

Trivial Pursuit



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Dear Johnnie;

In the medieval university from which modern liberal education has evolved, the Trivium subjects of grammar, logic and rhetoric were intended to establish an intellectual foundation to support good citizenship and excellence in any field. The upper division Quadrivium subjects of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music were built on that foundation. This systematic approach to the development of knowledge and intellect yielded the Enlightenment, the scientific enterprise, the Industrial Revolution and the

Internet. The world has become considerably more complex in the last few centuries and liberal education is under suspicion; largely on economic grounds. You need some practical training that leads to a gainful career, but the development of your intellectual capacity bears independent attention in the service of that end. That's why you are here.

In Zen, enlightenment is ultimately about posture and breath. In principle you could go straight there; but most people require encouragement, guidance and training. This is also the case in martial arts, music, medicine, literature, mathematics, computer programming, finance, philosophy, psychotherapy and law. Because totalitarian states and cults have manipulated intelligent people in horrific ways by training them how to think, liberal democracies make a point of not doing that. Do not expect to find *Effective Thinking & Phenomenological Reasoning* in your curriculum. The Trivium subjects remain as intellectual fundamentals, but they provide only the syllabus and not the cognitive style you must acquire in order to bring it to life. It is important to develop an accurate intuition of how your brain, your mind and your environment collaborate to think on your behalf; and how to manage that process in your education and in the world. Let's talk about your situation in this context. Trust me. Call me.

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