SELF-POSSESSION

PROMPT 2

Identifying Basic Moods of Self-Presence: Four Degrees of Risk

Your assignment is to carry out a delicate experiment. We have identified *four degrees of personal risk* we experience in our dealings with others [Ch. 5, Section 2.1]. This provided us with a clue to the Basic Moods of conscious performance. We have discussed in class our own experience of these four degrees of risk, and we have noticed that the feeling of risk seems to increase as the operations we perform move us closer to the goals or ideals expressed by the basic notions. I can be found by others to be *attentive or* *inattentive* in relation to what is given in my experience, to be *intelligent or* *unintelligent* in my pursuit of***meaning***, to be *reasonable or* *unreasonable* in my pursuit of ***objectivity, knowledge, truth, reality***, or to be *responsible or* *irresponsible* in my pursuit of ***value*.** We seem to progress in a spontaneous order from (1) merely experiencing *the given,* to (2) asking about the *meaning* of the given and coming up with ideas, to (3) asking about the *truth* of the ideas we get about the given and making judgments, to (3) asking what we *ought to do* in light of what we judge to be the true meaning of our experience. As the later operations build upon the earlier ones – as our attentiveness becomes an intelligent concern to find meaning, as our intelligent concern for meaning becomes a reasonable and critical concern to find the truth, and as our concern for truth becomes a responsible concern to discern value – *our involvement* *and investment* as subjects increases. We *heighten* our consciousness. When we express and reveal ourselves to others by (1) describing what we merely experience or remember, or by (2) expressing our ideas about the *meaning* of our experience, or by (3) expressing our judgments that the ideas we have gotten are *true,* or by (4) expressing our conclusions about what would be *most worthwhile to do*, we become *more and more invested* in our performance, we are *more intensely present to ourselves*, and *our experience of personal risk increase*s. **Our hypothesis is that others have the same experience of increasing degrees of risk.**

Your assignment is to *test for a similar experience of increasing degrees of risk in others.* and to *report accurately the results*.

The experiment has four parts: (1) When someone you’re with describes his or her mere experience of something, point out politely what he or she has missed, overlooked, or misperceived, forgotten, or inaccurately remembered, i.e., suggest *politely* that she is being ***inattentive***; (2) When someone you’re with expresses an idea about the *possible* *meaning* of his or her experience, point out the ways in which his or her idea doesn’t seem to make sense, i.e., suggest, *even more politely*, that he or she is being ***unintelligent***; (3) When someone you’re with expresses his or her conclusion that some idea he or she has is *true*, express your doubts and ask her for the reasons why he or she thinks it’s true, i.e., suggest, *still more politely*, that she is being ***unreasonable*** ***or uncritical***; (4) When someone you’re with expresses his or her view of what would be worthwhile to do (either in the present moment or sometime in the future), suggest to him or her that that may not be the best thing to do, i.e., suggest, *most politely*, that she is being ***irresponsible*.**

**Conduct this four-part experiment twice, once with one person or group and a second time with another person or group.**

In order to conduct these experiments correctly, **you cannot say you’re doing an assignment for your philosophy class**. **You have to actually perform attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly yourself in order to carry out this experiment correctly. You concern about their attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility has to be REAL.** The different parts of the experiment will unfold naturally in conversation. Don’t conclude your experiments too quickly. Let them unfold a bit and see what happens.

**Reflect on your experiments. Describe clearly the two four-part experiments you carried out with others and note and describe their reactions when you suggested that they were being (1) inattentive, (2) unintelligent, (3) unreasonable or uncritical, or (4) irresponsible. Compare and contrast the two sets of results.**

Length: 4 – 6 pp., typed, double-spaced.

1. FORMAT. Your reflection must be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt font, stapled.

2. Spelling, grammar, syntax, paragraphing are important!