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(F A L)

Wesley Shrum¹

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I was raised Methodist, as will be obvious from the name. I'm Unitarian now, and yes, I know the jokes. Unitarians have a different—can we call it 'less stringent'?—interpretation of spiritual rules. They are more like collective guidelines, or mild preferences that don't involve very serious sanctions. There are plenty of options, an emphasis on personal growth, and other New Age-type precepts that belie four centuries of history. One early and important figure was a king of Transylvania—which leads some to have their suspicions, but that's as far as it goes. Certainly there's nothing like everlasting damnation involved. It's not so much that Unitarians don't like rules and principles. They have a lot of them and they talk about them all the time. I secretly feel they like them more than some Southern Baptists I know—like my sister who's a Southern Baptist minister, or would be if they allowed it. See, Unitarians are not very certain about their rules and principles, even though they're often very good ones—and Southern Baptists are sometimes very certain about some very bad principles

big problem for Moses—is that it is usually the most obvious. I mean, heck, if you don't agree with that one,

(b) Write two manuscripts every year for the rest of your life. The reason is that you will be relaxed. Two papers is not a lot. What will probably happen is you will write more than this. But you won't have to. That's the key. You will be able to accomplish all your scholarly goals by writing two papers a year for the rest of your life.⁴

Now, don't you feel better already?

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Bestowing no honors keeps people from fighting.
Tao Te Ching (6th century B.C.)

At one university with which I am

should live one's life. Do not make yourself eligible for honors and prizes. As the honorable Pat Paulsen once said (stealing the line from Sherman), "If nominated I will not run. And if elected, I will not serve."⁸

Perhaps the most negative effect

tendency is to throw the citation to those that are well known—even for ideas that are patently obvious (maybe the Matthew Effect may itself be one, but I would normally cite one of my mentors, R.K. Merton)—and to neglect the work of insignificant people. Why not read and cite more evenly? You don't have to. This is not a commandment. But recognize that the work of splendid folk is not mostly splendid—it is mostly average, with a few splendid ideas. And often the most thorough work on a subject is by a graduate student writing a dissertation, who has had the time to search the literature properly, especially in a complex field. Often that graduate student is following the First Commandment better than the prominent scholar.

This Commandment enjoins you to cite others and to say something nice to them if you like their work. Divorcing yourself from the prize system does not mean losing rewards, but participating liberally—indeed, relishing—the true rewards of scholarship. These are the original and genuine pleasures that involve the esteem of those who benefit from your work. It may be that the esteem is mutual. Certainly that is the best of all worlds, a world in which one likes the work one reads, uses it, and produces something of value for those whose work you yourself have used and admired, in a mutual cycle of intellectual profit. (And it will be much better if you are not competing for awards!) For several reasons--competition among them--one often profits a great deal from the work of those not directly in one's circle. When you get the chance, tell them your views. When someone does this to you, be gracious.^{14 15}

¹⁴ Once I sat across the table from someone whose work I admired. At a quiet moment in the conversation, I said, "You know, I've read a lot of your stuff, and I like it very much, about as well as anything in the field." His response? "Well, if you like it that much, why don't you invite me to that workshop you are organizing."

¹⁵ Praise can be overdone. Current debates on childrearing have drifted away from the philosophy of constant praise. Brian Martin has been a good friend in discussing this point.

(4) T

Scholars with such disparate approaches as Randall Collins and Bruno Latour use a metaphor to emphasize the importance of competition for recognition in intellectual life.¹⁶ In the metaphor of the plain, individuals are widely dispersed in a vast open space, each isolated but within shouting distance. In order to get the attention of our peers, we must yell forth our views. Some of those in the neighborhood wander over to hear more. Gradually a small cluster of people forms, growing largely as others witness the movement. Other small clusters form around those shouting forth the intellectual alternatives--when any cluster gets too large, it is difficult to see within the circle. At the limit, Collins suggests from three to six major positions may define themselves in relation to one another within the attention space. Although the number may grow or shrink it rarely goes below three or above six--the Law of Small Numbers.

While Collins has captured an important dynamic in intellectual life¹⁷ the prescriptive that results is simple modesty. If the number of major philosophers that have ever existed in the history of the world is on the order of several hundred, the probability that you will be one is vanishingly small. The danger for one who studies social life is much greater than, say, for a physicist or a chemist, that one will seek recognition by claiming to discover or conceptualize 'basic processes,' 'fundamental principles,' or 'underlying reality' (Rule 1997).¹⁸ The danger is so great that one is tempted to view it as another Commandment: Thou shalt not build fields or

¹⁶ The competition for recognition was a cornerstone of Mertonian sociology of science, best exemplified in Warren Hagstrom's beautiful 1965 book, one of the first volumes of sociology I ever read as an undergraduate.

¹⁷ Collins remarks at the end of chapter one are conducive to a realistic assessment of anyone's prospects, and support the idea that one may not lose anything from being gracious and modest, since one is not going to be famous anyway, in the long run.

¹⁸ See in particular Rule's discussion concluding the first chapter.

If you work "against the field" then you should not expect to be much cited and it should not much concern you. There are, if I may be so bold, a lot of fields worth working against.

Some students like the profs that spend every lecture "telling it like it is," but those aren't typically the best students.

(7) T

Be guided by Socrates on this matter.

((add text & corollary: SEEK IMPROVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM & pay no attention to course evaluations)) ((The most extreme objections to this commandment I have heard come from high performing students: "acid tests for interests."))

(8) T

The original version of this commandment was on a computer, mysteriously whisked from a deserted parking lot at the University of Ghana. Since there is no way of reproducing the exact text it can only be noted that so many of the commandments (2 and 4) deal with recognition in one way or another that it is tempting to suppose a general ban on the commodity. But I do not think so. "Worry" about one's affairs is a personal thing and I obsess for hours over a passing remark to someone that *could* have been taken the wrong way, as hurtful. Whether others do, I don't know. Display of intelligence is another matter altogether and that is the proscription.

Let's consider the case of Wittgenstein's Poker, a ten minute debate between two of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century. In 1946, just after the war, Karl Popper and Ludwig Wittgenstein faced off during a meeting of the Cambridge Moral Science Club. Both men were arrogant, self-absorbed fighters, whose penchant for attack and verbal brutality was well known. Popper came as a visitor, gunning for Wittgenstein in the presence of Bertrand Russell, once Wittgenstein's strongest supporter, but now turning against him. The room was crowded with

Wittgenstein's disciples. It was very cold, so the coal fire that Wittgenstein prodded with the poker was the only warmth. Popper gave a short paper on the theme, "Are There Philosophical Problems?" a direct attack on Wittgenstein's dogma that there were only puzzles. The job of the philosopher was to uncover their linguistic roots. Wittgenstein immediately began to berate the speaker. As Popper tells the story, Wittgenstein challenges him to provide an example of a moral principle, while brandishing the implement he had been using in the fire. "Not to threaten visiting lecturers with pokers," replied Popper, whereupon Wittgenstein left the room in anger, slamming the door.

The incident is analyzed at length by ? & ? in one of the finest contextual analyses of a

(10) SEEK TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD

Surely you knew?

One Commandment is sufficient most of the time, just as one Golden Rule will do for most ordinary spiritual problems. But there has been a problem for me, since I entered the University of Kansas forty years ago. I'd like to come to grips with it--for who among us knows if we will have any longer career than we have just at this moment?

The problem is that what are generally viewed and justified as organizational means to intellectual ends often get substituted for those ends--no surprise to sociologists, of course. The end, goal, purpose, and reason for undertaking a career that involves teaching, research, and service to the community is to understand the social world. It does not have to be everyone's reason, but it is good if it is the reason for some of us. There is value in a communicable knowledge of social life. I still have trouble believing, twenty years later, that the Gret Stet, as

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and those you can help. Sometimes, when the opportunity arises, you may work together. If you need a journey, or equipment, or assistance for your research but there are no external funds, you should see if you can afford it and not whine too much. When you have the opportunity to teach, you will convey what you know with grace and excitement. Take a forgiving attitude towards bureaucratic silliness like class attendance, course evaluations, and program assessments where at all possible.²²

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As scholars and sociologists, we should do the best work we can, study the subjects we feel are worth studying, study them in the way that we believe is most fruitful for understanding, and make our work available to the community of scholars. That is the goal of our work. For most of us, it's why we got into the field. It was what we worried about before we knew people worried about citations and paradigms and prizes. We need—but I should only speak for myself—I need the Ten Commandments to remind me that the rest is secondary, superficial, and often harmful. Freedom, for those who like the term, comes from a realization that there really is an attainable goal, or, better, an attainable pathway to the goal of greater understanding. This may involve small acts of an academically bizarre nature, like the refusal of prizes. For many, the goal may have been obtained already, without the realization.

What is knowledge? It is something that we have when we understand the world. It is communicable--otherwise it would be wisdom or transcendental discernment. But whether it should take the form of propositions, thick descriptions, generalized discursive treatments, or box and line drawings is not a key issue in deciding how to live your life. I'm willing to listen or read your stuff as long as you don't tell me you've invented a new paradigm, discovered a fundamental process, revealed an ultimate and indispensable principle. Just say your idea. Say what you did and what you're doing. Write about your research.

I can tell you what I think knowledge is in relation to these Commandments, but I need a metaphor. We are not at great distance from one another on an open plain. We are rather close together, many of us. In the center of Mexico City, the Zocalo is an open square, one of the largest in the world. It is surrounded by the National Cathedral and the Parliament where there are often festivals and political demonstrations. Aztec dancers in brightly colored costumes stomp and swirl. Musical groups blare salsa and tejano from the stage. Break dancers and mimes entertain as many people as can see into their circle. Still, the cotton candy vendors are

the most interesting. Have you seen it made in the open air when the wind is blowing? When you swirl the stick into the metal drum to build up the layers of candy, the wind snatches bits of spun sugar like wisps of smoke, most wonderful and amazing. They drift into you before you realize that they stick—it is not smoke but candy. Why not grab a bit and put it in your mouth?

Of course, children realize this, too. They stand by the vendors, who spin large pink clouds for sale but make no attempt to stop them. The kids jump and chase the wisps. It is not easy. Some kids work harder than others. It's not like you can just stand there, after all. But if you time your jump just right, or stand still and stay alert, you may get one. If you follow the path and predict where the wisp is going

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Wittgenstein's Poker ref

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