

Expanding Our Horizons Through Codes We Can Live By

The words below represent selections from ideas I have picked up over the years, and others I have made up from my own evaluation of what I have picked up.

*From a hill or the top of a tall building we can see much more than we could from a basement. But with our imagination, curiosity, creativity, wondering, philosophizing, scientific, artistic explorations, and a continuous life-long learning approach, we can keep expanding our horizons and ‘see’ much farther than we can see with our eyes. **Expanding our horizons is about expanding our minds.** In expanding our horizons we gain a wider perspective of how we work, how others work, how the world works. With expanded awareness and understanding, we give ourselves more chances of achieving our goals*

*“**Expanding our horizons**” can be understood as “going beyond”...going beyond our automatic reactions, beliefs, meanings, and judgments, to more openness to a world of possibilities. (Read Bernard Lonergan’s words in “Method in Theology”, page 236.)*

We expand our horizons and improve our relationships with ourselves, others, happenings, and the world, when we train ourselves to see, interpret, understand, think-feel about things, situations, our experiences, etc., from many different perspectives. We expand our horizons through being attentive, looking and listening; through critical reflecting and thinking about how we are thinking-and-feeling about things, through judging our judgments..., and remembering that’s not all. We expand our horizons through being curious...Not being afraid to ask questions; constantly seeking to make sense of things...including things we don't like or agree with. We expand our horizons by extending our vocabulary and the range of our interests, and thinking of ourselves as “life-long learners”...with the word “etc”... remembering “that’s not all”. We expand our horizons by being aware of the power of language and how we use words: We can use words to amuse, annoy, entertain, educate, and confuse ourselves and others. If we do not attend to the ways we use words, words will automatically trigger reactions and use us. We can diminish the power of words over us by becoming more critical thinkers. Briefly put, “expanding our horizons” can be understood as “going beyond”...going beyond our automatic reactions, beliefs, meanings, and so on.(Read Bernard Lonergan’s words in “Method in Theology”, page 236.)

*On “**time-binding**” and “**conscious time-binding**” from Korzybski’s “general semantics”. We have a natural ability to transmit information across generations, build on, and improve the information we receive. As individuals, we have a natural ability to improve what we say, think, believe, do, etc., towards higher levels of representational accuracy between what’s going on in our heads and goings on in the outside world. “**Conscious Time-binding**” is about being aware of our natural*

time-binding abilities so we can critically evaluate and improve their effects.

Think of this principle-tool as an invitation to: Do what we do to discover what we are doing; to learn about what we are doing; to learn from what we are doing...how to do better what we are doing. We can relate this to an insight from Bernard Lonergan. In his book "Insight" page 187: He wrote: 'Our first work of art is our own living'. If we think of our living as something we are doing, we can learn ways to improve our living: Anything we can 'do', we can do better.

Principles of "non-identity" and "non-allness" from Korzybski's "Science And Sanity" (general semantics): We cannot know all about anything or anyone ...including ourselves. On "non-identity": Be aware of the word "same". No two things are the same in all respects. In terms of time and change, not even one thing remains the same. A word is not identical with the 'thing' it is about. A map is not identical with the territory it is a map of. We are not served the pictures on the menu. Things are not what we say, think, imagine, believe, or 'know' they are. Our beliefs, explanations descriptions, opinions, etc., have left out a great deal, and "are not" the same as what they are about. ('Maps' include our imaginings, theories, ideas, thoughts, beliefs, fears, judgments, opinions, explanations, expectations, knowledge, pictures, road, and other maps, etc.)

The algebraic variable: A very powerful psychological 'mind' expanding tool. In term of times and changes, anything (including ourselves) can be thought of in terms of the variable. We give our own values (meanings) to the variables that constitute our existence. For instance: We can think of the words "I", "me", "we" as variables. We are not the same persons we were at any earlier age. The words do not emphasize time and other differences (principle of non-identity). It would be more accurate to think "'I", "me", "we"...at this time, in this moment".

On meanings: (A general semantics approach) **Words do not have meanings. Things do not have meanings. "We give meanings".** Our judgments, decisions, beliefs, understanding, expectations, things we do, depend on meanings we give. We act differently, avoid conflicts, and improve our relationships when we remember that we each give our different meanings to what we see, hear, read, and so on. We expand our horizons by not dismissing others meanings. We can learn a great deal about ourselves and the world from the meanings others give.

A calculus approach: "a way to understanding a complex situation or problem by breaking it down into simpler more easily understood components". A definition of the calculus: **"The study of a continuous function by following its development through indefinitely small steps."** We can apply a calculus approach to fine tune and expand our understanding of ourselves, others, and the goings on in the world around us.

"Festina lente: *Haste slowly. We can do what we do without unduly harassing or stressing ourselves." We can run relaxed. We don't have to apply more energy than we have to in order to accomplish a task.*

Understanding others: *"He who would love his fellowmen must not expect too much from them." (I was attracted to these words I read in a magazine I picked up from the garbage many years ago.) I do not interpret these words to mean that we think little of others. One interpretation: We should not be surprised at what humans do. From our history, we have evidence of the wide range of human behavior...the many ways of being humans...good, bad, mean, and ugly.*

Fake news: *We might think of fake news' not in the usual sense of "slanted by reporters, networks etc." report about an event", but as "valuable unedited news for us" about goings on in the world. suits us to pay attention to what is called "fake news".*

Re. the words **"free" and "freedom"**. If the world, as far as we know, is one where everything is in relationships...we can be free of someone or something but not free from everything.

Re. **"alternative facts"**. In a dictionary, we find among others statements "alternative" "...something which can be chosen instead". Following the principle of "non-allness": There is not just one fact; not knowing all about anything. We are constantly choosing our facts... whether we are aware of this or not. Each one of us sees things from our individual perspectives, expectations, points of viewing, experience, training, etc. We can avoid many conflicts and disagreements when we remember that: "Our fact, any fact, is only one of many". We expand our horizons by being attentive to other facts as "news of the world for us".

On Judgments: *When we catch ourselves making a judgment expressing an opinion, making a plan or decision, we can ask ourselves the following: "What meanings am I giving? "Do I have all the important and significant information? Do I have enough information? How accurate is the information I have? How up-to-date? How credible the source? Etc.*

On autobiography: *"Whatever we say, the stories we tell about anyone or anything, are also stories about ourselves"...what we believe, what we know; what we understand, our concerns, fears, interests, values, standards, experience, and so on. The way we use words provides us with valuable clues, important information about some of the goings on at unconscious levels. We can use this feedback towards our own self-correcting self-development.*

Cosmic ethics? *Anything that exists has the right to exist its own mode of existence. If we reject this, we do so from our own values, standards, morals, beliefs, etc. But others have their values, standards, beliefs, and morals! Expanding our 'minds' as individuals, we might ask ourselves "How could I prove that my way*

is the 'right' way, the best way--without applying "my standards, and my values?" This does not mean that we do not have the right to protest, criticize, and protect ourselves.

Human ethics: *"...both taking care of oneself and contributing to the well-being of others have their legitimate place and necessary function." (Bernard Lonergan, Insight, page 219.)*

Self-protection: *a way to go beyond what is 'seen' as "stubbornness and resistance". In terms of survival and reactions against threats to their existence and structural-operational integrity: "Systems are naturally self-protective": "Systems are naturally self-maintaining" And human systems if not properly attend to are often self-destructive.*

"Mens sana in corpore sano": *a sound mind in a sound body. We have the ability to "Expand our minds, nourish our spirits, and take care of our bodies.*

It's worth keeping in mind the words of wisdom from earlier thinkers: "Quid quid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur. Whatever is received is received in the mode of the receiver. In other words: What you make of the above is up to you.

References. Bernard Lonergan's "Insight", and "Method In Theology". Alfred Korzybski's "Science And Sanity" and "Manhood of Humanity". And many others too numerous to mention.

Milton Dawes/17

