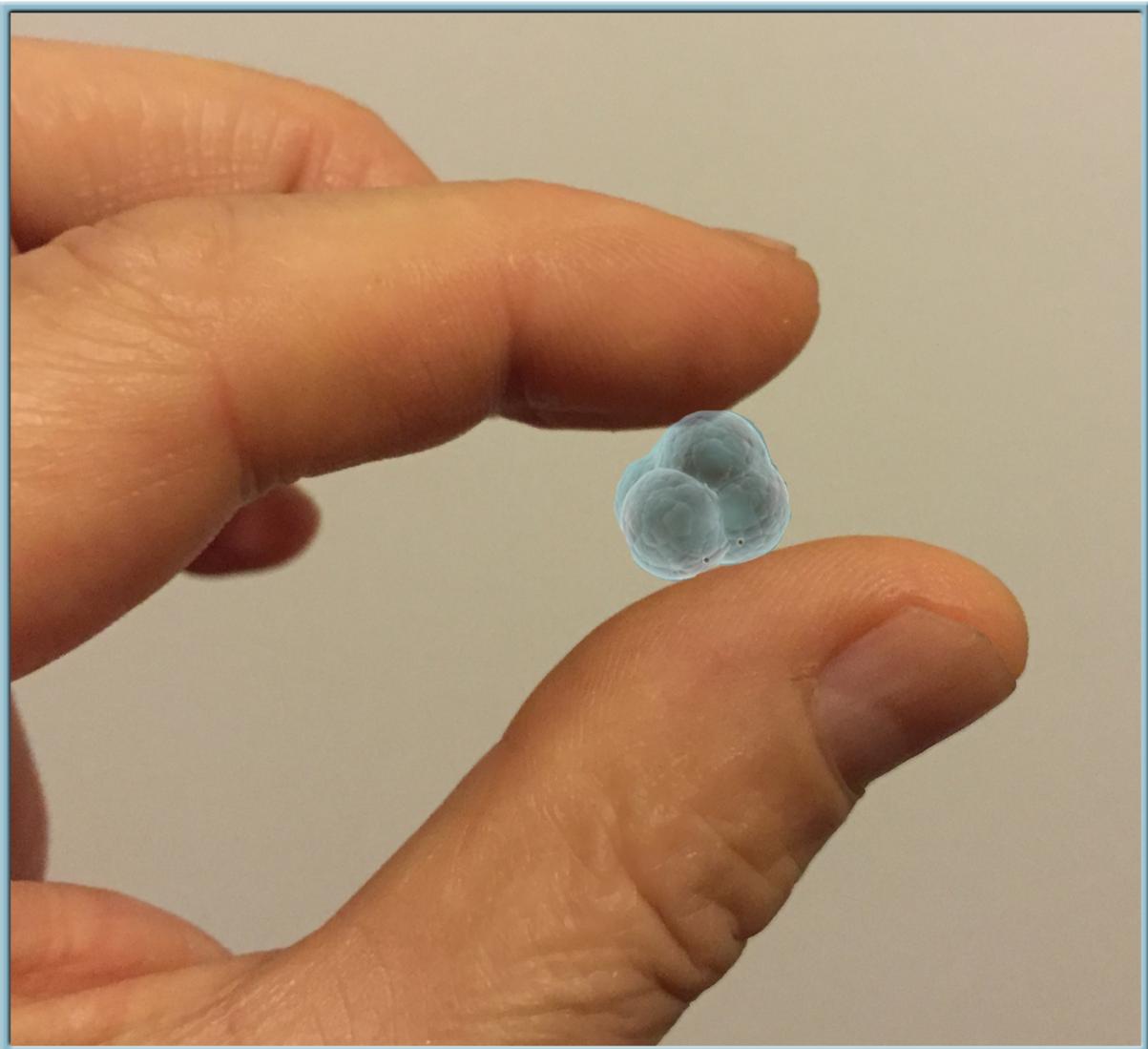


Shhh...

An essay by Ray Melnik

July, 11th 2016



I plan to live forever, but just in case I want you to know the meaning of life.

Let's start first with understanding what and who we are. We are billions of years of evolution in progress. There have been countless variations, colors and types of human beings, and scientifically speaking none are superior. Genetically we are all the same, and all of us are related. Dig deep and you will find compassion, empathy and community in each and every society found. Look easily and you will find misfires of ego, cruelty and evil in each and every society found. The former consistently quieter and the latter the loudest mouths, and the most visible. Don't let that fool you. If the meek, in great numbers, spoke with the same voice, they could one day rule the day. For now, we sit in the middle of societal puberty, too busy having fun and watching other entertaining humans to care. So the loudmouths rule and they like it that way.

We are here because more than 4.5 billion years ago stars exploded and the stuff of planets and stuff of life, forged in those stars, were thrown into a cloud that condensed around a new star that burst into existence; our star. From the muck, the ingredients of life cooked the first self-replicating cell. From that cell every living thing on earth evolved. No magic, just billions of years of tiny variations. How fine-tuned it appears, but it's not. Sure it is enough to exist, but there are so many flaws and there were countless failures. Over 99.9% of every species that ever lived has gone extinct. And humans are smart, but not that smart and we could easily join them.

If that isn't humbling enough, at our most basic level we barely exist in any form. The atoms that make us are mostly space. We are a complex set of force fields coming together to be human for a time. If you removed all the space between all the atoms of every human on earth, we would all fit on a tea spoon.

So then let's suppose that no human is worth more than another. If that were not true you would be worshipping a god that created human fodder for the sole purpose of suffering while condemned to continue that suffering for an eternity. There is just no reason to believe that is true. In more cases we cling to each other, we create communities, we want to belong to something bigger than just ourselves. We want to love and be loved. Those who have had that instinct stifled or even destroyed by tragedy or life circumstance need us. They need us not to look away. This planet was not created for a few to live in luxury to the obscene extreme while so many suffer starvation and pain.

So then I guess you want to know the meaning of life I mentioned. It's really very simple and it has always been with you. It is as compassionate as you want to be, as empathetic as you wish. It is as loving as the love you give others. It is as charitable as you are willing to be, and as real as you make it. It is as fun as any life could be in the times you are given to have fun, and as serious as it needs to be when necessary. If you wish it to be a full life and work at that, it will be. The meaning of life is that our lives are what we make of them. We choose.