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Nudge

"This approach tells us to encourage people, without coercing them, to make the best decisions through the use of 'nudges'."

Christian Laval and Pierre Dardot, ROAR Magazine (2020)

Composing and sending emails is a regular part of my day and has been so for many years. It'll be the same for you, I suspect. A lot or a little, every day or once in a while, emails are a wonderful communication tool.

I have no idea how they work, but I can write an email and save it in "draft" till it's ready to be sent. I can "archive" messages so I can refer to them later. I can "schedule" emails to go out at a time of my choosing – which is how you're getting this one if you're on my email list. "How come I get your 'Thought for the Day' at *exactly* the same time every day?" one of my readers asked. Well, scheduling sees to that!

But there's another email "tool" on my mind today. If I've sent a message and my recipient hasn't replied, or if someone's been in touch and I've not responded, after a while a message (in orange!) pops up which says something like "Sent 3 days ago. Follow up?" The system calls this a "nudge". I'm asked if I want to "dismiss nudge?" If I do, that's that. The system has done its job, but I've chosen to dispense with the nudge. If I deal with the message, the nudge disappears. I've responded, and I don't need to be reminded again. And if I do nothing, the orange error-message remains, as a nagging reminder that I have something to deal with.

But it's not just emails, is it? We get nudges all the time. Conscience; comments; fleeting thoughts; things we read; God. Stuff to do; ideas to ponder; decisions to make; procrastination to deal with. And we have a choice: deal with the issue; dismiss the nudge; or to ignore it. One way or another, the nudge matters. And how you deal with it matters all the more.

Nudges are there for a reason. However they come, they're seldom world-shattering and dramatic. In my experience, life, growth, meaning, purpose, fulfilment are more often a series of little nudges.

So I wonder what my little orange nudges will be today. And I wonder how I'm going to respond. Oh yes, and while I remember, I think I'm being nudged to deal with these emails first.

A prayer for today

If the nudges are from my God today, I pray that I won't ignore them. Amen

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