

Reply ID: wa3r

Letter to My Uncle, and Others In Need...

Dated 13 Sept. 2020

Hello Uncle,

Not sure which one you are, but I have an idea. Hey, it took some courage to leave your comment to this article, & it does me no good for you to feel guilty about having not reached in to me sooner. Apparently I'm coping better than your two brothers, so don't worry.

As you probably know from [facebook.com/PrometheusWrites](https://www.facebook.com/PrometheusWrites), I'm doing "okay," given my environment, given old traumas, given more recent traumas. I've intellectually developed myself; I've had poems published in literary magazines, an essay published in books, drawings published and hanging in art galleries, tattooed on bodies ☺, and, most importantly, I've two fine friends who've helped me when no one else would. So, I wish you well & don't feel you "owed" me earlier contact - years ago I was less morally sane, less ... decent, considerate.

Despite Tom not being in touch, I wish him well & am amused/pleased to see that he has a son who, at least as a child, had a face/head that (according to the woman who sent me the facebook photo of him, my nephew) makes him look like a mini-me. It warms my heart knowing that Tom, you, or any of my family are doing well! (I don't even wish Paulette ill, and honestly told Josh that I forgive him, although I can't relate to or grasp what they did to me in my case...)

Maybe I can help you, while at the same time correcting your misunderstanding of human nature, a too common misunderstanding.

"You make your own choices in life," you say Tom said. (I never received a printout of Tom's comments, so I'm going off your characterization of them.) Please look up my post on this blog, "Do We Really Have a Choice?" so you can possibly understand why/how factors beyond our control determine what "choices" we make, something all neuroscientists + most neurophilosophers understand. (One of my two best friends is a neuroscientist and eminent in the field...) This truth is contrary to what many/most Westerners have been raised to believe, but that was also once the case about the belief that the world was flat when the truth was that the world was round. The very reason that you certainly will find it so hard to consider even the possibility that our wills may not be entirely free is because they aren't entirely free! 😊

Let me use our mutually traumatic backgrounds to help demonstrate at least the possibility that it's factors mostly beyond our conscious awareness that determine what "choices" we make. Two of your brothers killed themselves, but you did not - why do you think

- I'm not saying you actually came up with any of these answers!

that is? You might come up with several answers, each serving a purpose that satisfies a need/desire, which you may not realize (may not want to realize) exist:

- they deserved it (satisfying a possible rage over their abuse of you/your siblings, also relieving "survivor's guilt");
- they were weaker than you (artificially boosting your self-esteem, also relieving survivor's guilt);
- they "chose" to do so (allowing you to overlook the impact on them of their abuse, thus your abuse to, relieving survivor's guilt, and allowing you to continue believing that the God you believe in is "good"...

If you're unwilling to consider why you answer the question whichever way you've answered it, then the truth is that your answer isn't fair, isn't reasonable, merely satisfies some need that you might not be aware of - people do so all the time.

However, a fairer (because it's open to logical/reasonable criticism), answer to the question of why your two brothers committed suicide while you did not, based on neuroscience, is that due to their unique minds (produced ^{by} the approximately over 600 trillion different neural circuits, over tens of thousands of which are active every second) interacting with their unique environment (financial or familial stressors, etc. etc.), they saw suicide as their

best "choice"... at the time and in the circumstances that they found themselves in. To fully understand the validity/rationality of my theory (a "theory" is not a possibility, but is something that's testable, supported by evidence or at least logic) you must understand the nature of the human mind, something that is only recently being taught in some highschools and that most people don't come close to comprehending.

Uncle, the main reason that I began studying neuroscience and neurophilosophy is to try to understand the kind of crap that troubled me and clearly still troubles you. While I've largely gained such understanding, and it has helped me digest what happened, my brain and its mind is still scarred by traumas; I still am hypervigilant, still struggle to restrain myself around bullies, wife-beaters & child-molesters... but at least I understand why, thus can be merciful to myself.

Understanding can help you. Recall the ancient saying, "know thyself"?

I'm sure that you lack the time that I've had, so don't expect you'll want to study such tomes as **Consciousness Explained** (by Daniel C. Dennett) or even lighter works like **The Mind's I**. But, do, I insist, watch David Eagleman's 5-part PBS series, **The Brain**, which will

help you understand... many things, including the pain I sensed in your message.

As egocentric as it may seem, I also suggest that you read my essay published in **Parental Incarceration** (2016), ISBN# 978-1-315-64597-1 (ebook), to more fully understand what I went through, so you understand that if I can "make it," there's hope for others, and you're not alone. Also, I suggest that you read James Fallon's **The Psychopath Inside** (2014), which will help you understand why I'm in prison and Tom is not — I wouldn't recommend trash to you to read, nor something that is difficult to understand.

Alright, it's 11:30 PM, bedtime.

Of course you're welcome to write me, or use touchnote.com, if you're up to it. You may also leave a message on my facebook profile, which I'll ask my friend to relay to me, if you're up to it.

Well, Jerry — so I figure — you raised some good daughters & ought to be proud of that. I would be. I'm proud of the good things I'm doing, helps keep my mind off of the ugly past. Take care of yourself.

Imperfectly Yours,
Your Nephew

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