

A Thought vs. an Idea

Pulse of Spirit

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What would you say is the difference between a thought and an idea?

Here's my take. A thought is something the mind thinks at a moment in time. An idea is the whole pattern of something, perhaps entertained in the mind all at once or downloaded over time. Of course, I am offering my own favorite meaning of the word *idea*. But I looked it up in the dictionary. Merriam-Webster has several definitions of the word. Some of them are synonymous with the word *thought*. Yet there is one that I particularly like, 4c:

A transcendent entity that is a real pattern of which existing things are imperfect representations.

This is a definition of an *idea*, attributed to Plato:

An archetype, or pure immaterial pattern, of which the individual objects in any one natural class are but the imperfect copies, and by participation in which they have their being.

One of my most vivid experiences of ideas has been as a songwriter. My experience is of finding the song in an unmanifest state. It is an idea, and as Plato described it: *a pure immaterial pattern*.

The word *idea* sounds heady. But my experience of touching the idea of a song is anything but. It is passionate and full of deep feeling.

It's hard to describe. The flesh of the idea is soft and gentle. At first touch, it is like kissing a baby's cheek. There is a sense of privilege upon encountering something so lovely, something definitely not mine, even though, as a songwriter, I have the high honor of ushering it into the world. Its beauty, passion, and delicacy often bring me to tears.

Sometimes, it feels like an instant download. *There it is, the whole song!* And I can't write down the notes fast enough because I want them to be heard as music to human ears.

Other times, it appears a line at a time. I know there is a whole song there. But I don't hear it altogether until it has downloaded onto my manuscript.

Often, I hear the tune playing in my head as I go about my day. I hear lyrics speaking to me while I am walking my puppy. And when I come home, *Where did you go? You were right there.* So, I have to coax the song out of its invisible heaven so it can be heard in the land of the living.

Songs aren't the only ideas basking in the glory of the invisible realms. There are books, paintings, poems, and even businesses, families, and flower gardens.

Ideas are the patterns of life we can become aware of in our thoughts. But wouldn't you say that the greater value is not in any individual thought we might have? The greater significance and value are the idea that the thought is a part of.

There is a vast difference between falling in love with our own thoughts and being in love with an idea, which is the pattern of a form of life that a thought might be a part of.

True thoughts are part of the idea from which they come. But some thoughts are just judgments, beliefs, or biases.

Someone said this:

Opinion is the lowest form of human knowledge. It requires no accountability, no understanding.

They say that talk is cheap. But so are opinions and other forms of thought that have no relationship to real ideas.

Ideas are the unborn reality of things that have yet to enter the world. They are the invisible source code of life, the spiritual DNA for a new world, and the holy city, coming down from God out of heaven if there is someone there to receive it.

Ideas are also our thoughtful awareness of the emerging pattern of life. Our minds are created as midwives of Creation, facilitating the entry of that new pattern into human culture.

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