

## A Sermon on Manipulated Belief

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for May 1st, 2022 (and beyond)

Why does anyone buy anything? I usually buy something because I like it, want it, and/or need it. Sometimes all three are in play like with choosing what to eat for dinner. You can need to eat and not like what's available and eat it even if it is the last thing on earth you'd want to eat. Or, if you were a contestant on Fear Factor with Joe Rogan then you were in it solely for the money or to prove yourself fearless, in moralistic terms you were in it for greed or vanity. But, fear is used to manipulate consumers too. "You'll die without the COVID vaccines which are free so what's the problem?" The problem is I don't believe dogs are born with heartworms. I'm not saying it isn't possible, I'm saying domesticated dogs from a line of dogs that have survived millennia in some cases where the daily heartworm medication didn't even exist until 1962 and the disease itself was first identified in 1856 don't need it. Sources: <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/dog-heartworms-14172/> and <https://www.guthriepet.net/blog/heartworm-medication/>. "The risk of a dog's being infected with heartworm disease each year is 250,000 out of 50,000,000; this translates to one in 200 dogs becoming infected each year." Source: <https://www.dvm360.com/view/commentary-argument-year-round-heartworm-prevention-dogs> So, there is a 99.5% chance a dog will never be infected with the disease. There is a cure for heartworms even if your dog contracts it. "An injectable drug, melarsomine (brand name Immiticide®), is given to kill adult heartworms. Melarsomine kills the adult heartworms in the heart and adjacent vessels. This drug is administered in a series of injections. Your veterinarian will determine the specific injection schedule according to your dog's condition. Most dogs receive an initial injection, followed by a 30-day period of rest, and then two more injections that are given 24 hours apart. Many dogs will also be treated with an antibiotic (doxycycline), to combat potential infection with bacteria (Wolbachia) that inhabit the heartworm." Source: [https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/heartworm-disease-in-dogs---treatment#:~:text=An%20injectable%20drug%2C%20melarsomine%20\(brand,according%20to%20your%20dog's%20condition.](https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/heartworm-disease-in-dogs---treatment#:~:text=An%20injectable%20drug%2C%20melarsomine%20(brand,according%20to%20your%20dog's%20condition.)

I don't understand why we treat all dogs as if they are diseased when there is a 99.5% chance they are fine and a 100% chance that they can be cured even if infected. The truth about heartworms according to the FDA is "Heartworms are only transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. In rare cases, people can get heartworms after being bitten by an infected mosquito. But because people are not a natural host for heartworms, the larvae usually migrate to the arteries of the heart and lungs and die before they become adult worms." Source: <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/animal-health-literacy/keep-worms-out-your-pets-heart-facts-about-heartworm-disease#:~:text=Heartworms%20are%20only%20transmitted%20by,before%20they%20become%20adult%20worms.>

To me, ignorance is the leading cause of wasting money on unnecessary treatments, products, or services. And, no one will ever guilt me again into buying heartworm medicine by suggesting I'm not a good human companion to my canine(s) if I don't buy

their bullshit while adding I may be putting myself or other humans at risk which is clearly not what the science actually shows if the FDA can be believed. So, I've got their number too and know to report unsafe products to them and/or my state's attorney general.

If someone is willfully blind and feeding their vanity by believing they are the best because they care SO MUCH about their dog that they buy heartworm prevention medicine which contains carcinogens, neurotoxins, and can cause seizure or death as side effects when such isn't even necessary at all since there is a cure and a 99.5% chance the dog will never contract it, I still have compassion for the dog because living under the authority of such a person is one of the 9 circles of hell. I'm not checking with Dante, I'm stating it as a fact. I believe in the world of mental health, such willful blindness, vanity, and treating non-existent disease in a dependent is called Munchausen by Proxy.

But, if someone is ignorant and naively trusts everything found on store shelves (or online or in the free market until sued out of existence or criminally prosecuted) believing they are bad people if they don't buy heartworm medicine for their dog, they are developmentally disabled or may have a learning disability that went undiagnosed and still needs to be addressed. But, in a free country we have the right to refuse treatment and be left alone. And, the right to believe what we want, which for me is the whole truth.

Before these things could be fact-checked conveniently using Google.com or some other search engine, it is understandable how many of us might fall for fear-based manipulative marketing making us believe we need something and may actually die or a loved one will die without it. But, now we can know which means only the willfully blind or those not quite internet savvy enough to run a Google search and crosscheck sources are victims of the frauds nearly constantly perpetrated right out in the public marketplace. And that's why consumer advocacy work is often frustrating. The victims are either malignant narcissists or unaccustomed to having their trust or good faith tested or broken so become emotional upon realization that if they don't exercise due diligence when making life decisions for themselves or dependents they may need to actually report the facts of the harms caused them to the proper law enforcement or regulatory body or sue for damages. Why does it have to be this way? Can't people just do the right thing? Yes, on an individual basis we can all choose to be honest and virtuous. But, until everyone so chooses it is a free country and freedom is also a virtue balanced by justice in an imperfect world. And, awareness that there are dishonest and vicious people in the world who must be reported to law enforcement with material evidence substantiating any allegations of dishonesty or vice is what consumer and victim's advocacy is all about and why Ralph Nader champions more top down regulation because from his perspective the free market does a shit job regulating itself. Top down governmental strategies don't work for me because I strongly believe in equality, freedom, and personal responsibility. This is why I love the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights in particular.

I'm free to try to educate and guide the ignorant in the ways of due diligence and proper reporting and with many who were just too sheltered in some ways but are otherwise of

average intelligence or higher, education and guidance works. They just need a little patience and understanding. But, if I'm going to err in political discourse, I'm erring on the side of freedom because I accept the risks that come with that and reject totalitarianism regardless of how tempting it is when interacting with a malignant narcissist with Munchausen by Proxy arguably taking such an awful risk in giving a dog heartworm medicine he doesn't need to feed their own vanity or savior-complex.

Part of how the free market regulates itself is by people being informed consumers and choosing not to buy products that are harmful and unnecessary such as heartworm prevention medication. See, as long as people buy it the government believes there is a market demand for it. So, by not buying it as a consumer you are exercising your power in the free market. If you do buy it and it turns out to be bullshit with a disclaimer, you will only get a refund, unless you can prove actual damages from veterinary bills or other directly related financial losses caused by the fraud. The refund makes you whole again in the eyes of the law even if the entire transaction broke your trust and turned you into a skeptic. Live and learn. If you buy heartworm prevention medication for your dog after reading this, you are a moron and may need supervised care so should be glad you are free of it because you are no longer viewed as having minority status as a result of being emancipated through court decision or age progression (reached age of majority).

It's going to be okay, each individual experiences that first broken trust differently which begins the practice of questioning more for those with relative cognitive functionality not too traumatized by being abused each time they asked a question or showed curiosity that they no longer bother. For some, they get into "rebirthing" and forgetting or pretending to forget all the bad of the past and come at each new interaction or sales pitch in the same naïve trusting ignorant state that has gotten them hurt time and again though they choose to dismiss it because feeling like the world is full of wonder and opportunity is what they may be addicted to if in such a cult or practice rather than embracing freedom and personal responsibility that comes with it. I'd rather keep evolving than believe in a reset button, I hope you do too. If not, the watch-list is waiting for you in one way or another. #TaoFu.

#### MEDITATIVE QUESTIONS:

If I claimed a product I wanted to sell you prevented an infection that you have a 99.5% chance of never contracting, where even if you did contract it you could be cured with 3 shots administered by a licensed and qualified medical professional, would you buy my product and take it as a preventive measure?

What if I told you my product is full of carcinogens, neurotoxins, and has all sorts of possible side effects including seizures and death, would you still feel it is worth taking to prevent an infection you were 99.5% likely to never contract?

What if the product was for your dog and not you? Would you buy it then? What if it was for your child and not you? How about then?

Will you consider also reading in addition to this sermon the information found here: <https://www.heal-online.org/thelist.htm#VITAMIN> ?

Are you lonely and do salespeople who make you feel cared about get your money even though the products might kill you immediately or as a result of prolonged use where it destroys your liver and/or kidneys?

Are you worried that people will judge you if you don't but my product? Am I manipulating you or did I disclose everything up front?

Has anyone sold you on a similar product without disclosing facts to you they assume you know or can know because the information is conveniently available and accessible to the public? If so, did you get out of it what you put into it (by "it" I'm including lack of due diligence in researching the product and any need you believe you have related to it and if you never learn the word "no" you'll never know what it means even though most everyone else does)?

Who am I to tell you how to spend your money? What am I selling? Can I manipulate you with a scare tactic like telling you that you or a loved one will die but you can prevent it with my product? Can I trigger your survival instinct by claiming you will die without my product and soothsaying you into a sale by claiming as long as you use my product you or a loved one won't die?

Can I manipulate you by giving you my time, actively listening, and make you believe we're friends so you buy my product in some kind of ongoing charade so there's a reason for us to associate or meet again as long as you are a good customer? Do you take pride in being a good customer? If I call you a good customer and friend in the context of this sermon, will you be more inclined to donate because I don't charge for this though know I'm doing a public service as a charitable church and need donations to continue doing so?

Are you suffering vanity and as a result a victim of greed? If not, do you feel better informed now so plan to avoid unnecessary and/or harmful services or products with the knowledge you've gained here and resolve to exercise due diligence in the future to avoid becoming a victim?

Do you think the government's job is to create utopia where everyone is honest and virtuous all the time and no one is ever dishonest and vicious? Are you aware that the US is a government of, for, and by the people which is why the choices we make as consumers in terms of purchases of goods and services as well as the choices we make when victim of an unlawful act (i.e. fraud or other crimes) on whether or not to report it properly are how we govern ourselves and participate in the free market and governance?

END OF QUESTIONS

Final Thought: Sometimes when you fight the power, you are fighting yourself even if ignorant of that fact in the midst of it. Often people who tell you in general not to trust law enforcement and/or the government as a whole while selling you something or making other demands of you (including silence) are criminals who shouldn't be trusted hoping you don't realize it nor overcome your fear of them before the statutes of limitation run out on any causes of action you may have resulting from their offenses against you. Where legal action is too much of a bother or it is too late, you can always divest and boycott (not do business nor associate with the offenders) and call on others to join you because your free speech is protected and a guaranteed right as is mine. I don't buy heartworm prevention medicine but recognize your right to do so as long as it is still on the market. Whether this sermon has an impact on that is up for debate. It is likely the low rate of heartworm infections in dogs will be used to claim the products work even though in full context the dogs weren't ever really at serious risk. The 3 shot cure for heartworm infection in dogs is between \$500-\$1500. Source: <https://www.petmd.com/dog/parasites/how-much-does-heartworm-treatment-cost-dogs> The cost of the heartworm prevention pills is between \$40-\$75 for 6 pills over the counter, sometimes more. If you treat them with it every mosquito season their entire lives, it will cost more than the cure. And, "Atlanta-Widespread use of heartworm preventive has not changed rates for infection of the disease in the last 10 years, according to a Gallup survey to 18,000 veterinary clinics nationwide." Source: <https://www.dvm360.com/view/heartworm-survey-no-change-10-years> Question more.

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>