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Embracing limitations of living inside our own heads

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Plato once wrote that human behaviour flows from three main areas ? desire, emotion and knowledge.
And Aristotle espoused that all human actions arise from one or more of these qualities ? chance, nature, habit, reason, passion, desire or compulsion.
These are very innate human qualities, which are often difficult to quantify or measure. Only knowledge can be accurately measured.
From this, we can agree that humans are led by our emotions, more so than knowledge, logic or common sense. How purely basic of us!
I've come to realize in my advancing years that the more knowledge I accumulate, the greater the importance for some simple, fundamental things ? human contact.
My wife pointed this out to me recently as we try to remain positive about 2019, and set some achievable goals. Couples and families are meant to function as a team, a cohesive unit. From the very beginning, human beings were never meant to be on our own. Even our early ancestors huddled together and wandered the earth in small groups.
When we get frustrated, set back, feel depressed or even despair, we tend to withdraw, to curl up into the proverbial fetal position on our living room floor. While there's some comfort in this position, it's not very productive.
Neither, as I've been told, is hiding within the circuits of my iPad or getting lost on the Information?Highway.
There is strength in numbers ? that has always been the case. We are reminded, time and again, to cherish and even strengthen our human bonds, with our family, friends, acquaintances and co-workers.
We are tough nuts at times, we homo sapiens. Part of the problem, from where I sit, is that we are encased in rather complicated shells.?Our 3-4 pounds of grey matter, or more accurately, our pinkish-grey matter, is tucked neatly into our skulls. From this solid cave, we do everything, almost like controlling a robot, drone or avatar. Sometimes I feel like and I'm so limited by this biped contraption of flesh and bones that I'd love to eject and be free.
Psychologists talk about empathy and sympathy and the fact is, since our essence is so well protected in our heads, we simply don't have the power to be true empaths. We have enough trouble living with our own neurons and synapses that we can't even think outside our own box.
The ultimate catch-22 ? we need to be connected to others, yet we can't fully attain it.
Pessimists would argue that this very natural biological fact is our biggest hurdle. We're like snowflakes and no one can totally figure out another human being. We are unique, almost to our own demise.
John Steinbeck agreed, when he said that ?no man really knows about other human beings.?The best he can do is to suppose that they are like himself.?
So here's what we've learned to do as a species.?We gather, team up, even sit in circle and share ideas, opinions, stories and emotions.?We never connect on a psychic or sub-atomic level, but we rejoice in our similarities and toss these about like colourful rubber balls, watching them bounce willy nilly.
Margaret Heffernan argued that in order to foster good ideas and true innovation, you need human contact, interaction, debate, even conflict and argument. Funny that the road to solution is paved with friction!
Billy Graham said each one of us is ?under construction? from the cradle to the grave.
Enough about our weaknesses.
We criticize our ancestors and past societies for their political incorrectness and lack of awareness. For decades we've been teaching our young to be independent, assertive, strong, aware, intelligent and steadfast in their focus and single-mindedness. But in the context of true cooperation and empathy, aren't these all counterproductive? Shouldn't we elevate the teaching of things like social skills, teamwork, human connection, love, kindness, reliance?
Jacques Cousteau said that if we were driven by logic alone, the future would be bleak indeed. Faith, hope and working together are key, he said.
If you really think about it, people need motivation to do anything.?And that often comes from external forces and other human beings.
We didn't get here over night. Humans spent the last 250,000 years learning how to get along, often with horrific results. It took us

so many eons of death, disease, starvation, hunger and man-made disasters to get a handle on how to behave.?Heck, we only really got the knack of it in the 50 years with advances in human rights! And now, the guidelines change weekly with each new idea, survey and politically correct message.

We have a strong tendency to enforce the rules, for ourselves and others.?In some ways, that's a good thing, otherwise we wouldn't have a structured, democratic society. But it's not so great in our personal lives. Every inclination makes us want to buck the system, be assertive, be free and be on our own, and yet it's the ultimate dilemma because we can't do any of these.

It's the consummate inner debate, us with ourselves.?We live inside our heads 24/7.?I?think this is one of the main reasons we seek out social interaction and modern distractions. I'd go bonkers without others to converse with, while some people prefer their own company and seclusion.

Humans are both complicated and simple. We are driven by our emotions; forced to behave in a certain way; live within the rules of society; encouraged get along with others in our own way.

We can't change our spots, but we can revel in our differences. We can never leave our bodies and mingle with other minds and souls.

But if we can, from time to time, slip on another person's shoes, it must might help our gait.