimate problems and underestimate our ability to deal with them. So we would run away. We survive by running away. It's not fight-or-flight, it's just flight. Fighting involves other stuff but you don't fight the tiger you run away.

So. Is imagination creativity in art-making? God no.

Creativity is problem-solving. Problem-solving is so basic to our makeup that we can't see it, (or we have been conditioned to disregard this huge ability by for-profit religions).

We like to solve problems we get a good feeling, hormones such as dopamine are injected into

the brain, opiate receptors are triggered, all to make sure we survive and enjoy it, just like sex in many ways. A basic biological function.

'Why did you make that art piece', is a common question. The only answer is, 'It was of interest to me.' It was an interesting studio problem to solve. Women art friends say, 'It made my nipples stiff.'

Now as for overanxiety, art is often used as a distraction. Ok, what causes overanxiety? Overestimating problems and underestimating our ability to deal with them. This is where religion makes its multi-millions. Reaffirming that you can't handle life, you can't create a satisfying life solving your problems by creating solutions, so you need divine intervention because you are a loser, others are bastards and life is unbearable. You need courses in divine creativity!

So that's an abusive relationship, you are being put down for profit.

Distraction is an avoidance of pain. Anxiety, actually over-anxiety, without appropriate anxiety we couldn't cross the street, hurts so much in order to make sure we run away in the jungle from danger. To distract from the very real pain of over-anxiety people do repetitive behaviours when they can't or won't, through religious conditioning, leave a dangerous situation, such as being put down and other abuses. Prisoners in jail make art, but only repetitive types of art-making. Prayer, chanting, yoga, art, internet sex, the list of repetitive distractions are seemingly endless. Monkeys

at the zoo, when observed in my anthro class, that have been raised in labs, masturbate all the time. The ones from the wild do not.

I teach a course in drawing. People always say 'I couldn't draw a stick man I am impossible to teach to draw.' They say the same about painting too in my adult ed. classes. Being a good cognitive therapist I ask if there is any evidence for their belief that they are losers and subhuman. 'Huh?', is the usual response. 'Can you write your name with a pencil or a brush?' Of course, the answer is yes. 'So under certain conditions, you have all the training and practice needed to solve visual problems.'

'In my art studio, you pay me money to give you an awareness of this. I set up problems using line, shape, tone, colour, texture and just for fun, rhythm. For example, draw/paint this glass. Make 6 works, 15 min duration each using primarily each of these fundamental visual elements. Now, for the rest of your life, work from observation only.

Now, if you try to draw/paint that beautiful 3-dimensional hologram in your head that you just imagined, using a stick with hairs tied to the end of it, dipped in glue with coloured rocks in it, you WILL fail, guaranteed. But you can draw/paint this glass using lines, or shapes etc, just fine.'

Of course, imagination leads to overestimating the problem and underestimating your ability to deal with it, so in many ways, imagination is the enemy of art-making satisfaction. It's good for

escaping tigers in the jungle though. Artists have been training each other for 800 years in the history and tradition of Western European art history this way. So we teach you to get out of your overanxious imagination and to observe your perfectly fine ability to deal with problems through practice and research aka talking to strangers and asking for what you want. Do you want to know how Rembrandt solved the problem of painting feathers? Well, it's probably exactly the same way you would. Look at his work and thereby ask him. Painting/drawing is a record of his thoughts, you are actually reading his mind down through history. Art history is fascinating.

This is very satisfying to me since I am interested in humans. The purpose of life is satisfaction after all. You don't need to find the unfindable, like your soul, to do it either. Neither do you need to do boring repetitive acts like a chanting priest or a monkey masturbating in a zoo in the debilitating pain of overanxiety.

Satisfaction is our evolutionary prerogative, our right and even our obligation, our purpose in life, to try different things, just to see what happens, based on observation, merely because we are interested and we find being interested satisfying and life-affirming.

THE CONSEQUENCES - HOLY SHIT

Cult victims and those who have suffered abusive relationships often suffer from fear, confusion, low self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress. This title explains the seductive draw that leads people into such situations, provides guidelines for assessing what happened, and tools for getting back on track.

I read this and said to myself, well this is how I feel, did this actually happen to me? An abusive relationship, I subsequently learned, is one where I am being criticized and put down.

"You are taking on life to grow, to learn to evolve to get past the mistakes of former lives." This dogma was from Susan Doughtred the yoga teacher at Shambalah House in Calgary. "We practice Karma Yoga, the yoga of selfless service to burn up the karma of past lives."

Chapter 3 verse 13.3 of the Bhagavadgita, the central teaching of yoga, a minor part of the Upanishads the religious texts of Hindu culture, which lays out the rules of society, such as the caste system where the untouchables manually remove the daily feces of the Brahman holy caste, says 'it is our privilege to work but not for the rewards.'

This was a paraphrase I often heard to shame people into working for free at the ashram on construction projects and other manual labour such as farm work.

Essentially, you are a loser so you have to haul my shit. The Swamis and yoga teachers don't haul shit, of course.



JERALD W. BLACKSTOCK

Jerald received a diploma[1] in painting at the Alberta College of Art and Design [2] studying in studio art from 1992 to graduation in 1996 having three times achieved the President's Honour Roll. He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree [3] in 1998 from the Alberta University of the Arts with a specialty in digital art studies influenced by Alan Dunning [4] and a minor in creative writing influenced by Suzette Meyr [5]. He holds a certificate in Adult Education from Mount Royal University[6]. He taught for 10 years at Alberta University of the Arts, Mount Royal University, and several long term care homes as a recreational therapist through art making. Previously he studied drawing and painting privately under Gary Ripley [7] at Grip Studios in Calgary, Alberta from 1972 till 1980 with a focus on the materials and techniques of the old masters. His first career was as an addictions counsellor for Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission where he was trained in REBT[8], Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, developed by Dr. Albert Ellis[9] the foremost psychologist of the last century. Jerald's publications draw heavily from the history and traditions of Western European fine art, street photo, digital debauchery and psychotherapy. He currently lives in Calgary, Alberta making art with his camera and computer, publishing his books under Black-

stock Art&Design[10] for The Duchy of Jerald.

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