

How Physics Made Me Virtuous . . .

"I'm helping to solve the population problem . . ."

Before I studied physics, I led a dog's life. I existed in a sublime state of supreme ignorance. I was virtually non-moral. My mother told me I should not pick up comic books from Safeway and my father warned me of the evils of drinking too much orange pop. I knew I should never tell lies, lose my temper, or exceed the speed limit, but I restrained from violating these "laws" only because I feared the consequences — punishment from my parents or the police.

Then I took physics. My whole life underwent a complete metamorphosis. No longer do I merely fear the consequences; I want to be virtuous to appease my own conscience. I developed a moral code which gives direction to my life. Before I make a decision, I consider the results. I am careful not to do anything that will cause another person to violate the code of society.

For example, I never push anyone off a building from a height of more than sixty-four feet. I computed that a body falling from that height reaches a velocity of approximately 21.94 miles per hour. Since the speed limits on downtown streets are about 25 miles an hour, my victims do not exceed the speed limit. In addition I am helping to solve the population problem.

As for telling lies, I need not worry. The study of relativity made me realize that I really do not tell lies. When a small untruth would help a situation, I think of it relative to a bigger untruth and come to the conclusion that it is not a lie after all. I find that a small untruth often prevents unnecessary arguments. My father does not have as much trouble with his ulcers, either.

However, I obey my father implicitly concerning the orange pop. I drink grape instead. Even so, I do not overdo. Pascal's Principle states that pressure applied externally to a liquid is transmitted equally at right angles

to the container and is equal on equal areas. My physics teacher explained that if ten pounds pressure were applied on a one-inch diameter cork in a jug with a ten-inch diameter bottom, the total pressure of one hundred pounds would push the bottom out. Occasionally I find myself in a situation such that pressure is applied externally to the pit of my stomach. Since stomachs are hard to replace, I keep the liquid level inside

low, thus saving my parents a superfluous expense.

My mother still has difficulty understanding where I got all my comic books, though. I tried to explain that there is a natural attraction between objects which is equal to the product of their masses divided by the square of the distances between them. I am also inclined to believe that there must be a difference in electrical charge between me and a comic

book, since opposite charges attract. I guess I am expecting too much of my mother. She never had physics.

Finally, I learned to control my temper in the interest of the welfare of mankind. In studying the gas laws, I learned that an increase in temperature increases the volume of a gas or, if in a closed container, the pressure upon the container walls.

Everyone knows the head

is full of hot air. If I became angry, the raised temperature would increase the pressure in my cranium, damaging many cells. Thus I have made a sacrifice to avoid losing my temper so that my grey matter may continue to function in the best interests of mankind.

Can anyone now dispute that physics has made me virtuous?

By Shari Cotton



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