

# Driven to distraction



**EVE FISHER**

AS one of the world's most easily distracted people I was recently heartened to discover that my desperate need to busy myself to distraction is perfectly normal.

I guess the harsh dose came when I realised we all launch into passions and projects to routinely distract from the most single most important thing in life – ourselves.

Even the so-called spiritual pursuit of “finding ourselves” proves the ultimate distraction because it affords a sense of forward movement without actually taking us anywhere.

In the new-age movement it's called spiritual bypassing, coined in 1984 by psychologist John Welwood who noticed “a widespread tendency to use spiritual ideas and practices to sidestep or avoid facing unresolved emotional issues, psychological wounds, and unfinished developmental tasks”.

Well knock me over with a Tibetan prayer flag, even the new-agers seem to have trapped themselves in a pit of distraction as they om and ah about how good they feel because they have the answers and Do Good Work, project a sense of harmony and well-being.

Bypassing is not just limited to the new age crowd. Rather it happens when an individual uses

any group, concept or value system to escape or ignore the tougher parts of life. They slide into a group-think mentality that on the surface appears to be a legitimate work on self-awareness but in actuality is simply collectivist distraction and completely devoid of legitimate self-inquiry.

It is a true crisis of consciousness as people grapple to find meaning in their lives without actually taking the time to look at themselves. Instead we jump on some sort of soap box and cling to the ideas generated within a tiny vacuum and determine that to be us making our own personal meaning. We believe thoughts are our own and that the Facebook photo filter telling the world we stand with the current thing is akin to true affiliation and acceptance.

I've done it with environmental activism and political participation, taking my smug and condescending notion of expertise regularly to the socials or media to make sure anyone not caring about My Thing was ridiculed and ostracised.

It's a classic trap in the

conspiracy movement too where obsessive dot connecting forces an individual to put their own needs and specific personal problems on the backburner as they dive and forage in an endless murky world that is both depressing and anxiety inducing. And ultimately results in lazy thinking much of the time.

Obsession with gender and sexuality is of course a contemporary form of this kind of avoidance. It's an infantile genitalia-fixation that the person really ought to have outgrown by the age of four.

It's an unhealthy preoccupation with the use of one's privates, hardly guaranteeing that self-love and acceptance follows. It's not the reason the person is chock-full of self-loathing, and physical alteration is no remedy for what is fundamentally a psychological malaise. Do what you want to your body, and have sex with whomever you like, but wear the label like armour and you're smack bang in the middle of avoidance.

There are so many forms of bypassing; take your pick. Try for size the obsession over media and its various and vacuous darlings. Must we pedestal these people and their ideas and ways of life? Every day it's another story of depravity. Hollywood Babylon.

The environmental obsession is

of course a classic one. In a massively overpopulated world of depleted resources a focus on a singular aspect of this catastrophe, such as plastic bags and electric cars, would take out the award for most lazy thinking of the year. How about we start by reducing the volume of people we produce as a society, not the Woolies bags.

The religious affiliated and the atheist are both worthy of a quick mention. Almost as though they are two sides of the same inverted coin. A desperately reaching hand. Frantically grasping at illogical notions that edit out far more of experiential reality than it allows in. Both openly display their inner weakness and insecurity. I am to be saved, because I bought the T-shirt. Or the world is utterly meaningless and empty and our lives utterly without purpose. Cheery stuff. Where do I sign on?

There is no easy way out. And no easy and convenient answers. We are all ultimately responsible for ourselves, in both word and deed. Historically humanity has been consistent in at least one thing: it's “somebody else's fault”.

Surely it's time to value ourselves enough to look inward and stop projecting. Otherwise we are left to simply don our labels and blame those over yonder for our woe-begotten lives.

## LETTERS & TEXTS

### FOOTY CHANGE LEAVES MEMBERS DISTRESSED

AFL and all clubs, please give us our lanyard membership and all it entails back.

For over two years, we gave all our membership money, so the clubs would not suffer and in return we have been slighted.

We need to be able to go to the ground and walk in as before and not feel stressed and inadequate and that our freedom has been taken away.

I have heard from hundreds of people who said they won't sign up next year and this is evident in the number of people who are already no longer at the football.

We are loyal supporters who deserve better.

Please bring back our lanyard membership as before.

We deserve it.

**M Scott, Belmont**

### PANDEMIC END MEANS PAYBACK TIME

ONE of the first acts of the new government should be to arrange payback of scarce funds allocated to major firms and private schools which took advantage of the pandemic to improve their

financial status. The private schools accepted huge amounts of money, in most cases more than was needed, and should be requested to refund to the government these excess funds.

Excess funds can then be used to provide better facilities for those struggling state schools which are the responsibility of the government in the first case.

Surely those organisations have a conscience and can see just how such exploitation occurred.

**G.R. Lovel, Highton**

### OPINION QUOTES NO FACTS NOR PROOFS

I AM compelled to write this letter to repulse the ignorant and dangerous “opinion” expressed by Karen Matthews (GA, 18/6).

An opinion is based on grounds short of proof.

A fact can only be dismissed after convincing evidence of error.

Karen quotes no facts nor proofs of facts of science and policy.

The issue of rapidly increasing average atmospheric temperature concerns the increasingly probable destruction of much current geographical areas of distinct life

forms and of human population. The cause is exacerbated by human activities and increased population. Karen writes from an easily reached platform for “opinions” of her own.

There, if considered by the impressionable, can only assist those whom she would criticise as politically motivated.

My own small qualifications to correct Karen are:

1. In 1959, I achieved the highest position in the geology class list at Melbourne University.

2. I have taught earth science and geology to Year 12 high school students for years.

3. I was a member of the Victorian Year 12 Earth Science Standing Committee, led by Professor White of Latrobe University (global warming was a topic).

Karen, the atmosphere temperature average is rising rapidly more each year, mainly due to the oxidation of coal to form carbon dioxide gas.

This gas can be released because the trees of the carboniferous age (about 300 million years ago) grew in large swamps, which, later buried,

preserved them as coal until recently (the industrial age). Heat from sunshine comes as short wave radiation through the atmosphere to warm the earth.

In winter and at night this heat re-radiates into space.

But this now long wave radiation is trapped by carbon dioxide and water vapour etc.

The balance of 300 million years is now very disturbed.

Sorry for the lecture, Karen.

There is more but that's enough.

**Julian Poulton, Newtown**

### VENGEANCE SO HOT IT BURNS CELEB PRIESTESS

“HIGH priestess” of “the Church of Celeb Worship” Lisa Wilkinson's contemptuous commenting on a high profile alleged rape case, which virtually torpedoed the case, rather

indicates Wilkinson's poor intellectual comprehension of the truly great wisdom of 17th century-born William Shakespeare who said:

“Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot that it do singe yourself.”

**Howard Hutchins, Chirnside Park**

## Geelong Advertiser

### AVALON'S TIME TO FLY

**A**VALON Airport is one of the region's biggest assets and appears to be being vastly underused.

Reports that the airport is still not at its pre-Covid domestic capacity, while its international terminal remains shuttered, are disheartening.

Local leaders have campaigned for years to help the airport reach its potential as the gateway to the region.

In 2018, history was made when the first international flight – carrying 300 passengers from Kuala Lumpur – touched down in Geelong.

The flight – the start of a 10-year deal between the airport and AirAsia – was seen as a “launching pad for more flights to other destinations around the world”. The airport quickly secured deals for flights to Bali and Vietnam. The future was bright.

Then the Covid-19 pandemic struck and flights were grounded for months. Behind the scenes, leaders are trying to secure more routes but that seem to be reliant on airlines taking chances they perhaps won't in a post-pandemic economy.

The potential of Avalon Airport is enormous. Last year the Geelong Advertiser revealed there were bold plans to move Avalon airport across the freeway to the Geelong railway line. The plan, if carried out, could make it the first airport in the state to have direct rail access.

As a community we must get behind Avalon and ensure that this asset becomes our gateway and does not go to waste.

## ON THIS DAY

**1613** London's Globe Theatre is destroyed during a production of Shakespeare's Henry VIII after a cannon accidentally sets fire to the thatched gallery roof. The theatre rises again in June 1614, with a tiled roof.

**1767** The Townshend Revenue Act, an import tax on tea and other goods, is imposed on the American colonists by British Chancellor Charles Townshend, bringing the Americans closer to revolution.

**1880** King Pomare V of Tahiti, a French protectorate since 1842, gives his island to France.

**1919** Townsville police fire on striking meatworkers as officers are attacked: nine are wounded.

**1981** Artist Russell Drysdale (pictured), 69, dies in Sydney. The Australian master's works include *The Drover's Wife* and *Sofala*.

**2003** Katharine Hepburn, the US actress who defied Hollywood by keeping her quirky ways, dies in Connecticut at 96.

**2007** Apple Inc.'s first mobile “smartphone,” the iPhone, went on sale. It revolutionises the industry.

**2012** Actress Katie Holmes, 33, files for divorce from US film actor and producer Tom Cruise, 50, allegedly due to disagreement about religious beliefs and the raising of their daughter, Suri.



## WRITE TO US

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