

AUG 22 1983

ESSAY GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO BELIEF IN ACTION, A PROJECT OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY BELIEF, SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA.

Dear Contributor:

The entire advisory board of the Center would like to join me in thanking you for accepting our invitation to contribute to BELIEF IN ACTION. We think you'll be pleased to learn that the response to this book has been overwhelming, and that a most diverse and talented group of distinguished individuals will be joining you in contributing to it. From His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Indira Ghandi, Alan Cranston to George McGovern, Malcolm Fraser to Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr., Norman Cousins to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, Steve Allen to Marcel Marceau, Joan Baez to Bart Starr--the quality, depth, and diversity of experience of those contributing to this book could scarcely be better.

Since we last corresponded with you, the advisory board has decided that they would like each of the essays written for this book to be done in isolation from the others. The reason for this is that we would like your response to be as original as possible, uninfluenced by either the style or content of another contributor's essay. As such, we have decided against forwarding you any of the essays already written for this book. Nevertheless, we feel obliged to provide you with at least some cursory guidelines to consider while composing your essay, and have made every effort to keep them as open-ended as possible.

Firstly, and most importantly, we want to emphasize that these guidelines are only for your consideration. You may answer the two questions we've posed in any way you wish, provided you seek to do so as honestly as you can, and try to remember that we are mainly interested in what you do believe, and not in what you don't believe. We want you to feel free, of course, to talk about what you don't believe, insofar as that may help the reader understand how you came to believe as you do and how you chose to pursue the occupations you have, but we do not want the book to become a forum for criticizing the beliefs of others. This would run entirely counter to our aim of fostering tolerance and understanding on a worldwide basis.

It is also important to bear in mind that although this book is designed to discuss beliefs in action, it is not, strictly speaking, a religious publication. While some of you may express your beliefs in traditional religious terms, others of you may not. This we both want and expect; there is room in this book for all points of view, the religious and the nonreligious as well.

In addition, it should be noted that we are looking for a single, integrated essay, rather than two separate essays which address each question in 1,000 words. We would also prefer it if you would concentrate your discussion on the mainsprings of your belief (or nonbelief), on the guiding principles (or lack thereof) which have directed your activities and helped you to find meaning in your life. In doing this, however, we want you to feel free to concentrate more upon one question than another, and to open and close your essay in whatever manner you feel would best express your thoughts.

In thinking more directly about what you believe, you may find it helpful to reflect upon specific events which stand out in your memory as having been especially significant in the shaping of your beliefs. You may also want to discuss the evolution of these beliefs, how time and changing environments have affected them and led you to either adopt, discard, or alter some or all of the principles which have guided and sustained you in your life and work.

In thinking about how your occupations have enabled you to implement your beliefs in daily life, feel free to interpret the word "occupation" in a broad sense. Naturally, we wouldn't want you to center your discussion upon your avocations, but insofar as they may relate to your implementing your beliefs in daily life, they may, for you, be especially relevant. If this is the case, do not hesitate to treat them in your essay. In addition, feel free to discuss any significant encounters which may or may not be related to your occupation(s), as well as those rare, epiphanous moments when you've gained a clearer understanding of yourself and your surroundings through a sudden, profound intuitive realization.

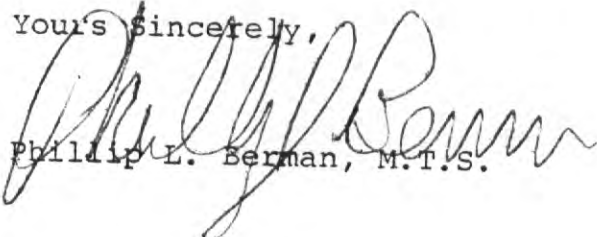
As we've said before, the above-mentioned suggestions are simply things for you to consider. Our main concern is that you answer the questions we've posed in the most intimate and honest way that you know how. The extent to which you can do this (i.e., speak from your heart) will in large part determine the impact your essay has upon those who read it.

However difficult this task might be, we feel certain that those who read your contribution will benefit. For while basic beliefs must be built slowly from one's own experience, they must also be built from a study of the experience and conclusions of others. The primary worth of this book lies, we feel, within that premise--in giving others the opportunity to read what you believe, you provide them with a sounding board for further reflection and personal growth. This is why the value and impact of what you say is truly inestimable.

In closing, let me assure you that all of us at the Center look forward to receiving your essay in January. When you have completed it, title it if you wish, and send it to the Center in the envelope we've provided you in this packet, along with any photographs or drawings you might wish to have included in the book. After we have carefully reviewed your essay, it will be returned to you for final approval.

Until we hear from you again, we wish you the best in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,


Phillip L. Berman, M.T.S.