

A note from Documentary Science Filmmaker/Professor Ben Shedd:

There are four manifestos and mottos which I use as fundamental foundations for the media work that I create. Making media about science content needs a basic grounding: it needs to represent the real world as it really is and help us to see and experience our physical world with new insights.

I wrote the first Manifesto for projects which I create or lead, to give specific language to the kinds of world-view which I want my films and videos to express. This was developed in 1994 after 24 years of directing and producing science TV programs and documentaries large and small to express the goals and aspirations for creative media work: “The films and videos we create are: gender-neutral, non-aggressive, multicultural, thought-provoking, intellectually encouraging, role-model expansive, economically neutral, non-abusive, cognitively healthy in world view, inspiring, self-affirming, physically accurate, future-minded, fun, invigorating, appealing to multigenerational audiences, made with a 10 year shelf life, worth seeing twice, and present ideas which take off and soar in the audience’s imagination.” <https://i1.wp.com/benshedd.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/SPI-Manifesto-JPG.jpg>

The second manifesto I use for basic ideas about what I want for audiences comes in the book EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE¹ and its corollary books ECOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE² and ECO LITERATE³, plus SIMPLE TRUTHS, VITAL LIES⁴, all by Daniel Goleman. The information in these books, ranging from biological to intellectual, practical to esoteric, provide EQ wisdom to shape outcomes for my life and for the films I make. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE was first published in 1995. I come to these books for their helpful content and for the fact that Dan Goleman is my oldest childhood friend, from when we were in pre-school all the way through high school, and we have kept in touch through the decades. This EQ work comes naturally and I appreciate having some of the language which my friend Daniel Goleman gives.

The third is a one line motto I heard in the 1980s from Prof Barbara Meyerhoff who had an Anthropology class at the University of

Southern California called: “Make The Strange Familiar and The Familiar Strange.” While researching, this short phrase always helps to reframe ideas. Acronym: MTSFATFS

The fourth manifesto comes from science educator Mary Budd Rowe, in an Essay called A FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION MAKERS⁵ in the 1983 DAEDALUS Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences issue on SCIENTIFIC LITERACY. Budd Rowe created a comparison chart of the “Characteristics of Low-Fate and High-Fate Control Views” which is scanned below. These comparisons, such as the second one “Low-Fate/No use to try—you can’t make a difference” contrasted with “High Fate/Try things—learn from experience” and/or “Low Fate/Now -oriented—here and now rewards” compared with “High Fate/Future-oriented—delayed risks OK” provides a comprehensive list of behaviour and motivations to model in media content.

TABLE I. Characteristics of Low-Fate and High-Fate Control Views

<i>Low-Fate</i>	<i>High-Fate</i>
Chance—can’t influence odds	Can influence odds
No use to try—you can’t make a difference	Try things—learn from experience
Little prior evaluation of possible consequences of action	Evaluate outcomes and use information
Now-oriented—here and now rewards	Future-oriented—delayed risks OK
Low task persistence	High task persistence
School achievement lower	School achievement higher
Passive	Active
Weak problem-solving strategies	Aggressive problem-solving strategies
Susceptible to influence	Relatively resistant to influence
“How I do things makes no difference in how things turn out.”	“How I do things makes a difference in what results I get.”
Goal-setting is irrelevant	Goal-setting is relevant
Displaces responsibility outward	May be excessively self-blaming

- 1 Goleman, Daniel. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. 1995. Bantam Books. NY
- 2 Goleman, Daniel. ECOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE. . Broadway Books. NY
- 3 Goleman, Daniel and others. ECO LITERATE. 2012 Jossey-Bass NY
- 4 Goleman, Daniel. VITAL LIES, SIMPLE TRUTHS. 1985. Simon & Schuster. NY