



## THE ANSWER TO LIFE'S MOST PIVOTAL QUESTION

“Which is most important, to know the truth or to seek it?™”

In merely knowing the truth nothing is required of us except to know that we know it. In a sense, we can set the truth on a shelf and refuse to seek it, refuse to reference it, or worse, we can choose to weaponize it for our own gain. Yet even then we can claim to know that we know it! And this is precisely how we mortals run the race of a fool or of a tyrant. Surely we can see how such a failure to deploy truth, or a refusal to seek and honor it completely, leads to foolish pride, shortsightedness, or worse, to manipulation.

Yet, when we choose to seek the truth as a matter of process, we are not given to such folly or misdeeds — in fact, they are not even options. When we choose to seek the truth and to honor what it reveals, the pragmatic reality of it all becomes clear: we have no choice but to use the very best of the truth we understand in pursuit of greater truths we have yet to uncover.

And whether we are seeking to help another person discover it, or we are attempting to grow in our understanding of it ourselves, this is the reality we must remember — the process of seeking the truth always begins with a choice to pursue it, regardless of where it leads. Then and only then, with the right guidance and information available, can the seeking process mature into what it is meant to become — truth applied, new truths gained and a more complete understanding of reality attained.

It is critical to consider just how important this choice really is. It plays the defining role in who we are, and more importantly, in who we are becoming — be it in relational life or professional endeavor. When we seek the truth, or a new application of it, only then are we actually engaging in real time with the truth as it actually is. It follows then, seeking the truth is the only way to actively engage with that which is really real.

Conversely, the moment we refuse to utilize the truth in such a way, or we refuse to learn from what it uncovers, we begin to engage in something very different from the meaningful reality made complete, made whole, by the truth itself. I wonder if there is any greater misdeed, or mistake, that a person can make at a foundational, first-principles level.

And while it's obvious that a failure to seek the truth is rooted in a person's choice or a character flaw, we cannot fail to see that it is also so much more — it is an error of process, one with heavy repercussions and profound downstream effects. It leads to a break with reality, a break that makes itself known as the tension one feels when stuck living under the weight of a mistruth — evidence that true reality, that which is really real, is somehow amiss. It's an experience we've all felt, even if we lacked the words to describe it.

So it becomes clear, to do our best for those we serve and/or those we love, we have a choice to make — a choice of profound consequence. We must choose to seek the truth and to honor whatever it uncovers. The alternative path is nothing more than a broken approximation, an imposter, of the truth itself. And if we want meaningful, real relationships and real solutions to actual challenges, what could be of greater importance than to refuse to contribute to a masked version of reality?

Therefore — we must choose to seek the truth, learning in the process, solving for the challenges it uncovers, reconciling what is learned to what is known, even to who we are. And truly, we must live it out. This is The Golden Ethic™

— Russ Smithson

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