

Information age? or age of lies and deception?

One of the biggest problems we have in our society today is thinking because we “know” something that it is “knowledge.” That is what makes it possible for so many psychopaths to publish a plethora of lies on the Internet that is believed by so many people.

This is the information age. Never have people had access to so much information – and it can be accessed while sitting in the comfort of your own living room... on your Smart TV or your laptop.

But information is not knowledge. It is just information... possibly true, possibly false; possibly meaningful, possibly not; possibly helpful, possibly destructive or otherwise worthless.

How does information become knowledge? Experience!

You only KNOW information is accurate when it has been tested. If people understood this there would be far fewer divorces and far fewer wars.

I often ask people for their definition of truth and most have to think before they give a response. They often reply “factual.” Here is my definition: Truth is that which does not change. There is only one thing that never changes. It is God, the only entity that is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Jesus Christ told us He is “the way, the truth and the life.”

There is a difference between factual and truthful. One can change; the other cannot. When truth changes it goes without saying that what we thought was the truth before it changed was, indeed, not the truth – so how reliable is updated

“truth”? One thing you can always count on in worldly matters is change.

We understand when presented with a list of facts surrounding a specific topic that as we investigate we will find more facts and some will conflict with others. As we learn more, our understanding of the facts changes. To verify that statement, we can look at the numerous scientific opinions put forth about global warming – all based on scientific facts (or opinions about facts that are presented to the public as facts rather than opinions). When we get conflicting facts, those who seek knowledge dig more to determine which ones are accurate, which are not. Those who are satisfied with information – those to whom knowledge is unimportant – stop seeking when their comfort level is reached.

The point is, facts may change. Truth does not. We once thought the earth was flat, for example. Our facts were erroneous. Today we believe it to be round, but as we learn more about our universe who knows what facts we may find?

The lesson to be learned? Information is just information, not knowledge. It may or may not be factual. Before making important decisions in your life, it is important to understand that.

Knowledge is information with which you have experience. You have tested it. It, too, may not be factual, however. Look how many people sincerely believe that something for nothing is a good idea – for them, for society.

Bernie Sanders has generated a following of many millions of Americans who think free education and free medical care are really free. They do not understand that they are coveting – putting their hands in their neighbors’ pockets and stealing from them money their neighbors worked hard to earn. They are incapable of digging deeply enough to learn that socialism has failed everywhere it has been tried.

One reason socialism fails is because when the productive are told they must support those who choose to be non-productive they become less productive. Why? Maybe it's because they have no motivation to pay for your education or that of your children. Perhaps they resent having the quality of their medical care go down so people who prefer to be unemployed rather than employed can get free care. Those who are truly unable to work need free medical care, but those who prefer the "freedom" of being unemployed? Please!

When people become less productive, government tax revenue goes down because fewer people are employed and fewer people can afford to buy things... from homes to clothing to cars. Taxes realized by government as a result of lost income tax from jobs and sales tax from purchases go down. Because college is free, more students attend and the quality of instructors goes down and so does the quality of education... college becomes (as it is today) advanced high school.

There are a lot of people who use information to escape rather than find reality.

Those seeking facts are totally different from security-motivated people who manipulate their life experiences so they hear what they want to hear, learn what they want to learn, and confirm the facts they want to confirm so they can keep their heads firmly buried in the sand – or wherever. You may ask: "If they are confirming facts, aren't they seeking reality?"

Many people stop seeking facts when they reach a point that confirms what they want to believe. They seek no additional facts that may take them into areas of discomfort. That is what we call cognitive dissonance.

Let's look at the sources we use to gain information today. Let me begin with this quote from Proverbs 26 (24-25): "A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his

heart he harbors deceit! Though his speech is charming, believe him not, for seven abominations fill his heart.”

First we have the media. It is hard to believe that people who consider themselves intelligent rely on the mainstream media for information, but they do.

How do we know the mainstream media is not reliable? We know because there is no bigger purveyor of political correctness. We know the primary victim of political correctness is facts.

When an entity that portrays itself to be the provider of news embraces political correctness, you often get opinions rather than facts and the facts that are presented are very selectively chosen. The people instinctively understand this (which accounts for the popularity of presidential candidate Donald Trump who consistently makes politically incorrect statements; people may dislike his personality but like him for the facts he provides).

We know people who believe political correctness has value are those who have an agenda. Often, they are being paid for pushing a particular agenda... the Food and Drug Administration is a good example of that as are politicians. These people think in terms of “the collective good,” a socialist concept. Or perhaps they think of payoffs. Their agendas cannot be supported with facts.

Second, we have social media.

While in college, a computer programmer, Mark Zuckerberg, decided people needed a computer program that would enable them to communicate with others, stay in touch with family and friends, and create new friends via a Web page reflective of their opinions. In 2016, Facebook, Zuckerberg’s creation, has 1.1 billion unique visitors monthly. That is close to 1/6th of the world’s population every month.

Born May 14, 1984, Zuckerberg’s Facebook has created him a net

worth estimated by Forbes to be \$46 billion.

Twitter has 310 million unique visitors monthly and LinkedIn has 255 million. There are many social media outlets. These three merely provide insight into how heavily the social media is used in modern life.

What has social media contributed to our society?

Unfortunately, the result has been to de-personalize communication with family and friends. Rather than a phone call or a personal visit with Mom and Dad on a Sunday afternoon, kids today tell their parents to visit their Facebook page for the latest pictures of the grandkids. We have an entire generation of people who while walking down the street or driving a car are Tweeting others and reading messages (both of which are dangerous). It has placed libelous material in the marketplace, put there by people who get their jollies by misleading others.

Though the large majority of postings to Facebook are made by normal, healthy and happy people, the social media also provides a reflection of human arrogance and stupidity... the posting of offensive and ugly parts of society including confessions of personal behavior that will stay with the person who posted it for a lifetime... or with a person about whom someone posted libelous information.

Facebook and other imitative social media have become heaven on earth for psychopaths. These mal-wired, usually angry people can say anything they want about anyone, including themselves.

Because mentally ill people often get their jollies by lying, their postings are often designed to be destructive to someone they either envy or hate. ISIS uses social media to attract young men to join their cause and blow themselves and others up. They recruit young women to become wives to ISIS warriors. Old men who portray themselves as young, dynamic young men

entrap girls into relationships which have morphed into personal (and destructive) meetings.

I had an interesting experience last week with one of these degenerates.

This sick person's Facebook identity will remain anonymous. I try to direct people to factual data and avoid promoting those with sick ideas.

Thanks to Mark Zuckerberg's creative energy, this man told the world that I was being paid a fee whenever a child is sold to a child trafficking ring. I was appalled to see those words publicly stated in writing. Could there be any worse thing to say about a person?

Does Mr. Zuckerberg monitor Facebook for accuracy or give innocent victims who avoid taking part in his social media experiment a place to complain about this kind of abuse? How can I find out who this person is so I can take him to court? Do I have the opportunity to say "this is a lie and this person is sick and should not have access to the public marketplace of ideas"? Evidently Mr. Zuckerberg overlooked the need for such an alternative.

Understand that I realize anyone who knows me is as shocked by hearing it as I am. I also realize there are far more people in the world who do not know me than who do. It is a comment for which I have absolutely no responsibility and about which I can do nothing. If I had a Facebook account, I could "un-friend" this sick-o.

The Bible tells us there is one unforgivable sin: to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. I believe that anyone who abuses a child blasphemes that child's Holy Spirit. I believe pedophilia to be a more serious crime than murder because by traumatizing their spirit it kills in childhood the person God intended someone to become. They are forced to live with the outcome... a fate far worse than death. I know people who were sexually

abused as children and they carry the scar of that trauma with them throughout their lives.

Those are just a few of the dangers of Facebook and other social media. The people who read the madness pass it on... it gives them a sense of empowerment. They think they know something no one else does and that makes them appear better informed than they are. In fairness to Facebook, this happens as a result of telephone conversations, too. People read or hear something, don't check it out, and pass it on as if it's a fact... and that's called gossip, not information – and certainly not knowledge.

When you pass on information about someone with no corroborating evidence (evidence goes beyond “I know this person well and he/she would never lie to me”) you may be defaming someone and may be libeling them. If we don't take time to verify what's being said about another person we have no business passing it on.

We as Americans need to ask ourselves some questions. One of them is: Has the quality of life gone up or down since the technology revolution? I also think when we give ourselves an honest answer to that question we need to understand it is what we have done with technology that creates problems rather than the technology, itself.

As for Facebook, please consider yourself “un-friended” (what a stupid expression!).

© 2016 Marilyn M. Barnewall – All Rights Reserved