

TO the Rainbow!

For Sixfold

I miss-spoke what I said I miss-heard that you miss-interpreted.

I'm Cabot Acer Simon, known as Cas. Without realizing it, I have been writing this short story for **Sixfold** in my head since I was sixteen. It is time to share with others the personal and social awareness I have acquired about conversation and those around me who speak, listen or miss-interpret—starting with you.

After high school and four busy years of college, I graduated; then came the major league draft. I began playing minor league and then major league baseball. This lasted a couple of years until I fell from the top as quickly as I rose from the bottom. I no longer could hit a curve ball. During my ascent/descent, I was found by Lisa, the love of my life; we got married and I had to seek more dependable work to support our growing family. These experiences taught much—with much more learning to come! What I didn't know was beginning to grow by powers of seven, my lucky number.

I know more than those that don't know what they don't know; yet am very confused as today I know a lot less in comparison to what I knew when I was sixteen. How can that be?

Dee, one of my mentors, says that it is good to be confused because that shows one is alive and thinking. I know I am alive and doing deep thinking (cognition), a lot of feeling (affective domain) and following my beliefs (affective domain) which holds my values and attitudes. In this context, the original plan was to share much but common communication snafus got in our way. As the snafus began to increase, Lisa, Dee and I, decided that we needed very deep conversations on thinking and communication. Here are the parts of it that I can remember.

Originally, one at a time, we shared much about critical thinking, dangers of dualistic thinking (only polar positions matter), paradigms, how our brain thinks via predictions and delusions to name a few. Examples started off as the foci but we quickly realized that examples have little lasting value except immediate entertainment.

Paradigms Underlie and Control Everything

Paradigms are especially important-sometimes the only show in town. A paradigm is a set of beliefs or values that form a pattern or a grouping of something--like putting a frame around a picture. The frame organizes the picture, usually enhances it but it isn't the picture. The terms "core values", "beliefs" and "attitudes" are often grouped as paradigms. A paradigm/pattern is often described in a sentence i.e. "You get what you earn." "It is what it is"; "Guns don't kill;" Values or beliefs are communicated in one or two word phrases that indicate a preference i.e. I love you; My anger is earned; I will pray for you; awareness is everything; guns are good."

Paradigms are the value base beneath most mind/brain activities. They control anything and everything. i.e. debaters in high school are taught "control the paradigm and you win the debate." In 2017, Donald Trump controlled the public relations debate with Hillary Clinton when he got the public to focus on her professional email issues when she was Secretary of State. Ms. Clinton knew the importance of controlling the paradigm and tried to get the public to focus on Trump's personality deficits such as sexually harassing women but constantly lost the paradigm fight.

My father structured his life through several paradigms. His paradigms became mine, especially "Get an Education." Over my ten-year higher education journey, I ended up with three higher education degrees (BA, MSW, Ed D.) somewhat as a result of my father instilling in me the great importance of "get an education son", his learning from the school of hard knocks.

These selected paradigms became very important to my father because of an unexpected life twist. In the mid to upper end of the 1930's, my dad was a star high school football player. His athletic skills were going to pay his way to college so that he would be the first and only sibling of seven able to move out of isolated, small, rural, town of Warren, Pennsylvania where the family lived for generations. His departure was to come via a full football scholarship to Penn State, awarded to him at the end of his high school junior year. A dream in the making.

What was unknown was that he would break his leg in his second senior year game! Goodbye scholarship. Hello Ditch Digging 101 at the United Refining Company School of Hard Knocks! The fact that father rose to be superintendent of the refinery, a position today that would require a Ph. D. in Chemical Engineering, didn't stop the value teaching I received from my parents!

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Some Adamant Concerns

Lisa: "That monologue has gone on long enough. It is my turn to proliferate. We 21st century humans know a lot that is useful. I know that I, Lisa, am personally leaving much unlearned that others know. To add to my confusion, I keep learning things that open doors I didn't even know were there which results in more opportunities to learn more or to know less overall¹. Today, when I talk with others about their confusion, they adamantly want to know how to tell the difference between real information (facts)—fake information (fake facts), real news—fake news, along with how to evaluate the claims made, especially when they used numbers i.e. percentages, one-out-of-five, etc. They also want to know if this democracy of ours is going to make it through our present crisis (Levitsky 2018).

¹ Be careful what you ask for!

Sort of as a buffet that never ends, all above is the focus of this musing including applying a critical thinking process to personal opinions so that opinions have weight to them. This is all done within many different models or paradigms that come from different groupings in this world—taking into account that most people are gravitating towards polar positions on many matters. What does one do when a "Red" won't talk to a "Blue" and vice versa?² Does anyone know about Rainbow thinking or are we stuck with dangerous dualism³?

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How To Think Outside of the Box When You Are The Box

A piece of good news. Dee, Lisa and I just learned and relearned that our emotions and values, which add quality to life and may mis-lead us at the same time, are usually augmented by this wonderful body part known as the human brain. Leaving some of the details until later, there is something to know now. NOW is far more important than 'than' (the past) and soon the future will be NOW. Get this all straightened out!

Your brain is functioning preconsciously/unconsciously on all matters that come to your conscious attention through the microscopic process of interception. Interception involves accessing prediction loops which are millions of loops of information collected from your past experiences and stored—to be used at all times in your future to predict what you will do and prepare you for that. It is working now, as always, with about a two second delay for your conscious awareness. This is called the Delusional Process but I won't tax your mind with that now; it will come to you later on.

² Learn about the organization of "The Better Angels". <https://better-angels.org/>

³ Dualistic thinking is when on the "pole" of a view are considered, a very common pattern for Americans.

Your brain believes its predictions and recognizes that things change in your present world so that there may well be prediction error. That then prompts your brain to allow sensory input from the NOW that will either confirm the prediction by filtering the new sensory input or allow it to be updated and your mind and other body parts influenced. i.e. in the case of a pending body movement, your motor neurons would adjust your body movement and your sensory neurons would simulate different sensations, leading to new prediction loops. The sequence goes on, with some, but not much, input from your conscious mind. (Barnett 2017, Chapter Four).

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Family Stuff

Lisa: "Cass, for you and I, as it was for Dee, parenthood came into to play in the second/third through fifth/sixth decades of our human lives. The embryo that Dee enjoyed creating became 'born', a baby, seeking help in being raised which is more than feeding and clothing. We all quickly learned what you don't know because of all the "why" questions we got. To cope with "why questioning," our secret was to add a second child. Then the first child can take over and will tell the younger child what, where, when and how to do everything. Sometimes, a third is added, especially when as a couple you are birth control drop-outs! At that number, having your own soccer team can become a dream, until the checkbook has to be balanced. You are still left with the dreaded, persistent "why" questions. Once you realize the "why" doesn't answer anything yet explains much. Answers come from within you, supported by both internal and external factors."

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Cass: "If I had to offer something simple—perhaps in only one paragraph-- to aid learning, it would be on "It's all about Paradigms." They are the bottom lines of our living, wishing and

being. That focus, along with the key elements of thinking-valuing-feeling, including the latest research/deep thinking from the neurosciences, is my focus always!!

The three of us realized that getting communication correct in terms of three common communication hurdles is not that difficult, nor will it take that long. We decided that between the three of us, we can deal adequacy, effectively and efficiently. May the force be with us.

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A Triple Whammy.

None of the three of us want to talk about our awful behavior and what it did to our relationships. In terms of what I contributed, I'm sorry. Communication is difficult without someone like me placing a triple whammy on a relationship. If one miss-speaks, another doesn't help by also miss-hearing and then a third party miss-interpreting both of them. That can result in a miss-stated, miss-heard and then certainly a miss-interpreted other. The other day, I think it was the other day and not yesterday, it was you Lisa, who said that I couldn't hear well enough to tell cats from dogs. I objected to that as I do think that if one feels strongly about their kitties, they wouldn't wish a dog's life onto them or any other living or non-living thing.

Clearing this up comes down to three things. One, if someone else or you thinks you have miss-spoken or not, say so: "I am not sure about what I said and will repeat back to you what I think I said: "You think about the differences between a dog and a cat and then we will compare and contrast what we each believe." In examining dogs and cats, that gets three mind domains (thinking-valuing-feeling) involved.

Two, if you or another thinks that you have miss-heard something, say so: "You or I are not sure what I heard, so instead of the cycle repeating it over and over, I will listen to what you say, repeat it back to you, and then compare and contrast our two hearings."

Third, if you or another thinks that you have miss-interpreted, say so: "You think I miss-interpreted what was said. Instead of your miss-stating it again or my miss-hearing again that statement, let us compare and contrast at least five possible combinations of what could have been said to see what patterns we agree on."

"It is important that all people communicating in a relationship speak correctly, hear correctly and allow for multi interpretations as they exist within our multiple realities. Work hard to achieve that; it will be a life -long task."

Cas then brought Dee into the loop with this question-statement. "Dee, are you done with ice cream for the day; yes or no?"

Dee thought out loud: "If I say 'yes', am I saying I am done for the day or that I am done with ice cream for the day, but not necessarily done with ice cream tomorrow? Or either or both?"

If it is 'no', have I not had enough ice cream today or am I saying that I won't say either way?

The ice cream will melt before one gets those answers in order unless we work on not miss-speaking, miss-stating or miss-interpreting.

Being very bright. Dee changed the topic while speaking in the same vein: "I can't comprehend all of that you question about ice cream, so let's take a more serious situation. Cas, are you done stealing the cash out of the drawer?"

Cass thought quickly. "If I say "yes", then I am admitting to stealing cash but have given that up. Or could I be admitting to being done being a 'cash crook' and now going to take something else from that drawer? Perhaps "yes" means I'm admitting to stealing from that drawer, and are now ready to go onto stealing from a different drawer? If I say, "no", then perhaps I plan to do more stealing or "no", I have never ever stolen cash, without even approaching other stealing? I'll bet money on those answers.

None of what was just narrated helped our relationships, but it did begin to clean up the communication we three shared.

Who is on First, or Second, or Third?⁴

Our story is shortened as a result of space and time. Space is something of which we can always buy more. The only way to get more time is to give it away. Come back for more as the three of us deeply think, quietly feel and actively value. Journey well to the next part of your life.

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⁴ Apologies to Abbott and Costello and the best comedy routine of all times: "Who is on first?"