

Impressionability



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Developing young minds should or should not be exposed to various types of material because they are impressionable. They can be swayed in many directions because they have not yet come to any firm conclusions. Kids are free to choose and to be persuaded, which is what terrifies their parents. Adults are less impressionable because they have come to so many conclusions they are fairly certain about; whether by faith, social conditioning or skeptical analysis. This is useful when the things we are certain about are *right* in the sense that a mathematical result, a financial statement

or a sports call can be right. If you really understand anything thoroughly it will be hard to make an impression on you while you are engaged with it, and you will not often experience the thrill and freedom of being impressed, which is to be changed and enlightened in some unexpected way. I think this experience is essential to happiness and that it should be cultivated.

This does not require giving up your established certainties or expertise in order to become intentionally naïve, although this can be a fruitful approach. No matter how sophisticated or constrained you are, there are unlimited new experiences and projects available to you in the world, in the context of which you are already exquisitely naïve! For good reasons, people tend to stick with what is familiar; with what is known to work or to be comfortable. But if too much of your time and attention is engaged with familiar material you will begin to feel a bit stale. This feeling of staleness can only be reversed by something new enough that it can impress, delight and change you in some unexpected way. The new thing doesn't have to be dramatic or exotic and there are many possibilities within your current reach, regardless of your circumstances. Trust me. Call me.

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