Reflections on “Closer To Truth”

Robert Lawrence Kuhn

Never before have we all been so similar. When should we get groceries? How much toilet paper do we have left? Why is my mask fogging my glasses? And if these be our worries during the pandemic, we are the lucky ones.

I have been writing and hosting Closer To Truth (CTT) for over 20 years — PBS/public TV stations (U.S.); [Closer To Truth website](http://www.closertotruth.com/); [Closer To TruthYouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/CloserToTruth1) — and never before have I felt as close to the CTT community, who are passionate in their pursuit of science and religion (with diverse interests and views).

I’ve come to see that there is a small subset of humanity whose members seem preternaturally predisposed to be fascinated by, or obsessed with, the kinds of big questions we feature on CTT: Cosmos (philosophy of cosmology, philosophy of physics, cosmology, multiverse, quantum physics, mathematics, time, information, fine-tuning, philosophy of science, science & religion, metaphysics, why something/nothing, critical thinking); Consciousness (philosophy of mind, mind-body problems, brain/mind, brain function, mental activity, essence of consciousness, personal identity, free will, subconscious, life after death, alien & diverse intelligences, parapsychology, cosmos & consciousness, critical thinking; Meaning/God (philosophy of religion, philosophical theology, existence/non-existence of God, traits/nature of God, theism, atheism, agnosticism, critical thinking).

[Closer To Truth website](http://www.closertotruth.com/): >4,000 videos of scientists and philosophers.

[Closer To TruthYouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/CloserToTruth1): >1000 videos, currently uploading CTT TV episodes Running 30 days: >1 million views, >10 million minutes watch time; 60% outside US, including 10% UK; >120,000 subscribers — reflecting growing interest in big questions, perhaps enhanced by pandemic reflections (and “free time”).

Members of our little group come from diverse religions, regions, races, countries, ethnicities, genders, ages, educational levels, income levels — the only thing we all have in common is the pursuit of these questions. But that “only thing” is a Big Thing — only those fascinated or obsessed know how truly Big it is. Some of us have felt isolated — until we discover that there are others of our kind. Indeed, our ISSR community is a core.

The pandemic is tragic, but the lockdown, ironically, has its benefits. Physical confinement can facilitate mental freedom. Our minds can wander and wonder and we do not feel guilty that we are not out “working”.

During this strange time, Closer To Truth is receiving more feedback on the CTT website and more comments on CTT YouTube. I read all the feedback and I browse through the comments, especially those under CTT TV episodes. I appreciate them all, including when challenging or critical.

I pay attention when viewers seem sure that I believe this or I do not believe that. Sometimes, seriously, I don’t know what I believe. But I do care. Deeply.

I’m pleased that some of my favorite CTT TV episodes — for example, “Big Questions in Free Will”, “Why Anything At All?”, “What Exists?” — are hits with viewers. My curiosity is piqued when under the same CTT episode (on, say, consciousness or materialism or theism/atheism), one comment will deride me for not believing and another will disparage me for believing.

All I can affirm is that my quest is real: I try to see the world, sense reality, objectively and honestly. I like to challenge conventional wisdom, but only if coherent. I can explore odd ideas, but I’m not comfortable with sloppy arguments. I am determined to keep an open mind — with at least one eye unblinking and skeptical.

During these weeks, I had a friend of 50 years die, and my daughter had her first child (one month short of her 49th birthday, from her 10-year-old frozen egg, husband couldn’t stay in hospital — new mom and son home and healthy. I’ve studied biology my entire life and still I find myself flabbergasted.) The cycle of life, more poignant in the lockdown.

For CTT producer/director Peter Getzels and me, Closer To Truth is our adventure of a lifetime and we feel privileged to share our work with CTT’s friends and visitors.

We do not claim to always know truth. Our pledge is that we try to always get closer.

Dr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn

Host and creator, Closer To Truth