

(I didn't get this from BTB yet, a friend emailed it. Hope I have the right comment ID!)

* I sure hope BTB's readers understand why prisoners' replies are invariably late and disjointed. By the time this reply posts (to Tenzin's Apr. 4th comment, "I'm going to write a letter..."), there will likely be newer comments from Tenzin and others, plus replies from me that seem to address the newer comments but in fact are referring to older material. Idk how this sorts out for readers; I hope it's not too bizarre. *

Tenzin,

The tone of your most recent (Apr. 4) comment seems to have shifted, making me regret some of my last reply. As you begin speaking to me more as a human being (an ambiguous phrase, but it works either way), I find it ever harder to be, well, ass-~~holic~~. That's really not my nature, but sustained personal attacks can detach one from his usual character. I now wish I hadn't made the "broken brain" comment to you. It was rude. I think I'll abandon "Deaf Kat" for the same reason. Both were slights.

You called my lengthy reply "rambling". Perhaps, but it's hard to balance thoroughness and conciseness. You write a lot that demands reply, and I aim for thoroughness but I tend to be wordy so I may overshoot to "rambling" sometimes. So it goes.

You suggested your sarcasm might piss me off. You clearly don't know or understand me. I exist in a semi-permanent state of piss-offed-ness ~~over some Reply BIA Things; your~~ being a bit nasty to me doesn't make the list. It does remind me, though, that I don't like how I look when I get snarky, so I'll try to refrain. I won't always succeed — I'm only human — but the intention is there.

You insist you asked "one question" and I didn't answer it. I disagree. Your two Feb. comments, one on "Parent Test: ~~Answers~~ ^{Addendum}" and one on "What time do the Riots Start?", ~~distinctly~~ distinctly asked at least 4 questions. I answered 2. You asked whether I'd "forgotten" that I'd "abducted" and "molested" children, which ~~was~~ clearly rhetorical and fully loaded, so I left it alone. You also asked "why on earth" I'd offered "parenting advice". This I answered. You also asked what you should tell your grandkids about "people like me", and this I answered as well. Finally, yes, you did ask "how do we stop predators like you?" But you've been asking that since Aug. 2020 (Incidentally, that's 2 1/2 years you "ignored" me, not 4, but perhaps we ~~can~~ ^{can} get there this time), and because it never seemed remotely sincere ~~and was even more~~ loaded than the "abduction" question, I never considered answering. But I will. Not now, as I expect more comments from you that may elaborate your intent, ~~so I only~~ end up addressing it twice if I tried tackling it ~~today~~, but soon. I doubt you'll appreciate my answer, but I'll give a sincere one anyway.

You mentioned my post "Tabula Rasa" "bemoaning" that I used to have "loads of friends and family", but now "no one writes me", not even with my new email access. Some context is in order. "No one" is obviously an exaggeration, which must be considered in relative terms. I actually receive more correspondence than most prisoners, and I'm profoundly ~~grateful~~ ^{grateful} for it all. But yes, I DID have "loads" of very close relationships, and

it hurts that many have withered away. It's especially tough to stomach the loss of a few folks in particular. And yes, Tenzin, of course I've considered why it's happened, and the answer is not what you insinuate. My huge family is no longer the tightly-knit unit I grew up with — maybe they never were? — and many of my relatives struggle with their own serious problems. A few, as you suggest, write little because of harsh judgements about what they think I've done or who I must be because of what I was convicted of, but of the 20 or so people I consider "core" family, that's a minority of just 2 or 3. Maybe less. The fact is, after my parents died, my family communicates much less, period, and I'm especially ignorable, being out-of-sight, out-of-mind. Those closest to me do pass on my well-wishes to the rest at holidays and birthdays, and sometimes I even get an appreciative message in return. It's nothing like the blanketed ostracism based on raw prejudice that you presume; rather, it's the typical familial atrophy that comes with engagement.

As for friends, yes, my phone once overflowed with them, and now only a few remain connected. Why? Well, there are many complicated and intertwined reasons. If the prison had provided free phone calls and email access 13 years ago^(like they do now), for example, most of my friends would still be in touch. Many of my friends had never even sent or received stamped letters before I was taken hostage, so postal correspondence was a non-starter, especially in light of the stigma of remaining ^{friends} and receiving clearly marked jail-mail ~~at one's home from~~ someone in my position. I've always had to be very sensitive about who I sent letters to, and now that communicating with me has gotten so much easier, I've reached out to many lost friends, with mixed success so far. Prison-damaged relationships are simply very hard to repair after such a long time.

Another dynamic comes straight from the standard cult playbook, which is essentially all ~~the~~ ^{that the} child-abuse/punishment industry is: a (profitable) cult that thrives on manufactured public hysteria. Many people in my life were isolated from me when I was caged, sometimes quite explicitly by pigs and pig-adjacent agents of the punishment system. In this forced separation, they were subjected to what Thomas Merton described as brainwashing. Per Mr Merton:

"Brainwashing is an artificially-induced 'conversion', brought about by isolating a person emotionally and spiritually, undermining his whole sense of identity, and then rescuing him from this state... by drawing him into a new sense of community with his persecutors, now his rescuers, who 'restore' his identity by admitting him into their midst as an approved and docile instrument. Henceforth he does what they want him to do and likes it, indeed finds a certain satisfaction in this, and even regards his old life as shameful and inferior."

Some people may not immediately grasp how this phenomenon applies to the destruction of friendships in the ~~case of attacks~~ ^{case of attacks} by overzealous police and prosecutors. Brainwashing often occurs when small groups ~~with~~ ^{with}

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charismatic leadership, like cults, or even just single ~~abusive partners~~ ^{abusive partners}, try to isolate a targeted individual from larger communities and family support. It also occurs when larger groups, like well-meaning families or ill-intentioned cadres of public servants, brainwash their targets ~~by~~ ^{by} isolating him or her from small cliques or even just a single individual, forcibly divorcing the person from associations they do not approve of. I suspect plenty of people will see the analogy in my case. Further, society itself ~~can~~ ^{can} be an insidious force for brainwashing individuals, as Thomas Merton again ~~explains~~ ^{explains} when he describes the brainwashed man who "has lost his identity or never had one in the first place, seeking security, hope, and a sense of self in his immersions in the pressures and prejudices of a majority." I can try to elaborate just how all this was done to many of my closest friends, and how it was attempted with everyone who ever knew me, if anyone likes. So yes, Terzin, I've certainly considered why I've lost a number of ~~valued~~ ^{valued}, beloved friends, even a few family members, and now you can see why as well, if you'll open your eyes. These things aren't the only factors at play, but they do explain the lion's share of my lost relationships.

Incidentally, while you're right that introspection can be uncomfortable, it's also just about all I do these days — I look inside for answers. The ~~often~~ ^{often} overlooked thing about introspection, though, is that it's not only valid when the discoveries one makes comport with the presumptions and agendas of others. So, if you still see me as "really self unaware," perhaps that's due to some blind spots of your own? Is that at least a possibility you can imagine?

Thanks for your words on my "Gopher Broke" post about the poor little fuzzi-ball I tried to help. Nothing bothers me so much as seeing a vulnerable creature abused ~~and~~ ^{and} being unable to do anything about it. I like to think you'd see similar evidence of my character as "something worth knowing" in many other posts as well, as most of what I write comes from the same moral place, i.e. a desire to contribute to a reduction of suffering in the world. My values are pretty consistent, and thank you for recognizing them in this instance. You may not believe it, but I really do care about our species and the world we're a part of. It's just, you and I differ by orders of magnitude over what we believe is harmful and should therefore be feared or fought against.

Since you say more comments are coming, whatever else I'd like to say can wait until then. As for venue, write me directly or post here as you see fit. I tend to favor open, public communication though, especially after witnessing how the police and prosecutors relied so heavily on secrecy and selective revealing of facts in order to obscure or downright assail ~~reality~~ ^{reality} in my trial. I repeatedly let the jury know that only the cop side was hiding facts from them, because I wanted to tell them ~~the truth, the~~ ^{the truth, the} whole truth, and nothing but the truth, first and foremost by showing them every scrap of paper the lying pigs had collected and then fought hard to ~~prevent others from seeing~~ ^{prevent others from seeing}. My vote then, is if we're going to interact, then it should be here. But what you do is your choice, not mine. Take care (Terzin, and all who take the time to read).