

Idle Capacity: A Form of Insanity

Have you ever noticed that people often buy exercise equipment, use it for a few days or weeks, then stop using it altogether and eventually throw it away? Does that seem silly to you? Well how about a company with lots of expensive machines for manufacturing something which has its workers stop coming to work and allows those machines to just sit there and rust? Sounds expensive and wasteful, doesn't it. Think next of homeless families living in their cars or in shacks they built of trash while down the street there are houses sitting empty and deteriorating because no one is maintaining them. Another of life's ironic tragedies.

Why do these things happen? Why do people live in poverty while the goods and services they so desperately need are wasted or not produced at all? Why is it that when millions of people who have no work, who *want and need* to work, who will take almost any honest job that they can do well, why are they not allowed to work, to produce, to make all of us more wealthy?

Surely you can answer those questions. We all know the answers. It's because *no one is willing to pay those people to work, to produce*. It's because those poor people *cannot pay* for the things they need. We don't work and we live in poverty because of *money and the way money is distributed*.

But doing that is insane. We might as well stop working because of the pattern of tea leaves in the bottom of the Queen of England's cup. We might as well stop working because of the shapes a diviner sees in the entrails of a freshly slaughtered sheep. We might as well stop working because of the planet Jupiter being somewhat in line with Mars.

We have the *raw materials*. We have the *tools* to process those materials. We have the *skilled laborers* to use those tools. We have the *transport* to bring those goods swiftly to market. We have *eager customers* wanting to consume what we could manufacture. We have everything we need except... well, except that *people do not think they will be paid for doing those things*. People do not think they have money to buy those things they would like to have. It's all in our minds. *It's a form of social insanity and it's all in our minds*.

What distinguishes a piece of paper which is worthless from a piece of paper which is worth lots of money? The distinguishing features are *in our minds*. It is what we *know* about those pieces of paper that allows one to be actual money and the other, which may look strikingly similar, to be just a piece of paper. What is it about certain electronic patterns in the memory of

a computer which makes the one pattern money and the other pattern just random bits? The distinguishing features are all in our minds. It's a mental thing.

Why do we think about things this way? Why do we let this figment of our imagination, this dream, this concept, this set of beliefs, so dominate our lives and give us so much misery? Mostly we do so because *we don't know any better*. Mostly we do so because *that's what everybody else is doing*. That's just the way we think about things. That is *how we were trained*.

But do we have to *continue* to act this way? Does the insanity have to continue? Are we doomed to proceed down this path of suffering and want just because we don't know any better, just because our parents and grandparents and so forth back through history for thousands of years trod that same path *to their eternal regret*?

Well, no. We *don't* have to. We could choose to do otherwise. We could learn and invent new ways and change our bleak future into a brilliant tomorrow. Because, after all, it *is* all in our minds. It isn't as if there were some physical barrier that walled us off from prosperity. It isn't as if there were some physical constant like the speed of light or the force of gravity that was preventing us from producing. *It's what we know, or what we think we know*. We can change what we think. We can increase what we know. *We can overcome ignorance*. We really can. Because there really *is* a better way. There actually *is* a way to change our money so that "money is no object," so that money doesn't make us stop working or stop using perfectly good shelter or not take care of the sick. There actually *is* a way which *doesn't cost anybody anything*.

Yes, I know, you're thinking that *somebody* has to pay, that everyone else can benefit at your expense, that the only way to win is to defeat someone else, that goods are scarce and there aren't enough to go around. But remember, *goods are only scarce because we stop producing them*, not because there is an upper limit to goods. Remember that *just because you win doesn't mean that anyone else has to lose*. Remember that the best things in life are free, or could be.

Are you ready to live a better life? Are you still capable of learning? Are you able to change your mind about things that seemed certainties in the past? If you are ready, if you are capable, if you are able, but most of all if you are willing to do something about it all, then start now. Read Invisible Hand. Learn *why* we are suffering this social insanity. Learn exactly how it comes about. Learn that it *is not necessary that we live this way*. Learn the single change we can make that will solve all these problems and more. Read Invisible Hand and learn.