

The Principle of Courage

The pursuit of reality the way it really is is not for the timid. Reality takes courage. It takes more courage to stand up to an unjust cause than it does to die in a war. People are herd animals. We want to be part of a community. It is one of our survival strategies that the human race evolved. Much of our information that we rely upon is part of the Tree of Knowledge. But what if a culture has a strongly held world view that is not only wrong, but dangerous? A world view like the world is going to be destroyed in our lifetime? There is a lot of pressure to go with the flow, but going with the flow is not the way of reality. We are committed to what is real, not what is popular.

Realists can expect some persecution for their views. Fortunately in most of the world at present Realists are no longer burned alive for expressing scientific fact. However in most countries it's hard to get elected to public office without giving lip service to the invisible cloud being. The Human brain likes a stable comfortable reality and when one upsets an axiom it causes a lot of mental anguish. This is true not only in religion, but science. The idea that humans have a 98.5% genetic match with monkeys is very disturbing to some people. We want to believe in flat space and linear time and people like Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking are just disruptive trouble makers. They make us rethink everything.

Change is disruptive and evolution isn't always pretty. Reality isn't always pleasant and it is far easier to go along to get along. Everyone is comfortable and then someone comes along and speaks the truth and you know they are right but you just don't want to have to deal with it. It takes courage to go against the flow, but if you make a true commitment to reality the way it really is, then that's often what you have to do.

It also takes courage to realize you are wrong because facing reality might have a personal cost. This is what keeps people in cults. They are integrated into a community and have a place in an artificial society. But then they realize it's all bullshit. That means they have to leave the cult. If the person isn't ready to leave the cult then the mind will play tricks on itself to keep the person from realizing a truth that would be obvious to someone who wasn't in the cult.

Often bad things are allowed to happen because people fail to speak out to stop them. To be silent when one should speak can become an endorsement. A Realist has to be prepared to pay a personal price to stand up for what is real because if we don't then we allow others to take reality away from the Tree of Knowledge and humanity is diminished. Realism is a religion of courage for without courage reality cannot be meaningfully pursued.