



Noesis

**The Journal of the Mega Society
Issue #201, July 2016**

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About the Mega Society

The Mega Society was founded by Dr. Ronald K. Hoeflin in 1982. The 606 Society (6 in 10⁶), founded by Christopher Harding, was incorporated into the new society and those with IQ scores on the Langdon Adult Intelligence Test (LAIT) of 173 or more were also invited to join. (The LAIT qualifying score was subsequently raised to 175; official scoring of the LAIT terminated at the end of 1993, after the test was compromised). A number of different tests were accepted by 606 and during the first few years of Mega's existence. Later, the LAIT and Dr. Hoeflin's Mega Test became the sole official entrance tests, by vote of the membership. Later, Dr. Hoeflin's Titan Test was added. (The Mega was also compromised, so scores after 1994 are currently not accepted; the Mega and Titan cutoff is now 43—but either the LAIT cutoff or the cutoff on Dr. Hoeflin's tests will need to be changed, as they are not equivalent.) Mega publishes this irregularly-timed journal. The society also has a (low-traffic) members-only e-mail list. Mega members, please contact the Editor to be added to the list. For more background on Mega, please refer to Darryl Miyaguchi's "A Short (and Bloody) History of the High-IQ Societies"—

<http://archive.today/K32e>

—the Editor's High-IQ Societies page—

<http://www.polymath-systems.com/intel/hiqsocs/index.html>

—and the official Mega Society page,

<http://www.megasociety.org/>

Noesis is the journal of the Mega Society, an organization whose members are selected by means of high-range intelligence tests. Jeff Ward, 13155 Wimberly Square #284, San Diego, CA 92128, is Administrator of the Mega Society. Inquiries regarding membership should be directed to him at the address above or:

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Editorial

Kevin Langdon

We have just three very interesting items in this issue of *Noesis*. This is not on purpose; I just haven't received a lot of submissions. Members of Mega and others are encouraged to submit material for publication.

Also, my computer system is not perfect; things can get lost. If you've submitted something for publication and haven't either seen it appear or received a rejection notice please contact the Editor.

We begin with a fascinating look at his military experiences as a 16- and 17-year-old sailor in World War II by Wallace (Dusty) Rhodes, followed by a poem he wrote on a destroyer.

And this issue includes Part Six of the long interview with Rick Rosner by Scott Douglas Jacobsen, from the *In-Sight* journal site—

<http://in-sightjournal.com/>

—where the interview originally appeared.

As in the previous parts of the interview, this part covers a lot of ground; including the difficulties faced by extremely-gifted students and resources to assist them, the tech revolution and the advantages and disadvantages it's brought for individuals, the economic system, and society, bullying and strategies for dealing with bullies, the need to use tech to improve education and make it more relevant to today's world, the major problems for the US and the world brought by tech and population growth and the outlook for the future, and the role of the highly gifted in shaping the future.

I feel the need to add a "don't try this at home" warning regarding some of the methods Rick suggests for dealing with bullies. Those without Rick's athletic skills and general toughness are likely to have a hard time making them work.

Cover: An image from the Hubble space telescope shows a spectacular aurora around Jupiter's north pole (NASA, ESA, and J. Nichols [University of Leicester])

Sketches and Remembrances—WW II at Sea

Wallace (Dusty) Rhodes

It was 1939 and the Germans, led by Adolph Hitler, had opened the door to start World War Two. Events and aggressions swept quickly from country to country throughout Western Europe in what was known as the German "Blitzkrieg". Countries began falling under German rule. Then on December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. The United States of America was quickly drawn into the war and at the behest of Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the U.S., war was immediately declared on Japan. Patriotism plus anger swept through the entire U.S.A. Long lines were seen at draft boards and enlistment centers. Both males and females wanted to do their share regardless of whether it was joining one of the Services, getting a job at a defense plant, making material necessities for the soon to be active Servicemen and women, mass volunteering by the American people for any job or duty that would place America in a position to be number one in all aspects. Air Raid Wardens, Nurses teaching first aid, blackout curtains for homes, rationing of gasoline, shoes, tires, sugar, cigarettes, and many other items and things once considered quite necessary began to take place. "Lucky Strike" cigarettes (when cigarettes were acceptable in society) had a motto, "Lucky Strike Green has gone to War". All the packs were white-not green). No complaints. Just patriotic duty. It was a frightening time, but a time when people helped people, and all put their shoulders to the grindstone to help their country. Their country. The USA.

Young men and boys lied about their age and volunteered to serve in some branch of the service, the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Corps, Coast Guard, or the Merchant Marine (even though the Merchant Marine was not considered a branch of any U.S. Armed Service, many of them lost their lives at sea). Men too old for the rigors of fighting in a war lied. No shame about telling such lies; it was what one's heart spoke from within. Many succeeded in getting into one of the Armed Services, whether too young or too old. Many died also whether too young or too old. Pride, patriotic duty, anger at an enemy, sadness soon to come, and sacrifice were all taken in stride. Tears of both pride and sadness occurred on the home front, in a far away foxhole, or aboard a ship at sea.

I happened to be one of the age-liars. The minute I turned sixteen in 1943, I went to a Naval Enlistment Center and smiled at the Chief Petty Officer. He did not smile in return but told me to go home. I did. I talked with my father who had served in the Army in World War I. At first he gave me the same treatment as the Navy Chief, but knowing my stubbornness, he relented and signed my papers. I enlisted in the U.S. Navy but was not called for my physical examination until the beginning of 1944. I was still 16 and after the physical I was sworn in and wound up in Boot Camp in San Diego, California. I was immediately homesick and asked myself what had I done. Boot Camp, where extremely rough treatment was doled out—especially during the first three weeks—had been cut from 12 weeks to 8 weeks because of the emergency need for additional Service personnel.

After Boot Camp I was given 6 days leave plus 8 days travel time to go home, see my parents, and return to base. Everything was by cross-country train in those days, and it required at least 4 days travel to go home and 4 to return to Diego. At times some civilians would give up their trip so that a Service man could get to some critical and necessary location. One's travel sometimes ate into the time one could spend at home (for perhaps the last time). Being late required "Brig Time" on bread and water for a week or so unless one had a valid excuse. I would be on time. No "Brig Time." I spent about 6 days with my family. I would walk around my neighborhood and notice the hand sized stars on the window panes. A White Star meant the family had someone in the service in the states, a Silver Star meant the family had someone overseas, and a Gold Star meant the service person was killed in action. There were more gold stars than I expected. I managed to visit each Gold Star home in my neighborhood to give them my heart-felt condolences. Many of the dead were my neighborhood friends and buddies, and a sadness dwelt in my heart and mind. At the end of my leave, my family took me to the Atlanta Terminal Train Station (where many trains were coming and going) for a journey into the unknown. Many tears were shed by all. I boarded a train that took me to Memphis, Tennessee. While waiting in the station, someone had dropped in a nickel in the jukebox to play "Sentimental Journey", written by Les Brown and Ben Homer, which put me in a very nostalgic mood and brought a sadness hard to describe. Finally, I boarded a train called the "Rock Island Rocket" to Amarillo, Dallas, El Paso, Texas and on to San Diego. Trains were so crowded with Service people that everyone had to sleep in their seats for several days. Service people only ate twice a day. No booze allowed, but someone always managed to smuggle a fifth aboard. I played my harmonica and was popular for that reason.

We called San Diego "Diego." The San Diego citizens hated that abbreviated name for their city, but they more or less disliked us (so what the hell). Diego was not at all like Chicago where the Great Lakes Boot Camp was located. One time during a visit we noticed that the people in Chicago dearly loved the sailors and servicemen, and we loved them too. Sometime one of them would invite a couple of us to their home for dinner, time permitting. They would even get up and try to give us their seats when riding on the "L." Of course we never accepted.

While at the Naval Base in Diego, we saw a group of about twenty shackled German soldiers (not Nazis) cleaning up the grounds. They seemed like a hard working lot. We were not allowed near them or to speak to them, even if we spoke German. I was able to give one of them an apple and he showed great gratitude. In about three days we were ordered to report to San Francisco, then to Shoemaker, California. After a couple of weeks in Shoemaker, we were taken to Treasure Island before being shipped out. Treasure Island was quite a Hell Hole. There were about thirty of us, and we stood in front of an old warehouse the entire night in the rain and cold. They had taken our Sea Bags (which contained our Pea coats, which we certainly could have used) and placed them on a ship. We were permitted to keep our small Ditty Bags. The next day we were still milling about. We had not eaten in almost two days but were given buckets of water with dip-pers. Night time again and we received a can of pork and beans and a can of apple sauce. It began to rain again so they issued us a blanket, wet from the rain. We were told to go into a warehouse until morning. All I wanted at the time was an honorable discharge. At

5:00 am we were told to get ready to report to a Chief Petty Officer at a dock where we boarded a very large old ship.

As it turned out, it was a WW I troop transport ship (by the name of The Southern Cross, I think); the regular crew ate well and tended to their duties. We (the troops) had to work but did not eat as well. I happened to be talking to one of the crew—a salty old Chief Petty Officer. He told me that if I ate as much as I could as often as possible, I could prevent sea sickness. I did eat and I didn't get sea sick. As I recall the old ship listed about 6 degrees. Not a happy voyage for new recruits. We passed under the Golden Gate Bridge and saw Alcatraz in the distance. We steamed along at 10 knots for five days or so. We passed the Hawaiian Islands, turned around for no apparent reason, docked, and were put ashore and told to wait for further orders.

We were there for several days and then we were split up into small groups. About eight of us were put aboard a two stack Destroyer (tin can). I was a Seaman First Class, which quickly changed to Fireman First Class, as I was assigned to an engine room. No one told me what to do, so I started reading and recording the various gauges on a boiler. It was extremely hot, I didn't know what I was doing, or for how long. After 8 hours a Chief told me to go and get some chow. My assigned duty was 8 hours on and 4 hours off. (When do I sleep, I wondered to myself) After a couple of weeks, they gave me other duties and told me to listen for the Boatswain's Mate First Class and his instructions on the speakers. If I heard a loud blaring sound, I was told it was a Claxon, and I must go to my duty station on the double because that was "General Quarters", and it could signal a Jap Sub, a Jap surface Ship, or just a dry run. Just before General Quarters was sounded, the Boatswain's Mate would blow his pipe over the loud speaker system and then announce several times that it was General Quarters and everyone must report to their duty stations.

During one of my 4 hours off, I went up to the deck, or "Topside." A bright, cool, cloudless day with a gentle roll of the Pacific. I wondered how things could seem so peaceful and yet be so ominous. I slept when I could, which was not much. The food was not all that great or plentiful but because several sailors were sea sick, I was happy to eat their chow (even though the powdered milk cereal had live weevils) and not let it go to waste. I noticed that on a Destroyer the Officers ate with the enlisted men. Not so on most other ships I was told. The Skipper called himself "Snuffy" Smith and he was a Lieutenant Commander (two and one-half stripes) and hard as nails. They said he really knew what he was doing at sea. I found that statement to be accurate and true "In Spades". I was up on the deck one cloudy day and saw in the distance an extremely dark cloud bank. A Chief told everyone we were in for it. My first experience of a heavy storm, and it was heading straight for us. In about 15 minutes everyone was ordered below. The hatches had been battened down and I found, at times, when I was below, that I could walk with one foot on the deck and the other on the bulkhead (wall) and almost be perfectly vertical. But that storm was just the beginning. It turned into a terrible Typhoon. The Skipper announced that we would be getting into some 60 foot high waves but we should not worry. Who's worrying? I actually sneaked up to a hatch, undogged it, and cautiously peered around the hatch. All I saw was this huge wave breaking over our bow. Then the rough hands of a Chief grabbed me, threw me down the ladder, redogged the

hatch, and told me the next time I pulled such a stupid stunt he would throw me overboard. I believed him.

Few made it to the chow line except me and a couple of friends who were not seasick. Scuttlebutt (generally incorrect information) had gotten around that we were headed for an island to give support to some Battleships (Battlewagons) and Cruisers. So off we went not knowing what was ahead. I had my 17th birthday coming up soon and I did not have a worry or a fear—too young, I guess. Either brave or stupid. Probably the latter. The next day when I was at my duty station in the boiler room, General Quarters sounded. We were told to stay at our stations. I wanted to go topside to see what the hell was going on. But there I was reading gauges and adjusting valves at my assigned boiler. A pang of nausea hit me because I wanted to see what was happening. Finally, my relief came and I dashed topside. We were steaming toward two Battleships and about five Cruisers (a chief told me two of the cruisers were heavy and the other three were light--that meant nothing to me except the noise of their guns). We were still a mile or so away and as we got closer the Battleships started firing broadsides with 16" guns toward an island. I couldn't see what they were shooting at but someone evidently could. Several more Destroyers were behind the other ships (Destroyers were sunk more often and took more damage than almost any other ship) and we fell in line to follow. We were informed that our job was to protect the other ships from any marauding Jap surface ships or Boats (submarines). We were carrying some depth charges ready to use if necessary. We were never told what island or where we were. In fact we were never told anything except to just follow orders. Of course our ship's officers received orders from the Skipper for all actions as the Skipper received them from his immediate command. Many commands and communications were sent and received by a shuttered light semaphore unit if it was safe from enemy eyes. (We were taught semaphore in Boot Camp). After that specific operation, we were sent to another island where some U.S. ships and Subs were docked. I looked on the Bulletin Board and saw my name and the names of my two buddies. We were being transferred to a repair ship, the "USS Arg 10." I spent several months on the ship, roaming the Pacific and repairing various U.S. Naval vessels. Most of our repairs entailed putting the Diesel engines of a ship or sub in proper order. I learned how to tear down an engine and put it back together in workable condition. I made a few mistakes but fortunately a higher ranking Petty Officer (a Motor Machinist Mate or Chief) saw them in time, and we had no recall problems. Just as I was catching on to engine repair work, they transferred me to the Tool Crib where I was in charge. The motor machinist mates would ask me and get the proper equipment needed for a specific project. I knew every tool by heart because of my past experience.

I was striking for a promotion to become a third class Motor Machinist Mate. (Many of the ratings were nick-named. E.g., a Motor Machinist Mate was a Motor Mac, a Secretary was a Feather Merchant, a Radio Operator was called Sparks, a Corpsman who treated non-serious illnesses or wounds was called a Penis Machinist, etc.) I was hoping to be a Motor Mac. That would be a good thing. I would receive a monthly pay raise from my present Fireman's monthly pay of \$30.00 (+\$6:00—20 % for hazardous duty pay). It was not meant to be. I got into a heated argument with a Chief Petty Officer, and he gave me extra duty by putting me on the Forward Gun Turret chipping paint. That was a continuous job with no sleep or chow until finished. A usual type of punishment passed out

to anyone who was "noncompliant". He also killed any chance of my "striking" for a promotion. I despised old Chief Johnny. Neither of us could stand the other. After a few weeks we had another "nothing type" argument and I lost my temper and hit him. They put me up for a Captain's Mast, then decided that two weeks on "Bread and Water" was not enough so they raised my punishment level to be tried by a Summary Court Martial. A very kind Warrant Officer (a lawyer) took my case and surprisingly recommended that they raise my trial to the level of a General Court Martial. He secretly told me I would go before three Officers and he (the Warrant Officer) could probably get me off with very little punishment. I don't remember the details basically because I was so young. The Court finally decided to give me five days of "Bread and Water" in the Brig. The Warrant Officer told me I was lucky, and don't hit ANYBODY again. He also told me to eat only the crust of the bread or I would get gas on my stomach which would be quite uncomfortable. I could have all the water I wanted but only one loaf of bread each day. On the third day they gave you a full meal but my stomach could not stand it and I threw up all that I had eaten. Those five days seemed like five weeks. The W.O. told me afterward that things could have been a lot worse. He turned into a great friend. The only reason they would let you out of the Brig was to go to the Head (toilet) and if General Quarters was sounded.

A month later my two buddies and I were transferred to LST 1039. (an LST was a Landing Ship Tank to the Navy). It was a fairly large vessel and the duty was hard. The bunks were four high, laced canvass, and the guy above you always managed to have his ass in your face. I thought about an ice pick but remembered what the W.O. told me. The guy on the bottom bunk was huge, slept with his shoes on, and was a real bully that snored. A couple of us put shoe polish around his shoe soles while he was sleeping and set them on fire. He was yelling as he dashed for the Head and jumped in the latrine trough filled with urine and excrement (at times). He was not such a bully after that. We soon learned that an LST (we called it a Low-Slow-Target) was not so comfortable in rough seas or enemy territory. Our sister ship, LST 1038, had a guy go "Asiatic" and kill three sailors with a rifle. We did not sleep very well after that episode. In another month or so we were transferred again to a Repair Ship. It just happened to be the old ARG10 that we were on previously. Life, I found out, has funny twists. As I headed toward my old bunk, I ran into one of my very good friends from my high school in Atlanta, Georgia. His name was Keith Yardley. We put our arms around one another to greet each other on such a rare occasion. Then I thought what they told us months ago. Don't make close friends. What a premonition. At about the same time frame, another sad event occurred. An old true southern lad whose name was Southgate Beauregard Lee (We called him Bird Dog) failed to fall in for the roll call (muster) at six am. We thought he might have overslept. He didn't. We all knew he was in a state of depression most of the time. He was six and a half feet tall, walked with a slump, but always spoke kindly to everyone. We searched the ship from bow to stern and never found him. The Skipper came over the speaker system and told everyone that he probably fell overboard. We were told by Officers not to ever mention suicide because his family in Virginia would not receive the standard \$10,000.00 issued to each Serviceperson upon signing up. He was listed officially as killed in action. He was loved by all.

After a month or so, our Repair Ship was sent to another island where some Battleships were shelling and several required some engine repair. While we were working on one of their engines, the Battleship we were on headed out to another island, and we could not immediately return to our repair ship. In a few days we arrived at the island to join a couple of other Battleships, a few Cruisers, and some Destroyers. I remember being homesick for my old Destroyer. Then the big ships started their salvo of shelling the island. They fired all night. Every time one or more 16" guns would go off, you could feel the "back blow," breathe the heavy smoke, and listen to the unbelievable noise. You were unable to hear anyone talking for a couple of hours. No ear muffs because in the Forties it was not known that loud sounds could damage the ears permanently. And it did, because when I reached my sixties my hearing began to fail. It was an irreversible structural condition.

After a few days we were returned to our ARG10 where we steamed around doing miscellaneous repairs on some of our surface ships and a couple of Subs. The repair on the Subs was great stuff. After the repair, the Sub's Skipper took it for a crash dive. It was a real experience for me and I loved it. They told me that they hoped we had done a good job on the engines. Lot of truth to that one.

Now that we were "*safely*" on board our ARG10 again, we were told we would be sailing for the China Sea and on the way we would cross the International Date Line (IDL). There was a small initiation that I did not know about. I saw some Mates looking into a covered bucket and so I bent over to see what their so-called sea creature looked like. While doing so, I was hit in the rear with a large board. I was knocked over a table and could not get up because my legs had no feeling and were completely numb. What a joke! Fortunately though (I guess) I never did cross the Equator, so I remained a Pollywog instead of a Shellback and did not have to face King Neptune. That, I was told, is one hell of an initiation. As we continued to sail toward the China Sea, we saw some Dolphins leaping along our starboard bow. Beautiful! Also, we ran into a school of Flying fish. They were about six inches long and shiny as silver. Some actually landed on our deck. We picked them up and threw them back to the old briny sea. As we sailed West, I thought of a game for all hands to relieve some of the boredom. I began making a list of all the old thirties and forties songs. All hands happily joined in and wrote all the songs they could think of. I catalogued them all. A big job as there were a total of about 10,000 songs. Mostly love, jitterbug, jive, country and blues. Also as we sailed along, a supply ship signaled us. We slowed down to two knots and they transferred by a steel cable (shot over to us) a new assortment of 30 inch, long playing phonograph records, plus our mail. Thank God! We had heard the same songs over the speakers for months. We got mail about once every six weeks. A letter from home or from a girl friend was generally something we all looked forward to, except the "Dear Johns" that told the recipient that his girl had met someone else. What a bummer.

As we reached the China Sea area, we slowed again from about eight knots to two. The sailor on the Bridge noticed several floating mines. At first the Skipper was going to send out a Lieutenant, JG and a Boatswain's Mate First Class in our small motor launch to dismantle them. Then he changed his mind and asked for someone who was accurate with a rifle. They chose me. The object was to hit one of the sensors and not the

body of the mine. If the sensor is hit, it explodes. If the body is hit, it sinks. The sea was relatively calm so that I was able to hit a sensor about seventy-five percent of the time on ten or so mines. When one exploded it made an unbelievable noise and the ship rocked a bit from the waves it made. The JG hit me on the back and told me I did a good job. (He certainly did not want to get close enough to a mine to neutralize it). U.S. ships had just finished shelling Sasebo, Japan. About the same time, we were ordered to go to Shanghai, China and drop anchor in the Huangpu River (pronounced Wang-poo). Several other U.S. Ships were there before us, including a medium Cruiser. A Boatswain's Mate and I were sent to pick up three Marines (No questions asked, period). It was about ten pm and as we were returning from the Shanghai dock, the Boatswain ordered me to run it wide open. I questioned the order but he insisted. It was pitch dark for security reasons. About that time we hit the side of the Cruiser. The Boatswain and I had life jackets, but the Marines did not. The river currents were fierce, but I managed to grab two Marines by the collar. The other drifted down the river. The Boatswain threatened me if I was asked and told about his insistence to run "wide open." We were fished out of the river. I told him to shove it. They searched all night with huge search lights but never found the other Marine. There was a hearing and the Boatswain had to go before a General Court Martial. I heard he was found guilty as charged. I gave my testimony as it happened. The Marines told me if they could ever do anything for me to let them know.

The river was filthy and during the day you could see excrement and dead Chinese bodies float by. The river was full of Chinese in Sampans (small boats propelled by a "Chink" on a tiller at the backend of their boat, and large Junks, propelled by sails. The "Chinks" used the river as a toilet and also drank from it. That was hard for me to believe even though I saw it with my own eyes. We were in Shanghai for a week or so. I didn't know a lot of the sailors on our ship as our complement was about 200+ men, as I recall.

One night while off-duty, I happened to meet a guy everyone called Nick. His last name was Oshaniki and I discovered he was a relative of some sort to one of the infamous Mafia Leaders, Lucky Luciano. If Nick needed a thousand dollars or so, it was wired to him by Uncle Lucky. One night a group of us were playing Blackjack (21). My \$36.00 didn't go very far most of the time. But on that particular night, it seemed as if I could not lose. I was ahead over \$700.00. One of the guys next to me told me that most of that money was Nick's and it would not be a good idea to walk away if I did not want an ice pick in stuck in my ribs when I was sleeping. So I did foolish things and let Nick win "his" money back. I did "rat-hole" about \$60.00, which was still a fortune to me. After the game Nick told me that I caved in and had let him win. Further, he asked if I was afraid of him. I told him no, except in my sleep. He laughed, peeled off a couple of \$20.00 bills, and told me to hit the sack and no hard feelings but don't ever cave in to anyone anymore. Nick was a first class Motor Mac and the best Diesel guy I ever had met. He was also mean as hell but he just happened to like me. He had a very quick temper so no one really ever crossed him. Especially with his Chicago and New York connections. He knew what Chief Johnny had done to me and asked if he could fix him up with some misery. I told him to "forget about it". He laughed and said that was a Mafia expression which meant "get rid of the punk". I changed my response to a plain "No, but thanks for the thought, Nick". We became great friends and he told me after the war to come up to Chicago for a visit. But that is another story. I visited Nick a couple of

times until he was gunned down in Chicago on a sidewalk on State Street not far from the Loop. I still miss Nick. He always took up for me and was a great and true friend. Nick told me one time that he felt he would die fairly young. He said that if you live to be old, all your kin and your friends will be dead. A very, very true prophecy because that is the way things are now that I am 88.

We had General Quarters a few times when we were roaming around helping other ships including one English (Limey) ship. We noted how utterly filthy and unkempt their ship was during our short stay aboard their craft. U.S. ships were always clean, spotless, and all the brass was bright and shiny. All in all, we had four General Quarters commands and saw the periscope of a Jap Sub. The Jap Sub fired torpedoes at us on one occasion but as luck would have it, they crossed in front of our bow. One other time the Jap Sub surfaced and took a few shots at us. One hit the rig we used to load things into the Hold. The other two times were false alarms. The Skipper told us we were very lucky that we had never been attacked by the Jap Kamikaze (divine wind) suicide bombers. The Jap history of what Kamikaze means to them dates back hundreds of years.

An event happened around this time that really pissed the Skipper off. As we were steaming along we passed an island. Three "Nips" in loin cloths started shooting at us with their old 31 cal rifles. Bullets were pinging of our superstructure. The Skipper ordered me and a swabby (who would fire 20mm rounds from the 20mm deck gun) to take them out. In about 30 seconds I had the range and cut them to pieces. Tough for the Nips.

After that, an event occurred that became a time of great sadness for me because the friend of mine, Keith, was working with a crew firing our 5" or 6" deck gun for practice. Something happened and the breeching blew open and cut him in half. Why Keith? They buried him at sea by sewing his two parts in heavy canvas, placing weights inside the canvass, put an American flag over the canvas, and let his body slide beneath the flag into a lonely, choppy, dark sea. I cried, as it was my first burial at sea, and he was my dear friend in life. Keith was 18 years old. I could not get it out of my mind that I would never see him again.

Another personnel transfer, and this time the only names I saw on the Bulletin Board were my two good buddies. I went to the guy who kept the personnel records. He was the secretary for the Skipper, a "Feather Merchant." I asked him why I wasn't being transferred. He looked at me and said that he didn't make the orders, he just followed them. My good friends, McBride and Sagar, were transferred to the Heavy Cruiser, USS Indianapolis. The Indianapolis was sunk by a Jap Sub on July 30 and went down in about 12 minutes. She had been delivering parts, etc. for the atomic bomb "Little Boy" that would be dropped on Hiroshima. I found out some years later that McBride died in shark infested waters but never knew what became of Sager. I have a book about the Indianapolis that has McBride's name in it as one of the casualties. I never found Sagar's name or knew what happened to him.

As the war was nearing a close, our Repair Ship was ordered back to San Diego. It was lucky for me that we were going back to the States because I had been injured and an officer told me I was lucky because the injury was really wearing me down. They put

me in Sick Bay. I would soon wind up at the San Diego Naval Hospital. The Officer wished me good tidings.

After docking in Diego, I was taken to the Naval Hospital where I was treated very nicely, and the chow was good. I stayed there about eight weeks and was given about 360 shots of penicillin in my rear end. A four striper (Captain) operated on me and told me not to worry. They gave me a shot of morphine for pain and it put me on "cloud nine." For the first and last time, I had experienced a potent pain killer. I asked for another but the Head Nurse said NO. The Nurse would come around every six hours, tell me and others to turn over, and to pull down our skivvy shorts. She would slap us on the rear (to deaden the needle pain) and say "Sunny Side Up." Penicillin was the first and only antibiotic known at that time. The Nurse, Miss Its, was a kind girl but really rough and rowdy. She had a large ship tattooed across her breast and sometime she would undo her blouse and show us how her ship could ride the waves. They were going to send me back overseas but that order was later changed. I would spend a few more weeks at Balboa Naval Hospital and then they would send me to Jacksonville, Florida for discharge (there I would get my discharge symbol—a Ruptured Duck—sewed on my jumper). I had second thoughts. Should I have stayed in the Navy?

Prior to my leaving the Hospital in Diego, they let me have a few days off to see the sights. Such as they were. I was walking along one evening, and I spotted a USO. Strictly for Servicemen to relax and listen to music (slow 40's music, jitterbug, etc.) I went in to have a Coke and listen to a real band. I think it was Artie Shaw. I was sitting alone at a table when the most beautiful, feminine, brunette came to my table and asked if she could sit down. I stuttered and stammered around and finally croaked out a yes. She asked if I would like to dance. I could Jitterbug some but I was better dancing the slow love songs typical of the late 1930's and early 1940's. We danced to the popular tune just out, "Sentimental Journey," and several other slow songs. She told me each dance was a dime but then laughed and told me it would cost me nothing. She—Gene Eliza Tierney—had just made the movie "Laura" in 1944 with Clifton Web, Dana Andrews, and Vincent Price. "Laura" was one of the ten all time great murder-mystery movies. Gene was very strikingly beautiful, with prominent cheek bones and an appealing overbite. She asked if I would marry her if she was not presently married and she was not seven years older. She took my breath away. I have seen the movie over 40 times. Gene was nominated for an Academy Award for some other movie. I named my Daughter "Laura" after Gene who played "Laura" (the title of the movie) in the movie. We had several Cokes together. I was 18 at the time. She gave me information on how to correspond with her and said she would write me as often as possible. She told me not to forget her and to this day, I never have. She again said she wished I was a few years older and she was a few years younger. I still carry her picture in my billfold. She was borne November 19, 1920 and died November 6, 1991. She left Hollywood and moved to Texas. She wrote me several times prior to her death from a mental illness. As I have said many times, life has so many twists and turns.

When the war was over, a buddy of mine (he served in the Army Infantry in Europe) and I applied at the 52-20 Agency. All veterans received \$20.00 for 52 weeks to help them get on their feet. A lot of money in the 1940's. We traveled over the entire U.S.

as Hoboes riding freight trains. It was against the law, but we never were caught. We worked at different jobs as we traveled. Also, we had the G.I. Bill, so we decided to go to college. We went to the University of Georgia in Atlanta, (dropped out), then Southern Tech (dropped out) because they were too easy and boring. We also could not decide what we wanted to major in. Finally he and I decided we would go to Georgia Tech and get a degree in Mechanical Engineering. A very, very difficult (and fourth rated in the U.S.) engineering College. Because of my aptitude in Chemistry, I took Chemistry for all my elective courses. In my Junior year, I met a very beautiful girl, Rebecca Burns. We married as I got my degree when I finished my Senior year. We had two children; a girl and a boy. We had such a beautiful and lovely family. My son died of a heart attack when he was 54 years old. My daughter is fine and is 63 years old. In February 2016 my wife and I had been happily married for 66 years. I am 88 and my wife is 87. She is still lovely and beautiful to me.

All of my close friends are no longer living. So I feel quite alone. When I go to lunch I sometimes see young Servicemen and Servicewomen. I sometimes buy them lunch and we swap a few war stories. All of us enjoy those moments.

Now all I have are memories of a good life; my dear wife and daughter; memories of long gone buddies in and out of the Military—Especially E.B. Sledge who fought on Peleliu and Okinawa as a Marine and wrote one of the best of the WWII books, *With the Old Breed**; pen pals in a couple of HIQ societies; and my dear little 6-year-old male long haired Chihuahua that has a better vocabulary than I do.

(Destroyers were sunk more often and took more damage than almost any other ship) Basically, I loved the sea and wish I could take one last voyage on a U.S. Naval Vessel. Perhaps even on a Destroyer.

On the next page is a poem I wrote while on a Destroyer. It is more truth than Poetry, I think. (Destroyers were sunk more often and took more damage than almost any other ship)

* Eugene and I had some good times together before he died of cancer a number of years ago.

The Hold

Wallace (Dusty) Rhodes

The roaring engines, the driving rods, the ever moving shaft
The turning screw, the hearty men, the onward moving craft.
How hot this Hold,
These men how bold,
With bodies of grease and sweat.
Inside they're cold,
These men so bold;
They curse and drink to forget.
And when they're gone
The ship moves on,
But memories linger yet.
Yet at life's end—
And only then—
They'll be free from toil and sweat.

The dashing waves, the foaming brine, they beat the sturdy hull.
The salty air, the golden sun, a drifting of a gull.
How free this air,
Beyond compare,
Yet men in that Hold can't smell.
It's always there,
This salty air,
And so is that Hold of Hell.
But that's their fate,
And so, fine mate,
You can rot, and burn, and sweat.
The ship will sail on
It will know you're gone
But the rest will all forget.

Interview with Rick Rosner by Scott Douglas Jacobsen (Part Six)

November 8, 2014

ABSTRACT

Part six of eleven, comprehensive interview with Rick G. Rosner, member of a number of high-IQ societies, ex-editor for the Mega Society (1990-96), and writer. He discusses the following subject-matter: organizations devoted to the moderately gifted ability sectors of the general population, few with provisions for the high, profound, exceptional, or ‘unmeasurable ability’ sectors, the possibility of proactive work by individuals and organizations, comparison of his own childhood to his daughter’s childhood, and extensive discussion on giftedness, giftedness in Los Angeles, and social guidance for the highly gifted; methods for the adult and senior gifted set to inculcate prosocial values in the young, commentary on Capitalism and the failure of communism, and technological booms on the horizon with examples of 3D printing and biotechnology; increased awareness and commentary on bullying; message for kids undergoing bullying and general reflections on personal experiences and considerations of adaptive active approaches to the problem of bullying; active approaches with respect to parents, teachers, administrators, authority figures, and the wider community for support and encouragement; possible passive approaches and consolation; assisting others in their struggle with bullying; extreme cases of abuse for girls and boys, young men and women, and words for those feeling driven to extremes; commentary on the possibility of mean people becoming kind people, *First Amendment*, and Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE); possibilities of remaking the educational systems of the world; thoughts on global problems in the United States of America and some possible ways to solve them; interacting political, economic, religious, corporate, educational, and other systems in societies with reflections on the future; associations of the highest levels of ability with world-changing things; and responsibilities of the gifted population towards society and culture.

Keywords: administrators, bullies, bullying, corporate, economic, educational, First Amendment, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, gifted, Los Angeles, Mega Society, parents, political, religious, Rick G. Rosner, teachers, unfolding, United States of America, universe, writer.

56. Many organizations provide for the needs of the moderately gifted ability sectors of the general population, most often adults and sometimes children. However, few provide for the needs of children (and adults) in the high, profound, exceptional, or ‘unmeasurable ability’ sectors of the general population. Not to argue for the necessary disadvantage of the gifted population based on abilities and talents. A definite benefit over others in life. Even so, some organizations and societies provide

forums, retreats, journals, intelligence tests, literature, or outlets for the highest ability sub-populations. No need to bore with a list best left to an internet search engine query. What can individuals, organizations, and societies do to provide for the gifted population? What argument most convinces you of the need to provide for this sector of society? In short, how can parents, mentors, educators, and policy-makers assist the gifted population towards the appropriate resources?

Based on my childhood compared to my daughter's childhood, I think that things are much better for the highly gifted than when I was a kid. Plenty of parents are on the lookout for giftedness in their children, and organizations will help them nurture it. This doesn't mean that every super-high-IQ kid will be found or well-served. Affluent, well-informed, non-chaotic parents are more likely to notice and encourage giftedness, which still leaves a lot of smart kids who may need to be spotted by other people in their lives.

A nice thing about our current internet-centric culture is that a smart kid can find smart, entertaining things to do without too much effort. All of human knowledge is available via any keyboard (though so is all of human foolishness – the smarter we get, the more sophisticated our time-wasting diversions become).

In the 60s and 70s, it felt like there was frickin' nothing. I should've taken more of the initiative in finding learning opportunities instead of watching endless crappy sitcom reruns, but I shared a certain laziness and complacency with the era. At the time, most people assumed just about everyone would turn out okay, educationally, with regular schooling. Back then, everyone I knew went to public school, and there didn't seem to be pervasive concern over public education. Could be America, exhausted by Vietnam and Watergate and crappy cars and ugly color schemes (orange, brown and turquoise) and the first OPEC crisis, didn't want to look for trouble where there didn't seem to be any.

Today, with schools seeming much more broke and broken, skepticism about whether a kid is being adequately served comes more easily. It helps any kid to have an involved parent. On behalf of my daughter, my wife spent hundreds of hours researching and pursuing the enriched educational opportunities available through the Los Angeles public schools. LA public schools have great gifted programs, but because the school system is financially strapped, they can serve only a very limited number of students. Basically, you accumulate gifted program lottery tickets and hope your name is drawn for a program. We were lucky. Or your kid can get in by scoring 145 or higher on a group-administered IQ test, which is an iffy proposition for a first- or second-grader, no matter how gifted.

To serve very-high-IQ kids, first someone has to notice that a kid is smart. This generally happens when a kid shows extreme precocity or is disruptive in the classroom out of boredom, which makes me wonder if quiet, well-behaved prodigies are sometimes overlooked. (Luckily for me, I was a bored and obnoxious kid. If there had been specialized educational resources to give me, I would've gotten them.) At the very least, teachers and administrators should get a heads-up at some point in their training to be on the lookout

for a once-in-a-decade kid. For parents who are wondering if their kid is super-smart, Googling “Is my child gifted?” returns a blizzard of information. A good book for figuring out what’s up with your possibly gifted kid is *5 Levels of Gifted*, by Deborah Ruf. But ideally, every kid should be noticed, should have people and systems that understand his or her abilities and interests. Via digital devices, kids do more of their own educating than ever before. An up-to-date educational system, which should include lots of tech-heavy teaching resources, would build upon kids’ digital lives and individualize instruction. It’s counterproductive that the hours spent in school are the least tech-rich part of students’ day.

I know of a couple organizations which provide considerable support for gifted kids. The *Institute for Educational Advancement* has a variety of programs, including the Caroline D. Bradley Scholarship, which covers the costs of four years of school at any high school in the nation. They’ve just doubled the number of scholarships available, to 30 new recipients each year. You take the SAT and apply during middle school, so it takes some foresight, but it’s well worth it. The *Davidson Institute for Talent Development* has a bunch of programs and a directory of gifted resources throughout the country. Parents who think their kid is gifted should network online like crazy. So should teachers who suspect they have a gifted student who’s being overlooked.

In a way, we’re all highly gifted children who need guidance. Tech is giving us capabilities unheard of up to now – the instantaneous retrieval of detailed though not necessarily accurate information on any subject, constant communication with a wide circle of family, friends, and acquaintances, access to vast selections of entertainment. I mentioned the Flynn effect, but there’s also what could be called the Watson effect. Like Watson the *Jeopardy!* computer, we have access to all the knowledge in the world but need to develop the research skills and discernment to use it well. Compared to a smart person without access to the internet, a person with a smart phone could potentially have an effective IQ of 400. (Imagine Lewis Terman in 1921, testing the IQ of a time-traveling kid from 2032 who has a smart phone built into his head [with an internet connection that works across time]. That kid would crush the test.) Of course, people with smart phones don’t have effective IQs of 400, because they’re tweeting clapping-hands emojis while almost getting clipped by an Audi in a crosswalk. Our entire civilization needs to adjust and embrace its genius, which we will, frustratingly slowly (along with a flood of high-tech foolishness – the greater the tech, the greater the sophisticated, time-wasting frivolity).

Besides intellectual and educational guidance, an ultra-smart kid might need social guidance. Growing up, I desperately could’ve used an older sibling to clue me in, socially. This is another thing the internet has made better, but there’s still no substitute for an older sister saying, “You’re wearing *that*? Ewww.” (Until high school, my mom helped me shop for clothes. In the *Brady Bunch* polyester 70s, this delivered mixed results. I eventually learned to avoid the wrong pants, at least, by wearing Levi’s to school every day, though I did commit a terrible mistake by making my jean cutoffs too long. Back then, they were supposed to cut off within about an inch and a half of your balls. Even the gym teacher made fun of me.)

57. From the vantage of the adult and senior gifted set, how might we inculcate prosocial values most net beneficial to both the gifted individual and society?

I believe that advantaged people should look for ways to increase equality of opportunity for everyone. We would never strive to completely flatten the playing field at the expense of every other cultural and economic consideration, but there's a level of opportunity that helps entire nations flourish. Many economists say the current level of economic inequality in America is bad for the country, but we seem years away from any effective remedies. Our infrastructure and schools are dilapidated, and anti-science yahoos – social Darwinists who don't believe in evolution – hold many of the reins of power.

We're all a little (or a lot) boggled by tech, and this is only going to increase. We can hope that smart people will come up with smart ways to use tech or at least figure out ways to reduce stupid and dangerous uses.

Capitalism is a pretty good framework for maximizing the benefit of smart people to society. When smart people invent good things, they're more often thinking, "Will people want this?" than "Will this help society?" The near future will be shaped by capitalism. Science fiction of the 1950s and 60s didn't include much economics. Enormous spacecraft traveled the galaxy without discussion of who was financing the spacecraft. In modern SF, market forces pop up frequently. (Of course, right now in this country, a lot of powerful douchebags are putting a terrible face on capitalism – dicks who argue that taxes and regulations amount to tyranny and who often espouse anti-scientific views which can reduce the U.S.'s chances to continue to be a tech leader. I hope that a wave of tech growth sweeps away much of the current political stupidity. Politics that's specifically designed for and targeted at dumb people is creepy and cynical.)

Regardless of politics, capitalism and investing will have increasing difficulty keeping up with the accelerating pace of change. It'll be tough to invest in market sectors in which companies have life cycles of less than a year. Tech might eventually make some types of consumer goods so inexpensive they're virtually free. Tech will also reduce the amount of work available for people to do. So the consumer economy will get weird, and money may not have the same motivating force it does today. We won't be living in Idiocracy, but neither will we be ruled by the Gordon Gekkos and Donald Trumps of the world.

Right now, Americans are in no mood to share. For 30 or 40 years, conservative think tanks have been studying how to hammer home the message of rugged individualism and entrepreneurial spirit. Some politicians have been successfully following the strategy of making people think that government doesn't work by making sure that government doesn't work.

The 20th century demonstrated the failure of communism. (Might it work if it weren't in the hands of murderous dictators? Who cares – we're not gonna do it.) So far, this century in America has demonstrated the danger of capitalism when moneyed interests get too much leverage over democracy. (Used to wonder if people voted against their own interests because they thought they were just a reality show away from being

millionaires.) But democracy is resilient – we made it through other periods of political rancour and should make it through the current dysfunction, perhaps with the help of a rising tech economy. (Don't even know why I'm going on about this; I have no particular political insight.)

I hope prosperity from tech makes people richer, smarter, more generous in spirit, and less able to be manipulated by the politics of dumbness. Under Clinton, we had a tech boom – we all thought we'd become millionaires via a website or an IPO – and things were good, but not because of politicians. Then the boom turned out to be a bubble. But we have tech booms on the near horizon – more digital stuff, biotech, 3D printing – and we can hope that the vitality they'll pump into our economy will overwhelm stupid politics. Tech will give Americans increased wealth and autonomy if we can keep America educated and prosperous long enough for that to happen.

58. Most children have negative experiences. Not to argue for life in shelter from the world – grit counts. Even taking this into account, some experiences should seem across the board uncivil and fought against according to the context. Indeed, some experiences might devastate a child, even though some become more resilient. Bullying does lead to increased awareness. Individuals, families, authority figures, communities, and organizations work to solve the social issue more than earlier times. Do you have any general reflections on personal experiences with bullies?

Looking back on the bullying I received, I have two thoughts. One, it wasn't that bad. I wasn't that much of a wuss, my school wasn't that bad, and I used my smartness to avoid some potential teasing and bullying by letting cool kids copy off of me. And two, I should've punched more people. The summer before ninth grade, I suffered some bullying at Jewish summer camp. Eventually, I realized that these bullies weren't the cool kids at their school – they were just anonymous assholes. I was really offended – I wanted to be bullied by the best bullies, not a bunch of losers. So I decided to start punching anyone who dissed me – crunch! right in the cheek. I punched about half a dozen jerkwad kids. It was very satisfying.

59. What message do you have for kids suffering from bullying? What would you recommend for them on an interpersonal level to do for themselves? In short, what counts among adaptive active approaches to the problem?

My advice to kids who are being bullied is several-fold.

Punch bullies, especially if you're young enough – say, under 14 – to not suffer serious consequences for assault. Practice some punching at home, learn the most painful places to hit people, and then fly at 'em. Go crazy – make them fear you. And don't fear their punches unless they're full-grown thugs. Kids who are afraid of fighting don't realize that it doesn't hurt that much to get punched by a 12-year-old. And even if it hurts, don't stop to consider the pain – just keep punching and kicking. And fight dirty – bend a kid's pinky back until it almost breaks. But only for the kids who really deserve it – the ones

who shove you hard in the back or elbow you in the face – not the cute girl who gives you an “Ewww” look or the boy who calls you a spaz.

Look for books, movies and TV shows about abuse and bullying (not necessarily books that are complete downers, like *Lord of the Flies*). (Googling “bullying movies” returns a bunch of lists. A quick look at the movies on these lists reveals that most of them suck. The documentary *Bully* is supposed to be pretty good – haven’t seen it.) In many of these, the abuser continues to get away with it as long as the victim is completely intimidated. You can read and watch these things to see how the victim eventually quits being a victim or you can figure out what you’d do if you were in the victim’s place. Movies won’t offer a quick fix – they just get you thinking. The kid in *Let the Right One In* is bullied, and he makes friends with a vampire. That’s not really gonna work for you. (Great movie, though.)

Acquire some social skills – learn to co-exist with stupid dickheads. I had to learn social skills, Temple Grandin had to learn social skills, even people who aren’t bullied have to learn how to interact with other people. Depending on your situation, you can try some stuff such as not flinching, staring the bully down, taunting the bully – “Hey, Snagglepuss – still wetting the bed?” (Careful with this – you’re gonna get punched. But if you’re gonna get punched anyway, might be worth a shot – but only in front of an audience – you want people talking about how you made the bully look bad.) At the very least, make the small, easy moves to reduce your chances of being the target of bullies. Are you the only one walking around your middle school with a 50-pound book-stuffed backpack? Are you still wearing your glasses from second grade that are now too small for your face? Take a look at yourself and fix the easy stuff. I wish I’d had an older sibling to tell me how to be less of a geek. (I had some horribly geeky years in junior high – didn’t call it middle school back then – and this was before being geeky was somewhat accepted.)

Become badass. If you’re recalibrating yourself to make your social interactions less painful, there’s no reason you have to stop at just fading into the background. You can eventually become someone who’s intimidating and/or respected. Again, use your smarts and research skills to figure out the angles. As a smart kid, I tended to turn things into big projects. If that’s your proclivity, consider making a project out of turning yourself into a non-bullied person with some possible swagger.

Be aware of your surroundings and situations. Lots of bullying and rape involve hooking up and/or alcohol. Be prudent – be familiar with your hookups. Is he a rapey douche? Does he have a terrible girlfriend or ex-girlfriend who, along with her scummy friends, will go after you? Watch out for the kings and queens of the school – kids who, because of being rich or star athletes or super-popular, get a free pass to screw over other people. This kind of thinking is currently controversial, with people saying, “We shouldn’t be teaching people how not to be bullied or raped – we should be teaching people to not be bullies or rapists.” This is valid. At the same time, it’s dumb to put yourself at risk to make the point that in a perfect world, you should be free to casually do whatever you want. It’s not a perfect world.

Own yourself. Figure out what you like about yourself and embrace it. Doesn't have to be much – could be that someday you'll grow up and will be able to escape all the dickheads in your life. (There may always be dickheads, but at least you'll be able to ditch these dickheads. Maybe what you like about yourself is also getting you bullied. You don't have to change this stuff. You can decide how in-your-face you want to be, or you don't even have to do that. You can simply be aware that you're gonna be who you're gonna be, and the bullies are headed for SadLivesville. You might be aware of It Gets Better, which tells LGBT teens that their lives won't always suck because of the jerkfaces around them. This is true for LGBT people, but it's also true for lots of other people. There are entire industries where the majority of people in these industries got a bunch of shit when they were kids – TV, movies, Broadway, fashion, design, video games. These are also industries where people get to have really cool lives.

Call bullies out. Don't keep bullying secret. You shouldn't be embarrassed – the bullies should. Some ongoing abuse depends on the victim keeping his or her mouth shut. Announce to your class what the bully did to you or sent to you. In front of other people, ask the bully why. "Is it because I'm effeminate / nerdy / fat / skinny?" (This is a tricky move. It can backfire.)

60. What about active approaches with respect to parents, teachers, administrators, authority figures, and the wider community for support and encouragement?

Document the abuse and what was done about it. If you get bruised or bloodied, take pictures. Keep a journal of what's happened to you, along with a record of adults you talked to and what they did about it. If this becomes a "them versus you" thing, you want to be able to prove your case that they're the abusers. Keep a record of online bullying – make a doc with all the terrible stuff in it, take screenshots. If other people, especially teachers or administrators, see you getting messed with, discreetly ask, "You saw that, right?" Clearly tell them what happened and keep a record.

Tattle, if it will get the bullies in trouble and not increase the bullying. If you're in a position to screw over bullies by telling on them, do it! They probably won't learn a lesson, but any punishment they get may make them feel bad for awhile.

Contact local news media. They love a good bullying story.

Sue people. Asshole kids often have asshole parents – make them feel some consequences. And go after lazy, incompetent, know-nothing administrators. There are great teachers and administrators, and there are lazy dumbshits. (One reason is, teaching doesn't pay very well, so some teachers are very skilled and dedicated, with their love of helping kids overcoming the crap pay, while others are too incompetent and sluggardly to do anything else.) Also, this whole bullying thing is new territory for administrators who haven't been paying attention. Often their natural reaction to a problem is to downplay or ignore it. As a group, teachers have about the lowest standardized test scores among all the professions. If you reach out to school administrators about bullying, odds are good that you'll

be dealing with at least one idiot. This shouldn't stop you. Idiots can be brought around, and you're helping the idiot do a better job on behalf of the next bullied kid.

Do research. With the internet, bullying is different now – some of the worst bullying is online. I want to tell you to use your smarts to destroy people online – to tell mean girls their futures with horrific specificity, the way the Albert Brooks character cursed bullies with a prediction of their futures in *Broadcast News*. But that's probably not a good move. It leaves a record, and you could be outmaneuvered and made to look like you're the bully or at least an evenly matched opponent. Instead, use the internet to research what other people have found to be effective against bullies. And go online to reach out to other bullying victims and anti-bullying organizations.

Play the victim. Can you make a reasonable case that what's been happening to you has affected you emotionally? Play that card if you think it'll help – people are ready to listen. Visit your school counselor. Ask to see a therapist. Maybe get a diagnosis – PTSD, being on the autism spectrum. (I don't know the politics of this. Seems like a diagnosis of mild autism might help make the bullies look extra bad for picking on someone who's officially handicapped, but I don't know.)

Team up. If you're not the only one who's getting messed with, get the testimony of other victims. You might have to build a case to present to ass-covering, confused, over-worked, often not-smart administrators. Officials have an amazing ability to not see what's right in their face if it's inconvenient. The more people you can put in their face, the more likely they are to take you seriously. Other people may be reluctant to come forward. Doesn't mean you can't mention them to the administrator, along with the phrase, "class-action lawsuit."

With bullying, there's a lot of stuff you can try, but most of it isn't easy. There are conditions in place which help bullies get away with it. But you're smart – you can examine the situation to see what can be changed and what resources can be applied to make it less easy for the bully.

61. What about adaptive passive approaches and consolation over time?

Be happy that you're not the bullies. They're probably going to be miserable, dickish people for the rest of their lives. Sometimes the best revenge is not being the people you hate.

Sometimes little dipshits grow up to be fine people. Trying to figure out who truly sucks and will suck forever is tricky, but that's part of what school is for. American schools were designed to be abridged versions of adult life. You don't go to school just to learn academic subjects – you go to learn how to deal with people.

Give it time and put it in perspective. Sometimes what nerds perceive as bullying is perceived by bullies as harmless goofing around, and sometimes the truth is somewhere in the middle. Analyze your bullies – are they truly malevolent, or do they just have a stupid idea of fun? Are they focusing on you in an evil way, or are they just generally

causing trouble? Is there a way for you to join in the stupidity instead of making enemies out of them? I'm not saying to go along with evil, but if it's just messing around, you might be able to work with it. On the other hand, truly evil little assholes are good at disguising their evil as harmless fooling around.

62. How about helping others undergoing it?

Stand up for other people. Bullies know that giving people shit is fun. If you see someone being a bully, you can give them shit – it's like a free pass to mess with someone. (This is an advanced move. There could be some unpleasant consequences.)

63. What about the extreme cases of abuse for girls and boys, young men and women, what do you recommend for them? Any words for people who feel driven to extremes?

Don't go overboard (and don't decide to hate everyone). No one ever thinks a kid who strikes back with extreme violence is a hero. They're always thought of as psycho losers, probably even to themselves. People who go on a spree of destruction find no good fame – they're monsters and creeps for as long as they're remembered (which isn't that long, because yuck). There's no joy in over-the-top vengeance – you've let the bullies win by driving you to brutality. You can play the game better than that.

Start over somewhere else, if that's an option. Are you completely screwed in your current situation? Will you never be able to overcome a loser-ish reputation or the enmity of jerks at your current school? Then switch schools before it's too late. (Or you can do home schooling for a while. It may not stop all bullying, but it'll at least reduce the face-to-face bullying, unless the bullying is happening at home.) I was too chicken to move when I should've, right at the beginning of high school. (Because of my parents' divorce, I had families in two different towns – it wouldn't have been that tough for me to relocate.) Kept thinking I could improve my standing among the kids I'd grown up with. It wasn't horrible for me, but I wanted a girlfriend, and there was little chance, given how nerdy I'd been and how Ryan Gosling I still wasn't. It gets better, but it sucks wasting years in a situation that's not gonna get much better.

64. What about in defense of, and reflections on, those capable of changing their socially maladaptive, and abusive, behaviors? In other words, your thoughts on the chances for change. The opportunity in life of the mean becoming kind people. Sometimes definitions of 'bully' and 'bullying' can seem too elastic in which any behavior of dislike by a purported recipient becomes grounds for claims of bullying.

In particular, many university environments stating the first amendment within your own country seem to fail to live to some of these standards. The *First Amendment* to the American Constitution seems most relevant, which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of

the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” [Emphasis added] Some organizations, e.g. Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) under the Presidency of Greg Lukianoff, assist those in need of advisement. This assists prosecutors and defendants, i.e. those without experience in the litigation process of arraignments, trial proceedings, and verdicts.

An issue clichéd into the initialism ‘PC’ (Politically Correct) becomes the basis for some of these organizations and universities in coarse analysis. Even extreme restrictions, increasingly common, the creation of ‘free speech zones’ on campus for students to speak without restraint or the phenomenon of ‘speech codes’ – sometimes limits in zone area and stipulations on speech to such an extent as to merit laughter, let alone the sheer existence of them.

Forms of ‘benign bullying’ – for want of a better phrase – or norm-keeping can work to build community, sustain professional standards, prevent unwanted advances of sexual harassers and aggressors (men and women), and provide consistent norms along the spectrum of appropriate-inappropriate social behavior. In short, assertive standard setting based on context without violating US citizens’ privileges. Of course, in an academic environment, ideological and intellectual norms need questioning for a vibrant, i.e. meaningful, university education. Likewise and further, this moves into the broader societal milieu.

I was bullied sometimes as a kid. In college, an aggressive girlfriend came close to being a bully, and for years I was the adult recipient from a bully of abuse in the workplace. (It was disheartening to be bullied even though I used to be able to (sloppily) bench press 300 pounds, but of course bullying doesn’t have to be based on physical dominance. Sometimes it comes from a simple willingness to be a dick, especially if dickish behaviour gets you what you want.)

Some bullying I was able to stop, and some I had to live with (at least that’s what I told myself). No matter how long ago the bullying happened, it still makes me mad. (I want to time-travel back to 1973 and body-slam the gym teacher who lined up everybody in class and went down the line slapping us, just for fun. But anger can be positively motivating – I’ve been lifting weights for nearly 40 years.) On the other hand, I’ve been in situations in which everyone gave everyone else (well-intentioned) shit, and it was great – fun and actually helpful, spotlighting areas in which I could do better.

As with a lot of characteristics, people come in a range of niceness, with most people being averagely nice, and a few people being saints or complete monsters. Similarly, the amount of change people can undergo covers a range from no change to radical change. Part of growing up is realizing there’s a chance that any given person could be (or could turn into) a despicable shit or worse, and defending against that possibility.

After high school, most people eventually put themselves in situations that confirm their worldviews and that don’t often challenge them. This lets people think of themselves in positive terms – as smart and good and competent, even brave. People who are in favour

of pretty rotten things like tearing down the social safety net in support of Ayn Randian social Darwinism build information bubbles which allow them to think of themselves as rugged iconoclasts making hard but necessary choices. (BTW – don't confuse social Darwinism – every man for himself, devil take the hindmost – with Charles Darwin. Social Darwinism is a facile and self-serving bastardization of his thinking.)

I returned to high school as a student a few times after graduation, and among the reasons were that I think people in high school are generally nice. Yeah, we think of high school as a place of vicious social struggle, but that's more often middle school. In high school, students mostly don't have to support themselves, so there's often less economic desperation than in adult life. (Don't get me wrong – there are plenty of students who are fully aware of their family's desperate circumstances.) And students haven't yet settled into their adult lives and personas and like to think of themselves as good people. Later, adulthood starts kicking their asses. Is it possible for people to become nicer as adults? Sure. But the general trend is to become more politically conservative with age. (When you're young, it's not your money, so yeah – spread it around. When you're older, you turn to Fox News.)

You can look for positive change among people who were part of an aggressive pack – mean girls, jocks – but are now free of the pack. Sometimes the pack contains members who aren't naturally vicious but are just going along. Of course, this doesn't apply to every single pack member – some might be dicks for life.

65. If you could, how would you change the educational systems of the world? In particular, how would you change the educational system to provide for the needs of the gifted population?

Education needs to become more individualized by using more tech. Hours spent in school shouldn't be the least information-rich hours of the day. Great teachers are still needed, but not all teachers are great, and a lot of school systems are underfunded. (In California, where I live, Proposition 13 limiting property taxes has left public schools strapped for money since 1978. Affluent parents send their kids to private schools or use elaborate strategies to get their kids into limited spots in good public school programs.) Internet-based aids to instruction could be an inexpensive way to help make up for less-than-great teaching.

In middle school, my daughter took an online math course, which kind of sucked. But online courses don't have to suck. Online courses need to look more like what people do online for entertainment. That doesn't mean adding some half-assed animated, talking algebra symbols. I hope that market forces eventually bring good people and good tech to education.

To help gifted kids, we need educational tools that help everyone. Now more than ever, a wide range of people have the potential to be gifted. A kid doesn't need a 160 IQ. She needs some combination of curiosity, motivation, and ability to find information and other resources. Among the next generations of gifted, successful people will be those

who are able to amplify their natural abilities with smart use of tech. Our brains and bodies will become more intimately linked with more and more powerful technology. (People wear fitness bracelets now. In the future, people will wear bracelets which tell them what nutrients to ingest and which will eventually administer drugs as needed. I imagine that a wearable drug-administration system which strictly regulates blood sugar and other factors might slow aging by 30 percent. Google Glass may never take off, but people will eventually have some form of wearable brain butlers to constantly augment their reality with helpful information (and distracting fun stuff).)

Perhaps schools will eventually have navigators who would be like a combination of counselor and teacher, to help guide students through our new world of tech and information. Students are already skilled at social media, typically better than adults. (My wife tells me it doesn't go by "social media" anymore – now it's just "social.") Among other things, navigators could help students adapt their social media skills for learning, researching, and professional networking. (I can see the school navigator being hopelessly behind the times – a walking dial-up modem. But it wouldn't have to be that way.)

How about this? – a tax deduction for online mentoring. Experts in all fields (and some non-fields) make themselves available for online consultation with qualified students and get to deduct \$25 an hour from their tax bill for each hour of mentoring up to a total of 8 or 10 hours a year.

One way to help millions of talented kids would be to build an online college admissions concierge. So many things go into college admissions – grades, test scores and test prep, high school course selection, activities, essays, selecting colleges to apply to, financial aid and scholarships, college tours. . . . Information about all this stuff often has to be gathered from a bunch of different sources, and often this information is incomplete or comes too late. It helps to have involved, knowledgeable parents and attend a private school with a quality college admissions department. Most kids don't have this.

It wouldn't be fantastically tough to build an online portal (obsolete term) to everything about prepping for college. Kids set up an account towards the end of middle school, entering grades and interests and test scores, and get personalized advice that carries them through high school. Every kid would get basic automated services. More deluxe services could be provided for a fee. Right now, kids obsessed with getting into college (and their parents) share information on CollegeConfidential.com, but it's hit-and-miss and not easy to navigate. There should be something more organized. Rich families often pay an admissions specialist the equivalent of a year or more of college tuition to help their kid through the process. (There's a guy who charges \$600,000 and more to get your kid into a top Ivy League school. If your kid doesn't get in, you get \$200,000 back.)

All talented kids, not just rich ones, deserve some guidance towards college – it's consistent with the idea of America being a meritocracy.

66. What global problems do you consider most important at the moment? What about problems in the United States of America? How would you solve them?

A major problem will be how well we can build a workable society around the huge and accelerating changes in tech. There are some signs we haven't been doing so well – our use of devices in dangerous and inappropriate places makes us look like idiots. Via the internet, millions of willfully ignorant people reinforce each other's stupid beliefs and are manipulated by clever, horrible people. But there are other signs that we're adapting to tech and living more intelligently in a smarter, better-informed world. (Just guessing – not sure I see those signs.)

Politically, the U.S. is in bad shape. But our system of government is resilient. A period of tech-driven growth would go a long way towards showing Americans that things don't have to suck and that you don't have to base your politics on accusing the other side of making things suck. It would help if the government would support research and innovation instead of denying evolution and global warming.

At the University of Colorado, I heard Professor Al Bartlett's lecture on the danger of exponential population growth more than once. I agree that many of the world's problems are associated with or made worse by our increasing population. But I don't think this will crash civilization.

It's easy to imagine an impending apocalypse, in part because they're easy to imagine. So many lazy TV shows and movies are set in a future post-apocalyptic world. Post-apocalyptic landscapes are cheap and don't require much imagination. It's much harder to try to picture a non-apocalyptic future in all its aspects. Only a few authors are any good at it – Neal Stephenson, Charles Stross, Cory Doctorow.

The world isn't getting worse. It's easy to imagine current problems exploding into disaster, and there will be localized disasters and worldwide challenges that verge on catastrophe. But standards of living are rising, and our understanding of the world and our tools for dealing with it are getting better. Social media makes it harder for criminal regimes to hide their crimes and easier to organize in opposition. Wider access to information and communication is a powerful force against ignorance and for helping people decide that they have a stake in the modern world.

The rate of population growth needs to decrease, which it's been doing, going from more than two percent per year in the 1960s to just over one percent today to a projected half-percent a year by 2050.

I'm hopeful that, by the end of the century, the world will transform into if not a technological wonderland, then at least a more livable place for most people, rather than the squalid dystopias of *Blade Runner*, also hopeful that economics and tech will be the agents of positive change, rather than having to rely on people not to behave selfishly and stupidly.

With that in mind, it would be great for the U.S. to be a more tech-friendly place. I'm hopeful that Americans are largely tech-friendly, but now anti-science dolts are getting disproportionate media coverage.

Over the next century, I suppose our most urgent task is not to let people stay stupid. (This includes learning to manage the rising flood of information and nonsense bombarding us.) There are more than 40 million adult Americans who are in the bottom 20% in intelligence, and some very creepy people have spent a lot of time and money learning how to manipulate them.

Right now in America, gerrymandering is a huge problem, making for some of the worst politics and politicians since the Civil War. (And it doesn't help that two Supreme Court justices are crazy dickheads with an apparent vendetta against regular Americans.) We can hope that demographics and sheer revulsion at the current political situation will gradually fix this. And government will gradually become less important as tech increases individual autonomy. But we have 320 million people in this country, and we need some government. We deserve roads that don't destroy our cars and schools to which we're willing to send our kids. Not suggesting any radical new form of government – just saying it would be nice to have the government work the way it did before it was broken.

67. Generally, many interacting systems operate in societies: political, economic, religious, corporate, educational, and so on. If you could build and run a society, how would you do it?

I'm not cut out to tell people how to run the world. (About 2,500,000 internet trolls are eager to provide advice.) But I will suggest that we look for ways to minimize the turmoil of rapid technological change. That includes making it unattractive to join tech-phobic reactionary forces that would rather tear down the world than embrace change. The benefits of technology need to be convincingly presented to people in all societies, along with the message that they can share in its benefits rather than be screwed over and exploited by it.

My general, not-well-thought-out feeling is that if we can keep the world from getting too pissed-off, economically and politically, for the next 50 to 80 years, advancing technology and increasing standards of living will make life better for just about everyone. (Food, clothing and other necessities and non-necessities should continue to get cheaper – 1901: food and clothing use up 60% of US consumers' income; 2002: 17%.) Poor countries have to feel they're participating in tech-driven economic boom. Which means, among other things, that we have to avoid undue influence by short-sighted, psychopathic pricks who think that any money not going to them is theft from them – the everyone-for-himself, except for tax breaks and subsidies for me, Ayn Randians.

People aren't good at thinking about the future, which made sense back when the world didn't change very much. Your parents were farmers, you're a farmer, your kids and their kids will be farmers. Not any more. (1790: farmers are 90% of US labor force, 1860:

58%, 1900: 38%, 1940: 18%, 2000: 1.9%) Now vast changes take place within single lifetimes and even within half-decades; in 2009, only teen girls were texting obsessively. Movies and TV shows consistently get the future wrong. The movie *Her* (the one where Joaquin Phoenix falls in love with Scarlett Johansson the cell phone) seems to present a pretty reasonable future, mostly because it kept its scale and the time-jump small.

We should be doing a lot more thinking about the next 50 to 100 years. Many of us will still be alive a century from now, due to new tech (and if we're not, it might also be due to new tech). Our entertainment should strive to present less lazy, more thought-out versions of the near future, not just robot cops.

68. Individuals might associate the highest levels of ability with certain specialized activities. For examples, construction of a grand theory of everything (e.g., Albert Einstein, *General & Special Relativity*, Sir Isaac Newton, *The Universal Law of Gravitation*), a great discovery in genetic science (e.g., Francis Crick and James Watson, *Double-Helix Structure of DNA*), the solution of a major mathematical problem (e.g., Andrew Wiles, *Fermat's Last Theorem Solution*, or Grigori Perelman, *Poincaré Conjecture*), musical compositions (Johann Sebastian Bach, *Goldberg Variations*, Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony 6, 7, and 9*, *Hammerklavier Sonata*, *Missa Solemnis*, Richard Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks and Burleske*), creation of a new field of research (John Von Neumann & Oskar Morgenstern, *Game Theory*), a revolution in medical science (Edward Jenner, *Vaccinations*), foundational scientific theories in biology (Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species*), comprehensive works of philosophy (Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, and coauthored with Alfred North Whitehead, *Principia Mathematica*), foundational research in linguistics (Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic-Structures*), revolutionary production on philosophy of language (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*), mastery of performance arts (Richard Pryor, *Richard Pryor: Live in Concert (1979)*, *Richard Pryor: Live on the Sunset Strip*, and *Richard Pryor: Here and Now*, Leonard Alfred Schneider AKA Lenny Bruce, George Carlin, *FM & AM*, *Jammin' in New York*, and *Life is Worth Losing*), work in cryptography and computer science (Alan Turing), work in espionage (Mata Hari AKA Eye of the Day), virtuosity with classical European musical instruments (e.g., Yehudin Menuhi with Violin, Glenn Gould, Martha Argerich, and Evgeny Kissin with Piano, Russell Oberlin with voice, Mstislav Rostropovich with Cello), great lyrical productions (Lauryn Hill, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, Shawn Corey Carter AKA Jay-Z, *Reasonable Doubt*, *The Blueprint*, or *The Black Album*, Nasir bin Olu Dara Jones AKA Nas, *Illmatic*, and Eric Barrier & William Michael Griffith Jr. AKA Eric B. & Rakim Allah, *Paid in Full*), theological productions (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, and Saint Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*), or foundational theological arguments (Saint Anselm of Canterbury/Aosta, *Ontological Argument*), the creation of a massive social movement (Mahatma Ghandi, *Revolution Devoted to Non-Violence*), an obsession in a single intellectual sport (Bobby Fischer, *Chess*), a major work of literature (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*), major works in ethical, political and social philosophy (Plato, *The Republic*, and John Stuart Mill, *On the Subjection*

of Women and Utilitarianism), a great work of art (Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, Michelangelo, *Pieta* and *Sistine Chapel*, Vincent Van Gogh, *Cafe Terrace at Night*, Jan Vermeer, *The Girl with a Pearl Earring*, Caravaggio, *Inspiration of St Matthew*, and Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*), earning tremendous amounts of wealth (Bill Gates, *Microsoft*, or Warren Buffet), adumbrated work in media theory (Herbert Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*, and *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century*), revolutionary psychiatric work (Timothy Leary, *LSD in Psychiatry* experiments and *Concord Prison Experiment*), engineered inventions (Bucky Fuller, *Geodesic Dome*, *Dymaxion Map and Car*, and *Synergetics*), calculation and extrapolation of technological trends (Raymond Kurzweil, *The Law of Accelerating Returns*), dual Nobel Prizes (Marie Skłodowska-Curie, John Bardeen, Linus Pauling, or Frederick Sanger), or some other revolutionizing idea/production/practice. Provided these and many other unstated examples, do you consider the association accurate? What about the tendency of underachievement or underutilization of abilities in the gifted community? What can people do to alleviate this?

Smart people want to do world-changing things. Many get side-tracked. It's like sports – not everyone who wants to play in the NBA gets to.

Starting early in life, people do a lot of self-selection based on perceived skills. With nerdy people, sometimes there's a nice agreement between geniusy interests and skills, almost as if in compensation for social awkwardness. (Not telling you anything new; everybody's familiar with the awkward, brainy nerd type.)

The sidetracking of smart people into intellectual enclaves might serve to make society more stable. What if every supergenius suddenly decided to go into real estate? It's likely normal real estate practices would be highly disrupted, and non-supergenius Realtors might have a hard time keeping up.

A combination of factors nudges nerdy people towards mentally demanding activities – having the appropriate skill set, the pleasure of being good at something, other people's expectations (“You're so tall – do you play basketball?”), the desire for recognition, curiosity, a tendency towards mental flexibility and introspection prompted by not being perfectly at home in the world. Who's gonna be more creative – the perfectly adjusted straight jock, or the gay guy who had to strategically think his way through every day of the mine field of middle school? (This isn't entirely fair – there are plenty of wildly creative straight jocks – Matthew Barney and Jeff Koons come to mind – but still. . . .)

Social skills are kind of the icing on the cake of mental development. If everything goes well, you end up with a kid who can fairly easily learn the demanding task of social interaction. But if any of a hundred things goes wrong with brain development, various mental subsystems aren't adequately integrated, and you don't get easy social understanding. Come to think of it, this suggests that consciousness – thorough mental

integration – is especially important in interpersonal interaction. This doesn't mean that people on the autism spectrum aren't conscious. But it may suggest that the components of their consciousness are weighted differently from Frat Boy Joe's.

Having smooth social skills might be at the expense of profound gifts. There are many well-known examples of people with social challenges who have astonishing eidetic memories or math skills or sculptural ability.

Everyone's familiar with stereotypical Asperger's behavior. I think the entertainment industry in which I work is packed with people who have *reverse* Asperger's. They have highly developed social skills, which can exact a price. When you can always make friends or hook up or get what you want with charisma, you might not value relationships and may leave a trail of burned bridges. Because social success comes so easily to people with reverse Asperger's, they may have never learned to do hard things – telling people “No,” for instance. (People in entertainment are notorious for not saying no straight out – it's painful to disappoint someone. Instead, it's a “Yes, maybe,” followed by a declining rate of returned phone calls.)

Now, about underachievement or under-utilization of abilities in the gifted community – humans' evolutionary niche is to spot exploitable regularities in the world. (It's every animal's niche, but we really specialize in it.) Some humans are better at spotting patterns than others. Some are more obsessed with and sidetracked by pattern-spotting, sometimes at the expense of real-world skills such as career and relationship success.

Plus, the unsuccessful smart person is a media trope. “Hey – look at the genius who lives in weird squalor.” *Schadenfreude*. Success isn't perfectly correlated with intelligence. There are plenty of not-traditionally-successful people at all levels of intelligence. It's just more exciting to see the smart ones.

What can we do to help make gifted people more successful? Show them the landscape, and let them make informed choices about whom they might like to try to be. We've talked about informed will being more important than free will – gifted people should know their options. Growing up, I desperately needed an older sibling (which I didn't have) to tell me what's what in junior high and high school. My stepdad tried, but I didn't respect him until much later, and he didn't help me understand the social benefits of doing normal guy things.

Back when I was pitching TV shows in the 90s, one of my ideas was a makeover show for nerds. In each episode, an expert panel would help a nerd to examine his life and decide what he wants to keep and what he wants to get rid of in the interest of social success. Keep the room full of pristine Star Wars action figures, but maybe drop 50 pounds and get some new clothes. But it's not 1998 anymore, and it's much more acceptable to be a nerd. Nerds and nerdettes are hooking up all over the place without being made over. It's a little frustrating – I could've used some nerd acceptance back in 1974.

69. In turn, what responsibilities do the gifted population have towards society and culture? Why do you think this?

I don't think gifted people spend much time thinking about what they can give to society (and may not even think of themselves as gifted or at least pretend they don't). Many highly gifted people are compelled to single-mindedly pursue their visions and objectives at the expense of almost everything else. I don't know about telling art to behave for society's sake – don't think it works like that.

However, I do think that gifted people don't get a pass to act like dicks just because of their giftedness. Many gifted people have terrible behavior, but so do many non-gifted people. Often, the fame associated with their gifts gives them increased opportunity to engage in bad behavior. And sometimes their gifts have made them a little nuts.

But it's really stupid to act out sexually in an era with virtually unlimited internet pornography. Having affairs, especially with terrible people – and affair-having is correlated with being terrible – generally doesn't turn out well. Sending pictures of your penis to women never works out, unless your objective is to be ridiculed and punished and have your life reduced to a shambles. Messing around extracurricularly with people in the flesh just seems so old-school, so 68-year-old Senator dumping his second wife.

What I'm saying is, if you're in a marriage or long-term relationship that doesn't have major problems, make do with the images you can find online. Don't scuttle everything for a half-dozen intimate encounters with some asshole. And don't tell yourself that being true to your gift doesn't leave you with sufficient control over the rest of your behavior to avoid trouble. But this is coming from a guy who's always had such lousy game with women that such opportunities never come up.

