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'The Bright Cup' That Stops You From Seeing.

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Photo by Drew Taylor

Here's a real 'eye-opener' if you have a mind to read on.

Most everyone's been in a situation—at work or in life—where they haven't been able to see the wood for the proverbial trees. When they've

been unable to see the big picture. Mostly because they were too caught up—distracted—obsessed even—with too many attendant tiny details.

A coffee break—quick walk around the block—change of venue—even a good night's sleep can invariably put that to rights. Help change perspective—so a problem can be seen for what it really is and thus be more readily dealt with.

What's much more difficult to deal with is being unable to see clearly in the first place. Made all the more insidious as for most people it's a situation that's been self-imposed—and quite unwittingly so in most cases—more's the tragedy.

As a wily old wise man once put it:

"There are none so blind as those who will not see"

Ever seen those full-face mug shots or head and shoulder photos where a solid black strip has been superimposed over the subject's eyes? Where a simple graphic device—that leaves the shape of the head, hairstyle, ears, cheeks, neck, mouth and chin in clear view—is thought to be enough to render an individual as unrecognizable.

The eyes—the windows to the soul—blanked out—redacted—obscured for legal or security purposes.

Hold that image in your mind for a moment. Now imagine yourself with a solid black bar positioned just in front of your own eyes.

Better yet—place a flat hand horizontally an inch or so from the bridge of your nose. That'll give you a better idea. And yes—it's an extremely silly

thing to ask someone to do. But until you do it—it remains an idea and not an experience—a theory and not a fact of life. So go on—try it. DO.

Simple often works wonders. Even a simple act can be an extraordinary enough event for the brain to remember it's now important to you.

As one comes to learn—however large or small the issue—a great deal in life is shaped by not remembering to remember whatever needs to be remembered—and acted upon—at any particular moment in time. The moment—and the learning and wisdom promised therein—slips away and is lost—never to return. There will be other moments—with the potential of new learning—but never that one again. That's why the constant self-help mantra—*always learn from your mistakes*. It's so that not all is lost.

Time for a cuppa?

The teacher who first told me to make a conscious effort to always remember to remember—to stay awake—and do everything I could to see the world for what it truly is and not how I'd like to think it is—introduced the concept to me as “The Bright Cup”.

As I recall the occasion—there were four or five of us sitting in a posh tearoom in London's West End—not a handmade shoe's throw from Jermyn Street—and ever one to use whatever props were to hand to make a point—the old master of theatre held up his bright, shiny, porcelain teacup just in front of his eyes and said: *“That's how most of you young idiots go through life—blind as baby bats. Not able to see past your emotions or whatever is the latest fashionable idea you've gone boggle-eyed over. You think you see the world—but you can't see for looking and you end up seeing only what you expect to see. Or worse, what you've been told to see. When what you should be doing is to start thinking for yourself. And if you find that thought difficult—ask yourself what in you is stopping you? What in you—your expectancies—your beliefs—your stubbornness or your pride—is getting in the way of you seeing your situation more clearly?”*

Sometimes the only thing people can see is the dazzling idea they're most in love with—whether it's of their own or someone else's devising.

Sometimes it's no more than the idea someone has of themselves they can't ever give up. That's why people end up shouting at one another

when discussion morphs into argument. Neither person can understand why the other person can't see what should be entirely obvious to them.

That's why they say, "*Love is blind*"—and deaf, too, to almost any entreaty. There's certainly no logical argument that can ever dissuade or deter someone who's based their convictions solely on their emotions. Only an occurrence or intervention of equal or greater emotional force will ever produce any discernable change for the better.

It seems all too inevitable then that "The Bright Cup" is always cast from the clay of pure emotion. And that once out of the fiery furnace—after it cools and hardens—and has been sufficiently polished by self-regard—it stands ever ready to bedazzle the unwary. Distorting perception. Warping reality. Blocking potential. And all of it thrown together on our own mad potter's wheel of a mind.

Of course, as you might expect, "The Bright Cup" is a right slippery bugger to get to grips with—but only for as long as you remain unaware of it. For then—and shades of childhood's *Rumpelstiltskin* here—once you can put a name to it. See it for what it is. You can begin to exercise control over it.

Creativity is fluid. So it pays not to be fixed in ways of thinking.

I once met Wynton Marsalis—one of the world's finest trumpet virtuosos—at a worldwide conference on creativity. He was the most gracious of men and a masterful teacher. And we were all rightly in awe of him and his creative and humanitarian achievements. One of his many insights during the day or two he spent with us: "*You create something... but what you wrote... how you think it should be... may not be as good as the 'different thing' you're hearing that was created by someone else in the group. So you have to put aside your model so that you can hear and see 'the new'. The eternal question is... can you? Do you have it in you to be open... to change?*"

All of which serves to underscore the idea that the unexpected often arrives in unexpected ways—and that it's much the wisest course not to expect to know the shape or form of any impending solution.

So ask yourself: Do you have it in you to get out of your own way—to recognise and set aside—or even smash—the latest 'collector's edition' of your very own 'Bright Cup'? The *Idée Fixe* that blinkers you—blinds you—blocks you from seeing clearly—stops you from thinking creatively.

The key is in *remembering to remember* the unseen and rendering it visible—even if only for a moment—so that you trigger in you the right mind set for creative thought and truly creative work.

So here's a suggestion for you. The next time you engage in a creative endeavour—in a team or by yourself—consider bringing the flat of your hand up to the bridge of your nose as a visual trigger—simply to remind yourself of the whole idea of 'The Bright Cup' (And, if after a moment or two, you gently rub the bridge of your nose a couple of times people won't see anything out of the ordinary—they'll simply think you had an itch that needed scratching).

But believe you me—even with a modicum of practice—that little ritual will prove to be an "*Opensesame*" to a whole new world of creative thought for you. Even if it does no more than prompt the question: "*What am I not seeing here?*"

All and everything done to remind yourself that it might well be you that's not seeing the "*different thing*" or "*the new*" because of 'The Bright Cup' that's always there—hiding in plain sight—right in front of your very eyes.

Fancy a cuppa? What's your fancy?

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