

“You are Intolerant, Arrogant, Loud-Mouthed Bullies”

Re: Your article on [Wicca](#). I'm using the same measure that so called "Christians" use to condemn others: the Bible. I do not see better people here. I see a bewildering growth of intolerance, and what is worse, of arrogance. My recent contacts with "Christians" have exposed me to a movement of arrogant, loud mouth bullies. I'm not judging your heart Sir, but your aggression towards other groups. Christians are not to judge others, that is God's job. Christians are to love their neighbor as they do themselves. They are to hate what is "bad", not who is "Bad".

I think that Mr Grimassi's letter shows that he is a better "Christian" than you are Sir. I'm not a Wiccan, but from what I have seen from your narrow side, I would rather involve myself with the type of gentleness displayed by this Wiccan man, than with the spiteful arrogant status-worshipping bullies who call themselves "Christian."

Please take an honest look at what you have done. You begin your letter by complaining about the behavior of so-called Christians (who may, of course, not really be Christians at all). But why should you consider yourself justified in writing such hateful things about Christians? After all, even if some so-called Christians have behaved badly, why should you have the right to behave the same way?

Just look at some of the hateful things you've said about Christians in your letter: You refer to Christians as intolerant, arrogant, loud-mouthed bullies (but I personally know many Christians who are not like this at all). You conclude by lumping all Christians together and denouncing

them as “spiteful arrogant status-worshipping bullies”.

Then you say that you’re not judging my heart, but my aggression toward other groups. But what is it that you’re doing? Aren’t you demonstrating the same aggression toward Christians which you say I’m demonstrating toward Wiccans? Indeed, isn’t your unprovoked aggression against me even WORSE than my alleged aggression against Wiccans?

Actually, I sincerely bear no ill will toward Wiccans at all. Not the slightest bit. Raven Grimassi and I had a very cordial e-mail exchange about my article. Like you, I had a very high opinion of the way he expressed himself in his letter to me. He was very kind and courteous in every respect. And I did my uttermost to be just as kind and courteous to him.

Now about judging, it’s important to understand that Jesus does not condemn all human judgments. If you carefully read Matt. 7:1-5, you will see that what Jesus warns against is hypocrisy. As Jesus says in v. 5: “You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” The assumption, of course, is that once the plank is removed, the brother will see clearly enough to judge his brother rightly and without hypocrisy. Indeed, if Jesus forbid all human judgment, it would be impossible to administer church discipline against sinning Christians within the church (something which the Bible clearly commands us to do).

But that’s not all. The Bible also urges Christians “to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3). Paul tells Titus that church leaders “must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9). These passages tell us that truth in doctrine is important and that we need to stand up for it, even refuting those who oppose it. Does this make Christians arrogant? Does this make Christians spiteful

bullies? What is my defense against such accusations? Simply this.

What if Christianity is true? What if, as Jesus Himself claimed, there is no other way to God but through Him (John 14:6)? What if people who reject Christ, or who attempt to find salvation through some other religion, really will spend eternity in Hell? Would it be truly loving not to warn people of this potential tragedy? Would it really be loving not to attempt to persuade them to embrace Christ while they still have opportunity? Would it really be loving to say nothing at all? For my part, I honestly don't think so.

Our ministry exists to share with others the arguments, evidence and reasonableness of biblical Christianity and to try to convince them that no other religion will ultimately save their souls. If Jesus really was who He claimed to be, then (in my opinion) it would be very unloving indeed to simply let people perish and not try to convince them to give their lives to Christ before the day of final judgment. The Bible warns us that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and that those who have rejected Him will perish eternally. Frankly, I don't want this to happen to anyone.

I will pray for you.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“We Only Learn from What We

Experience in Life—Stop Judging!”

How can you be so sure of what you write? We only learn from what we experience in life. Expand your horizons, stop judging and embrace life. Peace.

Dear friend,

How do you know that experience is the only source of knowledge? I would suggest that that is an unnecessarily narrow understanding of how we gain knowledge. I would also suggest that you do not live by this belief. Since you appear to be a student from your e-mail address, let me ask: Have you passed any history classes? You didn't *experience* the subjects of the classes; you learned about them a different way. Did you ever see someone do something unwise or dumb and choose not to do it? You learned without experiencing.

We suggest that there are four primary ways we learn things:

1. Experience: living through it (for example, getting burned by putting a hand on a stovetop or in a flame)
2. Reasoning: figuring things out (for example, logic—2 premises and a conclusion. “My husband earned his doctorate. Ph.D.s are earned in graduate school. Therefore, Ray went through graduate school.”)
3. Observation: watching (things always fall down, not up)
4. Revelation: being told from an outside source. Some things we can't know without being told. (for example, what God tells us in the Bible and through the person of Jesus Christ)

The reason you (correctly) discern confidence in our writing is that our faith is based on strong evidence, and because we understand that there are other ways of knowing than

experience.

If you truly are curious—as opposed to simply venting some steam—we have a couple of articles you may find interesting:

- “[Confident Belief](#) by Rick Wade
- “[How I Know Christianity Is True](#) by Pat Zukeran

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Pop Psychology Myths vs. A Biblical Point of View

Kerby Anderson compares some current myths with a Christian perspective informed by the timeless teaching of the Bible. These “pop psychology” ideas seem to make sense until one compares them with biblical insights from the creator of us all.



This article is also available in [Spanish](#).

Go into any bookstore and you will see shelves of self-help books, many of which promote a form of “pop psychology.” Although these are bestsellers, they are filled with half-truths and myths. In this essay we are going to look at some of these pop psychology myths as exposed by Dr. Chris Thurman in his book *Self-Help or Self-Destruction*. If you would like more information or documentation for the issues we cover in these pages, I would recommend you obtain a copy of his book.

Myth 1: Human beings are basically good.

The first myth I would like to look at is the belief that people are basically good. Melody Beattie, author of the best-seller *Codependent No More*, says that we “suffer from that vague but penetrating affliction, low self-worth.” She suggests we stop torturing ourselves and try to raise our view of ourselves. How do we do that? She says: “Right now, we can give ourselves a big emotional and mental hug. We are okay. It’s wonderful to be who we are. Our thoughts are okay. Our feelings are appropriate. We’re right where we’re supposed to be today, this moment. There is nothing wrong with us. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with us.”

In other words, Beattie is saying that we are basically good. There is nothing wrong with us. At least there is nothing fundamentally wrong with us. There isn’t any flaw that needs to be corrected.

Peter McWilliams, in his best-seller *Life 101*, actually addresses this issue head on. This is what he says in the brief section entitled, “Are human beings fundamentally good or fundamentally evil?”

My answer: good. My proof? I could quote philosophers, psychologists, and poets, but then those who believe humans are fundamentally evil can quote just as many philosophers, psychologists, and poets. My proof, such as it is, is a simple one. It returns to the source of human life: an infant. When you look into the eyes of an infant, what do you see? I’ve looked into a few, and I have yet to see fundamental evil radiating from a baby’s eyes. There seems to be purity, joy, brightness, splendor, sparkle, marvel, happiness—you know: good.

Before we see what the Bible says about the human condition, let me make one comment about Peter McWilliams’s proof. While an infant may seem innocent to our eyes, any parent would admit that a baby is an example of the ultimate in

selfishness. A baby comes into the world totally centered on his own needs and oblivious to any others.

When we look to the Bible, we get a picture radically different from that espoused by pop psychologists. Adam and Eve committed the first sin, and the human race has been born morally corrupt ever since. According to the Bible, even a seemingly innocent infant is born with a sin nature. David says in Psalm 51:5 "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." The newborn baby already has a sin nature and begins to demonstrate that sin nature early in life. Romans 3:23 tells us that "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." We are not good as the pop psychologists teach, and we are not gods as the new age theologians teach. We are sinful and cut off from God.

Myth 2: We need more self-esteem and self-worth.

The next myth to examine is the one that claims what we really need is more self-esteem and self-worth. In the book entitled *Self-Esteem*, Matthew McKay and Patrick Fanning state, "Self-esteem is essential for psychological survival." They believe that we need to quit judging ourselves and learn to accept ourselves as we are.

They provide a series of affirmations we need to tell ourselves in order to enhance our self-esteem. First, "I am worthwhile because I breathe and feel and am aware." Well, shouldn't that also apply to animals? And do I lose my self-esteem if I stop breathing? In a sense, this affirmation is a take off on Rene Descartes's statement, "I think, therefore I am." They seem to be saying "I am, therefore I am worthwhile."

Second they say, "I am basically all right as I am." But is that true? Is it true for Charles Manson? Don't some of us, in fact all of us, need some changing? A third affirmation is "It's all right to meet my needs as I see fit." Really? What

if I meet my needs in a way that harms you? Couldn't I justify all sorts of evil in order to meet my needs?

Well, you can see the problem with pop psychology's discussion of self-esteem. Rarely is it defined, and when it is defined, it can easily lead to evil and all kinds of sin.

It should probably be as no surprise that the Bible doesn't teach anything about self-esteem. In fact, it doesn't even define the word. What about the term *self-worth*? Is it synonymous with self-esteem. No, there is an important distinction between the terms *self-esteem* and *self-worth*.

William James, often considered the father of American psychology, defined *self-esteem* as "the sum of your successes and pretensions." In other words, your self-esteem is a reflection of how you are actually performing compared to how you think you should be performing. So your self-esteem could actually fluctuate from day to day.

Self-worth, however, is different. Our worth as human beings has to do with the fact that we are created in God's image. Our worth never fluctuates because it is anchored in the fact that the Creator made us. We are spiritual as well as physical beings who have a conscience, emotions, and a will. Psalm 8 says: "You have made him [mankind] a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands, you have put all things under his feet."

So the good news is that we bear God's image, but the bad news is that all of these characteristics have been tainted by sin. Our worth should not be tied up in what we do, but in who God made us to be and what He has done for us.

Myth 3: You can't love others until you

love yourself.

Now I would like to look at the myth that you can't love others until you love yourself. Remember the Whitney Houston song "The Greatest Love of All?" It says, "Learning to love yourself is the greatest love of all."

Peter McWilliams, author of *Life 101*, promotes this idea in his book *Love 101* which carries the subtitle "To Love Oneself Is the Beginning of a Lifelong Romance." He asks, "Who else is more qualified to love you than you? Who else knows what you want, precisely when you want it, and is always around to supply it?" He believes that the answer to those questions is you.

He continues by saying, "If, on the other hand, you have been gradually coming to the seemingly forbidden conclusion that before we can truly love another, or allow another to properly love us, we must first learn to love ourselves—then this book is for you." Notice that he not only is saying that you cannot love others until you love yourself, but that you can't love you *until you learn* to love yourself.

Melody Beattie, author of *CoDependent No More*, believes the same thing. One of the chapters in her book is entitled, "Have a Love Affair With Yourself." Jackie Schwartz, in her book *Letting Go of Stress*, even suggests that you write a love letter and "tell yourself all the attributes you cherish about yourself, the things that really please, comfort, and excite you."

Does the Bible teach self-love? No, it does not. If anything, the Bible warns us against such a love affair with self. Consider Paul's admonition to Timothy: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal,

despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

The Bible discourages love of self and actually begins with the assumption we already love ourselves too much and must learn to show sacrificial love (agape love) to others. It also teaches that love is an act of the will. We can choose to love someone whether the feelings are there or not.

We read in 1 John 4, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." The biblical pattern is this: God loves us, and we receive God's love and are able to love others.

Myth 4: You shouldn't judge anyone.

Let's discuss the myth that you shouldn't judge anyone. No doubt you have heard people say, "You're just being judgmental" or "Who are you to judge me?" You may have even said something like this.

Many pop psychologists certainly believe that you shouldn't judge anyone. In their book entitled *Self-Esteem*, Matthew McKay and Patrick Fanning argue that moral judgments about people are unacceptable. They write: "Hard as it sounds, you must give up moral opinions about the actions of others. Cultivate instead the attitude that they have made the best choice available, given their awareness and needs at the time. Be clear that while their behavior may not feel or be good for you, it is not bad."

So moral judgments are not allowed. You cannot judge another

person's actions, even if you feel that it is wrong. McKay and Fanning go on to say why: "What does it mean that people choose the highest good? It means that you are doing the best you can at any given time. It means that people always act according to their prevailing awareness, needs, and values. Even the terrorist planting bombs to hurt the innocent is making a decision based on his or her highest good. It means you cannot blame people for what they do. Nor can you blame yourself. No matter how distorted or mistaken a person's awareness is, he or she is innocent and blameless."

As with many of these pop psychology myths, there is a kernel of truth. True we should be very careful to avoid a judgmental spirit or quickly criticize an individual's actions when we do not possess all the facts. But the Bible does allow and even encourages us to make judgments and be discerning. In fact, the Bible should be our ultimate standard of right and wrong. If the Bible says murder is wrong, it is wrong. God's objective standards as revealed in the Scriptures are our standard of behavior.

How do we apply these standards? Very humbly. We are warned in the gospels "Judge not, that you be not judged." Jesus was warning us of a self-righteous attitude that could develop from pride and a hypocritical spirit. Jesus also admonished us to "take the plank out of [our] own eye" so that we would be able to "remove the speck from [our] brother's eye" (Matt. 7:1-5).

Finally, we should acknowledge that Jesus judged people's actions all the time, yet He never sinned. He offered moral opinions wherever He went. He said, "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me" (John 5:30). Judging is not wrong, but we should be careful to do it humbly and from a biblical perspective.

Myth 5: All guilt is bad.

Finally, I would like to look at the myth that all guilt is bad. In his best-seller, *Your Erroneous Zones*, Wayne Dyer tackles what he believes are two useless emotions: guilt and worry. Now it is true that worry is probably a useless emotion, but it is another story with guilt. Let's begin by understanding why he calls guilt "the most useless of all erroneous zone behaviors."

Wayne Dyer believes that guilt originates from two sources: childhood memories and current misbehavior. He says, "Thus you can look at all of your guilt either as reactions to leftover imposed standards in which you are still trying to please an absent authority figure, or as the result of trying to live up to self-imposed standards which you really don't buy, but for some reason pay lip service to. In either case, it is stupid, and more important, useless behavior."

He goes on to say that "guilt is not natural behavior" and that our "guilt zones" must be "exterminated, spray-cleaned and sterilized forever." So how do you exterminate your "guilt zones"? He proposed that you "do something you know is bound to result in feelings of guilt" and then fight those feelings off.

Dyer believes that guilt is "a convenient tool for manipulation" and a "futile waste of time." And while that is often true, he paints with too large of a brush. Some guilt can be helpful and productive. Some kinds of guilt can be a significant agent of change.

The Bible makes a distinction between two kinds of guilt: true guilt and false guilt. Notice in 2 Corinthians 7:10 that the Apostle Paul says, "Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

Worldly sorrow (often called false guilt) causes us to focus on ourselves, while godly sorrow (true guilt) leads us to focus on the person or persons we have offended. Worldly sorrow (or false guilt) causes us to focus on what we have done in the past, whereas godly sorrow (or true guilt) causes us to focus on what we can do in the present to correct what we've done. Corrective actions that come out of worldly sorrow are motivated by the desire to stop feeling bad. Actions that come out of godly sorrow are motivated by the desire to help the offended person or to please God or to promote personal growth. Finally, the results of worldly and godly sorrow differ. Worldly sorrow results in temporary change. Godly sorrow results in true change and growth.

Pop psychology books are half right. False guilt (or worldly sorrow) is not a productive emotion, but true guilt (or godly sorrow) is an emotion God can use to bring about positive change in our lives as we recognize our guilt, ask for forgiveness, and begin to change.

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