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Introduction

This essay aims to present a summary of a snapshot as of 2021 of my personal philosophy and ideology, titled Rindolfism [http://www.shlomifish.org/me/rindolf/#rindolfism], which is dynamic and subject to change.

It largely builds upon a previous essay titled “Putting all the Cards on the Table (2013)” [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-all-cards-on-the-table-2013/]

I am really tired of having truly intellectual people like me "speak in riddles" and be somewhat dishonest, so I'd like to put as many of the cards I have now on the table. There will likely be more into the future, and moreover, honesty is a process and a person should strive to become more honest as time goes by.

Epistemology: Truths, "Lies", A Dynamic Reality, etc.

Larry Wall noted: [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=larry-wall-all-truth-is-gods-truh]

I have a book on my bookshelf that I've never read, but that has a great title. It says, "All Truth is God's Truth." And I believe that. The most viable belief systems are those that can reach out and incorporate new ideas, new memes, new metaphors, new interfaces, new extensions, new ways of doing things. My goal this year is to try to get Perl to reach out and cooperate with Java. I know it may be difficult for some of you to swallow, but Java is not the enemy. Nor is Lisp, or Python, or Tcl. That is not to say that these languages don't have good and bad points. I am not a cultural relativist. Nor am I a linguistic relativist. In case you hadn't noticed. :-)

Neo-Tech noted something similar: [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/guide-to-neotech/]

"Truth" is a mushy, polyhydra word; everyone disputes its meaning.

A variant of an insight by Niels Bohr [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Niels_Bohr] goes:

The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth.

Moreover, I noted in a tweet [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/1351069373952360448]:

Not only is "All Truth is God's Truth", but "truth" is a function of time. If everyone copied solutions in Project Euler [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Euler] there'd
be far more people who solved more than 400 problems, but people are more honest today.

Moreover, note that like the X-files motto [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_truth_is_out_there] goes, “The truths are out there”. The media, including Internet sites, blogs, and social media (and I may err on it too some time), will always emit a lot of static white noise [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_noise] in all directions (for example see my notes about Paris Hilton later), but people can tell the truth. The Bible [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible] depicts acts of massacre, adultery, and incest that would seem appalling, and which historians believe were common back then (see e.g: Levite’s concubine [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levite%27s_concubine]). Nevertheless, generations of children (and adults) who read it, knew better than to emulate that.

Do note that there is a place for logical absolutism (= “1. A is A. 2. A is not not-A. 3. Every entity is either A or not-A.”; term logic [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Term_logic]/etc.) - without it mathematics won't be possible, nor will most modern engineering, computers (including many embedded and mobile devices), and computer networking. But I tend to agree with Bohr that often we can look at a more humane or spiritual issue from two different valid sides.

"Live and let live; do and let do"

While it had earlier occurrences, I derive this piece of wisdom from Saladin [http://shlomifishwiki.branchable.com/Saladin_Style/], a Muslim king and conqueror of Kurdish descent who is known for being one of the most effective warriors, and one of the most noble and merciful people in history.

During Saladin's time Palestine [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_(region)] which is also known as "The Land of Israel" or "The Holy Land" was ruled and terrorised by Christian conquerors (e.g: the Knights Templar [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knights_Templar] ). These were Christian fighters who originated from Europe, who were psychotic, psychopathological, vicious, sadistic, and vandals, who would have put the Nazis [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Germany] much less today’s Al-Qaeda [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda] or ISIL [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant] to shame, and harmed the civilians in Palestine and were feared by them.

Saladin acquired a large army of loyal warriors, who all joined him by choice, had superior swords to those of the Christians, and lighter armour, and he set out to release Palestine from them fortress by fortress. But the most amazing thing is that he told the Christians something like that:

**You can fight me or you can surrender. The choice is yours. Do what you want, you don't have to do what you think you must. If you choose to surrender, I will spare your life, disarm you and let you walk to Christian-controlled territory. If you choose to fight, I will try my best not to kill or harm you (but do note that protecting my troops is my priority), and then swear you not to fight me any more, and let you walk to Christian-controlled territory.**

I trust you will make the right decision and entrust you with power. Whatever your choice will be, I'll accept it.

While some knights were probably killed, many of them survived and became happy, sane, and while ostensibly Christian, unwilling to fight Saladin. Even if their religious leaders told them to return, Saladin told them he is OK with the oath breaking and said he'll fight them again. This caused his opponents to fight extremely poorly, and be quickly disarmed. Following that, they learned their lesson, and would not fight Saladin again.

By letting people do what they want, they will likely do the best thing they can do. This is management by not managing and parenting by not parenting, which is and always was the best way.
Big minded ("Rosh gadol") vs. Small minded ("Rosh qatan")

The Israeli military was small and as there was a lot of work to do to properly secure the Israeli civilians it coined the terms Rosh gadol ("big minded") and Rosh qatan ("small minded") [https://www.joelonsoftware.com/2004/12/06/news-45/] to encourage the soldiers to take initiative and try to perform their jobs as well as possible, regardless of the fact they were paid little.

This extends to non-military work, government work, and voluntary work or hobbies and endeavours: if you care about something, do it as well as possible and give it enough time as needed. It will get easier and faster in time.

For instance, a vendor on a candy store or an icecream parlour, should try to greet the customers, be friendly to them, offer recommendations to them if they ask, accept business cards with their personal web sites or social media presence and visit them, and generally treat every customer like royalty.

If you do this, you'll likely get more returning customers, bigger tips, bigger bonuses and raises, and you may be able to land a better job based on a warm recommendation from your superiors and coworkers.

The opposite is Micromanagement [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micromanagement] where you do exactly as you are told.

Note that the Nazis' Superior orders - "I was only following orders" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superior_orders] is orthogonal to this. Despite common belief the Nazis were very big minded / "Rosh Gadol" [https://www.geekwire.com/2011/top-10-reasons-darth-vader-amazing-project-manager/], which may explain their initial effectiveness.

One may opt to refuse orders completely, and given the bad reputation that Superior orders got recently, the "Off with his head" [https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/263700.html] Shakespeare and Lewis Carroll parody of Absolutism is unlikely to happen anywhere. If the current Dutch heir apparent [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catharina-Amalia,_Princess_of_Orange] requests a private jet flight at nighttime for a non-Emergency (which is what foolishly killed Samantha Smith [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samantha_Smith] and her father, and six other people), she will probably be refused. She is unlikely to request that anyway but that is besides the point. Why I picked the Dutch princess?

If your superior in any way requests something reasonable, you should comply with their request and be bigminded about it. But feel free to refuse harmful orders or requests. Despite common belief, this should not cause anarchy, but rather bring peace and prosperity.

Amateurs vs. Professionals

"Amateur" used to mean someone who worked for the love of it [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=paul-graham-what-amateur-meant]. Such people often produce better results than those who do it only for money or even a lot of money [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJrqpR_7VSo]

If you care enough about a task, invest the time to do it well. It should get quicker and easier and the results will be better and more "professional" in due time.

In the book The Three Musketeers [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Musketeers], Dumas tells the story of how d'Artagnan who is a young swordsman without much of an official training, from a remote region of France, eventually becomes the best fighter in France. This is despite the fact that his peers, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, have much more experience and training.

Why I picked the Dutch princess? I picked her simply because she is older than Queen Elizabeth II's oldest great-grandchild.
It may seem farfetched, but before the industrialisation of the Far East, and the way the West interpreted martial arts, with the coloured belts and all, there were regional masters of these arts, who practised them as much as they could and honed their skills. However, despite all that, they never ruled out that they would one day fight against someone who never fought before, and lose.

It took me more than a year to write The Enemy and How I Helped to Fight it [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/TheEnemy/] which was my first real story, but it took me about two weeks to write Summerschool at the NSA [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Summerschool-at-the-NSA/]. This is whereas the screenplay for the film Spaceballs (which was written previously by Mel Brooks, Ronny Graham, and Thomas Meehan) took "only" six months to write [https://thelaughbutton.com/mel-brooks/24-lesser-known-facts-spaceballs/].

Similarly, it took Bob Dylan less than 20 minutes to write "Blowin' in the Wind" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blowin%27_in_the_Wind] which is considered a masterpiece, but he likely wrote many lesser songs before that.

In 2021, amateurs (also known as "geeks") are often offered token pay, or even large salaries or one-off sums of money (while agreeing to do some commissions or jobs for free).

Hacking and Heroism vs. Conformism and Tragedy

As you may have read, David who fought Goliath was a hacker [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/putting-all-cards-on-the-table-2013/#david_and_goliath] and it was modernised in the famous scene from Indiana Jones [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anEuw8F8cpE] where Indy shoots a master swordsman using a gun instead of struggling with him. Hacking or heroism involves breaking or bending as many invisible rules as possible and not accepting your "fate" (which is usually death) and this applies both to fiction and to real life.

The opposite of hacking is conformism where you accept all the normative rules of society, fear your own shadow, and stagnate and die, possibly by taking many innocent people's lives with you [https://studybible.info/ABP_Strongs/Judges%2016:30].

As a result, eccentricity and "craziness" are the road to a happy life, not conformism as widely believed.

Great Hackers

A great hacker is an action hero that is aware enough of the essence of hacking to become a greater and greater hacker, despite whatever limitations he or she may have, and despite whatever setbacks they may run into.

Note that some great hackers were clearly fictional (e.g: Yoda [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoda], Darth Vader [https://www.geekwire.com/2011/top-10-reasons-darth-vader-amazing-project-manager/], Milady de-Winter [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milady_de_Winter], Miss Piggy [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_Piggy], or even Fluttershy [https://mlp.fandom.com/wiki/Fluttershy] ), some were female (e.g: Sarah Bernhardt [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Bernhardt], Ayn Rand [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand], and Taylor Swift [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taylor_Swift]) and some were underage (most notably Samantha Smith [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samantha_Smith], Shirley Temple [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shirley_Temple], and Macaulay Culkin [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macaulay_Culkin]).

So don't let anything stop you.
Even our period's canonical "anti-geek", Penny [https://bigbangtheory.fandom.com/wiki/Penny] from the popular sitcom The Big Bang Theory [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Big_Bang_Theory], is a wonderful great hacker. This is evident by her constant "hacks" (or "dispellings" [https://buffyfanfiction.fandom.com/wiki/Selinaverse#Dispelling_in_the_Selinaverse]) of the rules and prejudice of the show's more stigmatic geeks.

The Fox in the Chickens Coop

Despite common belief what happens when you put a great hacker (whether male or female) in a secluded place with many minor hackers or conformists, is not one crushed great hacker, but rather many great hackers, who spend time effort and conscious thought on satisfying their customers, peers and superiors. That is the "fox in a chickens' coop" motif as exemplified in the story of Joseph in prison in the Bible [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_(Genesis)], and that of Milady de Winter in "The Three Musketeers" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milady_de_Winter]. In my "Summerschool at the NSA" screenplay [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Summerschool-at-the-NSA/], a fictionalised Summer Glau [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Summer-Glau/] (the actress who is notable for being featured in xkcd: Venting [https://xkcd.com/406/]) is the fox (pardon the pun) who devours the hens of the fictionalised NSA.

I, Shlomi Fish, have done the same in real life in a top security Israeli psychiatric ward where I was hospitalised for being non normative, and for doing some foolish stuff. It worked surprisingly well, and I've used the collected wisdom of Moses#Saladin#Ayn Rand#the Beatles#Sesame Street#web 2.0 blogs and sites#My Little Pony / Taylor Swift and my own intuition and trial and error.

It took me about 6-to-8 weeks, and I suffered from the conditions of the hospital, but otherwise was able to hone my skills in benevolent psychological warfare, and also started writing some essays with my limited computing resources there.

The Hacker Monarchs / Messiahs

Traditionally in history, some great hackers have been motivated enough to change the world or improve it, and let no obstacle permanently stop them. They have become so powerful that they took over the direction of the world and together with some collaborators and supporters became sources of greatness. This is even though some of them were clearly or presumably fictional.

We'll call them the "Hacker Monarchs" ("Hacker Kings" / "Hacker Queens") which is a less loaded title than "Messiahs".

The nature of The Hacker Monarchs

We are still figuring out more and more guidelines for how a hacker monarch should behave, and likely there'll be future insights.

In the article about the Grand Nagus in Star Trek DS9 [https://memory-alpha.fandom.com/wiki/Grand_Nagus], Quark is quoted as saying «Oh believe me, the Nagus has the greatest business mind in the entire Ferengi Alliance, always thinking ten, sometimes twenty steps ahead of everyone else.» and

beauty-and-the-geek It is wrong to look down on reality show contestants [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour.html#pbride_philosophers] (and more recently - YouTubers) who, like older forms of entertainers / philosophers, are seeking recognition and fame. However, the show Beauty and the Geek [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beauty_and_the_Geek] was doomed to failure because not only are most attractive girls increasingly attracted to geeks, but they are increasingly quite geeky themselves.

As funny as the "Math is hard. Let's go shopping!" [http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/002892.html] meme is, you can be a geek even if you are not too good at maths, and even shopping is a skill that can be honed.
this is similar for a hacker monarch who is often ahead of the curve. A messiah also attempts to always 
think a few steps ahead.

A hacker monarch believes that the correct answer to the question "Who is the most powerful person on 
Earth?" is "I am". Furthermore, the only less powerful people are those who answer otherwise.

They also know they can improve themselves, improve the world at large, and enjoy themselves at the 
same time.

In addition, a hacker monarch wishes no man or woman to unnecessarily suffer or die prematurely and 
from unnatural causes. They also want every person and collective to improve and become better [https://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pygmalion_effect] (= the Pygmalion effect as opposed to the Golem effect [https://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golem_effect]).

A hacker monarch is “their brothers’ keeper” to paraphrase on the Cain and Abel myth [https://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cain_and_Abel]. For example Christina Grimmie has tried to adapt herself and her 
work to what she thought others wanted for several years before her assassination at age 22 (by a fan who 
killed himself later almost immediately). While it was ultimately her fault, she had many fans and viewers 
and friends who could have noticed (including I).

Some notable hacker monarchs

Some examples for notable Hacker Monarchs, from my Jewish/Secular Israeli and Western (Near East/
Europe/North Americas) bias, are:

1. Moses [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses]
2. Cyrus the Great [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great]
5. Aristotle [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle] (believed to have been a band of philosophers with 
a central poster boy figure)
7. Jesus [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus] may have been a hacker monarch, but I have not studied 
his teachings closely, and have some natural aversion towards Christianity as an Israeli Jew.
8. Muhammad [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad]
15. Alexandre Dumas [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandre_Dumas] (pere)
17. Walt Disney [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Disney]
24. The fictional Buffy Summers [https://buffy.fandom.com/wiki/Buffy_Summers] being the poster girl of “Web 1.0”.
26. In Summerschool at the NSA [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Summerschool-at-the-NSA/], I believed Summer Glau [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Summer-Glau/] and Xkcd [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xkcd] will succeed me. While other “messiahs” / hacker-monarchs in the past tried to convince everyone else to consider themselves as such, it was only possible after the web became prevalent.

Following the Summer Glau “termination” [https://www.shlomifish.org/me/rindolf/#update_long_live_us_hacker_monarchs], it was believed that there now can be many simultaneous hacker monarchs, and that people can try to become ones while not dethroning (or sic transit gloria mundi [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sic_transit_gloria_mundi]) the previous hacker monarchs. “We don’t die. We multiply.”

**Hacker Monarchs being Fallible**

Note that even a hacker monarch may be fallible. Socrates almost got himself killed several times, and then he willingly drank the poison and died. Plato and Aristotle said equally blasphemous things, but learned from Socrates’ fate and worked on better delivery so both died as highly revered and respected. The same story repeated itself during the Renaissance with Galileo and Isaac Newton.

Many Hacker Monarchs were two steps forward and one step back, like the fact Ayn Rand was anti-Open [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/culture/case-for-commercial-fan-fiction/#open_free_share_steal] and anti-Amateur and confused selfishness with rational self growth [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=neo-tech-selfishness].

Moreover, I still resent the fact that the characters in Buffy were competent, but on the other hand socially inept and lacked sexual assertiveness. This is a false dichotomy that I tried to rectify in my stories and
Having read *The Three Musketeers* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Musketeers], Dumas’ magnus opus, I recall feeling intimidated by the competence and resourcefulness of Milady de Winter [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milady_de_Winter], until I eventually realised that despite being the antagonist, or because of that, she was the ultimate good in the book, and she became my epitome of sexiness in fiction. I disliked the fact that Dumas killed her so much, that I set out to carve different destinies for her in *Selina Mandrake - The Slayer* [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Selina-Mandrake/] and for Faith [https://buffy.fandom.com/wiki/Faith_Lehane] (her rough equivalent in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) in *Buffy - a Few Good Slayers* [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Buffy/A-Few-Good-Slayers/].

So if you have a criticism against even the greatest hackers, voice it - we can only benefit from it [http://shlomifishswiki.branchable.com/Encourage_criticism_and_try_to_get_offended/]. Also see The Emperor's New Clothes [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Emperor%27s_New_Clothes].

### Other names for Hacker Monarchs

1. Hacker Kings / Hacker Queens (“Hacker Queen Regent”).

2. Warrior King [https://memory-alpha.fandom.com/wiki/Kahless_the_Unforgettable] / Warrior Queen / Warrior Queen Regent / Warrior Monarch


4. Best of the Best [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHZuLMFfriQ]

5. In the Selinalverse [https://buffyfanfiction.fandom.com/wiki/Selinaverse] they are referred to as ”Q”s or later as “Sith”s.


### Make your own kind of music / Take your qualities to your advantage

Similar to the Mama Cass Elliot song "make your own kind of music" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbSM02_lk34] or its Lady Gaga modernisation "Born This Way" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG0wi1m-89o], I have given an interpretation of Captain Nemo [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Buffy/A-Few-Good-Slayers/ongoing-text.html#faith-s-childhood] (= "nobody" in Latin, and not to be confused with Nemo from the animated film *Finding Nemo* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finding_Nemo]) in Jules Verne's novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty_Thousand_Leagues_Under_the_Sea], whom people keep finding interesting for what he believes are superficial reasons. But these qualities are part of what makes us who we are.

The YouTuber band Cimorelli [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cimorelli] has used the fact that they are six sisters (who also have five male brothers) in a large Roman Catholic family, a trend which has received a lot of antagonism, from environmentalists, psychologists and the media, to their advantage, and as a gimmick. As a result, they published many videos of them covering hit songs, some original songs, and have been live performing and collaborating with other singers and entertainers.
Naturally, they are not the only YouTube success story. But if you get an opportunity, seize it. Were you invited to give a talk? Go for it. Even if you were invited from the "wrong" reason, you will pave the road for future lecturers. A sociology student invited you to talk to them about your work as an open source / open content creator? Go for it. You thought of a new Chuck Norris/etc. factoid [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts]? Write it down and share it on social media and chat. Someone asked you out and you like them and are single? Go for it. You have an idea for a nice video, story, screenplay, song, etc. Execute it.

I used to be jealous of Ayn Rand [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand] for writing so lucidly and coherently in *The Fountainhead* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead] and in *Atlas Shrugged* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged], whereas my style of screenplays and stories was what I described as "staccato" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Staccato] where I do not mention any unnecessary details. However, Rand likely felt the same way about Dostoevsky [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fyodor_Dostoevsky] and Tolstoy [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Tolstoy], whose overly verbose style is now the terror and hatred of many Literature students.

Similarly, current and future generations will likely appreciate my staccato style more than Ayn Rand’s. Make your own kind of music!

**Time >> Money**

This tweet reads: [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/1175578541292957696]


"How much is too much?"

"Oh, try me."

There are likely many Nonprofit organizations [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonprofit_organization] with millions of dollars in the bank and not enough skilled volunteers' time to do anything with it.

If we take Sarah Michelle Gellar (SMG) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Michelle_Gellar] for example, she went from donating money, back when she played Buffy [https://buffy.fandom.com/wiki/Buffy_Summers] into dedicating time for worthwhile causes after that:

I started because my mother taught me a long time ago that even when you have nothing, there's ways to give back. And what you get in return for that is tenfold. But it was always hard because I couldn't do a lot. I couldn't do much more than just donate money when I was on [Buffy] because there wasn't time. And now that I have the time, it's amazing.

Like the old Beatles' song goes “I don't care too much for money. Money can't buy me love.” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srwXJUXPHvE].

**Karma, "What goes around, comes around"**

From my experience, Karma [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karma#Comparable_concepts] and "What goes around, comes around" are real. It is also evident that Ayn Rand incorporated her belief of them
in *The Fountainhead* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead]. Apathy and cruelty (as well as carelessness, paranoia, hubris, etc.) tends to retaliate, while being noble and generous pays back in spades.

I decided that if someone asks me for money, I will give them up to a reasonable amount (e.g: the resentful beggar case [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Summerschool-at-the-NSA/#the-resentful-beggar], or the story of my first kiss [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/true-stories/my-first-kiss/]).

"One Tin Soldier" and the senselessness of destruction

I discovered the song "One Tin Soldier" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTBx-hHf4BE] - an anti-war song from 1969, by accident through Rob Paravonian's Pachelbel Rant [https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/pachelbel-rant]. I found it saddening and touching.

While I like the song as is, I wish for Cimorelli who are known for their upbeat and energetic music to cover it. But like Hillel the Elder noted: [http://shlomifishswiki.branchable.com/Self-Sufficiency/] “If I am not for myself, who will be?” so I plan to record it myself using my poor man's tools, while emulating Cimorelli's style: ffmpeg [https://ffmpeg.org], my web cam, and audacity [https://www.audacityteam.org] all running on a desktop Linux [https://duckduckgo.com/desktop_Linux?ia=web] system.

The song indicates that any destruction of lives, costly equipment or buildings, or even anti-spam measures, and removal/censorship of web or social media resources is self-defeating and wrong.

What do "able" and "competent" imply?

Karl Marx famously remarked [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/From_each_according_to_his_ability,_to_each_according_to_his_needs]

> From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs

However, this is wrong because we should encourage people to be more able and more competent, and be less needy. So assuming we wish people to be more able, how do we measure it?

1. The first measure of ability is Money [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Money] - the more money you have the more goods you can afford, the more you can give, donate, lend, or invest, and the more free time you have to do creative works.

2. The second measure of ability is Fame [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/1175430272130650112], the more people heard about you the more places will invite you to be present and even pay you for your time.

   Fame has got a bad reputation lately, but I believe it is undeserved. Even if you are famous, you do not necessarily have to suffer from it.

3. The third measure is "luck" which is which opportunities you seize. The media went out of its way to present Paris Hilton [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Hilton], who was the canonical "alpha female" in the world throughout several years between 2000 and 2014, as incompetent, talentless, stupid, and lucky to have been a heiress by birth. However, despite that, she was the opposite of most of these. Moreover, if she utilised her initial state to her own advantage, then all the power to her.

   Earlier in 1982, Samantha Smith [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samantha_Smith] may have been lucky for her letter to have arrived to the Soviet leader, but she hoped for that and planned that. It is likely
that her friends found her a little "weird" for her habit of sending letters, given my friends looked down on a similar habit I had in the early 1990s before the prevalence of the Internet.

4. In today's Internet's social media, one can get a cheaper indication of some these, using views, upvotes, likes, "karma", reposts, replies, etc.

5. Naturally, abilities can refer to your various artistic, craftsmanship, sports, social, and intellectual skills.

**Sexiness as Competence**

Now here is something interesting: there is a strong correlation between how able you are and how sexually desirable you are to members-of-the-appropriate-sexes (MOTAS) (who may still be attracted to you whether or not you or they are in a relationship.).

Furthermore, fitness in biology [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fitness_(biology)] in humans corresponds more to sexual attractiveness than to physical fitness [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_fitness]. In the United Kingdom, the adjective "fit" has started to mean "sexy", "hot", "attractive" or "desirable" including such MOTAS who are not too athletic.

Some people may still think that sexual attractiveness is indicative of incompetence and bad form, but the opposite is true. Back when I referred a deaf friend of mine to the video Daily Gradvice [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21uXcvD5lPs] (tongue-in-cheek sex/love/etc. advice by Grace Helbig [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_Helbig]) he complained that the quality of the subtitles there (which were generated by automatic Speech recognition [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech_recognition]) was like "her butt before she cleans it up". I took offence for that because I knew she was a wonderful lady and that was because she was so sexy and sexualised, not despite that.

**Taylor Swift**

We were discussing [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=sharp-gnu--think-big] Apple's Swift language [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swift_(programming_language)] the other day on the #gnu [irc://irc.freenode.net/#gnu] chat room on freenode when I told someone there that he should charge 300 USD/hour for Swift projects because he disliked them so much. I also said the high fee may yield a higher demand [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=joel-camels-rubber-duckies-11]. Then, since I had a browser window open with the most followed Twitter accounts and Taylor Swift [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taylor_Swift] was there, I noted she likely charges more than 300 USD/hour for her live shows. He told me that she shared her name with that language, and I noted that she she sue Apple for trademark violations of the supposed "Swift" trademark - and win. I joked that if "Apple sued Taylor Swift for violation of their Apple Swift language's trademark they will spend all their money in the bank on litigation and still lose.". Ha ha only serious.

I then realised that Ms. Swift has become a Hacker Queen by that time. While I think her face is good eye candy, she is not that beautiful in my opinion (but I think she looks much hotter with black hair [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdneKLhsWOQ] than with her trademark blonde hair). Nevertheless, there are many things we can learn from her.

First of all is that she exemplifies the amateur model, because she does stuff for fun, rather than for money. Her videos despite often being popular probably do not offset their production value in ads, but they are good publicity, provide fodder for remixes, parodies and covers, and are fun enough to produce so she can afford to offset the cost. She doesn't work for money or even for a shitload of money. She works for fun.

**Conclusion**

The end of the story is that I told my friend that I would try to prepare better subtitles which he and others would be able to use. While his original insulting delayed that, I eventually yielded functional subtitles [https://github.com/shlomif/subtitles-for-dailygrace-on-youtube] for the video, which my deaf friend was able to use (and can be used by everyone else who wishes to use them).
Moreover, Taylor is an unapologetic “attention whore” [https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/attention_whore] who often spends large amounts of money or even also time in activities that will make her look like a better person or more well known. Note that per Jeremiah chapter 9 22-23 [https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/16006/jewish/Chapter-9.htm], “Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, nor the strong man boast of his strength, nor the rich man boast of his riches. But let him that boasts exult in this, that he understands and knows me, for I am the Lord Who practices kindness, justice and righteousness on the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord.” I not only hold it against her, but encourage other do-gooders to do the same. Furthermore, to paraphrase the film "For Love or Money" [https://im.imdb.com/title/tt0106941/] she doesn't do it because she seeks attention - she does it because she cares.

Otherwise, Taylor Swift is a great philanthropist who likely also donates to friendly individuals [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=shlomif-fact-taylor-swift-6] and realises that one should "cast your bread upon the waters" [https://biblehub.com/eccli/11-1.htm] to quote the wonderful Biblical scroll of Ecclesiastes [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiastes].

One advice I can give to Ms. Swift is to stop "speaking in riddles" which was also an issue of Terry Pratchett’s books [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Pratchett] and previously Ayn Rand's. I registered that idiom from the lyrics of a cover of Swift's song "Ours" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNzj55CEoMI] (which I now much malign). I recommend she start writing a public snapshot of her personal philosophy (“Taytayism” or whatever) similar to my repository of this very document [https://github.com/shlomif/putting-cards-2019-2020]. It can be on GitHub or GitLab, or perhaps Google Docs.

Another piece of advice is to emulate YouTubers and start an "indie" YouTube channel, but this is not particularly specific to her.

Chuck Norris

My previous analysis of Chuck Norris and the Chuck Norris factoids trend [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-all-cards-on-the-table-2013/#chuck_norris] turned out to not be the last word on the subject. It is well known that Norris took the facts to his advantage, and as a result became the most prominent actor in Hollywood (which I call "the Alpha Male"). However, shortly afterwards, the factoids seem to have fallen out of favour, and some time after that, Norris announced that he retired from acting.

Now, I still added factoids about other subjects to my collection [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/]. Then one day in 2019, I was chatting on the #gnu chat room on freenode [https://freenode.net/] and after giving someone some advice, I came up with a new factoid which I uttered there: “If Chuck Norris gives you some advice, and you do not follow it, he'll survive. However, you likely won't.”. To my surprise, my fellow to the conversation, told me it was funny. Some days later I spent some time with my sister's husband, who is an artist and a film maker, and showed him some of the software applications and web services, which I was familiar with as a Linux (or rather "GNU/Linux") [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linux] user and developer. Then, just when he and my sister were going away, I told him I had some factoids on my site about Chuck Norris/etc., and he told me he was a big fan of those.

So what has happened?

What I think happened is that Norris started playing (and fighting) in roles he liked, even if he didn’t get paid or got paid relatively little, or was paid after the fact. He became a happy amateur rather than an increasingly unhappy professional. I won’t be surprised if he has agreed to appear at local schools' plays, and/or playing roles that were seemingly unlike his traditional Hollywood roles - just because he liked them.

As a result of that, I believe Chuck Norris, both himself and the fictionalised Chuck Norris Facts image, has become a new Hacker Monarch. Well Done!
Update about the factoids’ trend

To my knowledge, I was the first to have come up with factoids about a fictional female (= Xena the Warrior Princess [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Xena/]). Later on, inspired by an IRC chat [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=summer-glau-vs-chuck-norris], I came up with factoids [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Summer-Glau/] about a real life female, Summer Glau. These were followed by some factoids about Emma Watson [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Emma-Watson/], and more recently some about Taylor Swift [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Taylor-Swift/].

My friends and I also came up with factoids about inanimate technologies and organisations such as those about Windows Update [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Windows-Update/].

"Fear is the path to the dark side"

Master Yoda [https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/Yoda] from Star Wars is a great hacker, despite being fictional, and we can learn a lot from what he said about being unnecessarily paranoid: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFnFr-DOPi8]

Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering. And I sense much fear in you.

When one is irrationally paranoid, he will become suspicious, distrustful, and overzealous, and demonise people who care about him, and cause him to lose property (including data) or even his life. As I noted in a tweet [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/1324813236114497538]:

I’m a full professor at an ancient university and I got here through hard work, high intelligence (lots of very clever people think I’m very clever), persistence, pulling my weight and…

AMAZING AMOUNTS OF LUCK

I recall master Oogway [https://kungfupanda.fandom.com/wiki/Oogway] saying “There are no accidents” in the first Kung Fu Panda film [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kung_Fu_Panda_(film)], which while using a very expected plot, was funny, fun and insightful. Not saying it’s always the case, but many incidents happen to you because you wanted them or was prepared for them. Maybe luck has less to do with pure chance than we assume.

Thinking you have bad luck and being pessimistic may be self-fulfilling.

Following the Snowden findings [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Snowden], some people decided to go to great lengths to avoid the NSA, CIA, or FBI knowing about their private lives, and online services such as Google or Facebook "fingerprinting" them.

However, do you honestly think the NSA/etc. cares enough about you to harm you? In my #SummerNSA [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/SummerNSA/] effort I have said many unkind things about an idolised version of the NSA [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/NSA/], and nothing happened to me, my homesite, and my other online writings / blogging. (And I announced the "Summerschool at the NSA" informal screenplay [https://www.reddit.com/r/xkcd/comments/1bigr/nxkeinspired_screenplay_starring_summer_glau_as/] on reddit some months before the Snowden findings of fact.)

Moreover, I had much earlier written and published The Enemy and How I Helped to Fight it [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/TheEnemy/], which is a surrealistic political satire that criticised the
Hizbullah [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah] at the time, but I can also retrospectively tell had a lot of criticism directed at the IDF, Israel, and other organisations. Since my home address is common knowledge, Iran could have killed me a long time ago.

On freenode, a chat friend told me he was glad that Google has his gmail.com E-mail messages because it means someone else besides him has them, and they will likely not get lost like his previous E-mail messages got lost in a hard disk failure.

I keep most of my important digital data in public repositories on GitHub [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GitHub] and other "code sharing" sites because to quote Linus Torvalds [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linus_Torvalds]: “Only wimps use tape backup. Real men just upload their important stuff on FTP and let the rest of the world mirror it.”. Nowadays, one should use git as a version control system [https://better-scm.shlomifish.org/docs/this-site-is-irrelevant/] most of the time, but the point is that one should publish or perish [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-all-cards-on-the-table-2013/#publish_or_perish].

(Note that there is also Google Drive [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Drive] and similar services, which are more friendly to laymen, have web interfaces, and have coarser grained revision history.)

My contact info [https://www.shlomifish.org/me/contact-me/] is publicly available, and I actually wish for more people - of any sex/gender, ethnicity, talents and interests, race, nationality, etc. - to contact me and chat in any plausible medium.

This tweet reads [https://twitter.com/sawaba/status/1038078106404315136]: “I know many people that have lost priceless data forever because they decided that it needed the utmost protection. Family photos, months and years of coding work, a novel… all gone, because it *had* to be encrypted.”

Moreover as xkcd #538 [https://explainxkcd.com/wiki/index.php/538:_Security] notes, the bottleneck for revealing secrets is you and the amount of pain and intimidation you're willing to endure. When I was a teenager, a friend who was physically stronger forced me to reveal the 4 digit password to my watch secret phone numbers - not unlike the "Princess Bride” gate key meme [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94LL8J8WYT0]. Moreover, as the xkcd hover text notes, if your data is worthwhile, then you'll share it far and wide [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/culture/case-for-commercial-fan-fiction/indiv-nodes/open_free_share_steal.xhtml].

So please do not be paranoid and overly possessive of your crown jewels.

Hakuna Matata - no worries and no problems

Hakuna matata [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakuna_matata] is a Swahili phrase, which after it was introduced in a song [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakuna_Matata_(song)] in the Disney film The Lion King [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lion_King] came to mean both "no worries" and "no problem".

Some people came up with elaborate hypothetical scenarios [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/computers/open-source/foss-licences-wars/#strong-copyleft-and-threats-to-foss] where using the more restrictive GPL licence [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_General_Public_License] will be advantageous instead of the permissive software licences [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permissive_software_license] which I prefer to use for most of the software [https://www.shlomifish.org/open-source/projects/] which I originated. However, I was non-plussed by them and said I will be “OK with it”. People did not violate my trust, because I entrusted them with the power to do so, which made them feel empowered.

I believe that if the great Saladin [http://shlomifishswiki.branchable.com/Saladin_Style/] was alive today and was a developer of open source software (which is not as farfetched as it sounds [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour.html#if_ayn_rand_was_born_in_the_1990s]), then he too would prefer using permissive licences when he could help it.
I met Wilfredo Rodriguez [https://blog.wikimedia.org/2017/06/22/wilfredo-rodriguez/] on freenode, and he notes that he uses the public domain ( CC0 [https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/] ) for most of his photos, so people can use them even without being legally required to credit him (much less to pay him). Nevertheless, many of them do exactly that.

Benevolent Psychological Warfare

Benevolent psychological warfare was practised by Saladin, but was enhanced by greater and greater action heroes / hackers throughout the ages: including Sesame Street [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sesame_Street], The Beatles [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beatles], web 2.0 bloggers / online writers and online entertainers [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0], My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Little_Pony:_Friendship_is_Magic], and YouTube videos.

The good news is that it is easy to practice, and can even be applied by people who are not in a position of power. And it can be summarised by the famous adages "Be excellent to each other" [https://mygeekwisdom.com/2011/09/12/be-excellent-to-each-other/] and "Don't be a dick." (= Wheaton's Law) [https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/wheatons-law].

If you interact with a fellow person, shake his hand. Expect everyone to improve and become better [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pygmalion_effect] (= the Pygmalion effect as opposed to the Golem effect [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golem_effect]) and act accordingly.

Thank someone for doing something you like. But be honest and tell someone if you dislike some action he took, or one of their works/creations (even if you feel they are your superior).

Express interest in the other person. Ask them "What's up?", "What's new?", etc. If he says "nothing much" tell them they should try to be less boring than that [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/635904227890458624].

I recall that during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Final [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_FIFA_World_Cup_Final], the Croatian president [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolinda_Grabar-Kitarovi%C4%87], who is a woman, was so sweet and hugged all the (male) players of both teams: her native country, Croatia — and France — which won the match.

Similarly, Queen Elizabeth II [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II] has reportedly recently actually attended [https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/guest-honour-queen-leaves-couple-685253] a wedding to which a British couple invited her as a joke.

Sometimes people may refuse to interact with you, in that case say: «OK, no problem, have a nice day!»

It is also a good idea to compliment your friends and acquaintances, of whatever sex, for their looks. I recall telling a gorgeous young woman who came to visit one of the fellow patients in the hospital: "You are beautiful", and she thanked me for that, and noted that nobody had told her that in several years. (Which made me sad.)

Don’t be afraid to ask for help

One important thing to note is that we all have our limitations and we are not good at everything. As a result, it is important that we sometimes ask other people for help, despite whatever Feudalism [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feudalism]-like take on “independence” there may be. For example, I prefer not to cook complex meals myself, because cooking and learning to cook would be a grand waste of time for me and I’d produce mediocre at best results.

To quote Peter Ustinov [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Peter_Ustinov]: «Comedy is simply a funny way of being serious». 

comedy-is-serious
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For some inspiration you may wish to listen to the Beatles’ songs "Help!" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help!_(song)] and "With a Little Help from My Friends" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/With_a_Little_Help_from_My_Friends].

Thoughts about how to Approach a MOTAS

"Be excellent to each other" and being honest has implications with respect to how a man or a woman should approach a member of the appropriate sex (or MOTAS [http://www.catb.org/jargon/html/M/MOTAS.html]). If you are interested in testing the waters for a long-term relationship, then a good strategy will be to simply say: "Hi, I like you and think you are beautiful/handsome/cute/hot/sexy/gorgeous/etc. What do you say we go on a date?" Either he or she will agree, or you have wasted much less time.

Note that girls should feel free to approach guys this way too. In my stories [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/stories/], I have tried to encourage women to become more sexually assertive, but it seems that most Israeli girls did not get the memo, and are still shy and playing it hard to get.

What if you are interested in a one off sexual intercourse? Nothing wrong with that. You can learn about how to do it from Jazz (= the name of one of the characters) from the show The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fresh_Prince_of_Bel-Air]. As he said in an excerpt from an episode [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcD7hvH0Wk8]: “let's go get some barbecue and get busy”. Or as DAILY GRADVICE put it for a girl trying to seduce a guy: "I want you to sail your dick ship into my lady port." [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21uXcvD5lPs].

Naturally, it doesn't have to be these exact words, but the point stands: be honest, sincere, and candid, cut to the chase and don't play games.

Strategy for Winning

I think the following strategy is useful for succeeding in life:

1. Admit that you want to become more able and competent.

2. However, note that you won't mind "losing", if it means avoiding hurting yourself or others, or even avoiding remaining miserable or unhappy for too long. ("You gotta know when to walk away." [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hx4gdlfamo] )

   “It is better to be considered a "sucker" (= generous) than to acquire an enemy.”

3. I may have competitors, but not only will I not try to immorally hinder them, but will encourage them, and try to publicly share my knowledge, thoughts, and opinions with them (given the time frame).

4. The important thing is to have fun ( geeks / “amateurs” ), identify with the cause, and have a well-rounded life.

YouTube

YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/] is a video sharing site which you've probably heard of. While there are many official videos by signed artists or by the film owners' copyrights, there is also a huge ecosystem of original "direct-to-YouTube" art created by the so called "YouTubers". They upload anything from bootleg videos of songs, to technical tutorials, to low cost covers (often just a man or a woman singing

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*Israeli Popularity* It is possible my site has not been as popular in Israel as it could be, because it is written almost entirely in English, and because I have not been too active on social media that is popular in Israel such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.
and playing a guitar, a piano or even an electric organ or A cappella), to parodies, to lyric videos, to live recordings of any musicians or comedians.

Now, some people still look down on YouTubers thinking that covers can never be better than the original, but having been introduced to the world of YouTube covers, I can often prove them wrong:

1. Tiffany Alvord’s cover of Hurt Me Tomorrow by K’NAAN [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6KAGqjdmsk]

2. Jess Greenberg’s cover of "Highway to Hell" by AC/DC [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2RZXeQc5HU] (somewhat NSFW - "boobs")

3. Alex Boye and Mom Bloggers United Africanised Cover of Katy Perry’s Roar [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5HexLIqWY8]

4. Christina Grimmie’s (RIP) karaoke cover of Whitney Houston (also RIP)’s "I Will Always Love You" [https://www.shlomifish.org/Files/files/video/Me%20Singing%20%20I%20Will%20Always%20Love%20You%22%20by%20Whitney%20Houston-CBdmpvPa73g.mp4]

Naturally, there is a lot of junk on YouTube - Sturgeon's law ("ninety percent of anything is crap") [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sturgeon's_law] is still true, and that may include my own YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc6rd10fdTTa8IBAdau_Cww].

One problem with YouTube is that many videos have been removed, or censored, or disappeared, or blocked in certain regions (often by automated filters). Some people like me try to use youtube-dl [https://youtube-dl.org/] or similar downloaders to download every video that we like from YouTube, and while some die hard copyright puritans have looked down on that, I still support that as a way to battle censorship.

While I do not condone the recent YouTube shooting [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube_headquarters_shooting] (by a woman no less), I believe that YouTube has brought it upon themselves by the aggressive and irrational content filtering and removal, that many YouTube creators and users have been witnessing.

I believe that signed artists and creators (or the somewhat more professional ones) should emulate YouTubers and start indie channels where they post regular collaborations with other YouTubers: from the better known to the relatively obscure.

Amateur-modelled commerce

Capitalism has been getting a bad reputation since Karl Marx published his book Das Kapital [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Das_Kapital] or as Neo-Tech put it:

The dictionary definition of capitalism is: An economic system characterized by private ownership of capital goods and by investments that are determined by private decision rather than by state control. Prices, production and distribution of goods are determined by a free market.

But most writers and commentators put dishonest altruistic-platonistic connotations on the meaning of capitalism: A system of exploitation of the weak by the strong – devoid of love and good will. A system in which unwanted goods and services are pushed...
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onto consumers through clever, deceptive advertising for the sole purpose of profits and greed. Capitalism dominates most Western governments. Capitalism, big business, and fascism are synonymous.

I am no longer a libertarian purist, but I still think Capitalism and liberalism are the best economic system and political system respectively.

That put aside, here are some thoughts about a more amateur take on commerce that we can consider:

1. I once attended an Israeli LiveJournal -ers meetup (back when LiveJournal was more popular outside Russia) which took place in a vegetarian Indian restaurant. That restaurant allowed one to eat as much as they want from the buffet and pay as much (or as little) as they want.

Now, I ate some of the food there which was pretty good, and decided to pay 70 ILS. This is whereas I recall that at a time a hamburger meal at a decent restaurant costed between 40 ILS and 50 ILS. Why did I pay so much? Because I appreciated their trust and felt generous.

2. Creators of digital media (or "content") may opt to initially release their works under relatively restrictive licences such as Creative Commons CC-by-nc-sa or the Affero GPL, and sell commercial or proprietary exceptions to the licence. Alternatively, they can ask for money to put it under a less restrictive licence such as CC-by, the MIT licence, or even CC0 / public domain.

3. I have been doing software development commissions where I give a rough estimate of the time it will take me by multiplying my estimate by 3 and charge 50 USD / hour (which is a good rate in Israel) and I do not charge if the customer is unhappy with my deliverables. This is because I'd rather be considered a "sucker" than acquire a new enemy.

Note that the deliverables of a recent commission were made open source by permission of the customer, because although he paid me to work on some change he needed, he was also happy to share it with the world at large.

4. Some people online lamented the fact that some Grammy Award-winning artists had to use Patreon (or similar) donation pledges to sponsor their albums, but it is quite similar to most philosophers of ancient times, who were entertainers who collected donations from the attendees after their performances.

5. Counterintuitively, charging more may yield a bigger demand. In the book The Princess Bride, there is the story of a swords' craftsman, whose secret better craftsman delegator was killed by the 6 fingered man, and charged more and more for his now pretty bad results. However, the more he charged the greater the demand was.

For more insights, see:


2. nayafia's "lemonade-stand": A handy guide to financial support for open source
3. quotes from Joel on Software’s essay about The Pricing of Software (or other goods) [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/joel-on-software.html#joel-camels-rubber-duckies-1]

### Amateurs in Sports

Before the industrialisation of the Far East, and the way the West interpreted martial arts, with the coloured belts and all, there were regional masters of these arts, who practised them as much as they could and honed their skills. However, despite all that, they never ruled out that they would one day fight against someone who never fought before, and lose.

In The Three Musketeers [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Musketeers], Dumas tells the story of how d’Artagnan who is a young swordsman without much of an official training, from a remote region of France, eventually becomes the best fighter in France. This is despite the fact that his peers, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, have much more experience and training.

The short-lived sitcom Phenom [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenom_(TV_series)] depicted a young skillful Tennis player whose happiness was ruined due to living in boarding school conditions. Even if she practised more, she lost the psychological war.

Building on the strategy for winning and amateurs we can see that in ~2021, most good paid sportsmen are increasingly enjoying their work, and don't mind losing too much.

1. Croatia were the runnerups of the 2018 FIFA world cup [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_FIFA_World_Cup_Final], despite being a small country.

2. 8 First Place Winners in a USA National spelling bee [https://www.newsweek.com/scripps-national-spelling-bee-winners-1440603]

3. michael phelps record/


### Christina Grimmie (1994 - 2016; RIP)

Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christina_Grimmie] and YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUudDyi0JiVmsXarvU98YYQ].

### If the mountain won't come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain

Fill in.

### People Can Change; Companies and countries and communities too

It may surprise you, but people can change. Towards the end [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Selina-Mandrake/ongoing-text.html#from-dispeller-to-selina] of my screenplay Selina Mandrake - The Slayer I describe such changes among traditionally stubborn men and societies:
1. Q [https://memory-alpha.fandom.com/wiki/Q], who had been revealed to be a humanoid, decided to appear less blasé and show some compassion for fellow organisms, including his ex-wives and children.


3. We admit to ourselves that sometimes amateurs (being people who like what they do, people who don’t play by the rules, and finally people who are not professional) can compete with the large budgets and high discipline of professionals, and even exceed it, because they can deliver more and at greater capacity, tend to think outside the box, and simply tend to avoid the many invisible rules that plague more professional structures.

Linus Torvalds [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linus_Torvalds] surprised quite a few people by admitting that being rude was detrimental to the growth of the Linux kernel’s development community [https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-45664640] rather than something that he believed was good for it. There were some conspiracy theories about how exactly he came to that realisation, but it is not unthinkable for a person to change their mind.

Richard Stallman [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Stallman] also decided to resign from his long term role as president of Free Software Foundation [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Software_Foundation], which also was a surprise to many. The exact impetus for that decision is irrelevant, and Dr. Stallman is planning to remain active. Furthermore, the new president will likely be better and more effective than him.

Companies can change too. Under its new leadership, Microsoft [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft] has open sourced many projects, or developed them as open source to begin with. It also acquired GitHub [https://news.microsoft.com/2018/06/04/microsoft-to-acquire-github-for-7-5-billion/], and despite some predictions of doom and gloom from paranoid users, it seems that the user experience (= "UX") of GitHub has improved since the acquisition.

Naturally, there are some paranoid "conspiracy theories" about evil Microsoft intentions to secretly take over and dominate the open source world. I on the other hand, try to avoid worrying ("Hakuna Matata") about such farfetched scenarios before they have materialised. I still recall some clueless users of Microsoft software saying that "Microsoft will buy Linux!" in the mid-to-late 1990s, and that naturally didn't happen because of the FOSS [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_and_open-source_software] nature of the licences (whether copyleft [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyleft] or permissive [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permissive_software_licence]), and the superior amateur-based model of development.

As the Chuck Norris factoid I came up with goes [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/1175452478273478656]: ‘Chuck Norris' round house kicks are licensed under the public domain because no one else can successfully emulate them.’

### Six kinds of fools: avoiding prejudice

There are two kinds of fools. One says, “This is old, and therefore good”. And one says, “This is new, and therefore better”.


Two more kinds of fools. One says: “This is popular, and therefore good”. The other says: “This is good because it’s not popular”.

— Shlomi Fish (though may not be a 100% original sentiment).
(And recently people had prejudice against "mainstream" culture.)

It is important not to be prejudiced against things just because they are old, new, popular, unpopular, seem like "a religion" [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/1165982522091737088], were hyped, seem blasphemous or cringeworthy, are politically incorrect, etc.

I've been criticised for still using XML [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XML] and related technologies, because they seem to have fallen out of favour. But I have good reasons for using XML and use it for different use cases than JSON [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JSON] and YAML [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YAML] and various lightweight markup languages [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lightweight_markup_language], which I also use and like for different purposes.

Similarly, back when the Friends TV show [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friends] was airing, some hard core computer geeks dismissed it, due to it being too mainstream, while I found it very good.

Lately, some people have looked down on adult male fans of the show My Little Pony Friendship is Magic [https://mlp.fandom.com/wiki/My_Little_Pony_Friendship_is_Magic] because it was originally intended for young children, especially young girls. This is even though most male adult fans (including me) are heterosexual and that they include some combat soldiers. In a tweet [https://twitter.com/shlomif/status/1174358484726497280] I wrote that "I've always considered myself a little "girly" and now I'm even kinda proud of it, and am an otherwise straight male. "You can never truly appreciate Gilmore Girls until you've watched it in the original Klingon!" ( Origin [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=sharp-perlcafe-looking-back-at-your-old-habits] ) … ha ha only serious.". I think you'd be surprised at how much unmacho and geeky some of the best male warriors are [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-all-cards-on-the-table-2013/#best_warriors].

**Criticism**

I feel that one should Encourage people to criticise them [http://shlomifishwiki.branchable.com/Encourage_criticism_and_try_to_get_offended/] and try to get offended, because negative criticism highlights things where one can improve, including various falsehoods that one believes in, but are in fact false. (See: "All great truths begin as blasphemies" [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/george_bernard_shaw_101824]). On the other hand, if one only tries to hear flattery or yesmen, they are likely to get trapped in an echo chamber, and become surrounded by sycophants [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sycophancy], and improve too little.

On the other hand, one should never try to please everyone [http://shlomifishwiki.branchable.com/Never_Try_to_Please_Everyone/] because some people will always dislike some aspects of your work, and the best thing you can do is disagree and move on. Back when I referred a certain fellow open source developer (who is a Christian American) to my Star Trek: “We, the Living Dead” [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Star-Trek/We-the-Living-Dead/] fan fic he objected to the use of the phrase “hot girls” there, and claimed I should delete the offending pages from my site. However, I refused because I didn't disapprove of using that phrase there, and even if I did, I'd rather not remove such offending material completely, but rather either revise it or add a disclaimer note.

**Colour of the Bikeshed**

A somewhat more involved case of criticism is Parkinson’s Law of Triviality [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_of_the_bikeshed] or the "colour of the bikeshed" argument in which discussions about trivial matters which many people can understand are given disproportionate time. In this case it is important to sometimes avoid insisting on one's preference. Recently, the local Israeli Free and open-source software
Putting Cards on the Table (2019-2021)

community contemplated whether to use WordPress or a static site generator for the new linux.org.il site and when the consensus settled on WordPress, I accepted that despite the fact that I preferred the other option. That is because wasting time on such trivialities will not be fruitful.

Quote from "If—" by Rudyard Kipling

"If—" by Rudyard Kipling is a famous poem which is the favourite of mine and many past and present people (including Ayn Rand). Quoting from it:

If you can keep your head when all about you Are losing theirs and blaming it on you, If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, But make allowance for their doubting too; If you can wait and not be tired by waiting, Or being lied about, don’t deal in lies, Or being hated, don’t give way to hating, And yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise:

Do not be afraid to live

Forgiveness

Saladin forgave the Knights Templar for their vandalism and murder, and let them go on their way as reformed and happy and sane individuals, despite their past criminal track record. Given that, you can forgive someone who has offended you or insulted someone you care about.

Lao Tsu noted in Tao Te Ching that “Those kind, be kind to them; Those unkind, be kind to them also.” and there is also the aphorism “keep your friends close and your enemies closer.” from the Godfather part II. Finally, there is the old adage that “To err is human. To forgive — divine”.

Your time is likely too precious to hold grudges against your friends, your past friends, or even people who currently dislike you.

Managing Your Memory

As I wrote in Sherlock Holmes about Awk:

I enjoyed reading some of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s writings about the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes when I was younger, which were entertaining (although possibly distanced from the way actual crime investigation actually works), and interesting. I vividly recall one excerpt from
His ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge. Of contemporary literature, philosophy and politics he appeared to know next to nothing. Upon my quoting Thomas Carlyle, he enquired in the naivest way who he might be and what he had done. My surprise reached a climax, however, when I found incidentally that he was ignorant of the Copernican Theory and of the composition of the Solar System. That any civilized human being in this nineteenth century should not be aware that the earth travelled round the sun appeared to me such an extraordinary fact that I could hardly realize it.

"You appear to be astonished," he said, smiling at my expression of surprise. "Now that I do know it I shall do my best to forget it."

"To forget it!"

"You see," he explained, "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things, so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones."

"But the Solar System!" I protested.

"What the deuce is it to me?" he interrupted impatiently; "you say that we go round the sun. If we went round the moon it would not make a pennyworth of difference to me or to my work."

(Chapter 2 of A Study in Scarlet [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Study_in_Scarlet/Part_1/Chapter_2] by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, under the public domain in most countries.)

Conan Doyle was naturally exaggerating here in portraying the ideal of Sherlock Holmes (as few, if any, human beings can forget that the Earth revolves around the Sun), but the principle still stands: we need to make a conscious decision of how to manage our memory, because there is a limit to how many different aspects can put inside our resident memory, or otherwise we'll forget more important stuff.

So what does it have to do with the Awk programming language? Many decades after A Study in Scarlet, Eric S. Raymond [http://www.catb.org/esr/] had this to say in his book The Art of Unix Programming [http://www.catb.org/esr/writings/taoup/]:

A case study of awk is included to point out that it is not a model for emulation; in fact, since 1990 it has largely fallen out of use. It has been superseded by new-school scripting languages—notably Perl,
which was explicitly designed to be an awk killer. The reasons are worthy of examination, because they constitute a bit of a cautionary tale for minilanguage designers.

The awk language was originally designed to be a small, expressive special-purpose language for report generation. Unfortunately, it turns out to have been designed at a bad spot on the complexity-vs.-power curve. The action language is noncompact, but the pattern-driven framework it sits inside keeps it from being generally applicable — that's the worst of both worlds. And the new-school scripting languages can do anything awk can; their equivalent programs are usually just as readable, if not more so.

For a few years after the release of Perl in 1987, awk remained competitive simply because it had a smaller, faster implementation. But as the cost of compute cycles and memory dropped, the economic reasons for favoring a special-purpose language that was relatively thrifty with both lost their force. Programmers increasingly chose to do awklike things with Perl or (later) Python, rather than keep two different scripting languages in their heads.[90] By the year 2000 awk had become little more than a memory for most old-school Unix hackers, and not a particularly nostalgic one.

Falling costs have changed the tradeoffs in minilanguage design. Restricting your design's capabilities to buy compactness may still be a good idea, but doing so to economize on machine resources is a bad one. Machine resources get cheaper over time, but space in programmers' heads only gets more expensive. Modern minilanguages can either be general but noncompact, or specialized but very compact; specialized but noncompact simply won't compete.

(Emphasis mine.)


I still keep awk out of my resident memory, but there are many other things I do not remember nor care enough to. For example, I do not remember the names of the current Israeli president or that of the current Israeli Chief of the General Staff (Israel) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_of_the_General_Staff_(Israel)]. I am almost sure they are both great people, but remembering their names is pointless for me.

We have to manage our memory with care, or we'll forget stuff that is much more important.

**Selling for people stupider than you**

Sell / Develop things for people as smart as you.

**The legitimacy of Fanfic and Real Person Fic**

I am an unapologetic and proud fan fiction and real person fiction (= "RPF") writer:
1. Why do you write mostly fan-fiction and crossovers? [https://www.shlomifish.org/meta/FAQ/#why_fan_fic]

Lawrence Lessig gives many good reasons for remixing in his book *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remix_%28book%29] which I have read and enjoyed. Writing fan-fiction and crossovers, whether in fiction or in non-fiction (see some of my crossover essays) is the writing equivalent of what he describes being primarily done with music and videos.

Our aversion towards fan fiction and an insistence on "originality" is mostly a 20th century fad, that is slowly (for some values of "slowly") diminishing.

Anyway, the various fiction franchises and idea systems that influenced me are a large part of me, and I cannot throw them away when writing my own works. I don’t have a lot of control of the ideas I come up with, but I know I must materialise them eventually.


I feature or reference several celebrities in my stories (whether past or present) as a way of Real person fiction [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real_person_fiction]. According to the Wikipedia page, such fiction is likely to be legal if it is done in mostly good taste, which I believe and hope is the case for me.

The general consensus is that a celebrity generally allows himself or herself to be a subject of reuse in literature, and that includes me, Shlomi Fish.

**Update (2 November 2019):** I have now written a more comprehensive essay [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/culture/my-real-person-fan-fiction/] about why writing real person fan fiction is good.

**Update (26 November 2019):** I now realise that fan fiction and especially real person fiction can be used to help combat the flood of new characters and names that plagues many more "original" stories. People generally have a rough concept of what characters such as Chuck Norris [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Chuck-Norris/], Emma Watson [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Emma-Watson/], Richard Stallman [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Stallman], Moses [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses], or Miss Piggy [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_Piggy], are like and generally can better remember them because they thought about them a lot.

3. Why I will continue to write my real person fan fiction (fanfic) [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/culture/my-real-person-fan-fiction/]

There has been a lot of fan fiction and real person fiction in the Hebrew Bible [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible] and among ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. For example, Plato [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato]'s dialogues with his mentor, Socrates are clearly RPF. So were some of the stories that the Israelite nevi'im [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevi%27im] (mistranslated as "prophets") told about their contemporary or past men and women, whether positively - or often negatively.

If we look at present time, then the Muppets and Sesame Street franchises often invite real life guests as fictionalised versions of themselves to the show, to interact with the muppets. Parodies are also considered fan fiction and some parodies like Spaceballs [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spaceballs] or Last Action Hero [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Action_Hero] (which also sports some real person fiction) are among my favourite films.
Moreover, fan fiction and especially real person fiction can be used to help combat the problem of the flood of new names and characters that plagues many stories that are more "original". People generally have a rough concept of what characters such as Chuck Norris, Emma Watson [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Emma-Watson/], Richard Stallman [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Stallman], Moses [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses], or Miss Piggy [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_Piggy], are like and generally can better remember them because they thought about them a lot.

**Do not interrupt foreign speakers for every mistake**

One friend of mine, who is deaf from an early age, told me that he didn't learn to verbally speak very well because his mother interrupted him whenever he said something wrong, which caused him to lose confidence and become demotivated. This story has implications for speaking with people who are learning English or a different foreign language. Try not to interrupt them on every mistake they make, and let them speak with some errors, so they will gain confidence.