

Back To Word of Mouth – Powerful Interactive Learning versus Sophisticated Mind Control

“*Foes' gifts are no gifts: profit bring they none.*” - Sophocles

“*Beware Greeks bearing gifts.*” - Virgil

For most of us the ideas of “mass communication” and “modern technology” are so inextricably linked in our minds as to be practically synonyms for one another. The former cannot exist without the latter, right?.....Or can it? I mean, is this something we really know to be true or is it yet another thing we have merely come to accept or assume, but which in fact has no more validity than any other groundless belief, including, by the way, that denial of it which is also mere belief. Simply put, we are inquiring here into whether there are alternative and effective forms of mass communication to those that depend on modern communications technology. And in particular we will investigate that form commonly referred to as “word of mouth”. This is undoubtedly a mode of mass communication, and equally undoubtedly a form not dependent on modern technology, so how does it compare? Are modern technology modes of mass communication such as TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and cinema really an improvement on time honoured word of mouth or are they something else entirely? In short, what really are the *facts* of the matter?

When comparing these two forms of mass communication there are two key factors to consider: speed of dissemination and quality. We need not consider the breadth of reach of delivery (i.e. numbers of people reached) since both forms have potential for reaching any number of people and it is really only the speed with which they do so and the quality of the message that distinguishes them. As for the factors of speed and quality, it can be seen that the latter is the *determining* factor since the advantage or disadvantage of the speed of delivery of a communication is determined by the quality of the communication in the first place. That is, a destructive lie may be made only the more so destructive if disseminated speedily, which is a disadvantage, while conversely it may be advantageous for a constructive truth to be similarly delivered. In other words we are adopting for the purpose of this discussion *integral* human values when considering the relative advantage or disadvantage of mode of delivery, and not those partial values that consider short term advantages to a particular group or fragment of humanity at the expense of another fragment both in the short and long terms.

Let's consider first the quality of the communication.

Mass media communication is characterised by shallowness, superficiality and non-interactivity. Intelligent and meaningful discussion gives way to the tyranny of short time “spots” or “grabs” of so-called “concision”. It is always more or less a monologue medium, there is no real dialogue or interactivity, only the appearance of it tightly controlled by those who oversee and supervise what enters the public debate forum in the first place – it is really just monologue dressed up as dialogue. This combination of superficial-limited concision and monologue non-interactivity makes this medium useless for the purposes of any substantial truth or *learning* based communication. Rather we are simply being given what to think about everything all the time, even “opposing” views, but with such subtlety and sophistry that we believe these views to be our own.

How often do you hear two people supposedly “discussing” an issue when in fact they are merely regurgitating what they have each identified with from the TV news or the newspaper or some other tightly controlled forum? While we are stuck in the adversarial mindset debating trivialities that we fail to perceive never really meant anything to us at all until we were persuaded otherwise by emotive, psychological button-pushing sophistry, and/or that we fail to perceive are complete concoctions, contrivances or fabrications in the first place, we are being skilfully distracted and diverted from the really essential truth of the matter which we *actually*

value. All of this serves to give an illusion of democracy and public involvement when nothing in fact could be further from the truth.

Word of mouth, on the other hand offers at least the opportunity for genuine dialogue and interactivity. It's really *us* listening and taking part in the discussion, and the only limits to the richness and scope of that discussion are our own illusions, obtuseness, close-mindedness or habitual contentiousness, all of which can be overcome and replaced with more mature listening habits as our return to organic, natural and powerful forms of communication deepens once more our interactive experience with one another. And since learning based, substantial communication is not excluded by word of mouth these options act as falsity-excluding and truth-protective devices inherent in the medium.

We need to consider also, the extent to which these two forms of mass communication are mutually excluding, when assessing their comparative quality. Superficial forms of communication, which are compulsively habit forming (and in fact deliberately made so by whole teams of big business lackey psychologists and "social scientists"), invariably act to cut us off from those forms which are innate and profound and inherently falsity-excluding. Conversely the more one turns to deeper and more meaningful forms of communication the more noxious and unpalatable seem to us the more superficial limited forms. Hence the importance of giving up completely our reliance and dependence on the latter, if we are to partake of the much richer experience they serve to deny us. This is a matter of try and see, not mere word play. The mass media technology and even other forms of so-called "communications" technology, such as telephones (mobile and otherwise), all have the general effect of keeping our minds at the superficial level where lies and sophistry have influence. A lie can never be *learned* or *understood* in any meaningful way, there is nothing to learn or understand (except that it is a lie), it can only be given a sense of credibility by sheer repetition and sophisticated spin and imagery in superficial-limited communications. This is more or less the function of the mainstream media tools – in particular TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, books from similarly controlled publishing companies and of course cinema, especially Hollywood, as well as the respective internet forms of all of the above. In fact, beyond the simple relay of time, date, place and sales/economic/financial information, all of these communication forms are really, more or less, carefully concocted forms of mind control and hypnosis - a fact that becomes obvious when we cease to be too heavily attached to the paltry (and substantial pleasure-denying) pleasure of them or the illusions they give us to live by and identify with. Actually it is inevitable that such forms of communication be used for rhetoric and sophistry (both of which depend on monologue non-interactivity for maximum effect), since there is nought else to which they are better suited, except trivia.

What about speed of dissemination then? How do the two forms stack up in that department? And how important is it anyway, in the long run? When I was at school years ago I remember being aware that, among those who did well academically, there were, generally speaking, two types of learners in the classroom. There were those (by far the more numerous) who grasped something new very quickly, but only superficially, and who jumped ahead into problem solving, applying the new knowledge or insight well before anybody else. Such learners made a great impression early on, but invariably they would run into problems later when the superficiality of their initial understanding made tackling problems requiring a little more flexibility of application impossible. Then it would be to those who took more time at the beginning to truly understand what they learned that these quick starters would turn to for help. In other words, when we are dealing with substantive learning and insight based communications it is very much like the fable of the tortoise and the hare - it's the tortoise that wins the race.

In any case we ought perhaps to preface any discussion of comparative speed with the reminder (as noted above) that swiftness of dissemination is not necessarily a good thing, and can in

fact be something malignant if the quality of the communication is also of that nature, as is so often the case with the mass media forms of communication.

Also we should note that the actual speed of *delivery* is the same in both mass media and word of mouth forms of communication since it matters not whether I am actually in dialogue with a live person or merely listening to a pre-recorded talking head on a screen, there is no difference in the rate at which I personally receive the information. Therefore the only possible distinguishing factor is the speed of *dissemination*, that is, the speed with which the message spreads among (large) groups of people.

Which of the two forms, mass media or word of mouth has the greater speed of dissemination? The answer is not as simple as we may perhaps first believe it to be. The difficulty is that though we have a rough idea of the *initial* speed of dissemination of any particular communication using the mass media framework, the factors determining the speed of dissemination of word of mouth are not generally understood, and much harder to assess. We should note that after the initial delivery (and subsequent repetitions) of a message with the use of a modern technology device any further dissemination enters to some extent into the realm of word of mouth anyway, at which point the factors affecting the speed of dissemination become identical. So it is only in the initial delivery that mass media communication might be distinguished, in terms of speed of dissemination, from the word of mouth form. In brief, we are asking whether the reaching of a large number of people simultaneously, in the *initial* relaying of a message, is a significant factor in the speed at which the message spreads among even larger groups down the line. And what other, possibly overriding factors, come into play?

What is certain is that word of mouth communication can be inexplicably and even somewhat mysteriously swift. As such many have speculated about the possible mechanisms by which such extraordinary feats of dissemination occur - from those who tend to a non-physical explanation, to those (among them so-called scientists and sceptics) who go to extraordinary lengths to explain everything in terms of their strictly and grossly materialistic view of the world and the people in it.

In the 1970's a biologist named Lyall Watson proposed a theory, which came to be known as "the hundredth monkey effect", for the way word of mouth sometimes seems to take a quantum leap, so to speak, at a certain stage in the dissemination process. He postulated that there exists among both animals and men a critical number of learners that, when the members of that number have learned or understood something, allows for a "group consciousness" effect to take place which goes beyond physically limited communication constraints and pushes the learning thus into the general group populace in a very short space of time thereafter. So for instance, by Watson's own illustration of monkeys, (which he claimed to be based on actual, though apparently unofficial, observations of macaque monkeys on the remote island of Koshimo, and surrounding archipelago, in Japan) let's say that at one point 99 monkeys know how to wash their sweet potatoes before eating them to make them taste better, and then a further one learns it (the hundredth monkey) then this critical number somehow allows for a transcending of normal physical constraints so that large numbers of the group populace learn the new skill almost instantaneously and spontaneously. One can see that if such an effect exists, or something like it, that it might be a factor rendering any physically constrained factors like initial breadth of reach relatively insignificant. Sceptics, however, have attacked this theory as being based on, in Watson's own words, "anecdotes and hearsay", but there have been experiments and observations since then that have all served to suggest to scientists that there may well be some kind of group consciousness "quantum leap" effect in word of mouth communication.

Among the experiments are ones conducted on TV, for example by the BBC, involving

superficial type puzzles (e.g. hidden faces in pictures and crosswords) given to isolated groups to do while monitoring the effect of one group's foreknowledge on the other's performance; also research labs where rat learning patterns in lab mazes have been studied across many generations and isolated groups. Observations of natural phenomena too, like the blue tit bird species in the UK and Holland and its extraordinary milk bottle cream drinking learning habits in the first half of last century (the rate of learning of the habit seeming to speed up with time and cross over generational and geographical learning gaps) have also added weight to the increasing collection of anecdotal evidence suggesting a group consciousness effect in natural and word of mouth type communications.

I might take this opportunity here to explain to the reader that I do not myself accept Watson's hundredth monkey theory, nor do I accept any of the materialistic explanations for the group consciousness phenomenon. In my opinion the critical factor for the group consciousness effect to take place is not how many men have had the new insight, but *which ones*. In particular, and this is what the materialistic scientists seem to have missed, the actual quality of both the learner and the communication affects the extent to which group consciousness comes into play, the deciding factors being the depth or profundity of what is learned, and the depth of consciousness that is the habitual residence of the particular learner. (Which perhaps explains why tests for group consciousness have often had strangely variable results.) This is because the group consciousness effect is fundamentally a phenomenon proper to the deeper levels of consciousness, levels which must be accessed in order to affect the more superficial layers of consciousness where most of the rest of the group population resides. It is exactly analogous to the accessing of the whole tree with water simply by targeting the roots. You cannot target the roots, and thus the whole tree, with a shallow spray of water aimed indiscriminately, you need a deeply penetrating delivery aimed in the proper direction. Though an indiscriminate delivery may eventually, at the critical moment, hit the target.

More recently, internet users have become familiar with certain communications "going viral" (a misnomer really for what is often a completely organic, natural and healthy phenomenon), though most assume by force of habit that this is merely and always a purely physical effect, the message going out in an ever widening pyramid, when really that alone could not possibly account for the sheer reach, scope and swiftness of the effect, at least some of the time. In fact, word of mouth and group consciousness have come into play where there is little content control to stifle it and sufficient interactivity to enliven it.

What's more, do not doubt for a moment that interested parties, such as advertising firms, spin doctors and so called "defence" organizations are well aware of the phenomenon of group consciousness, even if the general populace isn't, and though they cannot use it (group consciousness is propaganda-excluding by its very nature), they take an interest in it nonetheless as something dangerous to their own purposes. If key individuals with group consciousness influence can be identified for instance, they are, no doubt, targeted for all kinds of futile attempts at psychological manipulation by these psychopaths. Furthermore, these groups use the forums they control, including online ones like Google and Wikipedia for instance, to among other things, discredit and disclaim any notion that non-technological based human communication might be in any way innately more powerful than their technology-dependent and controlled alternatives, for obvious reasons. Yet the truth is that the knowledge of what we are calling here "group consciousness" is not really new at all; spiritual traditions have known about the phenomenon literally for millennia - scientists are the last to know anything profound, truth be told - but the recent entering of the knowledge into the currently influential arena of science (albeit at the fringes or behind the scenes) has meant that even the grossest of materialists have had to change their ideas, at least privately, about what constitutes effective mass communication, and even to some extent understand its significance and importance, though they may publicly deny and actively seek to

discredit it for what they perceive myopically to be in their political interests.

If the concept of group consciousness seems a little speculative to the reader then you should know that I sympathise entirely. There does come a point where we must move beyond mere speculation and put some things to the test for ourselves. After all, all the experiments and observations in the world cannot substitute for what we learn ourselves using our own wit and insight applied to living experiment. We know full well what it is like to be immersed in mass media forms of communication, but can we really say we have any idea what it is like to have a mind totally free of its influence? We can speculate about it and play with words, but at the end of the day we will not really know until we actually try it. Even just six months to a year without any kind of access to our minds by the mass media perception management machine is sufficient to arrive at definite conclusions regarding which state of mind is the more desirable one. (And it gets better and better with time.) Can you afford to go through your entire life never knowing the difference? Think about it.

All things considered, there can be little doubt about which of the two forms of mass communication, modern technology based or word of mouth, best serves our true interests as human beings, while at the same time there is nothing to suggest that that which best serves us, viz. word of mouth, is not also a better form in any way we choose to look at it.

In fact, when we step away from mere force of habit with our thought, we can see that back to word of mouth is not a step backward at all, but a step away from an aberration, a minor glitch in the history of human experience, and a step away from that which is far less powerful, and which serves us not at all, to something which is innate, free, edifying and liberating by its very nature.

But while we continue to look to superficial mass media sources for our information, impressions, views and beliefs about the world and our place in it, we must surely remain under the spell of the spin woven for us by those who would enslave us. Please be very clear about this. The hands of our political leaders will remain bound by those who prepare the information and imagery about them that mould our consumption and voting habits and/or convince us that election results are plausible. Even those politicians who really mean well and wish to do the right thing are quickly put in the picture so to speak about what happens to politicians who step out of line. Time and time again we have seen this happen yet we remain strangely oblivious to the implications. A politician cannot at present hope for electoral acceptance without the mass media on side. How can we possibly hope for truly representative government while we depend so heavily for our information about it and our leaders on those sitting behind the scenes and out of view, who live in a completely different universe to the average Australian, and whose values have nothing at all to do with our own and never will? Its time to shut down this corrupt state of affairs and sham democracy once and for all! And we each can do our own bit simply by turning away the mass media/Hollywood trojan horse being offered daily at the gates of our minds.