

I Have a Problem

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I have a problem. I feel the need to share what I think. And just to set fair expectations for the rest of this essay, know it's simply another one of my thoughts I felt the need to share. Whether or not it's worth sharing is immaterial to that established fact. Ultimately, that's up for you to decide.

The other day I was watching the Eagles documentary, which I highly recommend by the way (hey, anything for some ad revenue), and I had a thought. The documentary is in large part about the issues that caused the band to breakup, and it just so happens that my friend Tom and I had a falling out recently. My thought was, "Huh, Tom's kind of as big of an asshole as Don Henley," and of course I felt the need to share it. This presented two problems. The first was that the only person I knew who'd appreciate the Eagles reference was Tom. The second was that the only person I knew who wouldn't appreciate me calling Tom an asshole was also Tom. A bit of a catch 22, you might say.

Presented with the options of sharing or not sharing my ingenious observation, I more or less texted Tom I thought he was as big of an asshole as Don Henley. This was, as you can imagine, a pretty awkward conversation, but it was better than not having the conversation at all. Someone has to know what I'm thinking. Otherwise, what's the point of thinking?

This whole ordeal happened pretty late at night. Standing in the kitchen before rinsing out my glass of milk and schlepping off to bed, I had a thought. What

if this awkward conversation could've been avoided? What if there was someone out there you could say things to that you shouldn't tell a real person?

Then I thought, "That someone exists. God is the person you say things to that you shouldn't tell a real person." Of course! Instead of making my dad pause the television twenty times to tell him about the last episode of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* I watched or how I'm living *Caddyshack* through my job at the country club, why not just talk to God about it? It's not like He has anything else going on.

There's no downside to sharing your thoughts with God. Either you're talking to someone who doesn't really exist and therefore aren't bothering anyone, or you're talking to someone about what He already knows you're thinking because of that whole omnipotence thing. And if you happen to say something He doesn't like, He still has to forgive you. You really can't go wrong.

I began thinking about all the times I got in trouble for sharing things with people I would've been better off talking to God about. In my sixth grade art class, for example, I noticed one of the girls at my table had what Jerry Seinfeld would accurately describe as "man hands." I felt the need to share that thought, so I told everyone at the table I thought she had man hands. This obviously did not go over well. I was sent to the principal's office, where I defended myself by saying that she did indeed have man hands and that the thought needed to be shared. That defense didn't hold up in court. I realized that if I had just talked to God about it in the first place, all of this would have been avoided.

I imagined how this conversation would have gone. "Hey, God," I would have said. "You won't believe it, but this girl at my art table has man hands."

“Nice, Trevor!” He would have replied. “You’re getting better at the *Seinfeld* references every day!”

Still standing in the kitchen with an un-rinsed glass of milk, I began thinking there was more societal proof for my newfound concept than I had even realized. In old bank robbery movies, the criminals often leave their signature at the scene of the crime, obviously risking themselves getting caught. They do it because they want someone to know that they pulled the crime off, and obviously, as criminals, they don't believe in God. But if they had just talked to God about their crime instead, whether or not they believe in him, then they could've satisfied their desire to let someone know what they did without risking themselves getting caught. And remember, nothing can go wrong. Even if you say something He doesn't like, He still has to forgive you.

For an even better example, let's look to my generation - the “I-Generation.” If you look at churchgoing rates over the past fifty years or the percentages of people who say they identify as Christians, you'll notice the numbers are way down. But what's up? The amount of kids sending every little thought of theirs out into the Twitter-verse. Obviously, there's an explanation for this. Young people tweet so much because they don't pray anymore, but they still want someone to know what's going on in their lives. The decline of mindless believers has led to the rise of mindless tweeters.

I guess that's all a long-winded way of saying that people like to feel special and let others know what they're thinking. But bothering other people with your thoughts has clearly become a national crisis, and what could make you feel more

special than sharing your thoughts with the Lord? He could make you a prophet or something, and those guys get chapters written about them in the most bestselling book in history. What's more special than that?

Still idle in the kitchen, I began thinking about how I would share my thoughts with God. In my Jesuit education, I had learned a type of prayer called the Examen, in which you reflect on your past day, thank God for the gifts he's given you, see how well you've done in furthering God's will, and try to do better the next time. I was pretty sure this format could be turned around so that I could basically just go through my day and share with God every little thought I had. This, I thought, was bringing prayer into the twenty-first century. No more spiritual guidance, just an unfiltered dialogue of your every thought. Think of it as a "Captain's Log" for the common man.

I figured I'd try this new method of prayer that night. I had never really prayed before outside of school or for someone's health, but after having groundbreaking thoughts of this magnitude, I figured this was a good time to start. The only problem was I couldn't just go to God to tell him He's just the person who sits there and listen to my unfiltered thoughts, which is what I was thinking about at the time. Yes, He would still have to forgive me, but I needed to show Him some respect in our first encounter.

Therefore I would talk to Him about why it's an injustice that mid-calf socks have supplanted ankle socks as the dominant sock among teenage boys in America, to the point that ankle socks are considered so uncool that its wearers get bullied until they succumb to the mid-calf. The dominance of the mid-calf sock is purely a

stylistic point, as ankle socks demonstrate clear practical advantages. First, they use over fifty percent less cotton per sock, which clearly could be conserved for better uses like as fuel for cars or electricity or something. Second, the ankle sock provides for a feeling of freedom and mobility. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the ankle sock does not lead to the dreaded sock tan, which has become an epidemic among teenage boys in America. The sock tan is quite possibly the worst look one can go for at the beach or the pool, yet somehow the mid-calf sock remains in style. This is something I had been thinking about for a long time, so I figured I would share it with God.

Now with a plan of action, I finally rinsed my glass of milk and schlepped off to bed. I entered my bedroom, got down on two knees, clasped my hands together, and began to pray.

“Dear God,” I thought. “It’s truly an injustice that mid-calf socks have supplanted ankle socks as the sock of choice among American teenage boys. The ankle sock provides numerous clear advantages, and I think a world with ankle socks would be a better world for all of us.”

Then, just before I was about to rise and climb under my covers, I heard a voice.

“No one cares, Trevor.”