

6th June 2024

Consistency

**“The problem with being consistent
is that there are lots of ways to be consistent,
and they're all inconsistent with each other.”**

Larry Wall, *From a text-message thread, 2005*

It some senses, Larry Wall, a Computer Programmer, is right. There are many ways to be consistent. Whether they are inconsistent with each other or not, I'll leave you to ponder. But for now, let me say that consistency matters, and striving to be consistent is surely a positive attitude to life.

Yesterday, my wife and I celebrated our Golden Wedding anniversary. If the idea of consistency matters anywhere, it matters in marriage. It's not that our 50 years together have been constant and predictable. We would never set up our marriage as a model of perfection, and we have had to cope with many changes over five decades: changes in job, family circumstances, house, attitudes, health, age, and many more. But all of these have, we believe, been approached with consistency: openness, honesty, patience, tolerance, conversation, adjustments, compromises, and the like. In short, there has been a consistency which has allowed us to deal with inconsistencies – and we are the better for it.

In 1929, the writer Aldous Huxley, in a piece entitled “Do what you will” from *Wordsworth in the Tropics*, offered this critique of consistency:

*Consistency is contrary to nature, contrary to life.
The only completely consistent people are the dead.*

I don't know enough about Aldous Huxley's state of mind to understand why he would put things this way. (More research needed, perhaps ...) But I'm pleased to say that this isn't my experience.

We have a celebratory family gathering this coming weekend, but on the day of our anniversary we had a meal in the hotel where our wedding reception took place 50 years ago, and shared a delightful evening with our bridesmaid and her husband. Consistency? It was there in abundance: laughter, friendship, values, common interests, family love, beauty, wonder, pleasure, concerns, understanding, depth, faith.

Consistency ... Contrary to nature? Not a bit of it. Contrary to life? No chance. And none of us is dead yet.

A prayer for today

The Love of God: Alpha and Omega – from beginning to end. That's consistency for you.

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