

This Week's Message: Fact
By Ellie Lingner

Fact: n. 1. a deed; act: now esp. in the sense of "a criminal deed" in the phrases "after the fact" and "before the fact" (an accessory after the fact) 2. a thing that has actually happened or that is really true; thing that has been or is 3. the state of things as they are; reality; actuality; truth (fact as distinct from fancy) 4. something said to have occurred or supposed to be true (to check the accuracy of one's facts) 5. law: an actual or alleged incident or condition as distinguished from its legal consequence.

Did you ever receive an e-mail that sounded preposterous, but was delivered as sworn fact? Then you checked it out and discovered that it was nothing more than a rumor or urban legend with only a tiny bit of fact to back it up.

Facts seem hard to come by these days, but there is an overabundance of spin, opinion, and a blurring of the lines between news and entertainment (infotainment).

As Thomas Jefferson said way back when: "The people, when given the facts, will never make a mistake." The difficulty these days is discerning fact from everything that is said, printed and on the web.

Where do you get YOUR facts? Do you watch television news and believe one set of reporting over another? Do you read the newspapers and trust one columnist rather than his or her opposition? Do you tend to stick with the professional sources that you already agree with rather than hearing what the opposition has to say? Or do you listen to friends, family members, teachers, acquaintances and then repeat what they say rather than make up your own mind?

Hopefully you avoid this last category: "Election? What election? Scandal? What scandal? Facts? What facts?"

In other words, do you live in that insulated world called denial or self-absorption, concerned only with your day-to-day well-being? That course of action may work for you today, but beware; you are the one who will inherit the country, the government, the world, tomorrow. It helps to know the facts, so find out the facts and always take everyone else's facts with a grain of skepticism.

Week's Quotes:

"Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored." Aldous Huxley

"Digging for facts is better mental exercise than jumping to conclusions."

*"Every man has a right to his opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts."
Bernard Baruch*

"The hardest thing about facts is facing them."

"A hard-liner's admission: "My mind's made up! Don't confuse me with the facts."

"A sure way to stop a red hot argument is to lay a few cold facts on it."

"Facts, when combined with ideas, constitute the greatest force in the world."