

## GLIMPSE

### The Good and the Perfect

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In his book, "What's Wrong with the World", G. K. Chesterton wrote an easily misunderstood, yet oft quoted puzzler. "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." That reminds me of a similar statement, "Only the mediocre are always at their best." Chesterton elucidates his thought quite at length by several examples. If one needs to blow ones nose, it is worth doing even if badly. If one is off discovering the North Pole, it should be done very well, even though it is very worth doing. His main point was about mothers educating their children; it is quite worth doing, even if she is not worthy of the worth or perfect of the work.

When what we do is central to our identities, very close to our hearts, we will want to do them with excellence and beyond judgment. The further some kind of doing is from our core, the less it means to us. We rarely judge how well we sharpen pencils, if we use pencils anymore. So it boils down to this; we will generally know what is so central to us by where and how we most severely judge ourselves.

The "gooder" a thing, a person, an experience is, the more of it will we wish, demand. While in the experience of consuming a conversation, a piece of pie, a good book, we hope there will be more available, soon if not sooner. We long for the good in hopes of the "gooder". This is also true about the good we are doing. Any good we are doing, the gooder it is the more we are likely to criticize how and even why we are doing the good.

I write this little column and while doing so and when finishing, I begin wishing I had written this one sentence or paragraph differently, betterly and if I let it run away with me, I could scrap it and start over. In the extreme I could decide never to try writing again, because I am just not good enough. See, it begins with a whisper and ends with interior shouting. It really results from a variety of pride. Whatever I do should be better than ever I could possibly do. I want to be better than I am. What's worse is that I can judge you as an equally harsh critic as myself and so not even give you a chance.

It does come down to the acceptance that the good is not the natural enemy of the perfect. The perfect is the invitation to try. Our attempts are the responses to that invitation. The evaluation by ourselves is centered upon how, what we do is creative of life for others. We are responsible for the acceptance of the gifts we have been given, imperfect as they may be, and the sharing of those same gifts no matter what the reception may be. We then are not ultimate completers, but creational contributors. My egotistical self would want this to answer all your questions and solve all your problems. I have to admit and accept that I have something to offer, good enough to offer, but it is never and cannot be the final word. That's my final and incompleting word. It is only a glimpse, worth doing badly.