

Emotions as Cement

by [Armando Simón](#) (June 2021)



Aggressor, Philip Guston, 1978

There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true. –Kierkegaard

It has been both my professional and personal observation that a particularly strong emotion tends to cement a belief, even when it is contrary to reason, logic, or facts. If (for whatever reason) I am of the deep belief that Kyoto is the capital of Japan, but you bring me a map showing Tokyo to be the capital and show me newspapers and articles referring to

Tokyo as the capital, or tell me of people who have been to both cities, I will nonetheless still believe that Kyoto is the real capital of Japan—and refuse to see the contrary facts. Period.

My father adhered to a conspiracy theory and while I was in my teen and twenties, we would occasionally argue about it. I cited facts, used reason and logic, and almost always he ended up sincerely admitting that I was right in the end. The next day, he would be back at square one, as if the previous debate had never happened. In the end, I simply gave up and let him enjoy his belief.

Likewise, I have known women whose boyfriends or husbands were constantly unfaithful and/or abusive, even stole from them, yet were convinced that those men loved them, despite reality.

And, many years ago, religious adults came to believe that the role-playing game of Dungeons & Dragons was Satanic. When told otherwise, they refused to believe it and would scurry away when invited to simply sit in in one of the games.

And to this day, there are people who still are absolutely certain that Richard Jewell was the Atlanta bomber, even though there was no evidence and the real bomber was caught and confessed.

Another example: [videos](#) showed that [Nick](#) Sandmann, the Covington high schooler had done nothing wrong and was actually the one being harassed by Chief Drunken Beaver and a group of psychotic black people who hurled obscene insults at both the children and a handful of Native Americans. Yet, for days after the revelation, the boy was still being showered with abuse, threats and harassment. Not only that, but now, years after the facts, the same is still going around with individuals who still fervently [believe](#) that he was the guilty party.

I, also, am guilty of this. For decades, I was certain that looking into the microwave oven while it cooked food would result in physical damage, particularly to my eyes. It made complete sense that the escaping microwaves would cause blindness. The fact that the microwave oven had a window in which you could look at the food being cooked which window would not be there because of the number of lawsuits resulting from cases of blindness, I acknowledged but, nonetheless, continued in my aversion, which I strictly enforced on my children. Recently, I read an article by a scientist disproving my belief. Yet, even now, I refuse to look at food being microwaved in the oven for longer than a second, two seconds at most.

One issue that always elicits strong knee-jerk emotion in some people is the question of racism. There have been numerous instances in universities where [white](#) supremacist-[racist](#)-Nazi-anti-Semitic [kitsch](#) was found that turned out to have been [placed](#) not by [Nazis](#) in colleges but by [black](#) students. Nonetheless, [even](#) after the [hoaxes](#) being discovered, numerous students and staff continued mouthing anti-racist apologies, marching around in circles chanting the usual moronic slogans, and [promising](#) to do better to combat racism in universities.

Mark Twain's quip that "No amount of evidence will ever persuade an idiot" was off the mark in emphasizing a person's intelligence as the reason for not willing to change an opinion. It is intense emotion (anger, love, fear) that solidifies a belief in a person.

Which brings us to the present. Be prepared to experience cognitive dissonance. But, first, I must inform the reader that I regularly read the news given from the *full* political spectrum: liberal, conservative, libertarian, neutral (consider this a trigger warning).

Anyone who can still think for himself knows that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a big fiasco. The politicians and the media instituted a panic. Yet, the 65 million / 11 million / 2.2 million deaths that we were promised were going to happen never did happen. The masks that we were told would stop infection were/are useless and served only to enforce conformity. The number of fatalities attributed to the virus was exaggerated to the point that deaths from traffic accidents and gunshots were put down as deaths from covid