

Icarus is a famous story from Greek mythology. Icarus was the son of Daedalus, an inventor commissioned by King Minos to build a labyrinth to trap the Minotaur, a half-man; half-bull creature that terrified the island of Crete. However, Daedalus also knew that King Minos was up to something bad so he warned the king's daughters of their father's treachery and was swiftly imprisoned in the very labyrinth he designed to trap the dreaded Minotaur.

But Daedalus was a gifted inventor.

Daedalus designed powerful wings so that he and Icarus could fly away and thus escape the labyrinth and the Minotaur. Since the wings were held together by wax Daedalus warned his son not to fly too high because the sun would melt the wax and Icarus would fall from the sky. However, like most people having a great time they often ignore the warnings that can bring fun to a screeching halt.

So what in the heck does Greek mythology have to do with you here in the high desert of the southwest and Gallup New Mexico?

I was taught this story as a young boy but as a grown man I quickly realized this is not a children's story of willful disobedience, but rather an adult story of costly choices. For this column I will use a series of examples to highlight the importance of the story of Icarus.

Every year and in every state we are warned not to drink and drive. There is no denying the pleasurable affects of alcohol; it's one of the main reasons why people drink. However, every year, month and day without exception someone's life is cut painfully short because an individual failed to heed the warning not to drink and drive.

Don’t text while driving. Well, damn. I was guilty of this years ago which caused two wrecked vehicles and raised my insurance premiums. For some, texting while driving has created far worse circumstances.

During my time in the military I learned how to do many things by feel, such as taking apart your gun and putting it back together. However, we were never taught this practice while consuming alcohol. I’m sure you understand why.

After a number of violent altercations the young woman was told to leave the domestic relationship she was in. However, she was convinced that his violence toward her would change if she could somehow love him more. This woman and many like her are no longer with us because they failed to see that the violence they experienced had nothing to do with love.

The doctor told the man that his blood sugar level was 1500, that his diabetes was out of control and he must take steps to correct his health. The man was convinced the doctor had no idea what he was talking about. “I’m not diabetic” the man thought. As a result of this thinking the man refused to change. He allowed his weight to exceed 300 pounds. He began to have issues with his vision, his prostate and kidneys. He went back to the doctor for medication but he still refused to change. Before he suffered a heart attack and left us, his family and community the man experienced three amputations to his legs. Somewhere along the way he must have forgotten that he had a wife and children that loved him.

Wow, no one really wants to read stories like Icarus or examples like these. Who can blame us for turning the other way, or blocking such truth from our minds? There is enough pain in the world without someone scaring us with information we don’t want to hear, however the truth never goes away no matter how much we dislike facing it.

The most powerful point in the story of Icarus and situations like these is the element of choice. It is the correct choices that produce the experiences of joy, while allowing us to avoid the pain. Always choose behavior that supports your highest good.

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For the Sun