



Science—A Moral Pursuit **Carl Safina**

Science is essentially the systematic pursuit of what is real in nature.

Science is a method of inquiry. It asks, what is here?; then it seeks to answer questions of why and how.

Science aims to be objective. Two scientists who hold opposite hypotheses, give money to opposing political parties, and are of different faiths will—if they do their science honestly—get the same result.

This is what makes science the most powerful tool for truth-seeking ever devised by people. Science is in my opinion the finest achievement of the human mind.

Science is acknowledged as extremely important in much of the world. But it is also strenuously resisted, mistrusted, and ignored. It is not compatible with oppression and dishonesty, because it requires freedom of thought.

Only in a world where truth is feared can it be “inconvenient.”

A world that better valued and embraced science would be, by definition, more open to the truth, more realistic, more flexible and adaptable. A society more open to truth and more flexible could also be more humane, more compassionate, more pleasant—and more likely to survive.

Science can be flawed by human bias. It can be misused. But by its very design it resists those things; to the extent that science entails bias and is misused, it is bad science. Good science entails an abundance of curiosity, a lack of bias, a desire to better understand reality, and a commitment to embrace the truth. That makes science the most honest—and therefore the most moral—discipline ever devised by the human mind.

I am impressed over and over again with the fact that science must be the starting point for understanding what is really going on, for detecting changes in the world, and for identifying the likely consequences of human action or inaction. Science is a compass; it does not define the destination but it can guide us in getting there.

A populace acquainted with science, with its standards of openness, evidence, and repeatability, would be far less susceptible to the claims of politicians, salesmen, and extremists of various kinds. Science helps people

cut through the nonsense. Science is a wise counselor. In short, science is a very good thing for the world.

Because the world is accelerating and problems proliferating, science is crucially important now. We need more science in our world and in our lives. So we need more of what science does, and we need it better understood and better valued.



Read more about and from Carl Safina at blueocean.org and carlsafina.org

