

Doing and Allowing Those To Do What One Does Best

That is certainly my management style. I can't think of anything more unThelemic than to expect, force or coerce a person, community, animal or thing to act in a way which is contrary to its own true nature and/or design. The first organizational example that comes to mind, which I am sure at least some of you might remember, is when a little girl's parents tried to sue the Boy Scouts because they would not allow her daughter to join the Boy Scouts.

It is crucial that each of us understand our own strengths and weaknesses. If our relationship to the mission is wholesome, those strengths must be used to help further the goals and aims of the community. In return, the community may be able to provide ample opportunity to work on ones weaknesses. This is certainly how I view Thelemic communities: ever working to strengthen its members in order that they may fulfill their own True Purpose for the greater glory of the community which reflects the individual's values. In a perfect world, each community has clearly defined goals, its leaders are actively pursuing the attainment of those victories, and its members are like soldiers, taking feet and some times inches of occupied land toward victory: Win-win. I have just described the perfect organization with all of its elements intact, its membership doing what they each can, unasked for the greater glory of the Order they serve, and serves them.

I have said all of that to enter into my opinion on the nature of competition: Friendly or otherwise. The best example to serve you, my friends, is a military one. This is a true story.

When I was serving my time in basic training at Ft. Dix, New Jersey a young Canadian soldier in my platoon caught my eye and we began a flirtation that ended up costing us both when we were written up and served an Article 15 for fraternizing - and by fraternizing I mean, well... knowledge in the Biblical sense. While it was indeed embarrassing and costly, we learned to lean on one another in ways that intensified our desire to unite. At that time, if you wanted to pass the basic training examination one had to do 52 push up and 52 sit ups, each in a matter of three minutes. You were allowed to do more if you wanted to, but anything over 52 would not be shown on your military record.

We were ordered to pair off as partners, so naturally we gravitated toward one another... and when one was doing push ups, the other was yelling and otherwise encouraging their partner in ways that were nice and complementary, and others that weren't. When one would finish doing 40 push ups, the other would drop and try, for their life to do 41 - for the luxury of saying "I am better than you are" with a smile. The result is that next time; the other would rather die than not do 42 to do one better.

The result of this game was that at the date of our test, she and I did 144 push-ups, and the same number of sit-ups. It strengthened our bonds as comrades, lovers, and at a time

when no one wanted women in battle, I would have refused to go without her watching my back. That, my friends, is friendly competition.

So, what is unfriendly competition? Unfriendly competition is when one is unable to rejoice in a Brother or Sister's success because they do not feel they are a part of the endeavor, so one begins to measure their success by the failures of their comrades instead. In our incestuous little communities this might be something like secretly or not so secretly wishing or acting in a way that might cause a Local Body in your area to fail because you like the other Local Body better. Another thing which we might relate to is interfering with a Brother or Sister's advancement for some petty, personal reason... or simply because having the authority to interfere makes one feel more superior than the person in question, or because that person's advancement would interfere with one's political goals and aspirations. I would hope that we don't know people like this, because they do not belong with us here. They belong elsewhere with people like them.

But there is something I call "well intentioned competition." This is where two well meaning people compete with one another in ways that are detrimental, in the long run, to the aims that both are trying to accomplish. Say for example, that you are a Jehovah's Witness, and it is your desire to get your local church to act as a Jehovah's Witness blood drive organization. Not only is the organization you are trying to do this under, diametrically opposed to blood transfusion, but if you succeed in any way you will be taking donors away from the Red Cross. Not only is one forcing the organization to act in a way not natural to its design, it is also interfering with the organization whose design is to do JUST THAT. In other words, the intentions are good, but you know what they say about good intentions and pavement.

Say, for example, that there were two organizations dedicated to promulgating the Law of Thelema. The first reaction to most OTO members is to compete and try to put the other organization out of business. It isn't pretty, but let's not kid one another. We are way too intelligent for that, and if we are trying to get gnosis we have better start by being honest with ourselves. This is why the OTO has no competition. I for one, happen to like it doesn't - because I am a believer, but I am amazed by the indoctrination that has taken place in OTO. GL doesn't tell us we must fight for it on its behalf, we simply do. We get social currency from these sorts of activities, so indoctrination is self-administered.

One of the many flaws of sectarianism is that it seeks to do away with what it sees as competition, even when the offending party is trying to achieve the same end. The organization takes on the importance of the goal and begins to identify with it to the extent that any attempt at solidarity by other sects is viewed as antagonistic. Instead of becoming a stronger community by embracing others who share the same passion toward the same goal, we are encouraged to compete with them. This limits our own growth in society by keeping us too preoccupied with one another to focus on the philosophical big picture.

In short, there are times to compete and times to cooperate. If the goal really is the Promulgation of the Law of Thelema, and not some egotistical, self-serving political ploy

designed to fill some need for external validation, then we had better learn to do a certain thing, in a certain way, at a certain time. It is important.

Gerald del Campo

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