

As Shakespeare once said, "To be or not to be, that is the question". Maybe another way to say this is, "What is my purpose"? This presentation is a glance at a potentially destructive public policy that inhibits non-verbal emotional expression.

New policies within the Education communities discourage young elementary students from learning cursive writing, and only teach printing. One reason given for such a policy is to make more time available for other subjects and for testing to help the Education Department to compare and evaluate schools. I suggest that this may be taking away a certain freedom to be expressive along with handicapping a student to communicate faster.

The concept of eliminating cursive almost parallels the Church's conflict with the Iconoclasts in the 8th century when the Western Church wanted all reference to pictures, statues and icons to be eliminated from society. This schism divided the Roman leadership from the Eastern Orthodoxy. The Iconoclasts lost the argument and pictures and icons of the Holy mother and Saints were retained. These symbols can be viewed as art and therefore extensions of the artists' emotions and creativity and possibly an extension of the Holy Spirit.

When a person uses cursive, he is portraying on paper evidence of his thoughts and emotions; not so with printing. A psychologist is likely to inform people that holding thoughts and emotions inside is similar TO STANDING ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN AND LOOKING DOWN UPON the silver thread of a stream. But when walking down and getting close, he sees that thread turn into a turbulent stream, with depth and force. There are men and women who have great emotional force that do not show their feelings on the surface. The ability to express emotion can be a great creative force, especially if it is accompanied with wisdom.

I became a certified Graphoanalyst around 1984. I used this art to casually evaluate clients placed on probation to assist me in changing bad habits and to help develop better character. My small Encyclopedia Dictionary for the defining various handwriting strokes contains over 600 descriptions.

The first thing in a sample of cursive to be evaluated is emotional responsiveness. This is measured by the slant of each and every stroke. Nearly all other individual traits are related to this initial evaluation.

Although strokes denote many characteristics, just the letter "T" can reveal over 8 different traits such as enthusiasm, goal setting, domineering, and sarcasm. Most assessments are neither "good" nor "bad" traits. For instance the trait of secretiveness may be a hindrance to a marriage relationship, but a necessity to a CIA agent. I noticed that probationers who had an "I" in their name always displayed irritation in their signature to the "Conditions of Probation Contract" when the dot resembled a backward asterisk.

If you examine the use of cursive writing, you realize this is a form of non-verbal communication, both intentional and unintentional. Handwriting strokes are the same in all languages that use cursive. There are some traits that cannot be determined by handwriting, such as age, gender, and right or left handedness. In fact the use of a hand to write with is not always discernable.

If certain strokes of cursive writing identify individual personality traits, then a question comes to mind, "If a stroke identifies a trait, would changing the stroke change the personality of the individual"? The answer is "probably", but changing the stroke is very difficult, and if one is determined to change his writing, then he likely will change that attribute associates with the stroke.

The Romans developed handwriting analysis in the early centuries in order to detect forged documents, but to do a full personality assessment, several pages over time need to be examined.

I would like to conduct a short experiment in order for you to assess how your emotions and personality can be expressed and revealed. I would like each person here to point to an imaginary figure in the doorway. Pretend that it is Jesus or maybe your wife. Extend your arm and point to that person using a strait index finger. Repeat out loud or imagine this statement. "I truly love you with all my heart!"

Now, repeat the same exercise, but bend your index finger slightly such as a backward "C". Did you experience a slight deception on the second time? Try the experience once more and touch your index finger to your thumb to form an "O". This gesture sometimes creates the feeling of withholding information or strong deception. A closed "o" or "a" in cursive writing also indicate secretiveness.

These are types of emotions that are often revealed in handwriting if they are a dominate part of your emotional makeup. By just experiencing this emotion on this simple exercise, you may begin to understand how simple printed words can conceal and delay emotions and thought. The ability to both verbally and non-verbally communicate and express oneself is a very important part of our culture and promotes freedom of expression.

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