

# Re: investigation, definitions & logic

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MESSAGE TEN (not Lesson Ten)

QUESTION: If formal logic is infallible in being logical (which is the converse of saying that if it contains an error it is not logical and, therefore, not logic) then, for crying out loud, why don't we cease and desist from using anything else?

ANSWER PARTIAL -- Your attention span, and my allotted budget of time to writing these sharings, do not allow anything remotely approaching an exhaustive answer, so let a few "designations" be made to trigger up some things in YOUR experience, as well as mine, just taking a good stab at it.

For one thing, as we have seen in these messages up to now, there is a heck of a lot WE DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN. (To heck with Heisenberg and Schrödinger FOR PURPOSES OF triggering up experiences in your mind relating to this. We don't need any scholarly quotes to get at that, do we? How certain are you that the people you think are your parents actually are? If you and they have been DNA tested, and the results indicate that there is only a one in (however many gazillions) chance you are NOT their child, then you are pretty sure, although not 100 % certain.

But you look like your mom? Then how about your dad? Okay, so you have characteristics of both of them? Well, people who adopt babies sometimes take great pains to pick out a child having characteristics in common with each.

But no one who would have demonstrated so much love for you, and whom you never have caught in any lie but a little white one now and then would lie about anything so important as that? Think again. Documented cases exist.

A family got to know a family once who had a late-life child. When they were in their mid forties, they were raising a three year old "daughter" who looked very much like both parents. They also had a daughter in college that the three-year-old called "Big Sister." Unfortunately half the town knew "Big Sister" was actually "momma." So many people knew, that the family finally went to a professional counselor to find a way to deal with the fear "Sue" would find out, and -- among other alternatives considered was moving away, and starting over in another town or city. But that thought got

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shucked, and finally it was decided that the whole family would sit down with "Sue" and tell her.

By the way, "Sue" took it better than anyone else. In fact she liked being Big Sister's daughter, as long as she didn't have to change schools or anything.

The POINT is, we don't always KNOW what we THINK we know. And, shucks, this only touches on one kind of example.

But the message promised to be about THE HUMAN DEFENSE MECHANISMS.

Ooooookay. Defense mechanisms are bad, aren't they? Oh, you had Psychology 101. You KNOW they are as essential to good psychological health, because they serve as a BUFFER between the psyche and many shocks reality slams us with. Wait, did I say "psyche." Make that... hmmmmm... All that id, ego, superego and psyche stuff has "evolved" so much since I had 101, I'd better say, "emotional comfort zone." Either way, the designation called something up when you heard it. Good enough FOR PURPOSES OF the making of point intended here.

If you are really "psychology literate," you know that psychological "health" includes a healthy set of defense mechanisms. They are what allow you, when momma dies, to take care of all the arrangements, get things done, say "goodbye" to all the relatives, ask for a couple of days off from your job, and THEN become a mass of blubbing,

incompetent, self-absorption. Going through the "classical stages of grief" is pretty much something one not only has to do, however rapidly or slowly, or drastically or mildly, but — if you DON'T, then somebody needs to start worrying.

A child who does not seem the least bit bothered by the death of mommy, or has a "flat affect" for days, weeks, months afterward is long overdue for professional medical/psychological intervention... usually.

What has any of this to do with bio-evolution? It has EVERYTHING to do with any and EVERY scientific investigation... that's all.

So we know all that from psych 101 right. Good. Maybe we all know, also, that researchers and clinicians in the psych field like to refer to these mechanisms as (the) "EGO MECHANISMS OF DEFENSE.").

Before we take a look at the "formal" list of these mechanisms, let us contemplate a question about scientists: QUESTION: Can a SCIENTIST afford to resist against CHANGE, self-delusions of any kind, entertain fallacious rosy notions... goodness gracious... afford to LIE TO HIMSELF about anything pertaining to his work.

Well, here we go with definitions, but: According to a pretty sizeable consensus among shrinks, ALL humans not only have, but have a right to, and

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not only have a right to but have a "NEED" to... have a healthy set of ego defense mechanisms... albeit "MATURE" ones. Mature, as in not "arrested" in an early stage of development.

So wait... does a SCIENTIST have a right and a need and an innate and indispensable encumbrance with some mechanisms that enable him to DELUDE himself? Welllll.... if he/she is HUMAN he/she does... at least, according to a consensus among shrinks. But, then, what do shrinks know? They just WORK with that kind of stuff. Some folks say shrinks don't have the common sense nature (or whatever) gave a goose.

We who like to talk about science like to think in terms of total objectivity, and total self-honesty, and pure logic, and pure scientific motives, don't we. We like to talk about "EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE." Well, those who are in the business of trying to help people with what they call "Different Defensive Styles" from others have their differences

INDEPENDENT OF environmental influences.

Whoa, Nellie! Is this saying all the stuff this old layman has been saying about the necessity of an experiential possum

is off the mark. No, no, no... Don't forget the mention that individual humans, at conception, get hard wired differently and respond differently to the same... (not identical but approximately the same, okay?) scenarios.

But saying ANYTHING about psychology and SCIENTISTS is a slipper slope, isn't it? Isn't it?

So, okay, what point is this old layman trying to get across?

Simply this. Scientists are human. Reality can be brutal. Careers can vanish in a puff of smoke. Peers can shun you if you don't sort of buy-in to the current conventions and modes of thinking in your field. Funds can be GIVEN, and funds can be TAKEN AWAY.

One has to COPE, survive, defend one's "comfort zone," sleep at night, have enough income to live on.

Hey, nobody promised SCIENTISTS a rose garden. But, now and then, a pair of rose-colored lenses and some ear plugs... temporarily at least... until one has time to acclimate to some shocking new change in his professional life or his field or his income... those might be nothing less than tools of survival. And if that means sort of looking the other way if results of an experiment do not please the fund sources, that's no deliberate, cold, calculated, intentional fraud, is it?

Welcome to life in the real world, folks. But, given enough time, and enough means to keep the family alive and together, and a healthy, maturity of ego-defense mechanisms... a SCIENTIST should raise the bar of honesty and

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objectivity a little higher for himself than most, should he not?

First one has to SURVIVE, and THEN bend his work around to conforming with data exactly as data is... whether it means the whole project goes down the tube, or one simply gets kicked out of the lab for not telling some administrator what the funding source wants to hear.

It hard. But some scientists have something some of us call "personal integrity." We CANNOT PROVE NOR DISPROVE that a scientist who loses his job for not being a "team player" is any better than one who games the system for all it's worth. I think so. Maybe you think so. But we cannot prove it, now can we?

Message Eleven --- ain't figured out what it's be about yet...

g.

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