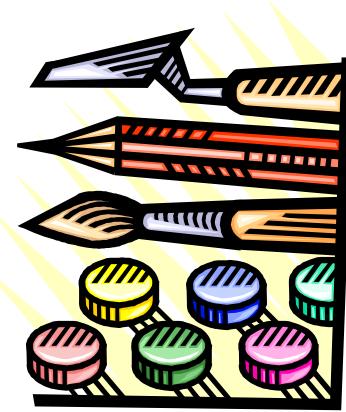


Genius challenges the status quo (01, 12, 12)

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I've been viewing myriad great art recently in several world class galleries located in Philadelphia. The Barnes Foundation alone is enough to take one's breath away. Dr. Barnes is the kind of guy seniors are attracted to, in that he made a fortune by discovering a solution that could be placed on the eyes of newborn babies thus preventing infections and disease and nasty results. But he then used his vast resources to purchase incredible works of art, most from European Impressionists, and subsequently launched a museum and a foundation that ensures continued public access.

Quite a humanistic accomplishment and damn good use of money.



Looking at the art, particularly that of Van Gogh and Picasso, I came to the realization that genius must often appear flawed to the powers that be. Genius challenges what is commonly accepted and radically suggests what can be, supplying hints and examples of how we might proceed. And yes, we know quite well just how radical change or even simple change is currently viewed by those with vested interest in the established course. Or simple fear of the process itself.

Fortunately, creative people, no matter how weird they are perceived by the rest of us, keep at it because they maintain integrity and continue to explore no matter what the cost which often is quite high.

Another observation is that "perfection" does not exist in the same fashion for explorers who ceaselessly push the envelope. If you peer at some of Picasso's and Van Gogh's art, you might think that the rendering is faulty or bizarre, but that's exactly what separates them from the pack. They are also content to make mistakes and turn mistakes into treasures. Scientists often operate this way, making "mistakes" which lead to great discoveries which ultimately benefit those to come. Frequently, "never let them see you sweat," is very poor advice indeed. We actually value people more when we realize the determination and effort that it takes to be active in this process. We appreciate their sweat.

For many months we were exposed to a media bombardment by two American politicians, and what did we learn about them after multi millions of dollars worth of self promotion? Not much.

Mitt Romney in particular was impossible to define, his values and answers constantly changing to suit every opportunity to gain votes. His running mate (hidden away in the last few weeks) fared not much better. They promised "change" but did not define it nor elucidate precisely how they might accomplish this "change." The assumption was that Americans should simply trust them because they said they knew what to do but when pressed about details, basically they suggested that they would merely undo what their opponent had accomplished.

What did we learn about President Obama? First, we observed that it's impossible to debate someone whose position keeps changing or who invents his own truth. We observed that he could fight but was not so inclined unless hard pressed. We learned he is for the "middle class" and seniors, determined to maintain health access to every citizen and lower their taxes.



And we learned that a few rich people think they can purchase democracy, aided and abetted by the Supreme Court. The money spent by both candidates was an embarrassment with so many poor and hungry living day to day in their country.

Polishing one's image and perfecting talk might be expedient political tactics, but they remove the essential item that we all look for in the process – you, the candidate. Who are you? What do you really think?

Of course, Canadians get the same treatment from our politicians. They say the right thing (aka politically correct) which in most cases amounts to nothing. I don't think much of

Justin Trudeau, but I'm starting to appreciate his originality. The Ford brothers in Toronto

openly display what they think, and it's frightening. Olivia Chow might be a breath of fresh air. And as for Stephen and Tim, our Canadian Mitt Romney's, what might they say today to a senior that's original? Don't hold your breath.