

# BILL COOK COMMENTS

## IN PRAISE OF ORIGINALITY

There is nothing original here. Unless now in our sudden remembrance of the truths we had forgotten, Truth seems new.

Truth is older and more enduring than all of the substitutes vainly imagined by mere mortals. We are of the moment; Truth is everlasting. That is why we find that over the past four centuries honest searchers have disclosed the questions, if not the answers, to all the overwhelming circumstances of our times. In fact, they propose answers to questions we are neither willing nor capable to ask. Think devolution. Think hubris. Think ignorance.

T. S. Eliot asked the question that is still waiting for an answer.

“Where is the wisdom we  
have lost in knowledge?  
Where is the knowledge  
we have lost in information?”

Today’s intelligentsia have no answer. In fact, they cannot understand the question. The silly *DIKW* model, still touted by management courses, fails on two counts: It perverts the definition of the terms by confining its meaning to organizational theory; and it turns an inferred process upside down, starting with non-contextual, originless, purposeless “data.” Illogically, it mimics a rational process of induction, but without a certain point of origin. So, no ending. Actually, there is nothing in this universe that is not a potential “datum.”

The original does not assume or display a process, but rather, the relationships between and among those “essential properties” of human beings.

- Wisdom: “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” It is that which is in perfect accord with Truth
- Knowledge: The “relatedness” of things. One universe. One common humanity. One human experience.
- Information: The sensible ordering of contextualized trustworthy facts - empirical or intuitive.

There has never been a time in which we did not have Truth to guide us. If we chose to ignore it, to prefer the lie, we most surely will suffer the consequences. Then we must ask, “Where is the truth we lost in *our* wisdom?” The current “madness of the crowds” differs from that of earlier times only in severity, scope, and the portent for the future of civilization.

As convincing evidence that the answer is always there, universally, even before the question, Eliot’s questions is from “The Rock,” 1934. (Anglo-Catholic; British-American). Eight years earlier, Mahatma Gandhi quietly identified the “Seven Deadly Sins” of society – sins that have become the norm in our culture. (Hindu; India, South Africa)

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce without morality
- Science without humanity
- Religion without sacrifice
- *Politics without principle*

How ironic that it is not until we see cataclysmic collapse of rationalistic systems and the sophists turning on each other, that we begin to remember the life principles our first teachers taught us. Some have never forgotten them. Our firm has worked intimately with more than 1,500 communities, and their education systems, in cultures around the world. We always begin the planning process by discovering, in mutual agreement, the beliefs they hold in common. We have never seen two statements of beliefs that were exactly alike – each is unique as the local culture. *Yet we have never seen a statement of beliefs that contradicted or opposed any other.* It seems most of us had the same teachers.

There is nothing original here.

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