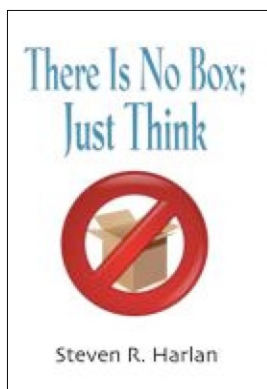


There Is No Box; Just Think



Steven R. Harlan



***There Is No Box; Just Think** encourages each of us to consider the way we look at things and our own values. Author Steven R. Harlan has compiled a short series of brief essays to explore some of his rather unique and frequently thought-provoking views regarding a variety of subjects like right and wrong, the healthcare law, visualizing more than three dimensions, and what it means to have free will.*

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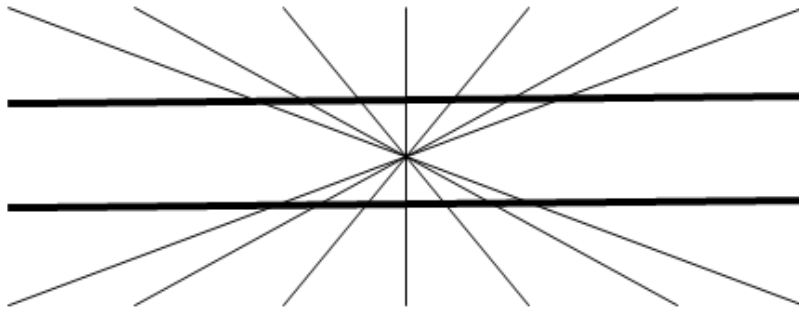
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Nothing Is Ever What It Seems



A soldier told me about a situation that made me angry. This was after the army had changed its reenlistment policy. Soldiers who were Staff Sergeant (E6) and above who reenlisted after 10 years time in service did not reenlist for a few years, instead they reenlisted for a period of time that would extend their time in service to their retention control point, a point usually well beyond 20 years time in service depending on their rank. Soldiers had to put in a request to retire before their retention control points.

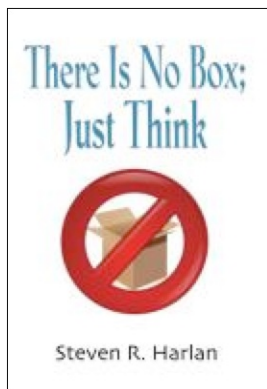
A Sergeant First Class (E7) serving in South Korea had submitted his request to retire at 20 years time in service and the army denied it. I did not need more information to have an emotional response. I became irate. I planned to retire at 20 years time in service. Apparently, the army was arbitrarily denying retirement. I remember talking to other soldiers off and on for

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months about that story. I ranted, "Denying retirement might be a short-term fix to a personnel shortage, but in the long run, senior soldiers will discourage others from reenlisting."

It turns out that there was more to the story. The soldier in question had apparently put in a different request prior to requesting retirement. When that soldier was at 19 years time in service, the army approved that soldier's request for a two-year stabilization in Korea, which included free leave or extra pay or a combination of the two. The soldier had already received part or all of the incentive for committing to staying in Korea for two years. The army was completely justified in denying the second request due to its inherent conflict with the first request.

Did I get angry for no reason? I was angry for a little bit, because the person who initially told me the story failed to include relevant information. He was probably unaware. Now, I find myself being very skeptical, especially when I hear sensational news. Nothing is ever what it seems.



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