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St Gussy of Hippo's hidden bits

George Pitcher

I'm sorry, I will answer this question of what I love, but first we need to know what we're talking about. "We love you Arsenal," we sing from the terraces of the Emirates Stadium. We may reasonably infer that this sentiment is distinguishable from our love for family and friends (though many a Gooner widow may wonder which is the stronger urge).

And so we'll conflate, with the same word, our love of a restaurant or holiday destination with the act of a parent who gives their kidney to a sick child, or the teacher who throws herself between her class and a gunman.

It shouldn't matter much, but it does. Take gay marriage. Wherever you've decided to stand on the subject, the rhetorical question "why shouldn't two people who love each other get married?" is insufficient. Because nowhere – in the religious or secular rites – is love said to be a sufficient purpose for marriage. So it's a category error.

It's the most defining of human capacities. But we still need to know what it is. CS Lewis of Narnia defines Four Loves (the name of his 1960 book): In Greek, storge, philia, eros and agape – or affection, friendship, romance and unconditional love.

Endlessly engaging as the first three are, it's the last where the real action is. And while we may know something of the first three (if we're lucky) it's probably the fourth of which we know the least. That's because it's endlessly mysterious and we're entitled to give up. But Augustine of Hippo had a damned good crack at it in the fifth century.

For dear old Gussy, this kind of love is about "recognition" - that is, recognising in someone or something a pattern of goodness or justice that we already know within ourselves as the source of our own judgement. This has little or nothing to do with the kind of ego-driven desire we experience in the business world and which may often be confused with authentic agape.

Yes, St Paul lists some of the qualities of this authentic agape (caritas in Latin, which is why it has often been translated as "charity"), as m'learned colleague Martin Lambie-Nairn relates here. But the bit of the scriptural passage he omits is that we only, in this life, see it "through a glass darkly". M'other learned colleague Christine Armstrong gets much closer to it through the transcendence of ordinary familial moments – through heart not head.

So, time's up: What do I love? I love the sense of that recognition of which Augustine speaks in everyday life. And I love that everything is accountable to it. I love accountability.

That's why, unlike many of my colleagues, I've tired of trad-jazz, Top Gear lookalike, hand-wringing communications consultancy, which all too often amounts to blowing smoke up the backsides of the "powers and principalities" of late capitalism, however well-meaning its intentions. At their best, parliamentary democracy, its co-extensive legislature and the "fourth estate" of journalism do something different – they hold us to account to that recognition of Old Gus that there is an infinitely bigger and better way to human endeavour, of which we only get the occasional glimpse but which, in caritas, is also infinitely worth the pursuit.

For those glimpses and for much else besides, I love St Augustine of Hippo too.

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My loving gift to you on Valentine's Day is this piece of advice, which I'm trying to live by: if you want to be a rebel, be kind

People Loving

Neal Lawson

I guess more than anything, what I love is people. I love our infinity capacity, potential and possibility, the uniqueness of all of us and the equal right we have to make the most of that special difference.

The progressive gamble is huge but simple. It is that if people have enough time, space and support, then they will make predominantly compassionate, and, yes, loving decisions. But it is a gamble. And context is all. My all time number one favourite Thatcher quote is, of course: "economics is the means; the goal is to change the soul". She knew that institutions could be built or destroyed to make the world in her image – a world that was about self and not society.

Privatisation, council house sales, the big bang, and anti-trade union laws all had a deep motive of social engineering – to promote individualism and spread the power of the market. The commodification of today, Valentine's Day, is but one example of the success of this strategy. Love is not about time

and commitment but what you can spend. Money has become the proxy for too much. It's not, I don't think, that Mrs. Thatcher didn't care – it's just that she believed you had to be rich first in order to be able to afford to care. That's why she told the story of the Good Samaritan so many times – charity demanded wealth creation and inequality.

But the Jericho Road, and the poor who lived on it, cannot rely on the whimsy of charity – to be given and withdrawn as the individual sees fit.

My second favourite Thatcher quote is that "Socialism never dies". She knew we had it in us to be compassionate, caring, and, yes, loving. But to her this was weak and created dependency; as if being dependent on other human beings – which we all are, all the time - was a crime. To me, love and equality go hand-in-hand. When we look into people's eyes we see not some 'other' but a version of ourselves.

The unique potential of all must be enshrined and underpinned in civic, social and economic rights. But such rights won't last and won't work without some moral glue that binds us all. That moral glue has to be our love for our fellow human beings – a deep sense of empathy and responsibility for each other.

A better quote than any of Mrs Thatcher's is this from Martin Luther King: "I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be; and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be." So my loving gift to you on Valentine's Day is this piece of advice, which I'm trying to live by: *if you want to be a rebel, be kind.*

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I plan to return my earlier loves...
dancing, and taking up bridge
with the ambition of becoming an
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Childcare for a card shark

Christine Armstrong

The things I love to do haven't changed in twenty years: getting eight hours sleep, dinner with great friends and, perhaps above all, reading. Fast and greedily. Anything and everything from product packaging to novels to management books via any size or flavour of newspaper, mags (men's lifestyle a favourite), and high or low brow biographies.

But we have three children under six, and the things most compromised are of course sleeping, socialising and quiet space. Today I picked up a newspaper. Our baby crawled into the pages, ripping it. Our three year old yelled 'TISS-UE TISS-OOOOO' after sneezing green snot down her jumper, while the eldest demanded I drew Peter Pan "flying with his hat and red feather".

My reactions swing between stoical (ish) toleration and occasional meltdowns. Regrettably, not the children's. I try to read at bedtime but fall asleep before the end of the first page. At 3am, wide awake

after soothing one, two or even three kids, I could read – but fear waking everyone else. So I lie awake, mentally drafting things like this.

Meanwhile people with older children frequently grasp my arm and tearily implore me to "treasure it, treasure every precious moment they are little". It is easy to laugh at their rose-tinted specs and yet - yet - there are moments when the sunlight breaks through the clouds and I am blown away by the realisation that they are right.

The sheer joy of steaming, bubbled, eucalyptus-scented bath times. Walking into the park and seeing from a distance my husband playing raucous games and the children shrieking in delight. At night when I sometimes find the two biggest ones curled up together in the same bed. At dawn watching the sunrise creep over Greenwich as the baby suckles and gurgles.

These are the things that I love now. And always will, as - I am learning - these perfect freeze-frames obscure the smeared baked beans, dizzying mess and endless laundry. They remain etched in your mind forever.

But later, when our children are big, I plan to return my earlier loves - adding, of course, highly romanticised nostalgia for their early years, dancing and taking up bridge with the ambition of becoming an octogenarian card shark. I bloody love cards.

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A good leader does not insist on being obeyed, but is a person whom others wish to follow.

Love – the inspirer

Martin Lambie-Nairn

The celebration of 'love' on February 14th typically means a commercially-minded emphasis on all things pink, heart-shaped, soppy, frilly and, all too often, transient.

For those of us who were married in a Christian church, a familiar reading is often included in the ceremony. It describes love in very different terms – very far from soppy or pink. In 1 Corinthians, verse 13, it is said: "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things".

But is this only relevant to newlyweds, or is it applicable to a broader audience? More important, does it apply to how we work, how we lead, how we relate to colleagues, and how we serve our clients?

Love is not a subject much discussed in

offices, although sex – often confused with love – is indelibly associated with the office, especially around the ubiquitous Christmas and New Year parties. It does not feature in the language of board or strategy meetings; nor will you find it included in your contract or terms of employment. Yet love, or at least the version I have quoted, could be the most powerful motivator both for leaders, and those they wish to lead.

A good leader does not insist on being obeyed, but is a person whom others wish to follow. So what kind of person might you or I wish to follow?

It will be someone who is patient and kind and accepts you as you are. Someone who has no need to continually tell you how clever he/she is or, when challenged, responds with dismissive contempt. Someone who does not think that the only good idea is their idea, or gets grumpy and resentful if things don't turn out the way they think they should.

Someone who is not delighted to see a competitor mess up; who has the balls to tell the truth, and who owns up when wrong. Someone who sticks by you, even when you have screwed up, who believes you and believes *in* you; who looks for the best in others and sees stuff through.

When it comes to leading businesses, managing staff, or serving clients, who would not want to follow a person like this? Love is inspirational.

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Why do corporations persist in thinking that a string of stitched-together clichés will impress anyone, or be remembered when people have left the room?

Words, words, words

Gary Mead

Of course it's first and foremost the children, my wife, my closest and oldest friends. All that goes without saying. But after that very short list – what else?

Those which once were pleasures are no longer. And I wish that I had jettisoned some of them (the 40 fags-a-day, what bliss that once was!) much earlier. So much that once seemed vitally important has now dropped away. Good riddance.

Nowadays the greatest love of my life is defined by that which I never tire of. I never tire of reading, and I rarely tire of writing. I adore solitude, which is essential for reading and – for me – is also vital for writing. These are individual acts, matters that can only be done alone. We are all familiar with the corporate or business document that has been drafted collectively. It has had all the lifeblood sucked out of it, as it drifts towards the lowest common denominator of the blandest inoffensive verbiage. Why do corporations persist in thinking that a string of stitched-together clichés will

impress anyone, or be remembered the moment the room has been left?

This path, this finding greatest contentment either sitting at my desk in front of a screen trying to conjure a phrase or two, or curled up on a sofa with a book, can lead to introspection, a separation from society. But then my disenchantment with 'society' is measureless and always has been. As one of my heroes, Jonathan Swift, once wrote in a letter to his friend Alexander Pope: "I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities, and all my love is toward individuals: for instance, I hate the tribe of lawyers, but I love Counsellor Such-a-one and Judge Such-a-one: so with physicians – I will not speak of my own trade – soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest. But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth."

If the old guard of political life is dead (but does not yet realise it) again, good

riddance. They have failed us in so many ways. Yet what might arise to take the place of the time-serving stunted intellects that now govern the world? I write this as the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust is commemorated. A mere 70 years ago such bestial butchery bestrode most of Europe. It is but the blink of an eye. Today we may be on a cusp of revolutionary change. How can we be certain that it's not a matter of, as W.B. Yeats put it:

"And what rough beast, its hour come at last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

How else can one love, other than individually?

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The smart leader is always on and welcomes dissenting, even angry, voices into the conversation. No-one can learn if they do not listen



New Clues and Chaos

Robert Phillips

My mother found me tidying her linen cupboard when I was 8 years old. She thought this was strange. I thought her cupboard was messy.

Until recently, I insisted on re-loading the dishwasher so that plates were stacked in descending height order and knives were bundled with knives, forks with forks and so on. I found it odd that others thought this odd.

Symmetry and order have always been important to me. Untidiness makes me feel unwell. Chaos historically filled me with fear and dread.

The old world of Public Relations was of course massaged and manicured to manage lurking chaos and disorder, and suppress the will of the people. It was a manufactured, imagined reality – one of tidy linen cupboards and neatly stacked machines. The world of old trust was an equally false construct – created and maintained by non-democratic hierarchies and stolen power. The new world blows all this apart. It is chaotic, very messy and often unpleasant. But at least it is real. I have got used to it and urge others to embrace it, too.

Few people understand the new reality better than David Weinberger, a professional inspiration. Co-author of the seminal Cluetrain Manifesto, it was

with David that I first developed Public Engagement as the evolution of Public Relations. Together, we codified “PE” as bottom-up, social, open, values-led and action-driven: small words that captured bigger meanings. When we conceived the thesis nearly a decade ago, it was clear then that change was never going to be as slow again.

Regarding change, I was right. Regarding the shift from Public Relations to Public Engagement, I was wrong. Public Engagement does not go far enough. Communications thinking must evolve towards Public Leadership (activist, co-produced, citizen-centric, society-first) and Public Value, where organisations become accountable to wise crowds and not to sterile, absolute, competitive measurements.

But Public Leadership, too, will only be transient. Our only constant is this state of permanent disruption. Old-style communications’ campaigns will never again enjoy the finite endings they once promised leaders, who need to think instead about permanent engagement and the creation of thoughtful spaces and processes that build constant dialogue and presence among multiple conversation and interest groups. The smart leader is always on and welcomes dissenting, even angry, voices into the conversation. No-one can learn if they do

not listen. Any attempt to maintain control ignores the chaos of real people and real lives.

Fifteen years since publication, Cluetrain has been updated with New Clues. It still speaks to the awesome power of networks as the defining agency of change. “It is time”, reads the Manifesto, “to breathe-in the fire of the Net and transform every institution that would play us for a patsy”.

In a recent exchange, Weinberger warned of those who hijack the internet – “the fools and marauders” - including businesses who merely adopt the Internet’s trappings without understanding the gravity of its connections and the awesome power of we, the people. But ‘we’ also need to be protected from ourselves. We can become a dangerous horde. With the stunning power of connectivity comes greater personal responsibility. Unbridled, anyone can tip towards the vile, just as religious absolutism can beget an Inquisition or an ISIS. Loving chaos is essential and real. But we cannot use chaos theory to attack those we don’t like, often with unsubstantiated claims or false allegations. Collectively, we need to think hard about the common good; what to do when the crowd is not wise; or when it is dangerously wrong.

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If I could find a way to
bottle what they have and
teach others to be the same,
I'd be a millionaire

The adoration of curiosity

Allan Biggar

I'm fascinated by entrepreneurs. What on earth drives someone to risk it all to create a product or a business, out of thin air? I've spent a lot of time with entrepreneurs and I've a couple of observations.

Curiosity is not a word you hear very much in business these days. I'm not sure that anyone has put down on their CV that one of their drivers is being curious. But curiosity seems to me to be one of the key characteristics of an entrepreneur. If Alexander Graham Bell had not been curious he would not have invented the telephone. If someone had not been curious then 100 years later the iPhone would never have happened. Neither would Google, or Facebook or Amazon. It's odd, isn't it, given its importance, how we never talk about being curious. I guess it's a word associated with childhood and something we grow out of. How about a bit of reverse engineering? Remember being a kid and thinking how we could do anything? Imagine harnessing that in business.

Ask most people what drives an entrepreneur and they would probably answer 'money'. I could not disagree more with that. What drives an entrepreneur is winning. Doing something no one else has done. Doing it better, bigger, faster or smarter. The reward for winning in business is more often than not money; but I rarely find an entrepreneur who really starts with money as the final goal. It is arrogance, perhaps, that drives many of them to believe they will win. Of course many don't. And many are really awful at money when they succeed. Many entrepreneurs are dragged out kicking and screaming from their own board rooms: they may have been brilliant getting there but, good grief, keep them out of anything important like making money and holding on to it.

Tenacity and stubbornness have to be the third element of that heady mix that goes towards being an entrepreneur. You know the difference between people with a great idea who get nowhere, and those who make something of it? Well it's 9.9

times out of ten the simple fact that they just got on and did it. Ideas and talk are cheap. Sweat, grind, risk are all hard won and vital to just making it happen.

I love entrepreneurs but I thrive off their boundless curiosity, their will to win and their tenacity to get up day after day and just do it. If I could find a way to bottle what they have and teach others to be the same, I could I'd be a millionaire. I'm working on it.

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There's an exciting and encouraging alternative future that is already (partly) here, emerging in pockets of light around the world

Why I Love the New Economy

Jules Peck

I'm loving being involved in something called the Real Economy Lab, a collective enquiry and movement building initiative on the future of economics, commerce and politics.

The Lab responds to the fairly dark context that I know many of my clients are concerned about, in which our current economic system is patently failing to work for the wellbeing of people and planet. We seem to be locked into an economic system that is intent and reliant on exponential growth on a finite planet, where power and resources are concentrated into the hands of the few. Every day seems to bring more worrying news about the breakdown in trust, climate chaos and inequality.

But it's not all bad news. There's an exciting and encouraging alternative future that is already (partly) here, emerging in pockets of light around the world. And I'm loving exploring that future and playing a role in helping its emergence.

There is a vast and increasing array of practice and thinking around what is being called the 'new' economy, like the nearly 500 Transition Town initiatives worldwide. As Professor Gar Alperovitz, a leading thinker and practitioner in this area, has recently said: "just below the surface of media attention literally thousands of grass roots institution-changing, wealth-democratizing efforts have been quietly developing."

This includes movements as diverse as the many members of the Post Growth Alliance and New Economy Coalition, and the P2P, commoner, maker, sharer, buen vivir, collaborative economic, social solidarity, direct action, localisation and co-operative movements and numerous others. Leaders such as Paul Polman of Unilever, Yvon Chouinard, founder of Patagonia, and others are actively engaging with many of these new initiatives.

The Real Economy Lab is building a multi-dimensional mind-map of this emerging new economy ecosystem that

will serve as an interactive, iterative and evolving tool. This will establish clarity and consensus on key principles and objectives for the new economy that can act as a foundation for the convergence of action. The mind-map will show how all the various 'tribes' within the current and new economy are related, where they differ, where they could collaborate more.

Many mainstream businesses, as with Patagonia's and Unilever's interest in this area, are watching this space closely. This is because, as we showed recently in our publication 21st Century Business, these emerging new economy innovations represent a significant threat, but also massive opportunities to mainstream commerce.

2015 looks set to continue the speeding up of the shift towards a new economy. I'd encourage everyone to tune into these shifts, as it is truly world-changing and exciting stuff.

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Holmes avoids jumping to conclusions, eschews bias, and knows how to prioritise and focus in a complex situation

Sherlock Holmes: non-conformist innovator

Alaric Mostyn

It was Sherlock Holmes who, in my early teens, inspired me to be a consultant, and who has – in a surprising number of ways – remained my most powerful consulting role-model. I don't mean Basil Rathbone, or Jeremy Brett or Robert Downey Jr, or even Benedict Cumberbatch. It is Conan-Doyle's original creation that opened my eyes to the world of client relationships, fees, expenses – and above all ways of thinking about problems. I have failed to solve any murders – and don't play the violin or inject cocaine – but in most other ways Holmes continues to inspire me. Here's why.

Sherlock Holmes does more than merely solve crimes. He provides an entire way of thinking, and ideal model for how we can think better than we usually do. His explanations, methodology, and approach to thinking, all predict the psychology and neuroscience that today are received wisdom. The Holmes method is: clarify the objective, evidenced-based observation and insight; understand and frame the problem; hypothesise (or imagine); test and decide; and repeat. He is deliberately sceptical and inquisitive towards the

world. Nothing is taken at face value.

Holmes avoids jumping to conclusions, eschews bias, and knows how to prioritise and focus in a complex situation. He even knows when to let go, stop worrying and clear the mind by going for a walk, or by picking up his Stradivarius.

His approach to clients and fees is transparent and simple. He works for free when there is an important project with someone with no money yet who is worthy – and charges much more for a difficult client with plenty of money.

Holmes has no automatic respect for hierarchy, status or protocol. He turns down a knighthood because it means nothing to him. He refuses to work on a brief from the Prime Minister unless it is on his own terms, and has no compunction in exposing the problems of several royal families. He doesn't do all this innocently or aggressively – he is simply much more interested in sticking to his own standards and doing what is right, regardless.

He is of course a famous innovator. His scientific approach to crime scenes – he invented pretty well all the rules in what was to become CSI – was not simply the work of an other-worldly boffin. Holmes was very aware of how the world was changing. He knew what his few competitors were up to and he had a restless pursuit of progress, very much driven by the thought that 'there must be a better way'.

Finally, there is his very interesting relationship with Watson. Recent research now shows that teams make better decisions than individuals – even better with people who have diverse skills, attitudes and backgrounds. Holmes understood this well and regularly explains to Watson why he is such a useful partner – precisely because he is so different.

Now, over 40 years on from first discovering Holmes, I start thinking about the fact he quit while he was at his peak, and retired to keep bees in a quiet coastal village. Sounds right to me.

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