

Runaway Reactions: Democracy T2 20240325

I've been developing a new series I refer to as Runaway Reactions and the first topic this first subject that I wanted to take up in this series is democracy and it's not so much democracy in the form that we have it in our daily lives it's more so the promise of democracy. It's that promise of individual autonomy of individual freedoms of individual rights and protections that are framed within that structure of democracy. And the founding fathers well recognized that it was a grand experiment and it was a work in progress and so as imperfect as it is its has immense if not infinite potential and therefore meaningful promise to those individuals who are citizens of that democracy.

So again, it's more about the promise of democracy and protecting and upholding that promise and being aware of the threats to that promise. It's that when we make a stand, what we're really making a stand for is to uphold and support and protect the work that's already been done, what we've inherited. Um, we don't want to lose or surrender or sacrifice the work that has already been completed by those in the chain of custody that we inherited our current state, our current set of circumstances from. That's really what we're trying to shelter and protect from harm.

Again, it's not so much the state that it's in currently; it's the promise of what it can become. So the warning that I'm sharing through this presentation is beware of overcorrection. And the best way I've found that I can illustrate this is with, with oversteer, um, the, the operation of a motor vehicle, like an automobile, where there'll be, uh, prevailing conditions, a set of circumstances that the operator finds themselves in and they'll make a course correction.

Unfortunately, if they're not well skilled at, uh, operating a motor vehicle, driving a car, oftentimes they'll overcorrect, which we refer to as oversteer. And as they start to feel the inertia of the vehicle, they can, they sense that they overcorrected, then they'll correct back. And unfortunately, oftentimes this also is, uh, overcorrection. Uh, they oversteer and each time this cycle completes, that oversteer becomes reinforced. And at some point they lose control of the vehicle,

which oftentimes results in a motor vehicle accident. I've seen many videos where they end up crashing into the barrier wall or they end up going off the road.

So, in a sense, the same thing happens in a democracy or really in any form of organization, whether it be a government or a corporation or an organization. There can be these cycles of overcorrection. So, we want to turn towards the course correction, but we don't want to overcorrect.

Overcorrection can lead to these increasingly destructive cycles that approach the limits of endurance. And with respect to a democracy, once you've approached that limit of endurance, there's so much stress being placed on the structure of democracy. You know, it makes me think of people not trusting in their ballots, in voting. If they can't trust the system and trust that their votes are being counted, they'll lose faith in that system.

And I talk about this with people all the time, that whether it's a government system or a monetary system, whatever system there is, it's all about trust. It's all about the faith that we put in that system. And without that trust and faith, the system collapses. So, as we...overstress the system, not only does it stress the system, but it also impacts our trust and our faith in that system.

When the mechanisms of democracy are fully functional, this is what I call in the wheelhouse, you have all of these active and passive participants, who have inputs into this mechanism of democracy. And some of these more active participants have influence, and they can input a course correction. And sometimes that course correction can represent an overcorrection. And the more passive participants, they, with their inputs, they can smooth this input so that it isn't as impactful as an overcorrection.

But that's when the mechanisms of democracy are fully functional. The masses, the passive participants, act as inertial dampers, as inertial dampening, which limits the overcorrection.

There's always going to be conflict. And in my modeling, I've modeled human conflict as competing ideologies. I model it as human rights versus class privilege. Democracy attempts to establish and uphold the standard of equal, but fair.

So, an alarming indication of when democracy is becoming dysfunctional is when you're always afraid. It's when you're experiencing either constant or periodic high anxiety. And I think this is a natural response or reaction to an instinct that we have that we sense that there's danger and instability. You know, if a governmental system or monetary system collapses, there is so much strife, and I think our instinct is, you know we're instinctive, we recognize this risk that this promise that we're all working towards this progress that we've made is at risk of collapse and we can lose all that work it's, it can be devastating.

And so war, you know, we know there can be not only war between different (nation) states, or different tribes, different communities, groups, but also internally. We call it civil war. So this is the source of that anxiety that we instinctively sense, that we instinctively experience, because we recognize that we may be or we are at risk.

So let's consider a sports metaphor; Opposing teams competing on the play field of their sport. This can be an intense engagement of players with practiced skills, work playing towards their team goal of besting the opposing team. This game play is guided by standards of the rules of the game and good sportsmanship.

And with respect to democracy, we refer to this good sportsmanship as statesmanship, an oath to honor the promise of autonomy. Being former military, I took an oath. And the thing that I recognize about taking an oath is some people take the oath and the words go right to their heart and it wells up within them a sense of honor, a sense of duty. And others take the oath and it's just words. It's just a means to an end. And oftentimes it's a self-serving end.

So I honor human potential and I honor the potential of democracy, recognizing that democracy is a work in progress. And it represents a potential that has been passed to us as an inheritance from the founding fathers and everyone that has contributed in that chain of custody up until our times.

So next, I'd like us to consider a war. Opposing armies engaging on the battlefield bent on destroying the opposition. Now, this intent to do harm can take many forms. The attack can be against their reputation, their credibility, and if there are no standards of engagement, it can spill over into their personal or business

affairs, into their friendships, their family, their home or hearth. It can even take the form of physical harm or death. Generally, there are no standards of engagement and there's limited opportunity for honor.

So in modeling our circumstances, I developed a set of bookends, which I suspect frames or provides boundaries of our existence as a species, and it's what I term a conflict of forces. It's the conflict of forces between sustainability versus extinction. And as a result of framing our existence, I realized that mankind's inclination to be destructive must decrease as our ability to destroy increases if we are to survive and to thrive.

If we can withdraw from the battlefield and return to the playfield, then we can engage our opponents and face our challenges and our differences together with an honorable intent to best, but not to destroy.

We can choose to engage in competitive collaboration using adversarial conditioning. That term, those terms, adversarial conditioning reminds me of a saying I found in scripture about iron, sharpens iron. When we engage each other, we are sharing tools and we're exemplifying and therefore developing skills. We make each other better. We can do better. And I just find that engagement so fulfilling and rewarding. But again, it's to best, not to destroy.

You know, I've often said that about, you know, well, it's kind of like gladiators of old. And then you think about, you know, Sunday night football. Yeah, well, if you destroy each other, who's your team going to play next week? You know, that's not, we want to see a good game. We want to see a close game. But we don't want it to be destructive. We want to get a chance to field the team again and face those opponents again and see who can best each other.

You know, through this competitive collaboration, we can accomplish together what none can do alone through our workplay. We can choose to share the rights, the privileges and the burdens of duty and obligation while sharing in our due portion of the rewards that are that we reap through our competitive collaboration.

We can choose knowledge and wisdom over ignorance, understanding over intolerance, and we can choose to care over indifference.

We can choose to respect the rights of others and discern the wisdom of privileges as being earned or forfeited. We can discern that democracy enshrines individual autonomy as always relevant and prevalent.

We can choose to discern that individual rights and protections are paramount over legal fictional has as, for example, corporations and over local, state and federal law authority. Democracy is intended as an instrument of individual autonomy. We can choose to honor the individual right of my rights end where yours begin.

We can choose to recognize that we exist in a critical state of balance between critical and supercritical states of sustainability, versus extinction as a species.

We can choose to accept the human conflict of competing ideologies between equal human rights and fair class privilege is a matter of maintaining a delicate balance between the extremes to provide the means of our continued survival and the magic of thriving.

We can discern the dishonor of a corrupt game when private interests overwhelm the public trust.

Thank you.