

THE GRUMPY DISCIPLE #2

Inside Everyone Hides a Secret Atheist Who Wants To Get Out

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Not so? Yes, so. How so?

To me, each of us has a rebellious streak. *If only I could do everything my way – everyday, all the time!* The streak is deadly. Some humans travel on it at highway speeds often colliding with those who get in their way. Others plod along, doing the quiet, docile, librarian thing – not even a squeak. But rebellion is there under the surface; living and breathing. Wide in some; pencil-line narrow in others.

Why would atheism be a clue of man's inherent, inner rebellion – a signpost of trouble or evidence of a sin nature? After all, aren't there happy, good and honest atheists? Yes, there are. But, living one's life as a nonbeliever, or disbeliever, just doesn't sound right and wholesome, does it?

As our world reaches for more evil and achieves it, this tips my quizzical balancing scales of Divinity or No Divinity, more to the latter. The no-show of a good God who'll slam-dunk rising evil is depressing. On too many days, life seems to have either an evil, or not-so-bad, or morally see-sawing Supreme Being. Hence, ancient cultures developed the idea of appeasing their unpredictable gods. Such immortal characters simply had ethereal window dressing which barely covered their amplified human behavior – after all, they were created by humans.

And *hence* again, because atheists see no decisive, celestial umpire at work, for them, religion is on par with a belabored fool's endeavor. Don't religious people expound a series of divine-like, pious-sounding excuses for the ump's mysterious laxity? The secret atheist in me grumbles a definitive "Yes!" Any theology which has all the answers worries me.

I think of atheists as *refusers*. They are religious pacifists. Their next of kin, the agnostics, amount to hesitant, atheist wannabees. Agnostics are skeptical about the existence of You-know-who. Actually, that is the issue! Does anybody really know You-know-who? Can anybody *know* for sure that they know? The agnostic asserts the answer cannot be known with certainty and so is noncommittal. Some days, I'm like that too.

The secret atheist in me quakes and quibbles desiring no pretend god. Instead I pray, "Please, show us Your true self for all to see and end the timeless riddle!"

To budge from atheism or agnosticism opens the door to the unsettling worry of crossing the lines of logic. I don't want to believe in age-old myths, legends or traditions which have gone through centuries of selective inbreeding. Or, ritual role-playing, coupled by lifeless liturgies with a dash of holy handshakes. Why would I want to commit to calling any of these, my own?

In the history of our battered and beautiful world, it seems that man can get away with anything. There are no limits to what he will try. Yet, a moral man (whether believing or non-believing) steps in to prevent harm to the innocent. The motivation to do such good takes place apart from our inherent streak of self-centered rebelliousness (toward You-know-who). The atheist in me wonders, *If there is a God, why didn't God do something to prevent (or if late, undo) the damage?*

In times of war, certain nations allow a person's pacifism to prevent him or her from harming other humans. These conscientious objectors see and disagree, learn but don't burn, and avoid violence which violates.

Our world is consumed by religion, with a continual roving army of the deadly and devout. Non-believers who chose to not pick up a Bible, Koran, Torah, etc. amount to religious conscientious objectors. Either they do not see a cause which is just, or they see the cause being dealt with in unethical or unnecessary ways. To join in or take sides is illogical. When people choose to do the opposite - be religious - are they justified, crazy, prideful, near-sighted, fearful or humble? Are they enviable? My secret self pouts, wanting to shout, "You are all wrong, and I-can't-prove-it!"

I see it this way. When atheists or agnostics witness the religious jinx on this planet, they wish to throw a large monkey wrench and stop it once and for all. I think religious people wish for a truck load of such monkey wrenches in order to hurl them into every faith which differs significantly from their own. After all, isn't that part of the job description? Make converts.

I see this jinxed world (called "fallen" by some) beckoning the entire population, from every corner of the globe, to adhere to a religious or spiritual lifestyle. Replicate. Replicate. Reproduce. But unbelievers, well...they just don't show up for the job - do they? Looking at man's miserable history and the current events in the news - *aren't these unbelievers justified?* But what if in doing so, they are unknowingly feeding and maintaining the inherent rebellious streak toward an invisible Supreme Being?

In the face of such established devout sincerity, the adventurous converting atheist-turned-believer can end up sincerely wrong. *Right?* But then, when does anyone find out that

they're wrong? We're all gambling, yet the atheists don't want to play. But, I think such sideline stand-offishness will not exempt them from a Creator's invisible, yet boundary-less playing field.

While at the well-worn card table, daily playing the game of life, I do wonder if the atheist hiding inside me prevents my having more chips? I also wonder if real atheists get a seat, but are dealt cards merely because they draw breath? Do atheists or agnostics sit down at the table but never pick up their hand? Or if not, they never buy in to get a stack of chips and gamble? Or, do they fold at any zeal shown by a religious opponent? Maybe they pass at each turn, choosing not to bet but reluctantly cashing in an unexpected, highly uncomfortable, high-profile jackpot?

For them the God game is a poor pastime.

Perhaps, when religious people attempt to influence an atheist, they are trying to pass on their learned on-the-job know-how, and supply chips to gamble with? While gambling with fate, in their limited fashion, are they spiritually impotent because they let their *inner* atheist out?

Either way, if you see one who is godless, consider the gamble of hugging an atheist or religious person today. Who knows, they just might need it.

These Things Make Me Grumpy!

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