

A Course on Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty

Presentation 6:

Human Nature

Slide 1:

Hello and welcome to Presentation 6, which focuses on the great difference between corporate capitalism's understanding of Human Nature and the CHPEM's understanding of Human Nature.

This presentation provides a graphic depiction of this difference.

Slide 2:

All economic philosophies are rooted in a preferred belief about Human Nature.

At the root of differences between various economic models are differences in beliefs or understandings about human nature.

The Capitalist Economic Model is rooted, fundamentally, in rather negative and pessimistic beliefs about Human Nature.

The CHPEM is based on a more positive View of Human Nature.

When addressing problems, it is best to address the deepest root cause(s) of a problem. Since one of the deepest roots of an economic model is its understanding of human nature, let's examine and compare two different hypotheses about human nature—one espoused by corporate capitalism, the other proposed by the CHPEM.

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What follows are simply hypotheses and impressions, not statements of proven fact. They are intended to raise important questions for discussion, not impose a certain point of view.

They are offered for purposes of stimulating and facilitating healthy dialogue. The reader is asked to participate in exploring which hypothesis and statements are most correct, and which need revision or further study.

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All of us appear to have a spectrum of innate behavioral capacities. At one end of the spectrum, each of us (or the vast majority of us) has at least some capacity to behave kindly and altruistically; at the other end of the spectrum, each of us has at least some capacity to behave selfishly (non-altruistically) and unkindly. Between these two extremes are our capacities to

behave relatively kindly or relatively unkindly; relatively altruistically or relatively non-altruistically.

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In individual persons, these innate capacities are probably not equal in size. Plus, we are all at least a little different. Fortunately, most people have relatively small capacities to behave with ruthless selfishness. Most people appear to have greater capacities for behaviors between the two extremes than at the extremes.

Slide 6:

It seems reasonable to hypothesize that human beings, overall, on average, have greater innate capacities for Kindness than Unkindness---i.e., the distribution of capacities (quantitatively) is probably not a symmetrical Bell-shaped curve. Instead, the curve is probably shifted to the side of kindness. That is, most people, probably, innately have greater capacities for kindness than for unkindness. It seems unlikely, however, that all people are identical, regarding the size of their innate capacities for kindness and unkindness.

Humans probably could not have survived as a species, if the curve were shifted too far to the side of selfishness. If so, human beings probably would have killed each other off long ago.

Slide 7:

But it is not just about innate capacities; More importantly, it is also about the extent to which innate capacities are EXPRESSED.

Capacities do not result in actions or behaviors unless they are expressed. The lid that keeps a capacity from being expressed, must be lifted, for the capacity to be expressed.

In this hypothetical “graphic” example, the lid on each capacity is partially and equally opened--meaning that each capacity is being partially expressed to an equal extent.

Slide 8:

According to the hypothesis we are discussing, expression of behavioral capacities is analogous to gene expression. The Human Genome consists of an enormous array of capacities (genes), many of which rarely need to be expressed. When expression of a gene is needed, the lid on that capacity is lifted; when expression of a gene is no longer needed (or not desired), that lid is closed. In Medicine, this is called up-regulation (de-repression) and down-regulation (repression) of gene expression.

In this hypothetical example, the lid on our kind capacities are opened wide (allowing full expression of those capacities), while the lids on our unkind capacities are kept largely shut.

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The stars on this slide (and the next two slides) represent the extent to which an innate capacity is being expressed. In this case, all capacities are being equally expressed to a mild extent.

Slide 10:

In this case there is great expression of capacities for Kindness (those lids are wide open). And minimal expression of capacities for Unkindness (those lids are largely closed).

Slide 11:

In this case, there is great expression of capacities for unkindness. (Those lids are wide open.) And minimal expression of capacities for kindness.

Slide 12:

What determines the extent to which an innate capacity is expressed?

The social milieu in which one lives can affect the extent to which certain capacities are expressed:

- A social milieu that is guided by a kind, altruistic philosophy and has created kind social arrangements and activities will likely encourage and give great practice to the expression of our kind capacities---i.e., the social milieu can help us to more widely open the lids on our kinder capacities.
- A social milieu that is guided by an unkind philosophy and has created “mean social arrangements” and activities will likely encourage and give practice to expression of our unkind capacities and suppress expression of our kinder capacities.

Experiences with one’s own family and immediate friends (as opposed to the larger social milieu) can also affect the extent to which our various capacities are expressed.

Independent personal efforts: Expression of our capacities can also be affected by the extent to which we do our own personal psychosocial work to better up-regulate expression of our kind capacities and better down-regulate (suppress) expression of our unkind capacities.

Individual differences: Some people, innately, may be able to express (or suppress) certain capacities more easily (or less easily) than are other people. That is, the lid on some of their capacities may be unusually easy (or unusually difficult) to open wide (or keep shut).

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Capitalism appears to be based on a presumption that most people have greater capacities for unkindness than for kindness (as shown in the graph below)---i.e. most people are naturally

predominantly selfish and unkind, and rather hopelessly so. Capitalism has little faith in human goodness and does not think it wise to choose an economic model that relies considerably on humans' capacities for kindness. Instead, capitalism claims that it is the "only realistic economic model" because it is based on the "reality" that human beings, "by nature," are predominantly selfish. This represents a very negative and incomplete understanding of human nature. Moreover, it ignores the fact that certain social arrangements (e.g., capitalism itself), as well as other factors, can up-regulate the expression of unkind capacities, while other social arrangements (e.g., CHPM) can up-regulate expression of our kind capacities.

The bars represent the distribution of innate capacities (quantitatively speaking), according to the capitalist view of Human Nature.

Slide 14:

The CHPM is based on the view that: Each of us has capacities for both kind and unkind behaviors; overall, on average, most human beings probably have greater capacities for kindness than for unkindness (as shown in the graph below, as opposed to the graph shown on the previous slide); and, the social milieu (and other factors) can either up-regulate (increase) expression of capacities for kindness or up-regulate expression of capacities for unkindness---that is, social arrangements and personal experiences can affect the expression of capacities and, thereby, can transform individual and group behaviors. Mean Social Arrangements up-regulate expression of capacities for unkindness, while Kind Social Arrangements up-regulate expression of capacities for kindness.

In this graphic depiction, the bars represent the distribution of behavioral capacities (quantitatively speaking) according to the view of the CHPM.

Slide 15:

Capitalism encourages, rewards, gives practice to, and even requires expression of our capacities for non-altruistic behaviors---e.g., self-interest seeking, participation in cut-throat competition, exploitation of others. Businesses that are "too altruistic" typically "lose" to rival businesses that more aggressively attend to their self-interest.

Capitalism, realistically, discourages expression of our altruistic, kinder capacities.

In this example, expression of a person's capacities for non-altruistic behaviors are up-regulated (increased, fully opened) by the capitalist social milieu, while expression of that person's capacities for altruism and kindness are down-regulated (decreased, shut down) by the capitalist social milieu.

Slide 16:

Accordingly, the results of corporate capitalism tend to be increased expression of capacities for non-altruistic behaviors and unkindness, and decreased expression of capacities for altruism and kindness.

Slide 17:

In contrast, the Children's Hospital Public Economy Model (CHPEM) encourages and gives practice to full expression of our capacities for altruism and kindness and discourages and gives little practice to expression of our capacities for non-altruistic behaviors and unkindness.

In this example, the lids on our capacities for altruism and kindness are opened wide, and the lids on our capacities for non-altruistic behaviors and unkindness are kept largely shut.

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The results of the CHPEM tend to be increased expression of capacities for altruism and kindness (Social Beauty) and decreased expression of capacities for non-altruistic behaviors and unkindness.

Slide 19:

An important aspect of the CHPEM is that people who appear to have above-average natural capacities for altruism and kindness (and/or above-average innate and/or learned inclination and ability to express these capacities and suppress expression of their non-altruistic and unkind capacities) are placed in positions of leadership. These "altruistic natural leaders" enhance up-regulation of expression of the group's capacities for altruism and kindness.

This hypothetical person has above-average innate capacities for altruism and kindness, above-average inclination and ability to express those capacities and is easily able to "keep the lid on" non-altruistic capacities---making him/her a preferred "altruistic natural leader" in a Public Economy.

Slide 20:

An unfortunate aspect of capitalism is that people with great capacity for non-altruistic behaviors (and/or great innate and/or learned inclination and ability to express those non-altruistic capacities) and below average capacity for altruism and kindness (and/or difficulty with expression of these capacities), are often placed in positions of power---because they are most effective in promoting and accomplishing corporate bottom-line goals in a cut-throat competitive social environment. (Altruism and idealism are liabilities in the capitalist culture of cut-throat competition.) Such capitalist leaders create ever-increasing coarseness of culture.

This hypothetical person has above-average innate capacities for selfishness, above-average tendency to express those capacities, and has difficulty expressing capacities for altruism and kindness--making him/her a preferred leader in a large, cut-throat, ultra-capitalist transnational corporation. Such corporations do not promote altruists, nor are altruists interested in working for such corporations.

Slide 21:

At this point let me interject a sobering thought, regarding upregulation and down-regulation of innate behavioral capacities: There is growing scientific interest in epigenetics and the notion that some epigenetic changes may be transmitted from one generation to the next (e.g., via DNA methylation reprogramming, histone modifications, and/or small non-coding RNAs)---a phenomenon known as **transgenerational epigenetic inheritance**. For example, severe emotional trauma, particularly if prolonged, might result in chronically upregulated expression of genes involved in protective responses to stress. Such upregulation places the traumatized person in a protective state of being “on-guard,” wary of and prepared for further trauma. Those “stress response” genes become programmed, or conditioned, to remain in or easily flip into an upregulated state for prolonged periods of time. It is possible that this programmed upregulation of gene expression can be passed to subsequent generations---i.e., a next generation individual may inherit a predisposition for quick and easy upregulated expression of protective stress-response genes, or might be born with already upregulated expression of such genes.

Slide 22:

We have talked about how corporate capitalism encourages, even requires, or at least gives practice to upregulated expression of our non-altruistic behavioral capacities and downregulated expression of our capacities for altruism and kindness---individually and collectively. Is it possible that, to at least some extent, this programmed and practiced upregulation of expression of non-altruistic capacities could be passed to subsequent generations. If so, societies could become increasingly non-altruistic, in part, because of transmitted predispositions to express non-altruistic rather than altruistic capacities. That is, society might increasingly become more coarse, Mean Social Arrangements might become more prevalent and meaner, and Social Atrocities might steadily become more frequent and more severe.

Slide 23:

On the other hand, the CHPM strongly encourages and gives great practice to upregulated expression of our capacities for altruism and kindness and helps us to downregulate expression of our non-altruistic capacities---individually and collectively. Is it possible that, to at least some extent, this programmed and practiced upregulated expression of capacities for altruism and kindness could be passed to subsequent generations. Potentially, societies could become increasingly altruistic, in part, because of transmitted predispositions to express capacities for

altruism and kindness rather than capacities for non-altruistic behaviors. That is, society might increasingly become more altruistic, Kind Social Arrangements might become more prevalent, and Social Beauty might increasingly become greater and more widespread.

The possibility of transgenerational epigenetic inheritance and its consequences needs to be kept in mind.

Slide 24:

To review:

This is the belief about Human Nature promoted by the Capitalistic Economic Model---that most human beings, by nature, have greater innate capacities for selfishness and unkindness, than for kindness and altruism. Furthermore, this belief ignores (or is unaware of) the effects that the social milieu can have on actual expression of innate capacities.

Slide 25:

In contrast, this is the understanding of Human Nature suggested by the CHPEM---that most human beings, by nature, have greater capacities for kindness and altruism, than for unkindness and selfishness. Furthermore, the CHPEM places great emphasis on the potential for a healthy social milieu to up-regulate expression of our kind, altruistic capacities.

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Perhaps the view of innate behavioral capacities held by ardent proponents of Capitalism (particularly the 1%) is correct, if they are talking about themselves.

It's possible that their view of innate behavioral capacities accurately applies to that 1%.

But does it apply to the rest of Humanity?

Who decides?

Slide 27:

To Review: This could be the results of CHPEM-inspired Public Economies—Great Social Beauty, due to widespread up-regulated expression of the kind, altruistic capacities of our Human Nature and down-regulated expression of our non-altruistic and unkind capacities.

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And this appears to be the result of Capitalism—Mean Social Arrangements and mean social activities, due to widespread up-regulated expression of the non-altruistic and unkind capacities of our Human Nature.

Slide 29:

The following “Proposed Summary” is offered for examination in the Social Clinic, where all are invited to help determine the extent to which this presentation’s conclusions and statements are accurate and helpful, or in need of revision or further study.

Slide 30:

- The capitalist model, at its deepest roots, is based on a negative, incomplete, and harmful belief about human nature---a belief that places little faith or trust in human goodness and insists that selfishness and unkindness are the predominant and most “real” tendencies of Human Nature.
- The capitalist model teaches, encourages, rewards, requires, and gives extensive practice to the non-altruistic capacities of our Human Nature---thereby creating a social milieu that increasingly up-regulates expression of those capacities, while tending to increasingly discourage and down-regulate (suppress) expression of our kind and altruistic capacities.
- Capitalism, by nature, elevates those with greater capacities for expression of non-altruistic behaviors to positions of power. These “leaders” then escalate the social milieu’s vicious cycles of ever-increasing coarseness. As a result, individual and collective behavior are increasingly transformed in a negative, non-altruistic direction.

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- The CHPEM is based on a positive, more complete, deeper, more nuanced, and more accurate understanding of Human Nature---an understanding that places faith and trust in human goodness, rejects the claim that selfishness and unkindness are the predominant and most “real” features of Human Nature, and emphasizes the effects that a social milieu can have on the actual expression of our innate behavioral capacities.
- The CHPEM encourages and gives great practice to expression of the kindest capacities of our Human Nature---thereby creating a social milieu that increasingly up-regulates expression of our kind capacities, while increasingly down-regulating expression of our unkind capacities.
- The CHPEM elevates those with the greatest expressions of altruism and kindness to positions of leadership. These “altruistic natural leaders” facilitate and enhance the social milieu’s ever-increasing creation of Social Beauty, and, thereby, increasingly transform individual and collective behavior in a positive direction.

Slide 32:

- A major root cause of capitalism's harmful effects, and a major root cause of capitalism's eventual demise, is that capitalism is deeply rooted in a mis-understanding and mis-portrayal of Human Nature.
- The negative, incomplete, and anti-human understanding of Human Nature that proponents of capitalism have imposed on Humanity has been degrading, diminishing, demoralizing, oppressive, depressing, dispiriting, and paralyzing. It has produced excessive feelings of fear, self-doubt, insecurity, alienation, and anxiety throughout Humanity. It has gaslit the public. In short, it has been abusive.
- By denigrating and negatively (and falsely) stereotyping the entire Human Race, capitalism's view of Human nature represents a form of racism---anti-Human racism, anti-Public racism.
- Humanity deserves liberation from this abusive view of Human Nature.

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- The world would be better off with an economic model (e.g., a Public Economy model like the CHPM) that increasingly up-regulates expression of the kind and altruistic capacities of our Human Nature, instead of a model (Capitalism) that increasingly up-regulates expression of the non-altruistic capacities of our Human Nature.
- Capitalism's greatest weakness, its Achilles' heel, is its negative, incomplete, insulting, and abusive, "gaslighting" view of Human Nature.
- The most effective way to counter Capitalism with a healthier economic model (e.g., a Public Economy model) is to expose the deepest roots of Capitalism---i.e., expose the view of Human Nature upon which Capitalism is based and that capitalism uses to justify itself and its control over Humanity.
- The deepest root that has allowed capitalism to dominate (at the expense of alternative ideas) is its misunderstanding and mis-portrayal of Human Nature. If we expose and increase awareness of capitalism's roots, it will be easier to replace capitalism's "Mean Arrangements of Man" and "Social Atrocities" with "Kind Social Arrangements" that create Social Beauty and a Most Precious Freedom for all to enjoy.

Slide 34:

The fears, confusion, insecurities, and diminished feelings of self-worth generated by an abusive economic system's view of Human Nature have been standing in the way of our doing something wonderful---democratically and calmly creating Public Economies, Vast Fields of Public Activity, and Social Beauty, to replace the Mean Social Arrangements and social atrocities of Capitalism.

By focusing on promotion of a positive view of Human Nature and a positive alternative to capitalism, and by exposing the deepest roots of Capitalism (its negative view of Human Nature, in particular), Humanity can regain its suppressed dignity and self-confidence, liberate itself

from capitalism's abusive control, and create the Social Beauty that Humanity, and the Earth itself, deserve.

Then, Humanity will be able to enjoy the most precious of freedoms: The freedom that comes from participating in comprehensive public efforts to genuinely look after others; the freedom to enjoy widespread up-regulated expression of the human capacity for kindness--in oneself and in the larger society, both of which depend on each other.

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For further reading, please see the following Chapters in "Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty."

- Chapter 15: Human Nature
- Chapter 16: The Concept of Up-Regulation and Down-Regulation of the Expression of Human Behavioral Capacities

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Thank you for your interest in examining roots of capitalism and in Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty.

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June 2026