

SELF-DECEPTION IS INSINCERITY - YOU CAN DENY YOUR GUT INSTINCT BUT IT NEVER STOPS TALKING

Self-deception is when you convince yourself that you are sincere when you know deep down that you are not. The definition of self-deception that it is telling yourself that something you know is untrue or something you don't really believe is true.

Self-deception can lead to anything. If you can deceive yourself that God loves you, you can deceive yourself that you should be a suicide bomber for your reward will be in Heaven. Its only chance that determines when self-deception will do little harm.

Jesus spoke of a self-deceiving Pharisee in Luke 18. The Pharisee was not accepted by God even though he did loads of good works. The man's problem was that he believed he was superior in holiness to other people. He thanked God that he was holy. This shows that thinking God has helped you become holy does not mean you will avoid pride. If the man was really sincere in his belief, there would have been nothing to condemn in relation to his intentions. He would have meant well. He used self-deception and blinded himself. His being rejected by God indicates that God regards a person blinded by self-deception as bad as one that is just acting.

The Society of St Pius X administers absolutions from sin and annuls marriages and ordains priests though it is in a state of separation from Rome and without Rome's authorisation. In doing this, it effectively proves that it does not regard Rome and the pope as the head of the Church though it says it does.

The priests of this society act saintly but we know they cannot be sincere. They are deceiving themselves. They prove that no matter how sincere a religious person seems to be, they could still be deceiving themselves. Self-deception leads to intolerance for at some level you know what you say you believe is wrong and you won't want your self-deception to be exposed.

If somebody believes something that could lead people astray and cause trouble or believes in something outrageous, that person must not ask us to just take his word for it that he is sincere. He must prove it by proving himself to be sensible in relation to his belief. Good deeds would prove nothing. Just because you do good things, that does not prove your belief true and it does not prove your belief sincere.

When somebody says they believe in something and that belief is totally outrageous and even dangerous, assume they are insincere until they are proven sincere. You might think that is not very fair. But if we don't do that as a general rule we will never be able to tell insincerity from sincerity. And if we can't spot it in others, we won't spot it in ourselves either.

1 The absurdity of the doctrine is evidence that it is not genuinely believed.

2 The evil of the doctrine is evidence that it is not genuinely believed.

3 The inability of the person to prove or give strong evidence for the doctrine will be evidence that it is not genuinely believed. Why? Because you need very strong proof to be able to believe in a doctrine that is stupid or evil or both.

4 These problems tell us something about the kind of untrustworthy person we are dealing with.

Innocent until proven guilty has its exceptions. So does assume sincere unless proven insincere. Those four points tell us when to assume insincere unless proven sincere.

If you deceive yourself that God exists and that Hell exists, it follows that you are condoning the suffering you say God permits to happen and part of you believes this is wrong. Your faith would be vile filth. Even God wouldn't praise it.

The more a person fails to live or study the religion or hear the other sides to the story the more you can suspect self-deceit.

Most religious faith has to be self-deceit if not all. Thus we should assume self-deceit until it is proven different. If a believer wants us to think he or she is not deceiving themselves, then let them strive to be as consistent as possible in their religious thinking and have what they do match what they say they believe.

Even if a religion or philosophy is true, you could still be using self-deception to "believe" in it.

The opinion of most people is that religion is dangerous and causes wars. Those who dispute this, have no problem saying that what is dangerous is religious self-deception not necessarily religion. Religion is self-deception so that's the end of that!

Many of us believe strange and outrageous things. Not all. Many naturalists and atheists make assumptions and have beliefs that are just as ludicrous as the silliest of Catholic doctrines. Perhaps this tells us that we should not try to refute religion but just let it be. But if we keep silent about the weirdness of other people's beliefs just because we may have bizarre ideas ourselves then the world will never progress. If I want to challenge the beliefs of others I need to be open to letting them challenge me as well.

Why is it that you can disprove a religious doctrine to a priest or theologian and they can ascend the pulpit the next day to say the doctrine is true? Why do they persist in saying what their minds must tell them is nonsense is true? Because they are experts at self-deceit or never have been true believers anyway. They might be pretending to believe.

It is said that it is a mistake for critics of religion to focus a lot on disproving a religion rationally and expecting its hearers to depart from the religion or at least say they don't believe in it any more. It could be a mistake indeed when we are dealing with ordinary believers but its still worth a try. The believers may be only professed believers in the refuted religion not real ones. But it is certainly not a mistake when the priests and theologians and the apologists for the faith are the hearers.

If God comes first, it follows that we must believe in him. Perhaps sincerity is all we need? But if God comes first then we cannot put him first unless we believe. In so far as we disbelieve we do not put him first. Can a woman give her heart fully to a man when part of her does not believe that he is lovable? The supporters of the God concept bully people to believe.

God by definition is the only that that truly and ultimately matters. Belief in him then has to be treated not as a belief but as a fact. Treating it as a belief would indicate that you have an attitude of, "There is probably a God and in so far as he is probable I will put him first. I am willing to abandon him should the evidence cast doubt on his existence." That would not be approaching God 100% or even trying to. The God tenet is intrinsically fundamentalist.

What about the view, "God may be the only thing that matters. If the best we can do is believe in him then he cannot expect to be treated as a proven fact though he is not"? If you believe in God 55% you only love him 55%. Would you not think a person is being hypocritical if he said he loved his wife absolutely and then admitted that he only believes he does it? Belief makes absolute love impossible. God cannot be your God if you only believe in him. Christians seem to hold that belief in God by some miracle is the same thing as a fact. For them belief is full certainty.

Schizophrenia is characterised by the following symptoms: You think your inner chatter is something outside of you chatting to you. It is a break in brain functions. Your emotions become separated from reality meaning you could laugh at the death of somebody dear to you. Believers feel that God is inside their minds talking to them. This is definitely schizophrenia of a type that does not always need medication.

CONCLUSION: True respect for belief means challenging belief. That alone is respecting the belief and the person. Silence respects the belief not the person.