

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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What is fear? plus 'the metaphorical use of the word 'skin''

Brian: I don't want to develop a thick skin but I find that when I put ideas to people and they just laugh at it ignore it or reject I find it difficult not to take it personally. I do my best. Out of the goodness of my heart. I wrote a report to our local Vineyard group that now has been defrocked but there is still a crowd of people ,about how to move on.

I wanted to relieve the previous organizers of stress; I thought we could share the stress and I promised to underwrite any development in communications for example a website. I said I would do it myself, but they see it as a threat. I do not know what to do with this psychology because I'm geared for the best in people.

Friend: The thing is you you have to adopt the philosophy of 'you can only do what you think is right' when you've done it if they reject it walk away and forget about it. I've done due diligence with my views. Success is not a guarantee because of free will. You can't guarantee to succeed and you will sometimes not get anywhere. There is no way through. Jesus was rejected. How many people heard him speak – all the tens of thousands probably millions of people. In the end how many followed him? Maybe less than 3,000. That's not a good hit rate. And that was then, 2000 years ago. Can you imagine now. He'd probably be in prison.

Brian: When I find in a group that the amount of fear is greater than the joy I'm just going to be down at the end of the day so why bother. I find the most religious people are those who are not in any religion – funnily enough. Fear is the fear of loss or something. Are we afraid of death? are we

afraid that our soul will be captured? Are we afraid that no one's going to love us anymore? What is the driver of fear and if we look at people who are secure what do they have that the fearful people don't have?

Friend: Fear is restriction. If you've got a restricted bandwidth of understanding, the rest of it is accommodated by fear. All of those things you mentioned are reasons for fear. Fear is a negative reaction and another way to say 'restricted bandwidth' – instead of having an open view – and say that's something to learn to go forward. They say 'no, I'm going to stay within my boundaries' which most people do. It's a way of life here in the UK. There's no room for expansion in very many people. They don't want change. They want stasis that's why they hate foreigners coming to their villages especially coloured ones.

Brian: one of the recipients of my letters said 'I think it's disrespectful to have thoughts like this without taking it through the leaders' and I haven't responded yet because I don't think there's a way out of this but I felt like saying we're all sovereign human beings and I don't subsume myself to anyone.

Friend: Most people do maintain by fear. That's why people follow churches, follow governments, follow rules. They all follow conditions which they hope will remove fear and give them security. Security is maintenance of fear and it's the same inside the church or outside. It's everywhere really. The church has got the whole thing wrong by putting somebody in the way of your free will.

Brian: The church gives a ticket to breathe

Friend: its the indulgence complex really. You can't get around it. (Catholic indulgencies)

An indulgence is the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment due, in God's justice, to sin that has

been forgiven, which remission is granted by the Church in the exercise of the power of the keys, through the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, and for some just and reasonable motive.

Brian: I don't want to believe it. I try to be Mr Nice Guy and I do what I can.

Friend – That's all you can do and then you walk away. And you don't persist because then the devil catches you. Don't stay in the same place conceptually; move on to something else. Have a go at it then move on to something else.

Brian: you mean shake the dust from my feet<

Friend: essentially yes, but really it's also to keep you from falling into a rut. If you get into a rut then you will become restricted and then you start to feel anxious and fear as a result of not being able to get out of it. In other words you know if you go in the hole everyone's going to suffer the same way. Hover above it and detect that a person can do with some help I'm going to offer it but if they do not show interest then do not follow up. If they are interested then still go off as you have got them going

Brian: My only justification to myself is the fact that I may have planted some seeds.

Friend: That is all you have got. You never know how well they'll take or not. An opinion of one self is always false because you don't know what you've done

Brian: you mean I might underestimate my contribution?

Friend: yes. Others including narcissists will over estimate their contribution

Brian: inspired by this conversation I'm going to write an article on fear

Friend: it is quite simply this: if you're not restricted you can't be scared. There's nothing to be scared of because you know the answers. We're all in fear because we all have restricted views. Knowledge is freedom.

Brian: What's the difference between what you just said and someone with a thick skin I mean what is thick skin? is it when you're inured to all emotions? See addendum to this article on all the ways that 'skin' can be used.

Friend: No it's when you do for example if you do something and you believe it's the correct thing to do yes and somebody don't like it and tells you to get lost and you move away. The 'thick skin' is really an understanding. It's not so much where you're insensitive. It means that you are considerate in that you can understand that somebody can have a more restricted view than you and you walk away to allow them to work with what you said or not to either improve or remain as they are.

Brian: That's that's my achilles' heel you see because I think anyone who doesn't understand what I'm saying is a twit. We going from my big exercise my lecture I was hoping to give in September with big announcements and adverts. I've had a slow response but I'll tell you this seriously I've got I got so much pleasure and satisfaction how to putting the thing together it's a bit like painting a work of art and it's done. If people don't see it or don't recognise it then hey that's their loss really and mine too but I don't know....

Friend: You can only try. Try somewhere else or try something else. That's why shaking the dust from your feet is really attachment and restriction to a restriction and if you then get negative because somebody doesn't respond then you haven't wiped the dust from your feet. It doesn't mean that you totally ignore that person forever, it's just that you are not going to follow that train with them anymore.

I think the way to survive is just to keep things very simple and not get involved weed you know don't go don't fly too close to the light and then just keep your integrity that's what that's what I'm trying to do. I think the answer is safety in numbers if you get a little bit of nutrition from a lot of people I think that's the best way for most people

Friend: if you start talking deep stuff to people you can only present it so if somebody accepts it and agreeeth it you have won. You have increased the cohesion of people. If they don't do anythingand you've got to bear in mind that 78% of people are going to be like that.

Brian: When we write books do we feel more comfortable safe with the planned book in our heads or out in the wild or is it a mixture.

Friend: It depends how much or how little you got to say because you could fill an encyclopedia with what is known and therefore the the trick to this is to precis that information into just a few hundred pages at what time it is to get the conceptual context for otherwise I start writing and it goes off on tangents all over the place. I've got to codify in my head to obtain the exact structure of it. Once conceptualized it can be uttered over a comparatively short period of time.

Brian – I am going to write an article on fear.

Friend: you can embellish fear into all these different subject areas but at the end of the day it is simply restriction or openness that's all it is. Everything else is then encoded onto the specific pre-existing restrictions of the individual.

Brian: I'm going to write up the essay for my own benefit and just see what comes but I take your point that it's the pivot – the pivotal thing.

Friend: You know one thing I tend to do is to try to narrow

down a whole pile of data. I take the information and then I reduce it to the core of that information, the place on which it all depends and then all the material spreads out from it, and that's what I do with a book as well. I've narrowed it down to its fundamental core what is it I really want to say here otherwise I'm just writing some sort of diatribe of endless useless facts.

Summary : The only emotion is caring (the dynamic of love). All other emotions are subsets of this, or gradations of its absence. The soul cares and loves and knows. The brain translates this into emotions.

Addendum – the many uses of the word skin (thank you mentalfloss.com)

The skin is the largest organ in the human body, covering a surface area of nearly 2 square meters. Skin covers a great deal of the English language, too, if we look to its many skin-related words, expressions, and idioms.

1. SKIN Let's start with the word skin itself. In English, the word skin isn't even comfortable in its own skin. Old English actually borrowed the word from the Scandinavian languages, like the early Scandinavian skinn. Skin originally referred to the hides of smaller animals, especially ones dressed and tanned, and was later applied to humans at least by the 14th century. The native term in Old English was hyd, which gives us hide, historically used of larger game.

2. THICK-SKINNED There is record of thick-skinned in the English language by the middle of the 1600s, when the compound adjective described the literally thick rinds of fruits and vegetables. But it soon proved an apt metaphor. By the beginning of the 1500s, thick-skinned was characterizing persons as "dull" and "stupid," later as "insensitive to criticism." A derived term, a thick skin, was once used to

tease dimwits.

3. THIN-SKINNED Politics requires a thick skin, but, as we've recently seen, Democratic presumptive nominee Hillary Clinton has ribbed her Republican opponent, Donald Trump, as "thin-skinned." While it's a fresh attack on the campaign trail, the expression thin-skinned, like its counterpart thick-skinned, is surprisingly old: The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) documents it in its current "touchy" meaning as early as 1680.

4. UNDER ONE'S SKIN Clinton's jibe was intended to get under Donald Trump's skin. This expression, to get under one's skin, means to "irritate someone intensely" here. But a compelling movie, say, can also get under our skins when we continue to think about it long after it's over. A different use of under the skin drives at something's "true reality," as opposed to its outer appearance. Rudyard Kipling popularized the expression in his late 19th-century poem "The Ladies." In it, a philandering speaker draws his own conclusions about women no matter the color of their skin: "For the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady/ Are sisters under their skins!"

5. GET INTO ONE'S SKIN We can get under one's skin, but we can also get into one's skin. This phrase, denoting deep empathy for another, far predates Luke Skywalker's warmth-winning security in tauntauns. The OED attests it all the way back in 1372.

6. OUT OF ONE'S SKIN English really itches to let you know exactly where we stand in relation to skin. We can jump or leap out of it when we're excited. We can fly out of it when we get really angry. And we can play ourselves out of our skin if we do a great job at something.

7. NO SKIN OFF OUR ... We don't just get in, under, and out of the skin. English also really likes to make sure its speakers don't shed any skin. If we are not challenged by a particular situation or aren't offended by some remark, it doesn't even

break the skin, so we say it's no skin off our backs—or off our ears, noses, and even bugles, slang for “nose.”

8. SKIN OF ONE'S TEETH Now, some people say a potentially face-losing situation is no skin off their teeth. This is a mixed metaphor, confusing expressions like no skin off the back with by the skin of my teeth, or a “narrow escape.” But what sort of monstrous teeth have skin? This proverb is a literal translation of the Hebrew *bě'ōr šinnāi*, used in the Book of Job. Scholars widely dispute the translation, though. The OED points to some other notable translations: The Latin Vulgate renders the passage as “only my lips are left around my teeth” and the Greek Septuagint as “my bones are held in my teeth.”

9. GIVE ME SOME SKIN We're not always trying to save our skins. We also like to give it away. Give me some skin originated as early as the 1940s as African American slang for shaking hands or related nonverbal exchanges.

10. SKIN IN THE GAME Seventies financial slang, meanwhile, put skin in the game, “to have a stake in something,” especially a monetary investment. This skin may harken back to the risk-taking suggested by save one's skin. Some games do feature skins, in a manner of speaking. In a scrimmage or pickup match, teams may differentiate their sides in a shirts and skins game. The usage is evidenced by the 1930s, around the same time we see skins in what golf now calls a skins game, in which the winner of each hole is awarded money, or skins. The term might be related to some other skin-related slang for money: frogskin and toadskin.

11. AND 12. FROGSKIN AND TOADSKIN In the 19th century, Americans nicknamed five-cent stamps toadskins. Historically, such stamps often had a greenish hue, much like the country's current paper money. Also as inspired by the amphibians' color, toadskins, and a related form, frogskins, later referred to one-dollar bills. Yet earlier, British criminal

slang called purses and wallets skins, perhaps because they were made from leather.

13. SKINFLINT A skinflint is a “mean and miserly person,” so said because such a money-grubbing individual would skin a flint—trying to strip a small chunk of the hard stone—in the name of profit. This originally British expression dates to the 17th century. An American variant is to skin a flea for its hide and tallow.

14. A GOOD SKIN Some dialects of Irish English call a person a good skin. This is not a comment on the health of the person’s epidermis; skin is a general term for a “person” or “lad,” or “guy” or “dude” across the pond. To some Dubliners, a skinny malink is a lanky fellow. The origin is unknown, but some students of Irish English think it may ultimately be a corruption of skin and bones, itself an old term for an emaciated individual.

15. SKINNY The OED gives the first attestation of skinny—as we think of (or aspire to) this adjective today—to Shakespeare’s Banquo addressing the witches in Macbeth: “You seem to understand me,/By each at once her choppy finger laying/ Upon her skinny lips.” Earlier, skinny was more literal: “covered by skin,” as the dictionary glosses. The OED finds an older but rarer usage: “ioynge in skinnes” or “gloriously skinny,” a way to comment on one’s attractiveness by their youthful integument. But we all know beauty is only skin-deep. The OED cites this proverb in a poem by Sir Thomas Overbury written in the 1610s: “All the carnall Beautie of my wife, is but skinne-deepe.” Think venti skinny pumpkin-spice lattes are trendy? A New York Times advertisement marketed skinny, or “low-calorie,” shakes, malteds, parfaits, and hot chocolates in 1969. Suppose your skinny jeans are hip? A heading in a 1915 edition of The Waterloo Times-Tribune read: “Skinny clothes in vogue this year.” The article continued: “The correctly dressed man for 1915 will display a ‘quick fit’. Fashion has decreed that the tight fitting clothes of the past year shall

become more so.”

16. **THE SKINNY** What’s the skinny? Today, this sounds like a quaint way of saying “What’s up?” But in a casual conversation in the early 20th century, one would want to get the skinny on some inside scoop of a newsy or gossipy bit of information. The origin is obscure, but underlying this colloquial usage seems to be a notion of the “naked truth.”

17. **SKINNY-DIP** Speaking of nakedness, or being to the skin, we’ve been skinny-dipping since at least the mid-20th-century in the United States, stripping right down to nothing but our birthday suits before plunging into water.

18. **SHOWING SOME SKIN** Still speaking of nakedness, skin has its more adult associations, too. A skin-flick is slang for a “porno.” In Japan, skin ladies sold condoms, or skins, from door to door.

19. **NEW SKINS** Socially, we are still striving to transcend the arbitrary differences of skin color. Mortally, we are still trying to defy age with the cosmetics of skin food. And linguistically, we are overcoming the limits of physical reality with digital skins. Gamers can buy or earn new skins: These alter or enhance the appearance of a game by, say, changing the appearance of a character or adding to its gear. Skins can also refer to stylized cases one can put on a cellular phone, computer, or gaming console.

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