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The Bottom Line

By Jed McKenna

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Whadda ya know?

Seriously. With absolute certainty, what do you know?

Put aside all opinions, beliefs and theories for a moment and address this one straight question: What do you know for sure? Or, as Thoreau put it:

"Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe... through church and state, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call reality, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin..."

In other words, let's cut the crap and figure out what's real. The cogito does exactly that, and it's very simple. The question is: What do you know?

The answer is: I Am.

All other so-called facts are really non-facts and belong in the category of consensual reality and relative truth, i.e., unreal reality and untrue truth.

::: Cogito Ergo Sum

Cogito ergo sum is the equation that proves the fact. But first, before we go on, let's ask what else we know. What else can be said for certain?

The Bottom Line

Nothing. We don't know anything else. And that's the real point of the cogito. The importance of I Am isn't that it's a fact, but that it's the only fact.

I Am is the only thing anyone has ever known or will ever know. Everything else, all religion and philosophy, is nothing more than dream interpretation. There is no other fact than I Am. The cogito is the seed of the thought that destroys the universe. Beyond the cogito, nothing is known. Beyond the cogito, nothing can be known. Except I Am, no one knows anything. No man or god can claim to know more. No God or array of gods can exist or be imagined that know more than this one thing: I Am.

We can't avoid letting this topic drift briefly into the Christian realm. When Moses asked God His name, God answered, "I am that I am." The name God gives for Himself is I Am.

Note that I Am is unconjugatable. It allows of no variation. God doesn't say, "My name is I Am, but you can call me You Are, or He Is." The cogito, the I Am equation, does not extend beyond one's own subjective knowing. I can say I Am and know it as truth, but I can't say you are, he is, she is, we are, they are, it is, etc. I know I exist and nothing else. Understood thusly, I Am, aka God, truly is the Alpha and the Omega; the entirety of being, of knowledge, of you.

::: The Line Is Drawn

The cogito is the line between fantasy and reality. On one side of the cogito is a universe of beliefs and ideas and theories. To cross the line is to leave all that behind. No theory, concept, belief, opinion or debate can have any possible basis in reality once the ramifications of the cogito have fully saturated the mind. No dialogue can take place across that line because nothing that makes sense on either side makes sense on the other.

We all think we know what the cogito means; this is an invitation to challenge that assumption. If professors of philosophy truly understood it, they wouldn't be professors of philosophy. Alfred North Whitehead said that all philosophy is a footnote to Plato, but all philosophy, Plato included, is rendered obsolete and irrelevant by Descartes. Nothing but the subjective I Am is true, so what's the point of prattling on?

The cogito isn't a mere thought or an idea, it is an ego-eating virus that, properly incubated and nurtured, will eventually devour all illusion. Once we know the cogito, we can begin systematically unknowing everything we thought we knew, and unraveling the self we aren't.

::: Life is but a Dream

There is no such thing as objective reality. Two cannot be proven. Nothing can be shown to exist. Time and space, love and hate, good and evil, cause and effect, are all just ideas. Anyone who says they know anything is really saying they don't know the only thing. The greatest religious and philosophical thoughts and ideas in the history of man contain no more truth than the bleating of sheep. The greatest books are no more authoritative than the greatest luncheon meats.

No one knows anything.

::: Disprove it for Yourself

Anyone wishing to deny these statements about the meaning of the cogito need merely prove that something, anything, is true. By all means, give it a try, dash your head upon it, but it can't be done. Cogito ergo sum, however, isn't the endpoint of inquiry, it's the starting point; it's a tool that helps us see, without intermediaries, exactly what is true and what isn't.

How great is that?

–Jed McKenna

::: About the Author "Jed McKenna is an American original." –Lama Surya Das Jed McKenna is the author of "Spiritual Enlightenment: The Damnedest Thing" and "Spiritually Incorrect Enlightenment",

published by Wisefool Press. Coming in 2005: "Spirituality X" and "Jed McKenna's Notebook". Visit WisefoolPress.com to learn more.

Control Stress or It Will Control Your Business

By Dale Collie

When we think about stress in the workplace, we usually refer to ulcers or heart conditions, but stress has a much broader impact. It is known that stress is linked to cancer, lung ailments, cirrhosis of the liver, immunity to common illnesses, back problems, and many other medical problems.

It is estimated that stress is the underlying factor in 75 – 90% of all physician visits.

We see the effects of stress in workplace absenteeism, accidents, health care costs, workers comp, quality problems, productivity, litigation, grievances, violence, customer service complaints, resistance to change, personnel turnover, and profits.

Workplace stress is costing your business thousands of dollars per year. Is stress a line item on your budget? Knowing how much you are spending on stress is a good place to start, but you must take responsibility for stress control and its impact on the bottom line.

To receive a free article about the signs and symptoms of workplace stress, send a blank email to

. It's automatic.

If stress is such a problem, you might be asking questions such as:

++How much is stress costing our company each year?

++How can we find out the costs?

The Bottom Line

++How can we control stress to put this money back on the bottom line?

Controlling stress is beneficial on the bottom line and for employees who work hard to make the company successful.

Dale Collie speaker, author, coach, and former US Army Ranger, corporate president, and teacher at West Point. Selected by "Fast Company" as one of America's Fast 50 innovative leaders. Author of "Frontline Leadership: From War Room to Boardroom," and "Winning Under Fire: Turn Stress into Success the US Army Way," (McGraw Hill).

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