

Consider: you may be wrong

**I am never wrong,
I thought I was once
but I was mistaken**



In Leo Tolstoy's novel *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, the protagonist, Ivan Ilych, is a smart, competent attorney dying from an unknown cause. Tolstoy describes a scene in which Ivan has a sobering realization while gazing at his sleeping daughter, Gerasim.

“Ivan Ilych’s physical sufferings were terrible, but worse than the physical sufferings were his mental sufferings which were his chief torture.

His mental sufferings were due to the fact that at night, as he looked at Gerasim’s sleepy, good-natured face with its prominent cheek-bones, the question suddenly occurred to him: ‘What if my whole life has been wrong?’

It occurred to him that what had appeared perfectly impossible before, namely that he had not spent his life as he should have done, might after all be true.”

What a solemn question.

I doubt if many of us will get to the end of our lives and wonder, “What if my *whole* life has been wrong?” But all of us should embrace the fact that there are specific areas of our lives that are probably wrong and need to change.

- What if you *have* lived a self-centered life?
- What if you *have* neglected your family?
- What if you *have not* lived authentically?
- What if you *have* pursued the wrong career?

Know this: there *are* areas of your life in which you are wrong. If you think you're an exception to this statement, your pushback betrays your naiveté, lack of self-awareness, and error.

The good news is you can change. Thoreau said, "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life through conscious endeavor."

Conscious endeavor can include turning wrong into right.

Take an audit of your life, particularly in the areas in which you have a closed mind - areas that have been unassailable and beyond reproach. Also investigate areas that are part of your cultural heritage - ideologies that you inherited from your family and culture. Consider your blind spot; everyone has one. (You'll need someone else to help you on this issue, because your are...blinded...to your your blind spot.)

If taken seriously, this exploration could be one of the most significant events of your life.