

How to Save the World: The Almost Complete Story of Thomas J. Savage

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Abstract: I tell personal stories of a three-year-old's efforts to steal a toy red fire engine, a boy's growing up with parents who were totally absent, and his parents growing up with similar parents. Yet these stories are not so unusual, for they all illustrate the fundamental nature of the way of life of modern society. Yet all this can and must change if the human race is to survive its increasing and deadly problems without solutions. I advance a central idea:

The human being, the most interactive being throughout the known universe, has the potential to continue to evolve intellectually ("head"), emotionally ("heart"), and with problem-solving actions ("hand"). I advance seven ideas for how we can learn to fulfill that potential: 1. When we come to realize that the way of life of existing societies is pointing us all toward problems without solutions. 2. When it is clearly demonstrated that a substantial number of individuals have actually succeeded in traveling on that yellow brick road. 3. When we come to realize that our own potential is no different from that of those individuals. 4. When paths open up for us to learn to move in an evolutionary direction, and to afford to do so. 5. When we begin to embark on those paths, and we find that it is rewarding for us to move in this evolutionary direction: intellectually, emotionally, and in our ability to solve problems. 6. When we continue to receive encouragement from others. 7. When we reach the point where we learn to teach others to do the same.

Keywords: Interaction, evolution, bio, EI (Evolutionary Intelligence), EE (Evolutionary Emotions), EC (Evolutionary Craftsmanship), personal problems, world problems.

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Introduction

After I tell my story, centering on my diaper years, I will proceed with a sociological analysis of it, emphasizing and going beyond the ideas in *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State*, 2024, 2nd ed., by B. Phillips, myself, A. Plotkin, N. S. Weiss, M. O. Spitzer, S. M. Sanseverino and R. Porter. Given sociology's breadth—with its 53 distinct Sections of the American Sociological Association—that analysis will be based on nothing less than the interdisciplinary knowledge contained in a science of human behavior.

I was born on the seventh day of July, nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, in Hubbing, Minnesota. That being the case, we may now precede to:

Story Number One: How I Grew Up!

At age nineteen months, my parents moved themselves and me to California.

So, goodbye to Minnesota. Sorry, I hardly had a chance to know ya! There would also be no opportunity to cheer on the Minnesota Vikings football team.

Then, why did we move? Snow! Yes, snow! The Great Northern Railroad had to shut down for six months due to excessive snow. Result: No work!

Disgusted, dad wrote to the Santa Fe Railroad in California, and was immediately hired.

Then, with the December seventh, nineteen hundred and forty one attack on Pearl Harbor, my father, a fireman, was immediately tested and promoted to engineer.

Now, dad had moved his family to the Santa Fe Railroad Station in San Bernardino, California, only to later learn his job would be working out of Los Angeles.

This left my mother and I alone in San Bernardino.

But, get the picture. I didn't see my father for three years, and seldom for the next seventeen.

I didn't see much of her either, despite living together. What did this mean for me? FREEDOM!

Story Number Two: A Wrong Material Goal

I am age three, and still wearing a diaper that didn't get changed every day.

Mom slept in most mornings, so I was able to get up early, and go out to explore the neighborhood on my own.

Mom had an interesting philosophy on child rearing. If I got lost, someone would bring me home!

Normally, I just stayed on my own familiar block, but this morning, I turned into the next block because I had spotted a metal, pedal-driven, toy red fire engine.

The owner and driver of this amazing car was Bill Moulton.

Now, Billy's father was an adult, real-life, fireman. He had made this beautiful toy fire engine as a gift for his son's fifth birthday. He had built this car all by himself!

By contrast, my father never built so much as a kite for me.

Every day I would come down and hide in the bushes, watching Billy ride his red fire engine.

Billy had spotted me, and knew of my desire to ride, to take a spin in that beautiful car.

But, the little brat would just grin and wave, making fun of my desire and dreams.

Well, screw hm! (Whatever that means)

I'm sorry I wasn't old enough to know what "flipping a person off" meant, either, because I would have jumped out of those bushes, and nailed Billy with my middle finger in both hands. So, there!

Thank God my mother would have never seen that.

Well, after he had finished his breakfast, Billy returned to ride, and enjoy making me miserable.

I'm now four years old. My parents, and some neighbors, have taught me some new, fun experiences.

The first one is, "What the Hell!" Notice, I don't need to know what this means in order to use it.

Such is the innocence of youth.

You can learn a lot from adults if you just pay attention, and listen to them talk. They are educating you, even if they don't realize it.

So, Billy is never going to let me ride in his little red fire engine. I must think up a new plan.

Killing Billy, of course, was far too violent.

No, I decided just to "steal" it.

Now, stealing is a "sin," I guess. But, since I don't know what a "sin" is, this shouldn't count. And, who the Hell is counting, anyway?

Plus, I wasn't going to really steal it, but just sorta "borrow" it.

Now, "borrowing" without gaining permission is still actually stealing.

But, I don't care!

"Jesus" (don't know who He is, either), just give me a break, here!

Dear reader. Think back to when you were four years old.

Were you as adventurous and questioning and challenging authority, as I was? With apology, I doubt it. So, there! You will see how my whole life has always been asking the question, "WHY?"

Here we go. My plans regarding "stealing" that little red fire engine: Let the adventure begin! It's four a.m. in the morning. Mother, of course, is fast asleep.

This allows me to slip out of the house, unnoticed. I have gone down one block, and the "Diaper Thief" is ready to ride!

Now, I'm actually seated in that little red fire engine. I push the pedals, move two feet, and "damn," (another swear word in my growing nasty vocabulary) I have knocked over a shovel, which lands with a loud bang.

Lights come on in the mobile home trailer. A gruff voice calls out, "Who's there?" Suddenly, a door springs open, and Billy's fireman father jumps out. "What the Hell?" (I already have that one).

Fortunately for me, I have quickly made it out of the fire engine, and am now standing at the end of the driveway.

"Who the Hell are you?"

Scared to death, I just say, "I'm lost," and "cookie!"

Now, Billy's father is yelling to his wife. "Rachel, there's some "damn" (I already have that one) kid out here in a diaper."

"He says he's lost, and wants a cookie. Can you imagine this "shit"?" (that's a new one)

"Better call the cops. Someone should be out looking for him."

What a joke! That someone should have been my mother, who won't be out of bed until about ten or eleven.

Oh well, someone will find me and bring me home. No thoughts of course of kidnapping or sexual abuse!

Now, I don't know what "oral sex" is, but if it includes the taste of an oatmeal raisin cookie, I'm all for it.

Rachel, Billy's mom, has brought me this requested cookie. I've never before ever had an oatmeal raisin cookie, which is now melting in my mouth. "Oh God, I hope they have oatmeal raisin cookies in Heaven. What bliss!"

Billy has now emerged from the family trailer. The cops are asking: "Anyone know this kid?" Billy points to the next block, and says, "He lives down there."

“OK, Phil,” says the fat cop. “We’ll start down on that block. Thanks for reporting the lost kid.” I am now being placed in the police car.

Billy is doing everything but singing and dancing, because he thinks I’m being arrested.

I am overjoyed getting to ride in the police car. Unfortunately, they didn’t blow the siren!

As we drive down the lower block, I spot my house, and pointing to it, I just say “There.”

Now the cops are banging on our front door. Mom, in her bathrobe, explains she can’t understand “how he got out of the house while under my watchful eye.”

Again, what a joke. But, it’s time to tell you about my parents.

Still, before I discuss my parents, I need to have you recognize and believe **Another Vision to Appreciate**.

What I need to have you understand is that education is not limited to formal classroom instruction.

A far greater learning impact comes from experiences in the larger world, in general.

Teaching is occurring daily in our homes, neighborhoods and city, with messages that are not part of our own beliefs.

Unfortunately, we have little control over the content of that informal education.

Thus, our role is to combat that negative content with what we are saying and teaching at home.

The words we use count. The children’s books we give them also can send powerful ideas into open minds.

To disregard this responsibility is unforgivable! So there!

Story Number Three: All about My Parents’ Impact on Me.

Let’s begin with good old Dad, and see if his own story will reveal why he never bonded with me.

To begin with, Dad’s father had left his wife and child (Dad) when he was only four years old.

So, Dad, unlike his son (me), was no adventurer. He was a momma’s boy, fearful of the outside world. Mom told me stories of Dad and his mother ending up hiding together in a closet, with creditors banging on the door.

Let us again pause for some instruction.

Relationships between children and parents are *not* automatic. They have to be developed. This takes time and great effort.

Dad’s father’s absence and lack of attention meant Dad’s growth for feelings was next to nothing.

Scars of abandonment would mean no presents at Christmas. This was all part of his shame, behavior shared by many of his peers.

Lacking any kind of a good role model on how to be a good parent, is it any wonder that Dad ended up being a lousy one?

Poverty was Dad’s early childhood remembrance. He never had anything as a child, so it never entered his mind to give anything to his kids, either.

Dad’s father never gave his wife a dime after he left. And he never legally divorced her, so she had no chance for public assistance.

And, remember, there was no social security at the time, anyway.

Desperate, Dad’s mom took in boarders in order to pay the rent.

To make extra room for more boarders, Dad had to move into his mom’s room, where he remained until he was sixteen, when he left.

Moving into a flat with four other guys, he learned to smoke, drink, swear, and worst of all, gamble.

My mother was the eighth child in a ten-child family. Her mother never touched her, either.

Mom’s best friend was the seventh child, named Lillian. Together, they spent many years playing in the attic. The closed environment, however, provided for little social growth and development.

As a direct result, Mom grew up both sullen and withdrawn. Lillian never recovered from being shy.

For these two sisters, their father had been present, but, seated in his chair, was emotionally absent.

Their mother was absent both physically and emotionally. Her life’s focus and purpose was WORK! Finishing her work, she locked herself in her room, not to be disturbed.

As a strict Puritan, she saw her role as mother was not to spoil her children with hugs and kisses. Life was hard, and to understand this, her kids just had to work.

Mom married my father, whom, I have already told you, was also a non-toucher.

They had ninety-second joyless sex, producing two boys, who were as different as different can be.

The younger, my brother Jim, responded to his parents’ neglect and abandonment by being angry with life in general.

I, being the eldest, found joy in my freedom, but ended up withdrawn, preferring to be left alone in my own private world of wondrous daydreams.

As a teen, I left home at seven a.m., went off to school, and daily returned at seven at night.

At no time did my mother inquire if I had anything to eat during those hours.

I am still embarrassed, remembering how many different families did feed me. And they never made me feel guilty providing such support!

Now, as you can clearly see, my parents, who should have been my primary teachers, had little or no impact on my growing up.

But, the positive side of this fact, and the benefit for me, was an early life of little direction or restriction.

My independence produced a happy life of total personal FREEDOM!

As a teen, I had already established a sense of responsible self-reliance that has been the foundation of my life philosophy.

Frankly, I expect nothing from the world, both physically and emotionally.

It is up to me to become a winner rather than a loser.

True! But challenging authority caused me problems during my work years.

Still, I wasn't going to permit the world to "brainwash" me, even if I didn't recognize how powerful a social force that was.

I had an early "VISION" of the necessity that, in order to survive, I had to be prepared to "FIGHT"!

The powers that be do not want to give up their authority without a "FIGHT."

And, if you're going to question that authority, you'd better have a clear understanding of just what it is, and how it works, if you plan to challenge or defeat it.

But, I have started out at least recognizing the problem: Bureaucratic Power. But, what action to take? At this point, I am unsure!

Sociological Analysis

As a preface to this analysis, every single reader should be aware of the knowledge contained within his or her own personal story. For that understanding could be subject to an analysis that could help guide the rest of us to solve both personal and world problems. It is the ideas of the social sciences that can function as the tools required to unlock the insights hidden within our personal experiences.

To achieve a systematic analysis, I will use three headings. My third heading will invoke my effort to link the knowledge within the former two headings. It will also join with not only the understanding in *Creating Life Before Death*, and not only with what we can learn from the articles published by the *ISAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* having the title, "How to Save the World." It will be my attempt to follow in the footsteps of Francis Bacon, who wrote: "I have taken all knowledge to be my province."

The little red fire engine

Starting with my very first days on earth, I had learned the importance of external objects, like my bottle of milk, or my warm bed, although not the hands of my mother. In almost everyone, this sets the stage for a lifetime of emphasizing both an outward and a materialistic orientation. The result is a general failure to look inward no less than outward, and to focus on the invisible concepts—like "intellect," "emotions" and "hierarchy"—that enable us to understand self and world.

Perhaps the loud bang of the shovel, after I hit it while riding my appropriated fire engine, alerted me to the limitations of my materialistic and outward-oriented dream. At any rate, my experiences of having a largely non-existent father and mother

somehow gave me a most unusual background, summarized by the concept, "FREEDOM." I was free to behave in ways illustrated by this passage from *Creating Life Before Death*:

Tom Savage has a story producing insight into the nature of our problems as well as a direction for solving them. It took place when he was seven years old and had to do with his first crisis of faith. A volunteer Sunday school teacher had just told his class the story of the Israelites' escape from Egypt. At the Red Sea, Moses had parted the waters, and the Jews all went safely through. But when Pharaoh with his army and chariots followed in hot pursuit, Moses closed the waters over them.

At that point, Tom jumped up and yelled, "What happened to the horses? Surely God didn't drown the horses!" The poor teacher, sputtering, could offer no defense. Tom would not calm down, for he believed in an all-powerful and all-righteous God, and he would not tolerate a teacher who dared to stray from those beliefs. The result, however, was that Tom became perhaps the first kid ever to be kicked out of Sunday school.

Tom had uncovered three key components of our bureaucratic way of life: Patterns of (1) persisting hierarchy, (2) personal conformity to the powers that be, and (3) narrow specialization without integrating knowledge.

What Tom also achieved with his outburst was nothing less than illustrating how to confront effectively that way of life: He dared to (1) question authority, (2) develop his own understanding, and (3) move beyond the simplicity or narrowness of the ideas of authorities, as illustrated by the good-evil biblical story (pages 3-4).

What this quote illustrates is nothing less than a contrast between two ways of life or worldviews. One carries forward the outward-oriented, materialistic approach illustrated by Tom's affair with the red fire engine. That focus is a narrow one, illustrating conformity to the materialistic focus of the powers that be within contemporary societies.

This way of life was well-illustrated by Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote, "Things are in the saddle. And ride mankind." Society's outward orientation is to be seen in this idea expressed by the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm: "The failure of modern culture lies not in the fact that people are too selfish, but that they do not love themselves." The frustrations linked to this worldview, partly the result of advertising, are noted by the analyst Karen Horney: "The stimulation of our needs and our factual frustration in satisfying them." Following numerous studies, such frustration is closely linked to aggression.

Yet Tom, given his most unusual freedom, was somehow able to point in a completely different direction, as illustrated by this quote by Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman (1960): "The greatest dangers to a system of illusions . . . are introspection and thought . . . The major technique of self-avoidance is work" (page 79). Tom had the freedom to learn to think for himself, as his adult life well illustrated. And his work reinforced his democratic conclusions rather than took him away from his ideas.

Tom's parents: emotional deprivation

My story number three tells it all: an absolutely disgraceful situation of parents who completely failed in taking responsibility

for the development of their children. But their actions were completely understandable once we probe their own background. It is here that we can understand the relevance of this quote from Albert Einstein: “The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility. The fact that it is comprehensible is a miracle.” For this applies not just to the physical sciences but to the social sciences as well. Yes, there is such a thing as a science of human behavior where we can actually understand what is going on, despite the negative views about the impenetrability of human behavior by so many of us.

Just as Tom was deprived of close contact with his parents, so were his parents with their parents. Tom’s father was abandoned by his father at the age of four. Dad’s mother was left penniless by her husband, and continuing work was what she had to do to survive, with absolutely no room for parenting. If Tom was gone all day, every day, that left her free to do what she had to do to make ends meet. What must be condemned as disgraceful is not the behavior of Tom’s parents, but their way of life, as well as that of Tom and the rest of us,

Socrates maintained, a great many years ago: “I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance.” Yet modern society, with its formal educational systems granting Ph.D.’s in all fields, and with its numerous mass media outlets, believes its knowledge of human behavior is up to snuff. Socrates be damned!!! Yet all our knowledge of human behavior is most limited, for it has failed to prevent aggression of all kinds, including the threat of nuclear warfare that hangs over our heads.

The psychoanalyst Alfred Adler wrote: “To be a human being means to possess a feeling of inferiority. The greater the feeling of inferiority the more powerful is the urge for conquest.” And that urge can be accompanied, in our modern world, with weapons of mass destruction.

Interaction is the name of the game

On pages 15-16 of *Creating Life Before Death* we have this statement:

Our capacity to learn about anything and everything illustrates a culmination of the interactive nature of the universe. The Big Bang some fourteen billion years ago produced a universe where no part of the world can be completely isolated from any other part.

As that interaction proceeded, it yielded the molecules that proved to become the basis for the origin of minute living things. Over billions of years this continuing process yielded organisms with ever greater ability to interact with their environment and, as a result, solve their problems of existence and reproduction.

We humans finally appeared on the scene quite recently. Our inventions of language and the scientific method have given us the capacity—through continual learning—to solve problems that are ever more difficult and far-reaching than simply existence and reproduction.

Our educational institutions—formal and informal—have failed to teach us more than the very beginnings of the nature of our incredible capacities and how to transform them into abilities. Instead, we have remained victims of a bureaucratic way of life that has taught even Einstein, Shakespeare and Madam Curie of their drastic intellectual,

emotional, and problem-solving limitations. Those deficiencies have in turn yielded ever more threatening problems to our very existence.

As we come to understand just who we are and what we are capable of accomplishing, we will come to see ourselves as standing at the very pinnacle of what the universe has yielded. It is that self- perception, in turn, which can enable us all to travel the yellow brick road of continuing personal and world development. It is an exceedingly democratic road, for each of us can work on our own unique tasks. We can scarcely imagine what lies over the rainbow.

I can elaborate on this statement. The human being, the most interactive being throughout the known universe, has the potential to continue to evolve intellectually (“head”), emotionally (“heart”), and with problem-solving actions (“hand”). These possibilities are summarized by the acronyms EI (Evolutionary Intelligence), EE (Evolutionary Emotions), and EC (Evolutionary Craftsmanship).

One direction for fulfilling these potentials is outlined in Phillips’s December, 2024, ISAR publication. It combines an Eastern with a Western orientation, including the concepts of mindfulness (stemming from the Buddha’s insights 2500 years ago) and *kaizen* (Japanese for “continuing improvement”) with the tool of an interdisciplinary science of human behavior that builds on so much of Western achievements (granting Eastern accomplishments as well in this area).

This approach can enable the individual to experience, in a short time, the combination of Phillips’s experiences in a lifetime (“head”), Tom’s experiences in a lifetime (“heart”), and Sergio Sanseverino’s experiences in a lifetime (“hand”). We may see them as the modern Three Musketeers, paralleling the Star Trek experiences of Spock, McCoy, and Captain Kirk.

Metaphorically, it is possible for the human race to travel on “the yellow brick road” within the film, “The Wizard of Oz,” beyond Emerald City, with the road leading to ever further personal and world evolution.

What is required is one’s learning to change hierarchical, highly specialized, and conformist habits for evolutionary habits. People will be motivated to accomplish this under the following circumstances:

- 1. When they come to realize that the way of life of existing societies is pointing us all toward problems without solutions, such as nothing less than the end of the human race.**
- 2. When it is clearly demonstrated that a substantial number of individuals have actually succeeded in traveling on that yellow brick road.**
- 3. When they come to realize that their own potential is no different from that of those individuals.**
- 4. When paths open up for them to learn to move in an evolutionary direction, and to afford to do so.**
- 5. When they begin to embark on those paths, and they find that it is rewarding for them to move in this evolutionary direction: intellectually, emotionally, and in their ability to solve problems.**
- 6. When they continue to receive encouragement from others.**

7. When they reach the point where they learn to teach others to do the same.

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