Twitter Thread by David Rothkopf



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If there is one thing I have learned it is that people love bullshit. They buy bullshit stories from professional bullshit artists, accept bullshit philosophies, purchase bullshit how-to-books, vote for bullshitting politicians.

At first, I resisted believing this because it is illogical and dumb and frankly, doesn't reflect well on the human race of which I am a member (and thus have long been hopeful that it is more of a distinction than it actually turns out to be.)

But if you actually are interested in facts you begin to notice how little most people care for them. Sometimes it is because they are heard to learn and bullshit is so much more widely and easily available. Sometimes it is because facts make them uncomfortable about themselves.

Sometimes it is because just one tiny fact will upset a whole worldview that has grown as comfortable as an overstuffed chair. (Settling into such worldviews is a lot like settling into chairs like that because the longer you're there and the deeper you sink...

...the harder it is to hoist yourself up and out of your fat-assed intellectual laziness.) But I actually think the reason people have such an appetite for bullshit goes deeper, goes to an aspect of ourselves we just can't accept.

It's this: Most of what we know, most of what we believe to be true, really isn't. Seriously, I don't know you and I am sure you are very smart and well-educated and read books and even went to school for a while. But the majority of things you think are true actually are not.

Think about it. Break it down. Most of your memories, memories you would testify to in court, are fuzzy. Many have been infiltrated by family stories and blurred by beery nights or distorted by misperceptions.

So you, like most witnesses to crimes, have the past wrong. Much of what you remember did not really happen. Further, think about history. Much of what we think is history was, as they say, "written by the victors." Or it was forgotten and replaced by legends.

Most of it is untrue. Science? Well, is pluto a planet or not? Is salt good for you or bad for you? Should you eat egg whites or egg yolks? Theories change all the time. That doesn't mean there isn't objective truth. It just means you are painfully

unfamiliar with it.

How about your most deeply held beliefs? Eight out of ten Americans believe in the existence of angels. More than half believe in the literal existence of Hell. In Iceland lots of people believe in elves. All this stuff is ridiculous nonsense.

But that doesn't stop us from believing it. Because it is more comfortable to believe in some fictional universe than the real, harsh, perverse, unsentimental one in which we actually live.

Then add to all this all the areas of knowledge where what you know has been compromised by your failure to study hard in school or learn all the facts. (Facts, as I said, is hard. Many consider them an elitest plot to make average folks feel stupid.)

You have twisted some to suit your worldview. You have forgotten a lot of what you once knew. You piece things together but they reflect only a partial view of reality which, of course, is not reality at all.

So, the reality is the majority of what we think we know is not true. Which makes it really hard for many people to distinguish between what is real and what is not, what should make sense and what should not.

The more bullshit we believe, the more likely we are to believe more bullshit. It's a vicious circle. Civilization gets smarter as facts are accumulated and the truth is more available to us all. But because we are lazy, defective, or otherwise flawed...

..most of us don't benefit from that progress. And so the charlatans and the bullshit artists and the television pastors and to the how-to-make-a-million book authors and the crap artists like the current president of the United States thrive.

And that, as they say, is a fact.