

So much going on . . .

With the recent announcement of the latest shutdowns, bowling is effectively shut down in Oregon until at least the end of the year. That is such a hard pill to swallow for bowlers and all of us in the bowling industry. This has generated so much discussion, anger, and divisiveness, and I really don't want to add to that conversation. I'd rather speak to how to keep my head up and not give into the frustration, anger, and bleakness of the situation.

Along those lines, I started to think of a discussion the other day with a friend regarding the concept of being smart (he said he was asked to name the smartest person he knew and off we went on our discussion). Of course, that sent me down the rabbit hole as I've had some interesting discussions on this subject in the past and one of my more thoughtful discussions centered around the difference between smart and intelligence. Are they the same things? If not the same thing, can you be one without the other?

My discussions on the subject of smart versus intelligence usually boils down to the application of acquired knowledge (smart) versus the actual innate ability to acquire the knowledge (intelligence). A smart person has acquired knowledge and can reference that knowledge situationally. Intelligence has more to do with the born ability to figure stuff out to acquire knowledge. So, it would seem that you would need one to secure the other. But is that always the case?

As I was unable to sleep yet another night, my brain wouldn't shut down thinking about my discussion and how it applies to other concepts, like how smarts and intelligence applies to truth and facts. With so much discussion on what is "truth" and "fact" nowadays that seem so absurdly contradictory depending on your political viewpoint or the occasional conspiracy theory, I wanted to see if I could put my arms around how so many diametrically opposing viewpoints could both claim truth and fact. Now as I started going down the rabbit hole on this train of thought, I had to first define in my own head what truth and facts really meant to me. Truth seems to be of a broader scope and can take into consideration beliefs and perspectives. Facts are more objective and can be verified.

So, if facts can be verified and are objective, why is there so much debate on facts? Because of truth, which can become deeply personal because of beliefs and perspectives, one person's facts may not be another's truth. Herein lies the rub, facts seem inarguable but the interpretation of the facts through a lens of personal truth can render seemingly indisputable facts meaningless. Unfortunately, we see examples of this every day in social media. One person's passionate plea on a post to look at the facts is so often met with angry derision because the facts do not fall in line with another's personal truth.

So, how do we get around this conundrum? Can we get around it or are we doomed to a perpetual state of anger and division now? This is where my truth begins as I sat sleeplessly contemplating such fates. While I don't outwardly show it much, I tend to be an optimistic person. In my personal truth, my personal beliefs and perspectives, I refuse to believe that we are doomed to perpetual anger and divisiveness. I have met so many people in my life that are both smart and intelligent that I have hope that such smarts and intelligence will ultimately pull us through this difficult time.

I do acknowledge some challenges. Smart people that have acquired a wealth of knowledge can choose to stop acquiring knowledge and become overly selective with their base of knowledge to better fit their personal truths. Intelligent people can take a more pessimistic perspective than my own and give in to the seemingly futile efforts it would take to overcome our current challenges, and become dare I say it, lazy or uncaring. Both of these challenges seem to imply that there is the possibility that smart and intelligence can be mutually exclusive.

While I acknowledge that those challenges certainly do exist. I refuse to believe that those challenges will ultimately prevail. I have met too many strong people, both smart and intelligent, that I believe will overcome skewed truths, will acknowledge facts, and collectively help move us away from anger and division and work towards moving us together instead of further apart.

Is that incredibly naïve? Probably. Am I risking ridicule posting such a thing? Probably that too. Why then do I believe despite all the evidence to the contrary given the current state of affairs? I believe because of a basic premise in almost all of our personal truths – respect. We all crave and value respect. Once that near universal realization that we all seek respect begins to be remembered and acknowledged, and enough smart and intelligent people are out there for this to happen (and I do not mean our political or big business leaders, but every day people walking the streets), we will start to overcome the dichotomy of our current socio-political environment. From respect comes caring, and if there is caring, we can heal the divisions. I believe in that, I really do. It's this belief I must rely on to keep the demons of frustration and anger from overwhelming.

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