

## I Don't Care What You think

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- Joseph Chilton Pearce

Only a sociopath has no fear about being wrong. For the rest of us a healthy dose of caution keeps us from making frequent mistakes which could harm ourselves and others. And prevent our employers from dismissing us.

As children we learn to avoid touching hot elements of a stove. While a few of us learn this lesson the hard and painful way, most learn it from our mothers who teach us to not touch anything on the stove. They also taught us to avoid touching many other things, like glass objects on tables and unpurchased items in stores.

In fact many of us become brainwashed to the point of obsession with not involving ourselves with anything that could result in trouble or damage because as children we were taught to not take risks. As adults we may not be aware of why we fear taking those risky moves that some people call opportunities that come so seldom in a lifetime.

Even shyness may be nothing more than a fear of doing something wrong and making fools of ourselves in front of others, especially strangers. This may be traced back to childhood training we received from our mothers and grandmothers. Remember "Always wear clean underwear when you go out in case you're in an accident"? Parents taught us to avoid shaming ourselves because it would also bring shame on the family.

A fear of taking a small risk when meeting someone we don't know in case we make a faux pas, thus embarrassing or shaming ourselves and our families as a result, is what we call shyness. It's easier to remain aloof than to get involved and publicly embarrass ourselves.

The creativity that Pearce speaks of that requires us to shed our inhibitions and fear of being wrong means putting ourselves at risk of not just being wrong, but of being teased or publicly criticized for what we did.

We accept that in the art world few masters dominate the field while many others labour in well-deserved obscurity. What we may not realize is that every artist from greatest to most humble displays an act of great courage each time he puts his work on display, risking the displeasure and criticism of others.

What makes them special--the artists, the entrepreneurs, the social leaders--gives them the courage to take the risks? They accept that both praise and rejection are fleeting, that the same people who give both cared nothing for them a few minutes before experiencing their work and will care nothing for them a few minutes after expressing their opinions.

If your mother thinks you're a jerk, that's one thing. But if someone you don't know, just met and have the choice of never seeing again shortly thereafter doesn't like you or your work, there is no point in taking unwarranted criticism from them seriously.

A stranger will forget you and your work immediately after meeting you. Holding the hurt of his criticism for ages afterward serves only to harm you. Not attempting a project out of sheer fear of criticism is worse because you unconsciously imprison yourself in a restricted life.

Since we can never please everyone, it follows that no matter what we do some people will dislike it and criticize it. Others will like it if we give enough of them a chance. Why should we care about the opinions of people we will likely never meet again?

More importantly, why allow the opinions of people who care nothing about you to affect your life and how you approach opportunities that present themselves?

When it comes to taking risking and possibly being wrong, only your opinion and the opinions of those who care about you should matter.

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