

# You Don't Know Who Your Friends Are

by [Carl Nelson](#) (November 2022)



*Studland Beach*, Vanessa Bell, 1912

I just finished the book *Apocalypse Child* by Flor Edwards, a memoir involving The Children of God cult. It seems systems of control, cults, communism, etc. want to sever a person's relationships with their family ... actually all close personal relationships. I wonder if social media hasn't played a large part in the terrifyingly quick collapse of our American society by magnifying divisions through fire hose applications

of propaganda and click bait diversions while virtually supplanting the town square commercially and socially.

Running up to the 2020 elections, my sister, brother in law, and myself got into a political discussion while on vacation and enjoying an outside pool overlooking the Oregon Coast. It seemed my points regarding the reality of Trump's accomplishments and Biden's incapacities were all lumped by them into my being "a Trumpster". My arguments were fatuous and fringe, while theirs were from credentialed sources and widely held. I'm sure most of you have been through the drill. But the discussion finally halted, when I observed, "The problem is, you don't know who your friends are." It wasn't hostile, so it didn't get their backs up—though I could sense my brother in law's hairs trying. But it also didn't register. My sister stood in the pool gaping at me. So then we continued on with our vacation well enough, though it did leave a bit of distance.

The rupture finally came, as with many families, with COVID. We were excited about planning a big Thanksgiving (2021) get together at my sister's home. When I called to confirm some dates, she was in transit with friends, and said we'd have to discuss it later. When I called later, I found that we were welcome, but our son wasn't unless he was vaccinated. I told her our 23-year-old son had had Covid. It had been a very mild infection and he was fine. She said it didn't matter; he still had to be vaccinated, but that we were welcome as we had been vaccinated. I told her we weren't going to leave our son out of Thanksgiving, and that there was no need for him to be vaccinated. She questioned how I could be so selfish and not care about the risk of spreading the disease to others. "What risk? You're vaccinated," I said.

"There could be babies there!" She retorted.

She accused me of bullying my son. And I retorted, "My son is his own man, but there is no way I'm encouraging him to take

that vaccine.”

I’ve graduated from four years of medical school, and have followed the course the COVID pandemic fairly closely through proven sources online. I can understand basic medical science and could see no reasonable case for giving the unproven ‘vaccine’ to anyone outside of those in the otherwise high-risk categories, such as the infirm and aged. Subsequent revelations are proving the prudence of this strategy—and also that the strategy was and is literally Epidemiology 101. Moreover, it should be no surprise that the pharmacological industry could come up with a vaccine at warp speed—because the same vaccine prototypes had already failed two previous trials in past years! All Big Pharma needed was a signed clearance and a waiver of liability, and they would reap billions in directed income ... the product was already there.

When we tried discussion months afterwards, my sister said she had only one question: Did I think Trump won the 2020 election? I said, “Yes.” She said, “That’s all I need to know.” She also said I needed to stop listening to the extremist alt-fringe conspiratorial web sites I seemed to have gotten sucked into, and get informed. “Watch the TV (news), for goodness sakes!” she suggested.

### *Everything Ends Up in a Ditch*

It was assumed that building a more fair and more prosperous country for everyone would create an ever more stable society—but just the opposite seems to have occurred.

The end of history appears to have appeared, the final truths ascertained, the problems enshrined, which leaves me especially, kind of waving my oars.

“Nothing good can last.”

Maybe this would be a good time  
to break for the fridge, prepare a sandwich,  
stop off to pee (and wash my hands, too)  
before rushing back.

As the revolution apparently  
is being broadcast  
on all the major news outlets,  
24/7. As the whole country  
disowns itself in a collapse.

This year, our son is going to be with his relations for Thanksgiving (at our suggestion). He loves family and hanging with his cousins. He assured me, "I'm not getting vaccinated." Actually, he has never liked vaccinations, pointing out that he never got sick in Thailand, from where he was adopted—until he had to take all those vaccinations to come here and then to attend school. In retrospect, from some of the reading I have done regarding "immunological imprinting," he may have a point. (Immunological imprinting is a process by which the body's natural immune response can become confined by repeated vaccinations, so that its total available response to as yet to be acquired infections is reduced. Immunological imprinting was something never discussed during my medical school training, and until this pandemic I had no knowledge of.)

Meanwhile, my sister and I are emotionally still maintaining the recommended six foot spacing.

It wasn't until the author Flor Edward's family had separated from the cult, that she was free to wander about a school library where she found herself leafing through a popular magazine with the sidebar question:

*"Did You Grow Up in a Cult: Take This Quiz and Find Out*

*Now."*

*"I snuck the magazine out of the library and showed Tamar and Mary Ann the quiz.*

*"You're not gonna believe this," I said, barely able to get the words out. "We grew up in a cult."*

I imagine kids decades in the future happening upon the same quiz. Questions are from Flor Edward's book, *Apocalypse Child*. My questions are in parentheses.

*Question #1: Did you grow up in a secluded environment?*

*(Did you follow only the major TV/news media?)*

*Question #2: Were you under the influence of a charismatic leader?*

*(Were you fed the ratings and credentialed sources?)*

*Question #3: Were you coerced to recruit members for your group?*

*(Were you advised to "change the world"? Did even commercials assume this?)*

*Question #4: Were you prohibited from leaving the premises unless you were recruiting members?*

*(Did your milieu denigrate and avoid "Flyover Country" and the Conservative culture? Did your school cancel Conservative speakers?)*

*Question #5: Were you taught that the world outside was a forbidden place, and did you feel guilty for wanting to leave?*

*(Were you told, "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem?" And isn't this an imprisoning paradigm?)*

Is my sister in a cult? Is our country now a cult, albeit an enormous one? Or is it just one enormous Women's Abortion League, or #MeToo complaint? An Antifa sandbox? A woke, bare-your-breasts to patriarchal oppression shout out? A soy-boy whine, a one-party tyranny, a transnational-corporate or CCP franchise? Or is it a marbled mix? Or is it nothing more complex than just parroting spin as all hell breaks loose? Just closing your eyes and believing in something until you get the results you want is sort of like holding your pee. The whole country now is jittery as a bed-wetting eight year old deep in the dark night.

Rush Limbaugh once made an observation, I recall, that if you examined how liberals actually lived their lives, 90 percent of the rules and routines they followed were conservative. (Conservatives and Liberals are not that far removed—rather like the DNA of Humans and Chimpanzees.)

And why was this? Perhaps for the same reason that “a pure Marxism has never been tried”, and that collectivist regimes—whose wealth producing free market has been criminalized—are propped up by a black market, corruption and criminal enterprises. Individuals produce wealth, while the government basically allocates it. In a like way, it is the conservative portion of your nature which sustains, and prudently invests your energies—whereas it is the ten percent of your nature which liberally seeks ways of dispersing it. This might be through re-imagining the past (conservative) or inventing the future (liberal) —but probably both. Currently, the Democratic Administration's Marxist direction has been criminalizing the wealth producing liberties of the private sector. And our Democratic Administration has numbers to call so that “if you see something, say something”.

The reason cults don't know who their friends are may be because eventually they have none—and wouldn't allow one if they appeared. And why is this? Perhaps this is because once you've begun informing upon the other, excluding the other and

denying them the opportunity to find employment, healthcare and banking services, and even the fair vote—you haven't any. You may have comrades, perhaps in surplus, but friends, no.

*Cults become dangerous as the author, Flor Edwards, further notes, when "they believe they're working towards a common goal and that's when they create an us versus them mentality, and that's when things get dangerous. Because it's no longer holistic, its no longer part of a whole, it's saying we are superior to you."*

It seems Progressives of all generations have adamantly held that they are the smart ones, while believing Conservatives are the ignorant, plodding, unimaginative ones (for spice add racist, homophobic, selfish, narrow-minded ones) –the "basket of deplorables" stuck in their routines and holding society back. And yet, Conservatives hold common values, but their goals are to hold no one back. And they are diverse, but no one cares. "Do your thing," was the proto-libertarian hippie maxim.

Nearly all success in life depends upon making and keeping friends. Citizens and organizations who try to help the homeless by inviting them into their homes, usually find that it is not the lack of money nor housing which has left these people on the streets—but rather a lack of friends. They simply are unreasonable. They are found so difficult to live with that there is no one within their circles any longer willing to offer help—and find themselves at the mercy of insensitive and coercive government and organizational palliatives.

Boilerplate

The administrator's delivery has a manufactured,  
fits-the-hole-without-a-crack-of-light-  
passing-through, swiveling-metallic  
with a final-thunk! sound,  
rather like a manhole cover finding its seat.

Full of positivity and irreproachable statements,  
affirmations and sympathies,  
you may as well be reading a condolence,  
as you are good as dead to him.  
But it's not personal, it's just that  
you don't matter.

"You are a mass of meat," my Democrat friend likes to say, in response to some tangential reference to faith I might have made. Progressives worship the rational and material like proud bugs whirling about a cosmic Big Bang—as if there weren't anything more mystical than that. But, if somewhere late in the night, someone turns the light off, what are the bugs to do then? What if the electric power in California fails? (Perhaps they'll buy some from their more conservative friends in other states ...?)

This reminds me of the joke about the kindergarten teacher who asked her students how they could tell a boy hamster from a girl one. No one had an idea until one student raised his hand. "Let's vote on it," he said.

Cults collapse, like many things, from making reality subject to their opinion.

I recall cursing myself, while in the midst of a months-long panic attack while self-producing my own play. "I must never do what I am thinking about," I recall reiterating to myself as I lay awake deep into the night. Nowadays, I try to remember that what I propose is just a twinkling notion. Nothing is real until something has been done, work has



happened.

I wish Progressives would come to this same realization—either deep into their nights or after I've tried to explain this.

But each time their brand new, world changing idea places Progressives at peak confidence on the Dunning-Kruger learning curve, they run full tilt with it. And since learning more outside of this ignorance bubble will necessarily imperil their confidence, they are prime candidates for enablers and warm, fuzzy, fellow believers. And there are a lot of charlatans out there helping these tadpole Progressives (most notably college students) to maintain their virgin positions with a propaganda brief of bogus studies and journalism. Puffed with virtue and confidence, the next Progressive urge always likes where it is rather than further down the curve where doubt is taking a sleigh ride. But I think we all would benefit if they should allow doubt, push the shovel in, and start to dig. And they would also discover quickly who their friends were.

If you've ever been an adolescent, you know there isn't much a youth won't propose to avoid work. Which is why adults threaten, cajole, reason, tempt ... do everything within their power to make adolescents perform some work—because nothing produces humility like work. And humble people listen. And people who will listen are eminently reasonable. You can dialogue with them. So that work is the quickest way to make a teenager reasonable—in fact, to make anybody reasonable. Work builds humility.

If you wonder why things get or have gotten so upside down, it is because the Good is wedded to humility, while might always pursues a power which is limitless and unbound. The clearest statement of humility is reality, where Murphy's Law ("If anything can possibly go wrong, it will.") dominates. ("Humility is the only antidote to despair," is I how I remember Thomas Merton's saying.)

Limitlessness—with its inbuilt perfection—is the clearest statement of Evil, as it is in constant expansion (somewhat like the onrushing Orcs) towards despair. Evil is constantly hungry like those gluttons in one of Hell's circles, whose eating cannot resolve their hunger. This is the foundational reason why the Left will never leave anyone alone. They seek limitless perfection. The (sub textual) corollary being that—if the future you promise is pure and virtuous, you may live as sordid, and amoral life as wished. Very tempting, but ...

A purified Progressive philosophy is a delirium. It cannot enjoy the day to day hauling of water and cutting of wood, which a true sage endures no matter. Progressivism, like a cult, does not know who its friends are, as it lives in some far-off future time. How would it ever meet them? My sister, whose politics embrace some better future, enjoys the proceeds of my politics—potholes filled, budgets balanced, a burgeoning economy with limited governmental intrusions and abundant personal freedoms. Seattle used to be a great place. Politically, I am her friend, just as I've always been to her personally, but she doesn't correlate these.

And by now, I would suppose she has imperiled her children's (and perhaps grandchildren's) health through imprudent Covid vaccinations, and her city's well-being (Seattle) and her retirement through her politics.

Currently, of a group of 600 plus financial professionals whom Dr. Robert Malone (creator of the mRNA technology) had spoken to, only six (including himself and his wife) had heard of the Great Barrington Declaration[\[1\]](#). Progressives are very much like the alarmed people to whom I try spreading the good news, that that the world is not ending! Global warming due to CO2 is a hoax! Life for all will continue. They can relax!

But they don't relax. They get very angry! At me!

But perhaps, if they realized who their friends were, they wouldn't.

Fnegadigm

*(A False Negative Paradigm or Worldview)*

You were struggling with a problem  
you didn't have.

So, of course, it was actually a worry,  
as the actual work could not begin,  
held up as it were by events  
—or lack thereof.

A quite common occurrence actually,  
especially for something which doesn't exist.  
It's rather like missing a sunny day at the beach,  
because you'd been searching for your rain gear.

Or missing the wedding,  
because you figured she'd turn you down.  
It's the good news which drove right by,  
not waving,  
because you'd never met.

[\[i\]](#) *The Great Barrington Declaration* was an open letter (of many distinguished medical professionals) published in October 2020 in (a critical) response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns. —Wikipedia (Parenthesis enclosed statements are mine.)

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Carl Nelson has just finished a book of memoirs and poetry celebrating his current area of Appalachia titled Become Remarkable. To see this and more of his work, please visit [Magic Bean Books](#).

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