

Non-Small

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Dear friend,

A thought --

Let us avoid pettiness (smallness) in life.

Also,

Let us avoid being small people. Instead, let us seek to be great.

Pettiness

The word 'pettiness' comes from the word 'petit' (French).

Not sure where the word 'petit' comes from -- but the opposite of the word petty is grand (great--MAGNUS).

The opposite of 'magnus' (great) is 'minutus' in Latin

Why anti-petty?

One of my new year's resolutions was:

Don't be petty.

I feel that in modern society, 99% of our actions, thoughts, envies, bitter rivalries-- all petty.

What is non-petty?

[Magnanimity]

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicomachean_Ethics#Magnanimity_or_\"greatness_of_soul\"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicomachean_Ethics#Magnanimity_or_\) -- greatness of soul.

Magnanimity

Magna: Great. Like Magnum -- greatness.

In Aristotle's "Ethics", he brings up this concept of 'Greatness of Soul' (megalosuchia) -- megalopsychos -- a great-souled person.

- Megas: Great
- Psykhē: Mind/Spirit/Soul

Magnanimity in society

My buddy Seneca once wrote:

Even if we had all the riches in the world, but if we had nobody else to share it with-- we would not desire it.

Which means:

The greatest gift for a person is the company of companions, or friends.

We must interact with other people in society. Even the most solitary people (occasionally) leave their caves to interact with other people. Or people who are caved in their apartments are still interacting with other humans-- whether via video games, the web, etc.

Thus this is my simple idea:

We great-souls should despise pettiness, and see it below us.

This means making it a personal rule/virtue for yourself:

Don't be petty.

What is pettiness?

We all define pettiness differently. What are the small poisonous jabs that you sometimes catch yourself saying, or others saying?

Or like my momma once taught me:

If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it at all.

I think it is natural to have petty thoughts. Pangs of jealousy, envy, or hatred towards others. Yet, **it is in our control to NOT ACT upon these petty thoughts-- via our actions, words, etc.**

Whenever I feel petty thoughts arise, and my anger boiling over-- my simple solution is:

Don't talk (keep silent), go on a long walk, and air out my thoughts.

Sometimes when we feel slighted or angry, it is ourselves who are to blame. The heuristic I've discovered to be the most useful is from Nassim Taleb's "Bed of Procrustes":

If your anger increases over time, you've been wronged. If your anger decreases over time, you're the one who did the wronging.

Let this be a simple filter.

Or another story from Plato-- when he was angry with his slave for spilling some coffee on his lap:

Plato (to slave): "I would beat you, if I weren't so angry!"

How to not act petty

I think it is Seneca who once wrote:

"Anger is momentary madness."

A heuristic (rule of thumb) I've practiced-- which works pretty well-- is this:

When you are angry, wait 24 hours (1 full day) before acting.

99% of the petty shit fades by the next day. But if you're still angry 24 hours later-- your anger deserves credence.

I think it was a custom for the ancient Romans to wait 24 hours before beating their slaves. **My modern version is waiting 24 hours before (verbally) beating others.**

Dragons don't get affected by the bite of a snake

A little parable from Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" book:

If you're a dragon, and you got bit by a poisonous snake-- of course you would not die. You're a motherfucking dragon!

Get your inner-Gyarados on. No magi-karping around.

Great-Souled

You have a great soul.

Ignore pettiness. Let us praise non-smallness (shout-out to Nassim Taleb).