

Dissonance

How it can hurt us.

George Orwell
(author)

“We are all capable of believing things which we know to be untrue, and then, when we are finally proved wrong, impudently twisting the facts so as to show that we were right.”

Lewis Smedes
Counselor

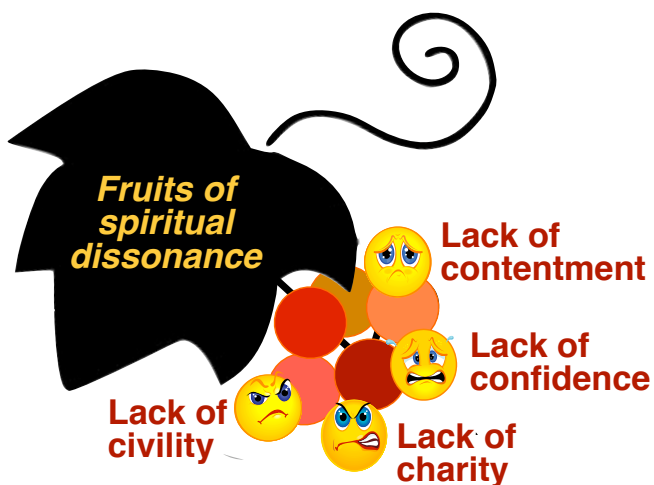
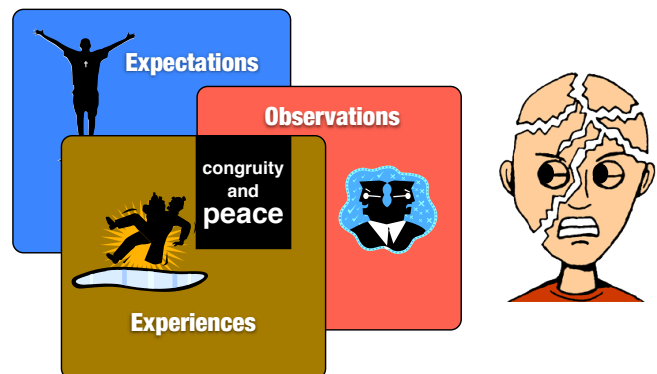
“The difference between guilt and shame is very clear—in theory. We feel guilty for what we do. We feel shame for what we are.”

Carol Tavris
psychologist

“Our memories may tell us more about what we believe now than what really happened then.”

#1
Dissonance
can create deep personal
shame
and **stress.**

Spiritual Stress
comes from unresolved dissonance.



Depression

is the exhaustion of our soul
as it pursues misplaced
strategies to relieve
the dissonance of
life in a fallen
world.

#2 The Stress of Dissonance can encourage us to

set our mind on the flesh.

Adam & Eve's Dissonance

"she took from its
fruit and ate"
Gen.3:6

"I heard the sound of You
in the garden, and I was
afraid because I was
naked; so I hid myself."
Gen.3:10

"The woman whom You
gave to be with me, she
gave me from the tree and
I ate."
Gen.3:12

1.
sin

I made
mistakes

2.
shame

I am a stupid
person

3.
strategy
to relieve the shame

Mistakes were
made but not by
me

The father of lies
wants us to find
hope in anything
and everything but
Jesus.



The greatest lies we tell are the ones we tell to ourselves.

Satan's sneaky pack of lies

- ✓ **Focus on the Law** - Who sinned - me (shame) or you (blame)?
- ✓ **Unrealistic expectations** for God, others, and ourselves.
- ✓ **A toxic church culture** that is narcissistic, pragmatic, and punitive.



Faulty paths to removing dissonance

1. **Lower the expectations** - Psychotherapy.



Romans 7



"7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be!"

"14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin."

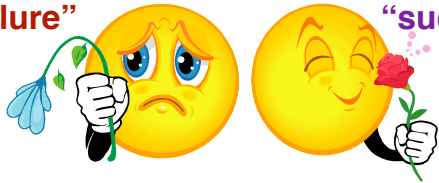
1. The moral standard is not the problem.
2. Removing moral expectations does not address the real problem of the "sinful self."

The two sides of “self”

Shame
is our ego's
punishment for
“failure”

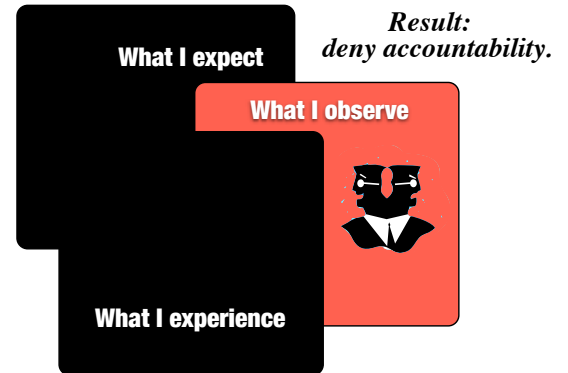
and

Pride
is our ego's
reward for
“success”



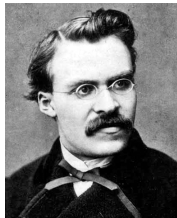
Paths to removing dissonance

2. **Pass the blame** - I am not responsible for this mess.



Friedrich Nietzsche

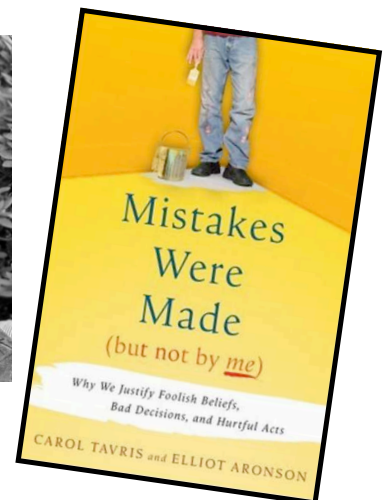
(philosopher)



““I have done that,’ says my memory. ‘I cannot have done that,’ says my pride, and remains inexorable. Eventually - memory yields.”

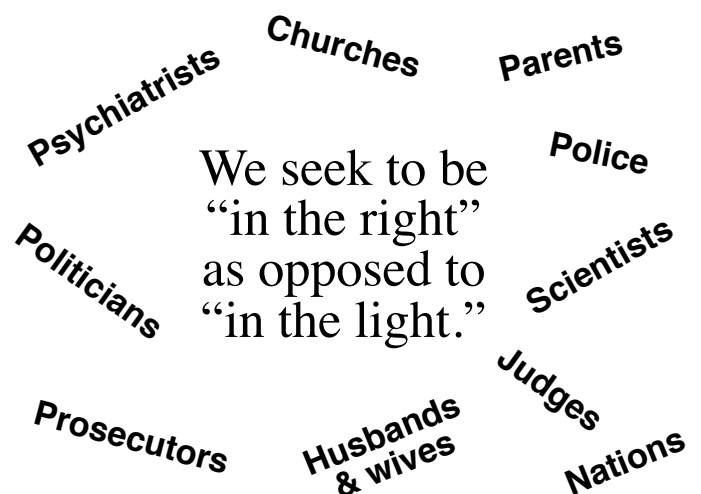


Carol Tavris



Matthew 6

“22 The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”



Paths to removing dissonance

3. **Try harder** - I just need more faith, commitment, and discipline.

*Result:
more dissonance!*



Most popular "Christian" paths to removing dissonance

- ✓ **Retreat & rebel** - I have lost hope in spiritual progress in this life.
- ✓ **Pass the blame** - I am not responsible for my mess.
- ✓ **Look for a quick fix** - All I need is to find the key to the power of the Spirit.
- ✓ **Try harder** - I just need more faith, commitment, and discipline.

*It's **my** problem to solve
through **my** behavior
by **my** faith in the Holy Spirit!*

What can I expect in my experience?

**Powerlessness in this life
is unnatural.**

**Progress in this life
is expected.**

**Perfection in this life
is unrealistic.**

Perfection in this life is unrealistic.

- ✓ **Can Matt.22:37-39 be satisfied?** "love your God with **all** your heart, soul, and mind"
- ✓ **Is freedom from "know" sin enough?** "I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am **not** by this acquitted . . ." 1 Cor.4:4
- ✓ **Does "perfect" (Greek) = flawless or complete?**
- ✓ **Is the "flesh" still present?** "The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." Gal. 5:17

✓ Can anyone claim to be perfect?

"If we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." 1 Jn.1:8

✓ Was Paul free from sin? "For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want." Rom.7:19

✓ Were the early churches free from sin?

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. . . . For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?" 1 Cor.3:1-3

#3

**The Stress of Dissonance
can only be removed by**

**what God in Christ
has done for us
and in us.**

