

PLEASURE AND PAIN

FINDING FREEDOM



INSPIRED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI
SILENT PERCEPTION

Pleasure and Pain

Finding Freedom

A meditative exploration into the workings of pleasure and pain, and the understanding that frees the mind from them.

Inspired by the teachings of **J. Krishnamurti** and the philosophical clarity of **David Bohm**.

INSPIRED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI

Written by Silent Perception

“People only examine pain when they cannot escape from it. People do not want to escape from pleasure, so few ever examine it. For a serious mind, acknowledging the repetitious nature of pleasure will be the first indication the whole structure is a trap” — *Silent Perception*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION	1
STRUCTURE OF INQUIRY	2

CHAPTERS

WHAT IS PLEASURE AND PAIN	8
THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PLEASURE AND PAIN	11
THE SOURCE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN	14
THE ORDER OF PLEASURE AND PAIN	17
PART 1 - THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTORTION	23
PART 2 - THE CONSEQUENCE OF DISTORTION	27
PART 3 - WHEN DISTORTION BECOMES REALITY	31
THE UTILITY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN	37
THE FIELD OF DISTORTION	41
THE CENTRE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN	45
THE MEMORY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN	48
THE DESIRE FOR PLEASURE	53
THE URGE FOR PLEASURE	57
HOW A DECISION IS MADE	64
THE REPETITION OF PLEASURE	69
THE ESCAPE TO PLEASURE	74
THE FRUSTRATION OF PLEASURE	79
THE DECEPTION OF FRUSTRATION	84
THE ENDING OF PLEASURE	88
PROCESSES THAT CONDITION THE MIND TO PLEASURE	94
A RESTLESS MIND PURSUES PLEASURE	99

APPENDIX

THE EFFECT OF BOREDOM ON PLEASURE	103
THE FIXATION OF PLEASURE	106
THE ATTRACTION OF PLEASURE	109
THE CORRUPTION OF PLEASURE	112
THE REFUSAL TO GIVE UP PLEASURE	114
THE FEAR FOR PLEASURE	117
THE MEANING OF PLEASURE	122
THE SELF-CENTREDNESS OF PLEASURE	125
THE TRAP OF PLEASURE	127

INTRODUCTION

In this series, we explore pleasure and pain.

Pleasure and pain are facts of everyday life. They assist in guiding our behaviour by reacting to the present moment, and signalling whether something should be embraced or avoided.

Pleasure and pain have been fundamental in the security of man as he has evolved.

Examples:

Our conditioning to pain has helped us avoid dangerous creatures.

Our conditioning to pleasure has helped us find food.

Contrary to the many benefits, pleasure and pain have extended themselves into the psychological field and begun to distort reality in a way that threatens the security of man.

Examples:

The pleasure found in belief has fragmented man and resulted in innumerable wars.

The restraint on pleasure held by religious ideologies has begun to fade and be replaced by a permissiveness in modern society. This has led many people to be afflicted by an irresistible pleasure they cannot control and, inevitably, watch themselves building their life around. The pursuit of pleasure appears to move society towards greater levels of superficiality and causes a gradual degeneration in the mind of man.

In this series we neither condemn nor condone pleasure. The intention of this series is to undertake an honest enquiry into pleasure and pain so as to understand their activities: where they go right, and where they have gone wrong.

The purpose of our enquiry is beyond a mere intellectual comprehension. Not only do we intend to understand pleasure and pain, but we intend to observe how that understanding effects our own behaviour.

The purpose of our enquiry is to examine whether the understanding of pleasure changes the operation of pleasure within ourselves, and whether the understanding of pain changes the operation of pain within ourselves.

Can the very understanding of pleasure and pain bring order to their operation within ourselves?

STRUCTURE OF INQUIRY

This section provides a basic introduction to each chapter.

Chapter 1: What is Pleasure and Pain

The chapter discusses what pleasure and pain is.

Chapter 2: The Distinction between Pleasure and Pain

The chapter discusses the distinction between pleasure and pain. Pleasure is a good feeling that soothes or excites the mind, and pain is a bad feeling disturbs the mind.

Chapter 3: The Source of Pleasure and Pain

The chapter discusses the cause of pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are reactions. The reaction is based on one's conditioning. The source of pleasure and pain is found in the interaction between an event and one's conditioning.

Chapter 4: The Order of Pleasure and Pain

The chapter discusses pleasure and pain in the context of order.

We state that pleasure and pain are reactions that assist in the preservation of the body. So long as those reactions are appropriate, they can coerce behaviour that establishes order in people's lives.

We explore the requirement for pleasure and pain to operate orderly.

Chapter 5: The Distortion of Pleasure and Pain - Part 1 - The Establishment of Distortion

The chapter discusses the factors that cause the reaction of pleasure and pain to be distorted.

We state that distortion takes place for many reasons:

1. The knowledge one holds is incorrect.
2. The knowledge one holds is insufficient.
3. The pain resulting from one experience effects an unrelated experience.
4. The pleasure resulting from one experience effects an unrelated experience.

Chapter 6: The Distortion of Pleasure and Pain - Part 2 - The Consequence of Distortion

The chapter discusses the consequence of having a distorted pleasure or pain reaction: inappropriate behaviour.

We discuss the different ways distortion expresses itself through various examples.

1. People feel pleasure where there should be pain.
2. People feel pain where there should be pleasure.
3. People feel nothing where there should be pain.

4. People feel nothing where there should be pleasure.
5. People feel pleasure where there should be nothing.
6. People feel pain where there should be nothing.

Chapter 7: The Distortion of Pleasure and Pain - Part 3 - When Distortion becomes Reality

The chapter discusses how it is possible for us to consider our behaviour to be right, even when there are many signals showing us it is wrong.

To behave appropriately we must be able to identify coherence and incoherence in our daily life. We state that incoherence is acknowledged through conflict, and coherence is acknowledged through harmony.

To move from a state of incoherence to a state of coherence requires four things:

1. The ability to perceive incoherence.
2. The ability to identify the knowledge that must be changed.
3. The ability to learn.
4. The ability to change.

Chapter 8: The Utility of Pleasure and Pain

The chapter discusses how pleasure and pain can be used.

The reaction of pleasure and pain can be distorted without one being aware of it. This means our reactions cannot be a guaranteed way to discern what is universally good or bad in the world around us.

While our reactions to something may be inappropriate or disproportionate, the reaction is a fact in itself. Irrespective of whether the reaction was right or wrong, it shows us how our mind is conditioned.

A reaction is an honest expression of how the mind is conditioned.

The utility of pleasure and pain is the means to uncover how we are conditioned.

Chapter 9: The Field of Distortion

The chapter discusses the area where distortion takes place.

We state that the distortion of pleasure and pain does not take place at the level of the body, but at the level of the mind.

Example: The Body

Anyone who puts their hand in fire will feel the pain of getting burned.

Example: The Mind

One person loves being in the water, another person hates it.

We explore the basis for our physical and psychological reactions.

The body is the basis for our physical reactions and its structure persists through time.

Our understanding of life is the basis for our mental reactions and its structure is able to adapt rapidly in light of new information.

We discuss the possibility of changing our distorted psychological reactions.

Chapter 10: The Centre of Pleasure and Pain

The chapter discusses how knowledge is always alert and ready to respond to perception.

Chapter 11: The Memory of Pleasure and Pain

The chapter discusses how pleasure and pain are recorded into memory.

Chapter 12: The Desire for Pleasure

The chapter discusses why the mind desires pleasure.

Chapter 13: The Urge for Pleasure

The chapter discusses the urge that coerces one to concede to desire.

Chapter 14: How a Decision is Made

The chapter discusses the process of making a decision.

Chapter 15: The Repetition of Pleasure

The chapter discusses why pleasure is repetitive.

Chapter 16: The Escape to Pleasure

The chapter discusses how the demand for pleasure is created as a means to escape from pain.

Chapter 17: The Frustration of Pleasure

The chapter discusses how the remembrance of past pleasure creates the demand to experience it again through frustration.

Example:

In the past, sex gave one pleasure. The pleasure of sex is demanded again through the creation of sexual frustration.

Chapter 18: The Deception of Frustration

The chapter discusses how frustration offers a solution to the pain it creates: experience the pleasure again and the frustration will disappear.

Example:

Sexual frustration states that the frustration will end once you have sex.

However, the remembrance of sex is the factor that causes the sexual frustration. Thus, by having sex again, you strengthen the frustration next time.

Frustration presents itself as a solution, but it actually causes the individual to strengthen the problem.

That is the deception of pleasure.

Chapter 19: The Ending of Pleasure

The chapter discusses how frustration holds the key to ending the repetitive cycle of pleasure.

Chapter 20: Processes that Condition the Mind to Pleasure

The chapter discusses the processes that condition the mind to pleasure.

Chapter 21: A Restless Mind Pursues Pleasure

The chapter discusses why the mind is restless.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The Effect of Boredom on Pleasure

The chapter discusses boredom as the reaction of dissatisfaction to the absence of pleasure.

Appendix 2: The Fixation of Pleasure

The chapter discusses the mind becoming fixated upon a particular pleasure. Once fixated, the mind builds a life around that pleasure.

Appendix 3: The Attraction of Pleasure

The chapter discusses why pleasure is attractive.

The mind wants more: more money, more power, more beauty, and so on. Pleasure is attractive because it signals to yourself and others that you are moving in the direction of getting more.

Appendix 4: The Corruption of Pleasure

The chapter discusses how pleasure drastically changes the meaning of an activity.

Example:

The purpose of sex is to reproduce. However, when the purpose of sex becomes pleasure, everything is done to avoid the reproduction element, such as the use of contraception and delayed ejaculation.

Appendix 5: The Refusal to Give Up Pleasure

The chapter discusses why the mind refuses to give up pleasure.

Appendix 6: The Fear for Pleasure

The chapter discusses why the mind fears losing pleasure.

The mind pursues pleasure to escape from pain. The mind then fears losing pleasure because it means returning to a state of pain.

Appendix 7: The Meaning of Pleasure

The chapter discusses the meaning of pleasure in the context of its repetitive cycle.

Appendix 8: The Self-Centredness of Pleasure

The chapter discusses pleasure as a self-centred activity.

Appendix 9: The Trap of Pleasure

The chapter discusses how the repetitive demand for pleasure places limitations on people's lives, yet, because pleasure feels good, they don't object to it or challenge the lifestyle they have built around it.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS PLEASURE AND PAIN

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

WHAT IS PLEASURE AND PAIN

In this chapter we will be discussing what pleasure and pain are, and how they are experienced.

What is Pleasure?

Pleasure is the experience of satisfaction.

The Experience of Pleasure

Pleasure takes place through an experience that acts as a stimulant that either soothes or excites. There is a sense that everything is ok and one can relax.

Examples of Pleasure

One sees a magnificent view and experiences beauty.

One surfs a wave and feels exhilaration.

One talks to a friend and feels content.

The Process of Pleasure

Pleasure is a reaction to an experience: One has an experience, and then thought reacts to that experience with pleasure.

What is Pain?

Pain is the experience of a disturbance.

The Experience of Pain

Pain takes place through an experience that acts as a stimulant that disturbs the mind. There is a sense that something is not ok and something must be done about it.

Examples of Pain

One gets rejected and feels embarrassed.

One is alone and feels lonely.

One loses and feels worthless.

The Process of Pain

Pain is a reaction to an experience: One has an experience, and then thought reacts to that experience with pain.

Conclusion

Pleasure is the experience of satisfaction and pain is the experience of a disturbance.

CHAPTER 2

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PLEASURE AND PAIN

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PLEASURE AND PAIN

In this chapter we explore the distinction between pleasure and pain by delving into their differences and seeing how those differences are connected.

How does pleasure differ to pain?

People have identified differences between pleasure and pain, and a simplistic view is to consider them opposites.

Pleasure is a **good** feeling.

Pain is a **bad** feeling.

This simplistic view does not convey the depth and complexity of pleasure and pain, nor does it give any meaningful basis for an enquiry to proceed from. What is required is for us to examine the experiences of pleasure and pain to ascertain the base assumption that inspires their activity.

The Distinction between Pleasure and Pain

The Experience of Pleasure

Pleasure takes place through an experience that acts as a stimulant that either soothes or excites. There is a sense that everything is ok and one can relax.

The Experience of Pain

Pain takes place through an experience that acts as a stimulant that disturbs the mind. There is a sense that something is not ok and something must be done about it.

The Assumption Behind Pleasure

The assumption behind pleasure is that, in that moment, everything is ok.

The Assumption Behind Pain

The assumption behind pain is that, in that moment, something is not ok.

The assumption underlying pleasure and pain produces a state of mind. That state of mind acts as the basis for our experience.

The state of mind created by Pleasure

The **assumption** that everything is ok, creates a **stable mental state**.

The state of mind created by Pain

The **assumption** that something is not ok, creates an **unstable mental state**.

Thought responds differently to those mental states. The thoughts we have compel us to act in different ways.

The Stable Mental State

When the mind is stable, it can do nothing and relax, or do something and enjoy.

The Unstable Mental State

When the mind is unstable, it is unable to do nothing without feeling restless, and is inspired to do something to alleviate the disturbance.

The Distinction between Pleasure and Pain

There is a distinction in the experience of pleasure and pain.

Pleasure:	One is satisfied
Pain:	One is disturbed

There is a distinction in the assumption behind pleasure and pain.

Pleasure:	Everything is ok
Pain:	Something is not ok

There is a distinction in the state of mind where pleasure and pain are experienced.

Pleasure:	The mind is stable
Pain:	The mind is unstable

There is a distinction in one's compulsion to act.

Pleasure:	A stable mind can relax
Pain:	An unstable mind must act (to resolve the disturbance)

Conclusion

Pleasure is a good feeling. Pain is a bad feeling.

The Experience of Pleasure soothes or excites the mind. There is a sense that everything is ok and one can relax.

The Experience of Pain disturbs the mind. There is a sense that something is not ok and something must be done about it.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOURCE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

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THE SOURCE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

In our last chapter we discussed the distinctions between pleasure and pain. We discussed how the experience, the assumption, the state of mind and the compulsion to act differs between pleasure and pain. In this chapter we will explore the source of pleasure and pain and discuss why certain experiences cause pleasure and others cause pain.

We have said that pleasure is characteristic of a mind that is stable, where everything is felt to be ok in the present moment, and the mind can relax.

We have said that pain is characteristic of a mind that is unstable, where something is felt to be wrong in the present moment, and the mind demands change.

Why is it necessary for the mind to be stable?

The mind can only function properly when it is stable.

When the mind is calm, it can think clearly.

When the mind is in pain, it cannot think clearly.

Pain disturbs the mind and compels it to act. The compulsion to act arises from the necessity of mental stability. Stability is necessary for the mind to function adequately. When the mind is unstable, it demands to be returned back to a stable state immediately.

When the mind has demonstrated that it was not able to handle a situation sufficiently it becomes disturbed. That disturbance acts as a signal for improvement and the mind demands to become better.

Loneliness is interpreted as a signal to build better connections with people.

Failure is interpreted as a signal to acquire more knowledge and skill.

Anxiety is interpreted as a signal to build more confidence.

Mental stability represents a mind that is handling the situation sufficiently, so can think clearly. From that state the mind can take part in pleasure.

Look at the beauty of the sky.

Laugh with a friend.

Everyone, to some extent, understands that the mind must be stable to function properly. So, our state of mind is of great importance.

What determines our state of mind?

What is the State of Mind?

Our **state of mind** is our **present mental state**, it is either **stable** or **unstable**.

Our state of mind can either be unstable or stable. Whether our mind is stable or unstable is dependent upon how the mind reacts to a event. There are three things involved in this:

1. The event
2. Our conditioning

3. Our reaction

The factor that determines how we react to an event is our conditioning, that is why some people like going in the water and others don't. Whether one likes or dislikes going in the water has nothing to do with the water (the event), it is a reaction based on one's conditioning. That conditioning has been put together by past experience.

Examples:

Someone who had swimming lessons from a child may feel very comfortable in the water.

Someone who almost drowned when they were younger may feel uncomfortable in the water.

This is interesting because it means we can take the same event (i.e. being in the water) and generate two different reactions which, in turn, produces two different experiences.

Examples:

Person-A

The Event: Swimming
The Conditioning: Memories of swimming as a child
The Reaction: Pleasure

The Experience: A day of fun in the pool.

Person-B

The Event: Swimming
The Conditioning: Memories of almost drowning as a child
The Reaction: Pain

The Experience: A day feeling uncomfortable and continually monitoring for danger.

What is the source of pleasure and pain?

Pleasure and pain are a reaction. The reaction is based on one's conditioning. So, the source of pleasure and pain is found in the relationship between the event and one's conditioning.

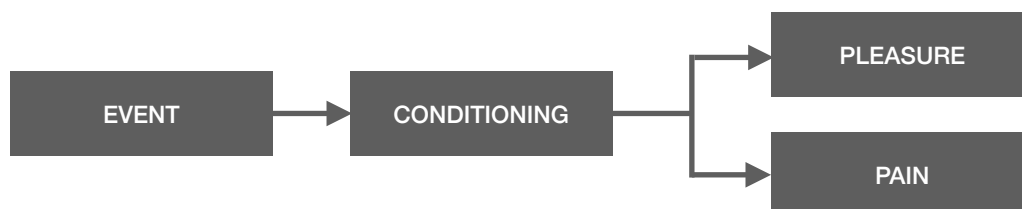


figure 1. the source of pleasure and pain

Conclusion

Pleasure and pain are a reaction. The reaction is based on one's conditioning. The interaction between an event and one's conditioning produces pleasure or pain.

CHAPTER 4

THE ORDER OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

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THE ORDER OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

Pleasure and pain are reactions to an event. The event is reacted to based on one's conditioning. The source of pleasure and pain is found in the relationship between the event and one's conditioning.

The reaction of pleasure and pain is the result of two things:

1. The event
2. Our conditioning

The event cannot be different.

A fire will always be a fire.

When you put your hand in the fire, you will always get burnt.

An insult will always be an insult.

When you hear the insult, the image you hold of yourself will always take a hit.

The conditioning can be different.

Person-A who enjoys being in the water has one type of conditioning.

Person-B who fears being in the water has another type of conditioning.

This understanding opens up the possibility for the conditioning to be changed. The conditioning is simply memory, some may refer to it as learned behaviour. Person-A has learnt to be comfortable in the water, Person-B has learnt to be uncomfortable in the water. By changing the conditioning, you change the reaction and, thereby, change the experience.

It is irrational and dangerous to consider removing pain completely or installing pleasure completely. There are times when being in the water carries very little danger and there are times when being in the water carries a high degree of danger. The conditioning must be established properly so that safe events are experienced as safe, and dangerous events are experienced as dangerous.

A person in a swimming pool must experience a low risk of danger.

A person in a rip tide must experience a high degree of danger.

What we can understand from this is that: The conditioning must be accurate. When the conditioning is accurate, the reaction is appropriate. When the reaction is appropriate, one's behaviour is coherent with the event.

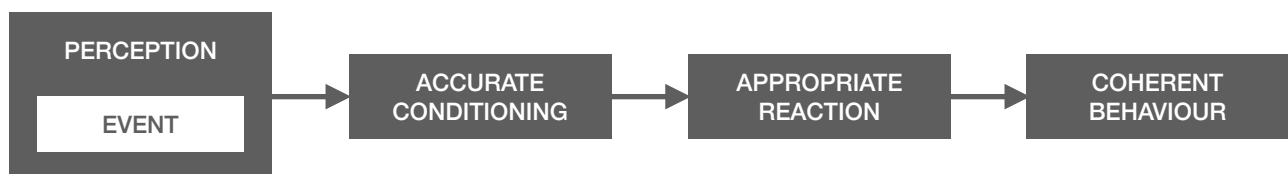


figure 1. accurate conditioning leads to coherent behaviour

Accurate conditioning is the factor that determines the orderly function of pleasure and pain. That order is not determined by whether an experience is pleasant or not, it is determined by whether one's reaction of pleasure or pain is coherent with the event.

The Order of Pleasure and Pain

The order of pleasure is when the reaction of pleasure is appropriate to the event.

The order of pain is when the reaction of pain is appropriate to the event.

Example of an Appropriate Reaction

One feels pains when they put their hand near fire.

That is an appropriate self-protective reaction that keeps the body safe.

Example of an Inappropriate Reaction

One feels afraid when they enter a swimming pool.

That is an inappropriate reaction based on the memory of almost drowning as a child.

Naturally, the mind is conditioned. It is conditioned by past experience, and those experiences determine how one reacts to an event.

Why does an appropriate reaction happen?

The basis of an appropriate reaction is determined by two factors:

1. One must be related to the event.
2. One's conditioning must be accurate.

One must be related to the event

One must have direct contact with the event.

The mind must perceive the event actually how it is, and not be carried away by imaginations that superimpose themselves on perception.

One's conditioning must be accurate

The conditioning must represent an accurate understanding of the event.

The memories one holds must not be irrationally skewed to the negative or positive.

When one's conditioning is accurate and one is having direct contact with the event, the inevitable outcome is an appropriate reaction and coherent behaviour.

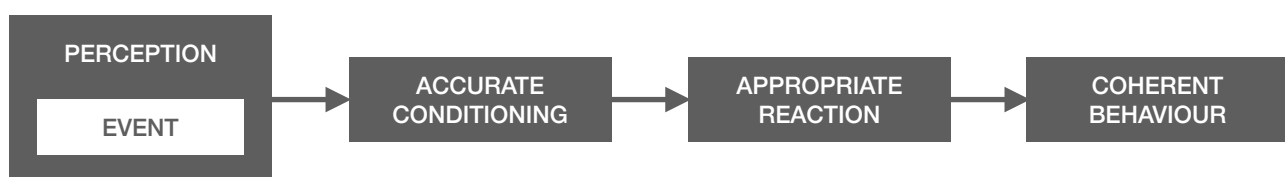


figure 2. accurate conditioning leads to coherent behaviour

Why does an inappropriate reaction happen?

The basis of an inappropriate reaction is determined by two factors:

1. One's conditioning is inaccurate.
2. False Imaginations are superimposed upon perception.

One's conditioning is inaccurate

When memory is skewed disproportionately towards either pleasure or pain, one's reaction will be inappropriate and produce incoherent behaviour.

When the knowledge one holds about the event being witnessed is wrong, one's reaction will be inappropriate and produce incoherent behaviour as well.

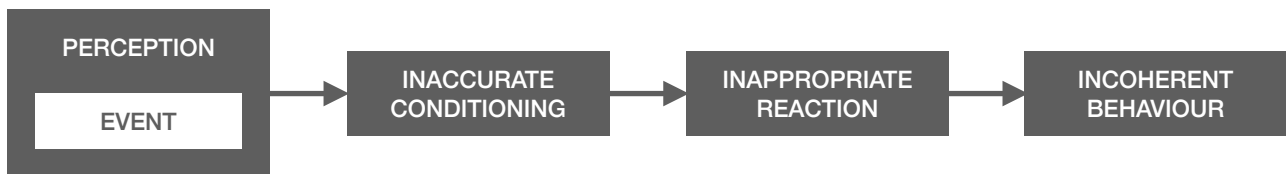


figure 3. inaccurate conditioning leads to incoherent behaviour

False Imaginations are superimposed upon perception.

When imagination is superimposed upon perception, one begins to relate to the knowledge that represents the event, rather than the event itself.

When the knowledge representing the event is correct, the imagination maintains a true relationship to the event by providing additional truthful information.

When the knowledge representing the event is incorrect, the imagination severs a true relationship to the event by providing false information.

The imagination enters perception in both obvious forms and subtle forms, this makes it impossible for the mind to immediately discern between what is the actual event and what is the imagination.

When the imagination fuses with the actual event in perception, the person's reality becomes distorted. One's reactions are inevitably the result of that distorted reality, so such a person's behaviour cannot be coherent with the event.

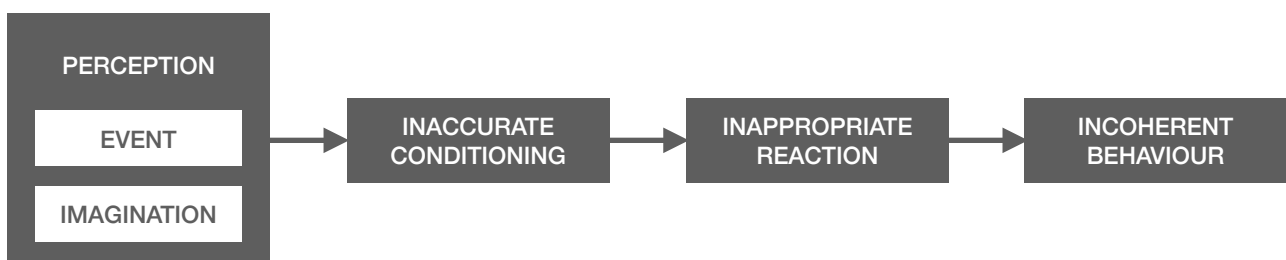


figure 4. imagination distorting perception

The Problems of Incoherent Behaviour

So, you have the following problems:

1. Imagination entering perception
2. The conditioning

Imagination Entering Perception

When the imagination enters perception and fuses with the event, reality becomes distorted and inevitably results in inappropriate reactions and incoherent behaviour.

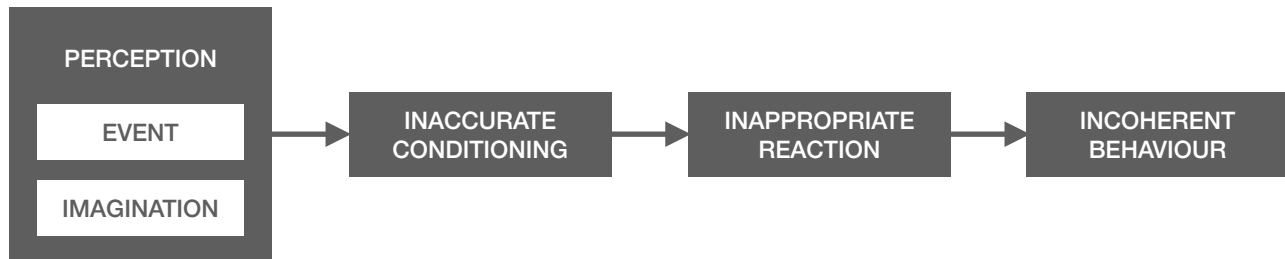


figure 5. Imagination entering perception

The Conditioning

The reaction can still be inappropriate even when one is perceiving the actual event (without imagination) but the conditioning one holds is inaccurate.

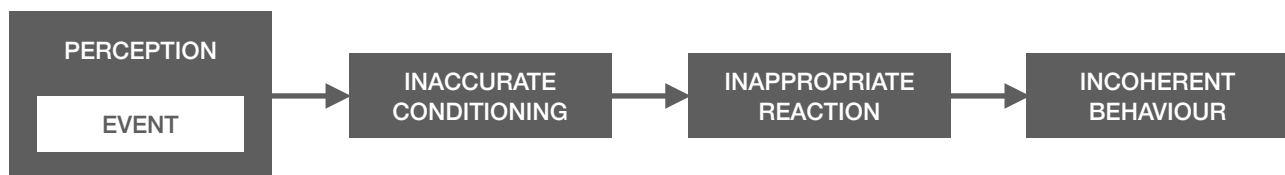


figure 6. inaccurate conditioning leads to incoherent behaviour

These are the two problems that must be solved for a person to react appropriately and behave coherently with an event.

The Requirements for Coherent Behaviour

1. The conditioning must be an accurate representation of the event.
2. Memory must not enter perception in a way that distorts perception of the event.

Memory can enter perception to provide information. That is a functional use of knowledge.

My knowledge of how to use a kettle helps me make a cup of tea.

However, when memory enters perception in a way that takes the place of reality without me realising, then it must result in an inappropriate reaction and incoherent behaviour.

Take the example of how one's imaginations of a person affect their actual relationship with that person.

Example of Insult:

You are having your second meeting with a person.

In the first meeting the person insulted you, and you have thought about it a lot.

They offer to buy some stock from you at a price you would be happy to sell at but, because of the insult, you refuse to accept the deal. You choose to decline the deal as a way to retaliate against the insult from the first meeting.

Example of Flattery:

You are having your second meeting with a person.

In the first meeting the person flattered you, and you have thought about it a lot.

They offer to buy some stock from you at a price lower than what you would be happy to sell at but, because of the flattery, you accept the deal, agreeing to sell at a discount. You choose to accept the deal as a way to reciprocate the compliment from the first meeting.

A Transformation in Human Behaviour

We are suggesting that the solution to these problems comes through understanding how pleasure operates, how pain operates, how thought operates and how perception operates.

The author cannot provide any quick solution to these problems for the reader. He cannot give you a magic sentence that will transform yourself radically. The author can only continue to enquire with you, the reader, into the mind and, as we enquire together, bring about an understanding in the reader. As the reader is understanding, that very understanding is transforming how thought operates, whether the reader realises it or not.

That is what we will continue to do through this series on pleasure and pain, and through the other series on thought, imagination, perception, and so on.

Conclusion

When the knowledge one holds about something is accurate, one's reaction to that thing is appropriate. When the reaction is appropriate, one's behaviour is coherent with the event one is experiencing.

The order of pleasure is when the reaction of pleasure is appropriate to the event.

The order of pain is when the reaction of pain is appropriate to the event.

Accurate conditioning is the factor that determines the orderly function of pleasure and pain. That order is not determined by whether an experience is pleasant or not, it is determined by whether one's reaction of pleasure or pain is coherent with the event.

CHAPTER 5

THE DISTORTION OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

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PART 1

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTORTION

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE DISTORTION OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

PART 1: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTORTION

In the last chapter we said coherent behaviour results from accurate conditioning, and incoherent behaviour results from inaccurate conditioning. In this chapter we explore how inaccurate conditioning is established in the mind.

Pleasure and pain are reactions to an event. Those reactions are based on our conditioning.

What is an Event?

The event can be anything from a day at the beach with friends, to the imagination of an argument with a neighbour.

What is our Conditioning?

Our conditioning is the experiences we have had in the past that have been recorded into memory. Those experiences can be actual events or imagined events.

Accurate and Inaccurate Conditioning

The Distinction between Accurate and Inaccurate Conditioning

When one's conditioning is accurate, one reacts appropriately to the situation.

When one's conditioning is inaccurate, one reacts inappropriately to the situation.

What is a condition?

A condition is knowledge about something that is stored in memory. A condition is a representation of a fact. That representation can be either true or false.

An accurate condition is a true representation of a fact.

An inaccurate condition is a false representation of a fact.

Example of an Accurate Condition

An accurate understanding of how much food I eat in a week allows me to pick up the right amount of food from the store.

Example of an Inaccurate Condition

The image I hold about someone who insulted me in the past disproportionately represents them as a horrible person in the present.

How is a condition established?

The brain is recording all the time. Through perception, one's experience is recorded into memory.

How is an inaccurate condition established?

When the experience one is perceiving is distorted, the recording of that experience will be distorted. The distorted recording is the inaccurate condition.

This may happen because one is having only a **partial observation** of the situation or because there are **other factors** going on in one's life at the time of that perception.

Partial Observation

Take the example of a rival tribe:

A rival tribe is hunting in your territory. When you see that, you think it is unacceptable and consider it to be an attack on your tribe. You feel that way because you are reacting only from what you have seen. You can only think from what you know, thought cannot factor in what it doesn't know.

There may be other factors that you have not seen, for instance, you have not seen the starvation that exists in the rivals village, and you have not seen that for past 48 hours the rival tribe have been hunting in their territory without sleep and without success.

In your memory is the condition:

Those irresponsible tribesmen trying to steal our food.

(rather than)

Those responsible tribesmen trying to feed their families.

Other Factors Effecting Perception

I saw a man leave the house and he looked either very tired or unwell. He drove away from his house to pick up his children from school. While he was gone, a stray dog came past looking for food and ripped open a bin bag at the front of his house. The dog ate some food and then fell asleep in the corner of the garden. The man returned in his car half an hour later with the windows down, he was having an argument with his kids. As he pulled up to his house, he saw rubbish everywhere and noticed the ripped bin bag. Instantly he flew into a rage, got the out car, picked up a big stick and hit the dog.

Here you can see the physical state of the man (tired or sick) caused him pain. That pain increased the likelihood of him feeling frustration towards his children. That pain of illness and the frustration with his children caused him to react to the observation of the ripped bin bag with a rage that demanded to express itself violently.

In that man's memory will be the condition:

There is that filthy mutt who spreads rubbish over my driveway.

(rather than)

There is that starving dog who has to fend for himself.

The distortion can arise from a single significant event or from multiple insignificant events.

Significant Event

Take the example of embarrassment:

Someone purposefully goes out of their way to embarrass you in front of a large number of people. Immediately, you feel hatred towards that person.

That single experience causes you to feel a great sense of dislike for that person.

Insignificant Events

Take the example of irritation:

Every day for several years, a work colleague eats their crisps loudly. It creates a minor irritation in you that builds up day after day into a strong loathing.

Those multiple experiences cause you to feel a great sense of dislike for that person.

Conclusion

When thought is distorted, one's behaviour will be inappropriate. Distortion takes place for many reasons:

1. The knowledge you hold is incorrect.

Example:

You hear gossip about someone and treat them differently as a result.

The gossip you believe in is not actually true.

2. The knowledge you hold is insufficient.

Example:

You see your country's army marching through the capital and feel secure.

You don't know that your country's rival has an army twice the size.

3. The pain resulting from one experience affects an unrelated experience.

Example:

An argument with your wife at home causes you to be impatient with someone at work.

4. The pleasure resulting from one experience affects an unrelated experience.

Example:

You've just won £500 on a scratch card, so you overlook the taxi driver overcharging you as you get out the cab.

CHAPTER 6

THE DISTORTION OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

—

PART 2

THE CONSEQUENCE OF DISTORTION

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE DISTORTION OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

PART 2: THE CONSEQUENCE OF DISTORTION

In the last chapter we discussed how inaccurate conditioning can be established in the mind. In this chapter we discuss the consequences of having inaccurate conditioning.

An inaccurate condition is a false representation of a fact. When one meets an event, that condition forms the basis for our reaction. When the condition is inaccurate, our reaction must be inappropriate and produce incoherent behaviour.

The Consequence of Inaccurate Conditioning

The consequence of inaccurate conditioning is a distortion in how one reacts to an event. That distortion expresses itself in many forms:

1. People feel pleasure where there should be pain.
2. People feel pain where there should be pleasure.
3. People feel nothing where there should be pain.
4. People feel nothing where there should be pleasure.
5. People feel pleasure where there should be nothing.
6. People feel pain where there should be nothing.

To help clarify these forms, let's use some examples:

People feel pleasure where there should be pain

Example:

People get pleasure from hurting other people.

Why?

The other person is represented in one's mind as being fundamentally different to them. Person-A does not see Person-B as just like them: a person who is insecure, confused, scared, trying to protect the one's they love, and who wants to be loved themselves.

People feel pain where there should be pleasure

Example:

Someone breaks a world record for the 100m sprint, but I came in second place. I dwell in my own loss rather than rejoice in humanity's success.

Why?

A person prioritises the security found through self-identity to be higher than the achievements of man.

People feel nothing where there should be pain

Example:

People walk past someone who is homeless without feeling anything.

Why?

One may have preconceived notions about homeless people that interprets any homeless person as someone not worthy of one's time. One may also be so burdened with their own problems, that they have no space to incorporate the suffering of a stranger into their lives.

People feel nothing where there should be pleasure

Example:

Someone shows another kindness, but they feel nothing and don't reciprocate the gesture.

Why?

Being hurt by someone in the past affects how we meet people in the present. One may misinterpret the kindness of another as a devious act of manipulation. Past experience has taught us to guard against the kindness of others, expecting them to only act that way because they want something. Feeling nothing can be a self-protective reaction that prevents us from becoming attached to, or being influenced by, another person.

People feel pleasure where there should be nothing

Example:

One carries a good luck charm with them wherever they go.

Why?

The mind associates unrelated pleasant experiences and beneficial outcomes to a physical object. That means, the mere remembrance of having that object in one's possession brings a sense of comfort to the mind.

People feel pain where there should be nothing

Example:

One has a fear of heights.

Why?

One has a fear of heights because, when they are up high, they don't trust themselves to not jump off.

Conclusion

The consequence of having a distorted pleasure or pain reaction is inappropriate behaviour.

The distortion expresses itself in many forms:

1. People feel pleasure where there should be pain.
2. People feel pain where there should be pleasure.

3. People feel nothing where there should be pain.
4. People feel nothing where there should be pleasure.
5. People feel pleasure where there should be nothing.
6. People feel pain where there should be nothing.

CHAPTER 7

THE DISTORTION OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

—

PART 3

WHEN DISTORTION BECOMES REALITY

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE DISTORTION OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

PART 3: WHEN DISTORTION BECOMES REALITY

In the last chapters we discussed how inaccurate conditioning was established and the consequences of holding inaccurate conditioning. In this chapter we explore how the conditioning we hold forms our experience of reality. We also discuss how the reality we experience can appear so convincing, even when the conditioning we hold is not true.

The Reality of our Conditioning

Our conditioning determines what we see, how we react, how we act, and what we think.

One sees an event based on one's conditioning.

One reacts to an event based on one's conditioning.

One acts towards an event based on one's conditioning.

One thinks about an event based on one's conditioning.

The perception, the reaction, the action and the thought all combine to form a coherent experience. That experience is what we call reality. Our experience of reality can be either true or false.

When the conditioning we hold accurately represents the world, we experience a true reality.

When the conditioning we hold inaccurately represents the world, we experience a false reality.

Coherence and Incoherence

The accuracy of our conditioning determines whether our behaviour is coherent or incoherent.

When we hold accurate conditioning, our behaviour will be coherent.

When we hold inaccurate conditioning, our behaviour will be incoherent.

Incoherence is identified through not getting the result you expect.

Example:

You go to open a door and realise it is locked.

Incoherence is identified through relationship.

- Our relationship with the world
- Our relationship with others
- Our relationship with ourselves

Our relationship with the world

Example:

We reach into our pocket expecting to find our phone, but realise we left it somewhere else.

Our relationship with others

Example:

We greet someone kindly expecting them to reciprocate the gesture, but they act aggressively.

Our relationship with ourselves

Example:

We stay at home expecting to have a relaxing evening, but feel lonely instead.

Incoherence is acknowledged through conflict.

The conflict between 'what is' and 'what should be'.

Coherence is acknowledged through harmony.

My actions are coherent with my expectations and do not produce any unintended consequences.

To have a mind that is able to live in harmony with itself, others, and the world is a factor of high importance. To move from a state of conflict to a state of harmony requires four things:

1. The ability to perceive incoherence.
2. The ability to identify the knowledge that must be changed.
3. The ability to learn.
4. The ability to change.

Perceiving Incoherence and Acknowledging How we are Conditioned

Our conditioning effects what we see, how we react, how we act and what we think. These combine into the experience we call reality.

Coherence shows us that our reality is true.

Incoherence show us that our reality is false.

We do not know our reality is false until we identify some part of it that is incoherent. We must be able to identify incoherence to make the parts of our reality that are false align with truth.

By understanding how our experience of reality is built, we can understand the factors that inhibit our ability to identify incoherence in our daily lives. Our inability to identify incoherence can be the result of our lifestyle or a deep refusal in ourselves to change.

Identifying Incoherence

Take the example of someone with a phobia of swimming. The reality for that person is that water is terrifying.

When they think about getting in the pool they feel afraid.

When they see the pool they feel afraid.

When they walk towards the pool they feel afraid.

When they are in the pool they feel afraid.

What the person thinks, what the person feels, how the person reacts, and how the person acts are all coherent with each other and form that person's reality.

The person is only able to identify the incoherence of their own behaviour when they observe other people. They observe other people enjoying their time in the pool and not exhibiting any fear.

That perception enables the person to discern that their behaviour is not a true relationship with the pool and that there are other ways the pool can be interacted with. They acknowledge that the fear is a reality for them, but not a reality for other people. So, the fear they experience is not universally true and can be otherwise.

Failing to Identify Incoherence

Take the example of someone who believes in a religion and follows its dogma.

They believe what has been written in the religious text.

They behave in accordance with the religious doctrine.

They feel the presence of God.

In the example of the phobia of water, the person was able to identify incoherence through observing other people behaving differently. However, when a religious believer stays within a religious community, they do not see others behaving differently. Thus, the factor that could offer a perception of incoherence, actually becomes a factor that reinforces the appearance of coherence. Others who hold similar beliefs:

Think the same thoughts.

Wear the same clothes.

Act the same way.

Say the same things.

This gives one's conditioning an appearance of coherence that originates outside of oneself. This forms a powerful sense of reality.

The Willingness to Change

When what one perceives, how one reacts, how one acts, what one thinks, how other people act, and how other people think all combine coherently, it creates a powerful sense of reality. That reality is highly resilient to change.

When the reality has been created through conditioning that is true, everything works well.

When the reality has been created through conditioning that is false (but appears to be true), everything doesn't work well, and it becomes very difficult to change it.

For change to take place, the factor responsible for change must be so vital that it breaks through one's reality and shows one the incoherence. Because so many factors contribute to the illusion of coherence, the perception of incoherence must be so fundamental that it disproves every factor propping up the false reality.

Even when the incoherence is perceived, there are a network of ways the mind may resist that perception to avoid the discomfort associated with changing one's current conditioning. One may:

Reject the perception as something false.

Distort the perception to accommodate their own conditioning.

Accept the perception, but continue their habitual behaviour.

The Danger of Distorted Reality

Our conditioning is built from knowledge. We derive knowledge from the perception of our experience. Experience forms the basis of what we see, what we learn and what we know. Our behaviour is the response of knowledge: The knowledge we have acquired in the past responds to what we perceive in the present, and that determines our behaviour. This whole process covers what we refer to as reality.

When our conditioning is inaccurate, our behaviour is incoherent, and creates conflict at some level of existence. The conflict takes place either within ourselves, between ourselves and others, between ourselves and nature, or between groups of people.

Our conditioning is not a danger so long as incoherence can be identified and, once incoherence has been identified, change is not resisted.

When incoherence cannot be identified or change is resisted, there is danger. The danger arises out of the inevitable violence that comes from a relationship in conflict.

Both the inability to perceive incoherence, and the resistance to change in light of perceiving incoherence, prevent security by sustaining the fragmentation of society.

The Continuity of Distorted Reality

Once the condition has been established in society, both in the minds of the people and in the physical structures through which society functions, the condition becomes very rigid and widely accepted. The current generations then condition the coming generations to the same pattern, and the condition continues through time.

The Totality of Distorted Reality

A false condition can produce incorrect perceptions, incorrect reactions, incorrect actions, and incorrect thoughts. The false condition can be embodied by other people too. This means you observe others behaving the same way you do, and thinking the same things you think. All these factors cohere together to create a false reality. That experience is so total. It is worth taking a moment to contemplate just how total that experience is for such a person because it has great significance for your own life.

Irrationality Propagates Distorted Reality

When one's lifestyle does not provide any perception of incoherence, it is not irrational to maintain one's conditioning, it is inevitable. However, once incoherence has been observed, any resistance to changing in accordance with it is irrational. Irrationality can be favoured for many reasons.

Irrationality can be adopted to maintain comfort.

One's life may be set up in a way where the incoherence tears at its very foundation of its structure.

If one lives in a religious community, has a religious family, and a religious job, then a perception of incoherence in relation to that religion could impact many things.

Irrationality can be adopted to feel a sense of freedom.

You see scientists who are totally rational in their scientific work, but are totally irrational in spiritual matters. It appears they derive a sense of freedom in being able to think and believe whatever they want.

You see this in business as well. Business owners think rationally with respect to their business, but behave totally irrationally in their leisure time.

Conclusion

Our conditioning determines what we see, how we react, how we act, and what we think.

The accuracy of our conditioning determines whether our behaviour is coherent or incoherent.

When we hold accurate conditioning, our behaviour will be coherent.

When we hold inaccurate conditioning, our behaviour will be incoherent.

To correct our behaviour we must be able to identify coherence and incoherence.

Incoherence is acknowledged through conflict.

The conflict between 'what is' and 'what should be'.

Coherence is acknowledged through harmony.

My actions are coherent with my expectations and do not produce any unintended consequences.

To move from a state of incoherence to a state of coherence requires four things:

1. The ability to perceive incoherence.
2. The ability to identify the knowledge that must be changed.
3. The ability to learn.
4. The ability to change.

CHAPTER 8

THE UTILITY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE UTILITY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

When the knowledge we hold is not an accurate representation of a thing, our relationship with that thing is distorted. The distortion effects how we react to the thing.

When our knowledge is correct, our reaction is correct.

When our knowledge is incorrect, our reaction is incorrect.

We are only able to discern that the knowledge we hold is incorrect after we perceive incoherence in our behaviour. Prior to that perception, the knowledge we held was false, but we acted as if it was true.

One always believes they are right, until they see they were wrong.

That means, we can live in a false reality believing it to be a true reality. So, our reactions cannot be used as a measure to discern what is universally true or false. In this chapter, we explore the significance of that, and understand what place our reactions have in the understanding of ourselves, others and the world.

The Reaction of Pleasure and Pain

Our conditioning causes a multitude of pleasurable and painful reactions. Our conditioning can be wrong without us realising it, so pleasure and pain cannot be taken as the measure to determine whether our way of thinking and behaving is true or false.

Example:

A reaction of pleasure does not ensure something is truly good.

A reaction of pain does not ensure something is truly bad.

The Utility of Pleasure and Pain

When we acknowledge that pleasure and pain cannot be used as a means to understand what is universally true or false, we have to ask ourselves what pleasure and pain can be used for.

The reason we say that pleasure and pain cannot be used as a measure of universal truth is because we see different people, having different responses, to the same event based on their conditioning.

Person-A meets **Event-X** with Conditioning-A and reacts with **pleasure**.

Person-B meets **Event-X** with Conditioning-B and reacts with **pain**.

The reaction of pleasure and pain cannot be used to understand what is true for everybody, but they can be used to understand what is true for oneself.

Pleasure and pain have a true relationship to how one is conditioned.

Person-A meets **Event-X** with Conditioning-A and **reacts** with **pleasure**.

Person-A meets **Event-X** with Conditioning-A and does **not react** with **pain**.

What is the utility of pleasure and pain?

Pleasure and pain do not have a true relationship with what is actually true, but they do have a true relationship with how one is conditioned.

Pleasure and pain do not convey the true state of the universe.

Pleasure and pain do convey the true state of one's conditioning.

Pleasure and pain can be used as a means to uncover how we are conditioned. The conditioning can be:

- true
- false

Irrespective of whether the conditioning is true or false, pleasure and pain will arise out of that conditioning.

When Person-A has **Condition-A**, he will respond to Event-X with **pleasure**.

When Person-A has **Condition-B**, it will respond to Event-X with **pain**.

There is a 1-to-1 relationship with the condition and the reaction (of pleasure or pain). This enables one to experience pleasure or pain, and deduce how one is conditioned.

When someone says to me 'I am ugly' and I get hurt, it shows me that I hold some security in the idea of me being beautiful.

When someone says to me 'I am poor' and I feel nothing, it shows me that I don't hold security in the idea of me being rich.

The utility of pleasure and pain is that they allow us to understand a truth of ourselves, the truth of how we are conditioned.

Understanding Others

The observation of pleasure and pain assist in understanding oneself. The understanding gathered from those perceptions is not localised to oneself, but covers the whole of humanity.

A particular condition always results in the same reaction.

Condition-A will always result in Reaction-A.

The same condition produces the same reaction, irrespective of the person who embodies that condition.

When any human has **Condition-A**, they will respond to Event-X with **pleasure**.

When any human has **Condition-B**, they will respond to Event-X with **pain**.

This point can be expanded beyond even pleasure and pain to cover any conscious experience.

The moment you understand a truth of yourself, you simultaneously understand that truth in the whole of mankind.

Understanding Truth

Pleasure and pain do not provide universal truth. However, the understanding that **pleasure and pain do not provide universal truth** is, itself, a **universal truth**.

Conclusion

The reaction of pleasure and pain can be distorted without one being aware of it. This means our reactions cannot be a guaranteed way to discern what is universally good or bad in the world around us.

While our reactions to something may be inappropriate or disproportionate, the reaction is a fact in itself. Irrespective of whether the reaction was right or wrong, it shows us how our mind is conditioned.

A reaction is an honest expression of how the mind is conditioned.

The utility of pleasure and pain is the means to uncover how we are conditioned.

CHAPTER 9

THE FIELD OF DISTORTION

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE FIELD OF DISTORTION

We have recently discussed how our reactions can be distorted. In this chapter we explore the area of life where the distortion occurs. It appears that distortion does not take place at the level of the body, but at the level of the mind.

Pleasure and Pain at the Level of the Body

The body experiences pleasure and pain.

When we are hungry, we feel pain.

When we eat, we feel pleasure.

The experiences of pleasure and pain (that are related to the body) have helped us to successfully navigate the physical world. These reactions have helped us acquire safety and avoid danger. Throughout evolution, man has been both physically and psychologically conditioned to these dangers.

Physical Conditioning

When I put my hand in fire, I feel pain.

Psychological Conditioning

When I hear a lion roar, I feel primal danger.

As time goes by, the objects in the world stay relatively fixed.

I don't see a lion chasing an antelope on a Monday, and then on the Wednesday see it's become vegan.

I don't feed my cat in the evening and wake up to find its grown wings.

In this way, the reactions of pleasure and pain (in relation to the body) remain constant.

Pleasure and Pain at the Level of the Mind

Contrary to the consistency of the bodily reactions, we notice that the reactions of pleasure and pain related to the mind change rapidly.

Example:

Gender identity was not considered by 99% of people, then over the course of a few years it became an issue everyone was discussing.

We need to explore why there is a difference between body reactions and mental reactions.

Why is there this difference?

The body is effected by fire.

The body remains constant over time.

The fire remains constant over time.

The factor that remains constant over time is the condition. The body has a certain form, quality and working structure, as does the fire. That is the condition. Because the condition of the body and the fire remain constant, the relationship between them remains constant over time as well.

The condition responsible for our mental reactions is not the body, so what is it?

What is the condition responsible for our mental reactions?

The condition responsible for our mental reactions is the understanding we have about life. As that understanding changes, our reactions change.

Because our understanding of life can change rapidly, our reactions can change rapidly as well. We can form an understanding of a topic we previously knew nothing about, and become very passionate about it in a short space of time.

We can enter a cinema with no understanding of climate change, and leave the cinema one hour later feeling that climate change is the most important issue of our lives.

The difference between our bodily reactions and our mental reactions is the condition that is being effected:

The condition effecting bodily reactions is the body.

The condition effecting mental reactions is our knowledge.

Our reactions, at the level of the mind, are determined by our understanding of life. Whether we find something pleasurable or painful is determined by the knowledge we have. Knowledge is acquired through the perception of our experience, and this creates an understanding of life. Our experience is limited based on the information we have access to and, for this reason, knowledge differs between people to varying extents and produces differences in behaviour. This fact has the capacity to divide people.

The Contradiction of Information

Person-A thinks one thing, and Person-B thinks the opposite.

The Contradiction of Importance

Person-A has knowledge of Topic-A and feels Topic-A to be most important.

Person-B has knowledge of Topic-B and feels Topic-B to be most important.

To handle the fragmentary nature of knowledge, we must understand the activity of thought fundamentally. By understanding thought fundamentally, we are able to identify the experiences we have as resulting from:

the knowledge we hold.

(rather than)

a truth that exists independent to our knowledge.

This understanding allows knowledge to work in a field of freedom rather than a field of conviction.

Example:

Person-A has knowledge of Topic-A and feels Topic-A to be most important.

When Person-A does not understand thought sufficiently

Person-A acknowledges that the thoughts he has about Topic-A are the result of the knowledge he holds.

Person-A experiences the sense of importance he feels about Topic-A to be a real fact of life.

When Person-A does understand thought sufficiently

Person-A acknowledges that the thoughts he has about Topic-A are the result of the knowledge he holds.

Person-A acknowledges that the sense of importance he feels about Topic-A is also the result of the knowledge he has.

Understanding thought means to comprehend the depth and complexity of the experiences thought creates in one's own mind. The way this understanding creates freedom is that those experiences are observed with a sense of 'can be otherwise' rather than 'cannot be otherwise'.

When an experience is thought to arise independently from the knowledge one holds, it has a sense of reality that implies 'cannot be otherwise'.

When an experience is thought to be the result of knowledge, one knows knowledge can change, so it is met with a sense of 'can be otherwise'.

Conviction is a fixed attitude, whereas freedom is a flexible attitude.

Freedom is not only an attitude with which one must observe their own mind, but an attitude with which one must communicate with others. Freedom is a seriousness that expresses itself as a willingness to listen and uncover truth.

Conclusion

Distortion does not take place at the level of the body, but at the level of the mind.

Example: The Body

Anyone who puts their hand in fire will feel the pain of getting burned.

Example: The Mind

One person loves being in the water, another person hates it.

The body is the basis for our physical reactions and its structure persists through time.

Our understanding of life is the basis for our mental reactions and its structure is able to adapt rapidly in light of new information.

The understanding of how thought operates is directly proportional to the freedom of knowledge.

CHAPTER 10

THE CENTRE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE CENTRE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

In the mind there is a centre. It is experienced as a very sharp point. It is a centre of activity and it is highly sensitive.

That centre feels pleasure.

That centre feels pain.

Resisting Pain

We identify that the centre is vulnerable, so we try to protect it from pain. To protect it, we build images in the mind. The purpose of those images is to act as a wall between what we experience and the centre. The images act as a wall by filtering the information that comes into the centre.

Example 1:

Suppose I feel insecure, so I build an image of myself as strong, moral, and intelligent.

In extension to the image of myself, I build modes of behaviour that immediately respond to dismiss and invalidate any insult against my character.

Example 2:

Suppose I feel lost in life and begin to search for a solution. I come across a religion, and the people there make me feel cared for and part of a community, so I join the religion.

In extension to the image of religion, I create responses that immediately reject any contradiction to the beliefs I hold.

Allowing Pleasure

We utilise that centre to experience great pleasure.

To experience pleasure we take down our walls and allow that centre to be stimulated.

We suspend our contradictions, and pursue the direction offering pleasure.

We throw caution to the wind, and allow ourselves to feel.

Pleasure is experienced as a flood of stimulation.

That pleasure creates its own form of energy, giving a great sense of liveliness. The energy is experienced as something immense that nothing else compares to. It is considered to be a peak experience.

Pleasure is experienced as a sense of freedom.

When the mind lets itself go, it feels unrestricted and spontaneous.

The intensity and freedom felt during pleasure gives it a great importance in the mind. The mind actively refuses to give it up and, in many cases, opts to build its life around it.

The Career of Pleasure and Pain

You see the process of pleasure and pain in the career of a sexual relationship.

The man and woman begin their relationship as strangers. They both have their guards up to protect themselves from the hurt they have experienced in past relationships.

The 'guard' is a refusal to build an image about the other person.

To enable access to more pleasure, they begin to drop their guards. As the relationship develops they continue to drop their guards to enable access to as much pleasure as possible, in as many different ways as possible.

Pleasure in companionship

Pleasure in reassurance

Pleasure in sex

The extent to which we feel pleasure is the extent to which we have built an image about the other person, attached ourselves to it and begun to depend upon it.

Opening ourselves to pleasure means opening ourselves to pain. Trust becomes an important issue because it is the way we assess the likelihood of the pleasure transitioning to pain.

The bond of the relationship is actually formed through pleasure. Each attaches to the other with the expectation of deriving particular forms of pleasure.

Perhaps the man envisages sexual pleasure, and the woman envisages financial security.

When that pleasure dries up, the relationship begins to deteriorate and the structure that was once responsible for pleasure becomes the structure that is now responsible for pain.

This is why, at the end of a relationship, we see the person differently. At the beginning the relationship we experienced that person in a state of pleasure relating to ourselves that were also in a state of pleasure. At the end, we experience the other in a state of pain relating to ourselves in a state of pain. That is why there is such a huge explosion at the end.

Conclusion

The mind is setup in a way where knowledge is sitting there and waiting to respond in ways that stimulate that centre with pleasure and protect that centre from pain.

CHAPTER 11

THE MEMORY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE MEMORY OF PLEASURE AND PAIN

In this chapter we explore how pleasure and pain are recorded into memory.

To begin as simply as possible, let's take an example where pleasure and pain are excluded. In this example, only the event one is perceiving is recorded. The emotional response one has to the event has been excluded.

Everything begins with an experience. That experience could be the observation of a tree, the hearing of a bird chirp, the tasting of a fruit, and so on.



figure 1. experience

The experience is perceived.

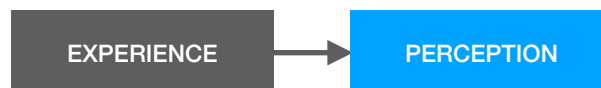


figure 2. perception

The perception is recorded into memory.



figure 3. memory

Let's take some examples to clarify this process.



figure 4. the process

Example 1: Meeting a girl

We experience the girl, we perceive the girl, and the perception of the girl is recorded into memory.



figure 5. the process of meeting a girl

Example 2: Being at a festival

We experience the festival, we perceive the festival, and the perception of the festival is recorded into memory.

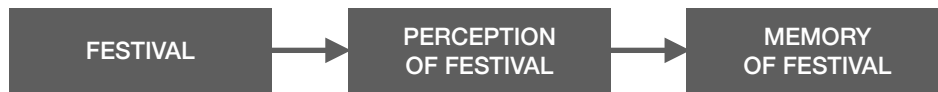


figure 6. the process of being as a festival

This is a basic overview of how an experience is recorded. The example only demonstrates the event being recorded, but the recording is more complex than that.

When we experience an event, we have a reaction to that event. The reaction will either be some form of pleasure or pain.

In the case of pleasure, one experiences an event that soothes or excites oneself.

Example of Pleasure

One sees a magnificent view and experiences beauty.

In the case of pain, one experiences an event that disturbs oneself.

Example of Pain

One gets rejected and feels embarrassed.

The mind simultaneously experiences the event and one's reaction to the event.

The mind will experience the event that caused pleasure and the feeling of pleasure simultaneously.

The mind will experience the event that caused pain and the feeling of pain simultaneously.

Whatever is perceived is recorded. Because the event and the reaction are amalgamated into one experience, they are recorded as one memory. That is why you will have pleasurable and painful memories: The event is recorded along with the emotion that responded to the event.

Take the example of meeting a girl you like.



figure 7. the process

NOTE: We will represent the event by using turquoise boxes and the reaction of pleasure by using grey boxes.

You meet a girl and your mind reacts to produce a sensation of beauty. Together, those two sensations form your experience.

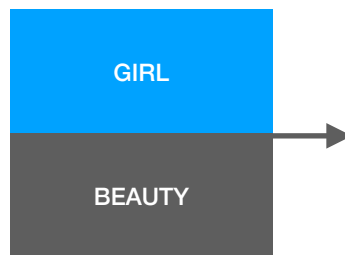


figure 8. the sensation of beauty

You perceive the experience of seeing the girl and the of feeling beauty at the same moment.

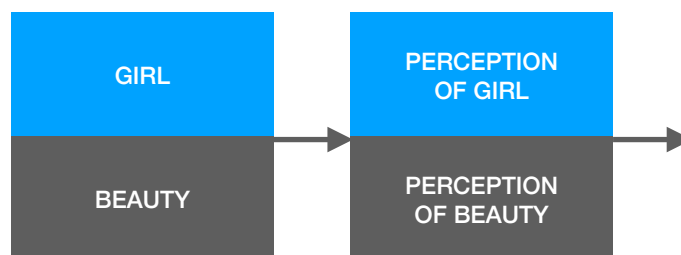


figure 9. the perception of beauty

The perception of the girl and the perception of beauty are recorded as one memory.

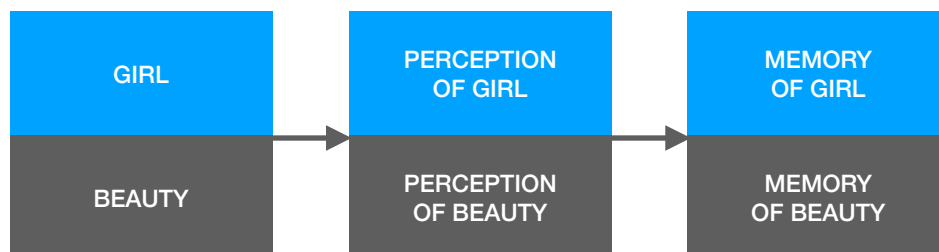


figure 10. the memory of beauty

You can prove this to be the case by remembering a meaningful experience you had in the past. When you remember the experience, both the event and the emotional reaction you had at the time enter your mind together.

When you remember a meal with friends, the event and the relaxation you felt come into the mind together.

When you remember an argument you had with someone, the event and the anger you felt come into the mind together.

The amalgamation of the event and the emotional response in memory helps us to navigate life by using the past reactions of pleasure and pain to guide our present decisions and actions.

Conclusion

Memory contains knowledge. Knowledge is acquired through perception.

The perception of sensation is the recording of knowledge into memory.

Any sensation that is perceived is recorded into memory.

Examples:

When you perceive a person's face, their face is recorded into memory.

When you feel pleasure from a compliment, the pleasure that responded to the compliment is recorded into memory.

CHAPTER 12

THE DESIRE FOR PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE DESIRE FOR PLEASURE

In the last chapter we discussed how pleasure and pain were recorded into memory. In this chapter we discuss the desire for pleasure that arises from that memory. There is no desire for pain. Some people seek the pleasure in pain, but that is still the desire for pleasure. The opposite of desiring pleasure is fearing pain.

Man desires pleasure.

Man fears pain.

The Desire for Pleasure

Once an event has been recorded into memory and accompanied with a pleasurable emotion, the mind desires to experience that event again in the hope of experiencing the pleasure again.

Example 1:

You went to a festival, had an amazing time, and had lots of interesting conversations.

That event was recorded into memory and you desire to go to the festival again.

Example 2:

You went to a restaurant, ate some delicious food, and the waiters were very pleasant.

That event was recorded into memory and you desire to go to the restaurant again.

Once a pleasurable memory has been established, the mind has knowledge of a means by which to acquire pleasure. At this point, the mind begins calling out for that experience again. That is what we refer to as desire.

Desire is the demand to experience something again.

The Process of Desire

The mind wants pleasure. To get pleasure the mind remembers a past experience that brought it pleasure. When those memories are brought into the mind, the mind relives the event and the pleasure again. The remembrance is an imagination.

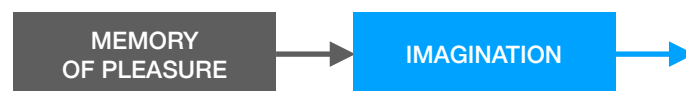


figure 1. imagination

As the mind continues to remember the event, desire intensifies. Once the desire reaches a certain intensity, the mind makes a decision to experience the event again.



figure 2. decision

At the point of decision, the energy that was put into desire is cut and transferred to the faculties that make experiencing the event again possible.

Examples:

One gets in their car and goes somewhere.

One goes into the shop and buys an item.

One goes online and books a ticket.



figure 3. action

The Selective Nature of Desire

Desire, in its very nature, is selective. By this we mean that the experience one desires is not a complete representation of the experience, but a partial representation of the experience. Desire presents to the mind the remembrances of the past experience that brought one pleasure, but desires neglects to present to the mind the past experiences that brought one pain.

The intention of desire is not to represent truth, but merely to acquire pleasure.

The intention of desire is to convince thought to make a decision to act in a way that will receive pleasure. The mind wants pleasure, but it has to convince the reasoning faculties to act in accordance with that demand. It does this by presenting to the mind a biased version of the experience.

Take the example of a man who desires a woman.

The fact of relationships is that they involve pleasure and pain.

In relationship with another person, one experiences tenderness, care and affection.

In relationship with another person, one experiences arguments, confusion and sadness.

Lets say a man meets a woman and begins to desire her.

The content of his desire (the imaginations he has) is not a complete representation of what it means to be in a relationship with that woman, it is a partial representation that focuses solely on the pleasurable aspects he wants from the relationship.

The man has imaginations of having sex with the woman.

The man does not have imaginations of having arguments with the woman.

Desire expresses **what one wants from the experience**, not **what the experience actually is**.

Desire is not a complete representation of the experience one longs for, it is only a partial representation of the experience that focuses on the specific parts of the experience that bring one pleasure.

Desire is the representation of an experience that is bias towards pleasure.

Many acknowledge that the mind desires pleasure and not pain, but many don't realise that desire is bias in the very imaginations it produces in the mind. Desire actively neglects to recollect the memories that brought us pain and produces only the memories that provided us with pleasure.

We know how interconnected the memories we have are, and we know that painful memories are not stored in a separate location to pleasurable memories in the brain. All memories are in the same bucket and interconnected in a way that is truly astounding when you go into it.

That means that the process of desire is not operating from one part of memory, but is actively energising both pleasurable and painful memories, but filtering out the painful memories without one being consciously aware of it. The fact that one is not aware of desire doing this, means that the process of desire is self-deceptive in its nature.

Desire is a distortion and must create illusion.

Imagine a criminal that is solely focused on the reward of his crime and neglects to consider the potential punishment for his actions. Such a mind is incapable of making a rational decision.

Conclusion

The desire for pleasure arises from memory.

A past event that produced a pleasurable emotion is recorded into memory. Following that, the mind desires to experience that event again in the hope of experiencing the pleasure again.

Desire is the demand to have something: an object or experience. Desire intensifies through the repetitive remembrance of a past event that brought pleasure. Once desire reaches a certain intensity, a decision is made, and one acts to get what they want.

CHAPTER 13

THE URGE FOR PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE URGE FOR PLEASURE

In the previous chapters we discussed how pleasure was recorded in the mind and how, when pleasure has been recorded, the mind starts calling out for it again through the process of desire. Through desire one feels oneself being convinced to indulge in the pleasure and, as desire continues, the urge to indulge intensifies. Once desire has reached a certain point, the urge to indulge in pleasure appears irresistible. In this chapter we explore the urge that compels one to act in accordance with the desire.

Desire begins by establishing the demand to have something.

I see a woman and desire sex.

I see a politician and desire power.

I see a celebrity and desire attention.

In these examples, **sex**, **power**, and **attention** would be referred to as the **object of desire**.

The experience of desire is made up of three parts.

- The images appearing in the mind.
- The mind's emotional state.
- The urge to act.

The images appearing in the mind

Throughout the process of desire, images appear in the mind. Those images are built using the memories one has acquired through experience. We said that desire filters out the painful memories and only constructs new images based on pleasurable memories. The memories accessed by desire are the memories that relate to the object of desire.

The mind's emotional state

One's emotional state is the result of:

1. The images appearing in the mind
2. The mind's reaction to perceiving those images

The images appearing in the mind

The images appearing in the mind have been constructed from pleasurable memories. This means the images already contain pleasure within them. Those images are **not** verbal or pictorial imaginations void of emotion.

The mind's reaction to perceiving those images

In addition to the images coming into the mind with pleasure imbued into them already, the mind is also conditioned to react with pleasure when it perceives those images.

This is because the mind that created those images is the same mind that is reacting to those images. A mind that creates an image of pleasure must react to that image with pleasure.

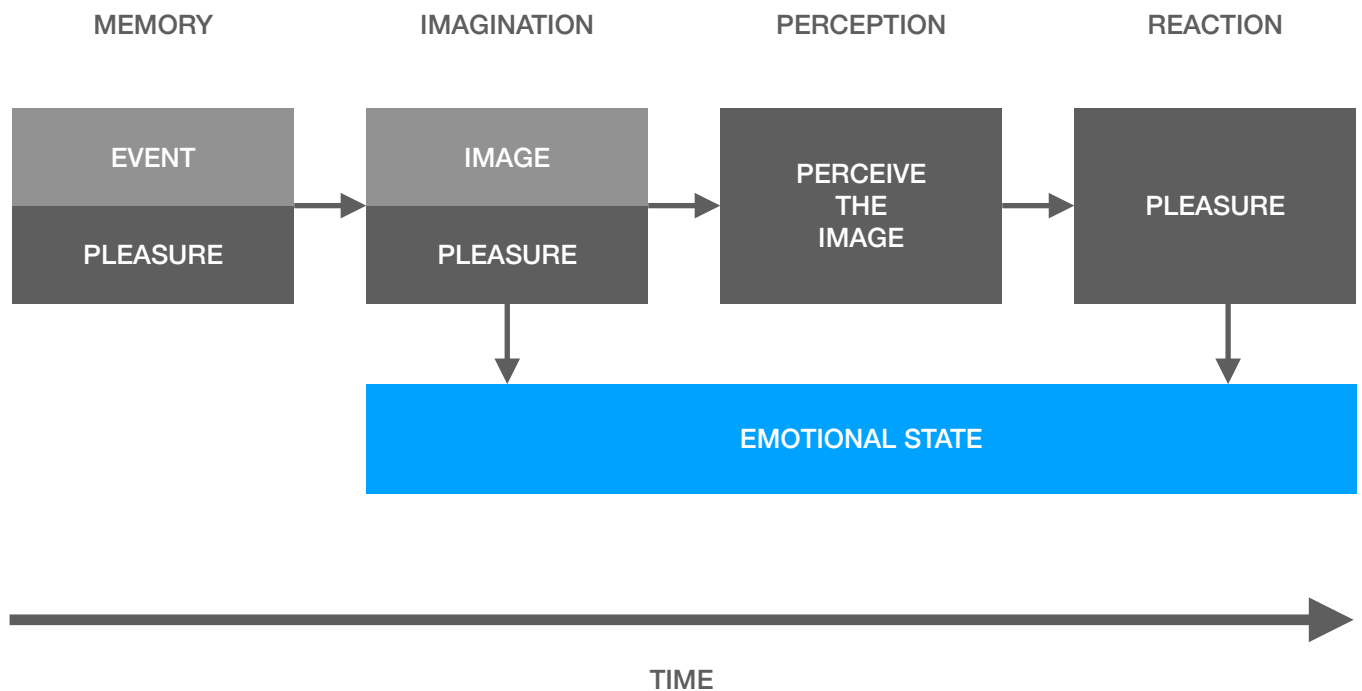


figure 1. the reaction to perceiving images

Over time the emotional state builds up. Each instance of pleasure leaves a residue that creates one's overall emotional state.

Simile:

You can think of it like dropping coloured dye into a bowl of clear water.

The bowl of clear water represents the emotional state.

The coloured dye represents pleasure.

Each time an image of pleasure enters the mind, it is like a droplet of coloured dye entering the bowl of clear water. As more droplets are added, the clear water transitions from clear to coloured.

The urge to act

The urge to act is central to the process responsible for making a decision. The urge moves the mind towards a decision, either:

- A. The decision to carry out the demand made by desire.
- B. The decision to not carry out the demand made by desire.

You can think of the urge as being on a spectrum between resisting and conceding.



figure 2. the spectrum between resist and concede

The urge is energised until a decision is made. Once the decision is made, the energy is no longer given to the imagination but sent to the areas of the mind required to carry out the decision.

The Illusion of the Urge

The mind believes the urge to be a rational decision-making instrument. Because the mind believes that, it perceives the urge as that, uses the urge like that, and trusts the urge to be that. This means the mind believes the process of deciding to be rational, and the outcome of the decision to be rational as well.

The mind may later consider the decision it made to be irrational but, at the moment of making the decision, the decision is considered to be rational.

The urge is related to ourselves, we feel that it is us that is choosing and we feel that we are choosing rationally.

We are the one choosing

We are the one deciding

The urge is us

The reason the mind believes the urge to be rational is because it considers the urge to act independently from what one is seeing and what one is feeling. Believing that independence to be a reality, one feels that one can trust the urge to make the right decision.

By observing the urge carefully, you can see that it is not independent from what is seen and what is felt, but is actually influenced by what is seen and what is felt. One of the times this is most apparent is following a relapse from an addiction.

Example: Smoking Addiction

Take the example of someone trying to quit smoking.

Person-A smokes 10 cigarettes a day, for many years. He has a health scare and forces himself to stop smoking.

The first few weeks are hard but, as time passes, the desire to smoke diminishes and he thinks about smoking less and less.

The desire to smoke arises occasionally and, when it does, his urge to give in to the desire is low.

One day, for whatever reason, he relapses and has a cigarette.

Shortly after that cigarette, he notices that the desire to smoke has increased and his willingness to concede to the urge to smoke has increased as well.

It is understandable that having a cigarette would stoke the flames of desire, but we see it influencing the urge as well. What we can identify here is that if the urge was truly independent, one cigarette would not have any significant impact on the urge. Instead, what we see is the enflaming of desire, and the willingness to concede to desire, moving together. Both the desire and the urge are effected by the undercurrent of the demand 'I want a cigarette'. So, **the urge** and **the desire** are **not separate thoughts, they are one thought** that is simultaneously appearing in the mind as two different forms.

Acknowledging this, we have to admit two things about our experience of desire in the mind:

1. The urge appears in the mind as something separate to desire.
2. The urge is not separate to desire.

The urge (ourselves, the chooser) is a biased process that is influenced by what we are seeing and feeling. The separation that appears in our experience is an illusion. Once the mind understands this, the urge continues to appear as it did before (appearing to be separate), but the difference is found in how the mind relates to this appearance (the urge).

Before realisation, the mind related the urge as an independent entity capable of making a rational decision. The mind trusted the urge to appropriately resist or concede to the desire.

That is irrational.

After realisation, the mind relates to the urge as being part of desire. The mind simply watches the whole movement of desire: the images, the emotional state, and the urge. No part of the experience has dominion over any other part. All three appearances are one movement of the same thought.

That is rational.

Desires expresses itself in the following forms:

- The images appearing in the mind.
- The minds emotional state.
- The urge to act.

The illusion is: We think the urge is 'us', an activity that is independent of thought and not influenced by thought in the decision-making process.

The Illusion

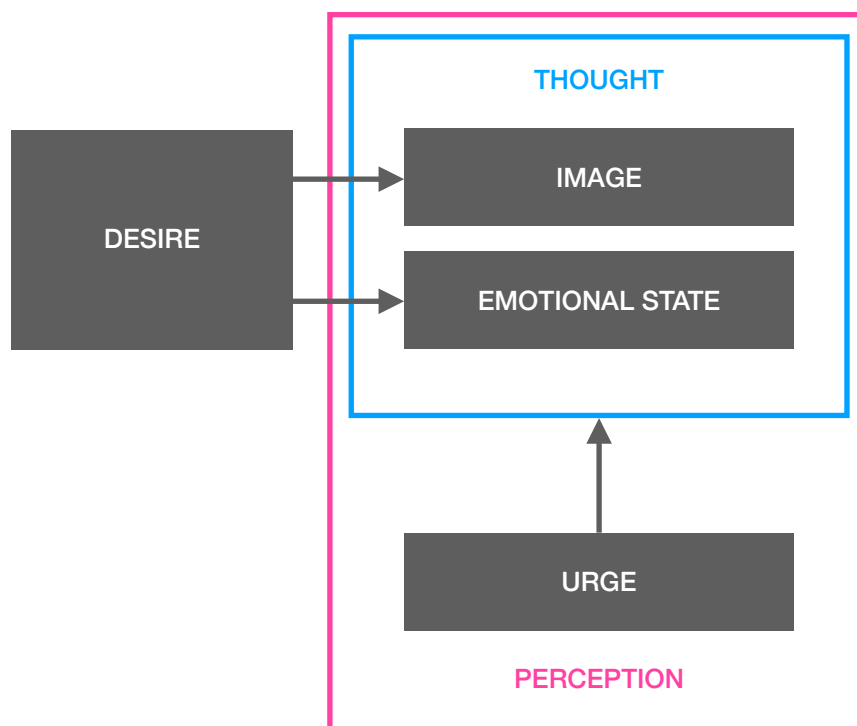


figure 3. the illusion

The reality is: The urge is a form of desire. The urge is an activity of thought.

The Reality

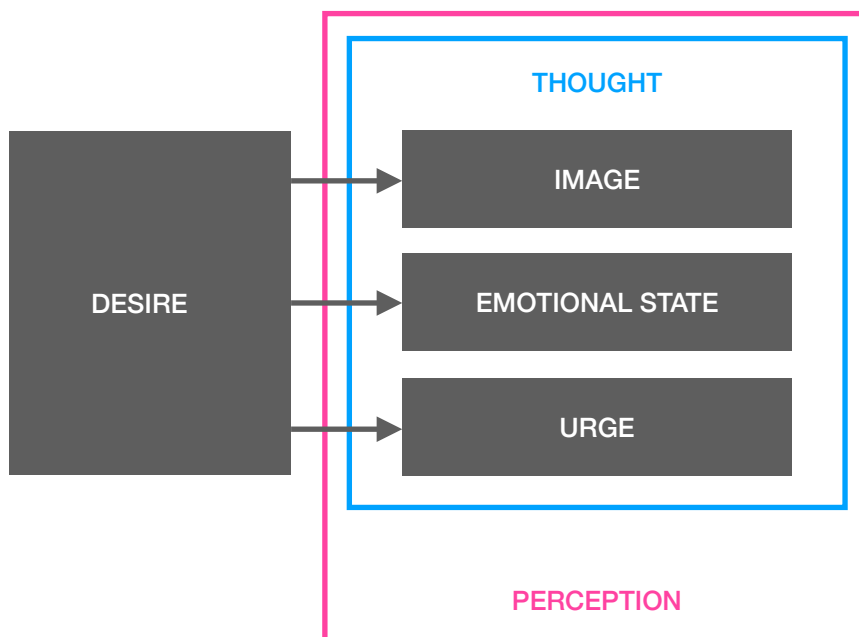


figure 4. the reality

The Misconception of the Urge of Desire

In desire, there is no independent entity that chooses. There is only an illusion created by thought of a separate entity who chooses.

There is no separation. There is just one activity of thinking. That activity of thinking is influenced by the imaginations appearing in the mind and the emotional state of the mind.

The Misconception of the Urge

A separate appearance that is independent from desire.

The Truth of the Urge

A separate appearance that is desire itself.

When the mind no longer trusts the decision-making process to be rational, the mind ceases to direct its energy towards making the decision and, instead, gives its energy towards the perception of the whole process of desire.

The Irresistibility of Pleasure

Pleasure is felt to be irresistible to the mind because it contains two self-deceptions.

1. The content of the imagination is bias towards pleasure without one realising it.
2. The decision-maker is not separate to desire, it is desire itself.

Conclusion

The process of desire contains an urge that strengthens until the point it is irresistible. The urge brings about a decision that causes one to act in the direction of desire.

The urge is the compulsion to act.

The mind believes the urge to be an independent feature of the mind that can make rational decisions. The mind believes the urge is not influenced by the state of the mind, but is observing the state of the mind impartially in its decision making process. However, this is not true. The urge is influenced by the state of the mind, especially the emotional state of the mind. The urge is like a stick on the surface of the water that is flowing with the current.

CHAPTER 14

HOW A DECISION IS MADE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

HOW A DECISION IS MADE

Through the process of desire, a decision is made to act. In this chapter we explore how the decision is made.

How a Decision is Made

In desire there are three factors: the **image**, the **emotional state** and the **urge**.

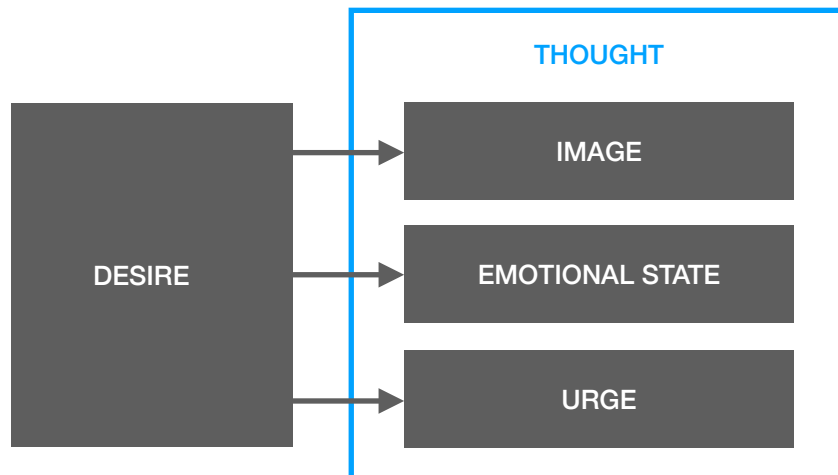


figure 1. the three factors of desire

In the process of making a decision these three factors relate to each other. Below we explain their relationship, how they cause a decision to be made, and how that decision becomes acted out.

The Images

Desire acts in the field of perception. In perception, the images move through the mind.

You can think of it like someone sitting in front of a conveyor belt with enticing items going by. The images appearing in the mind are the enticing items on the conveyor belt.

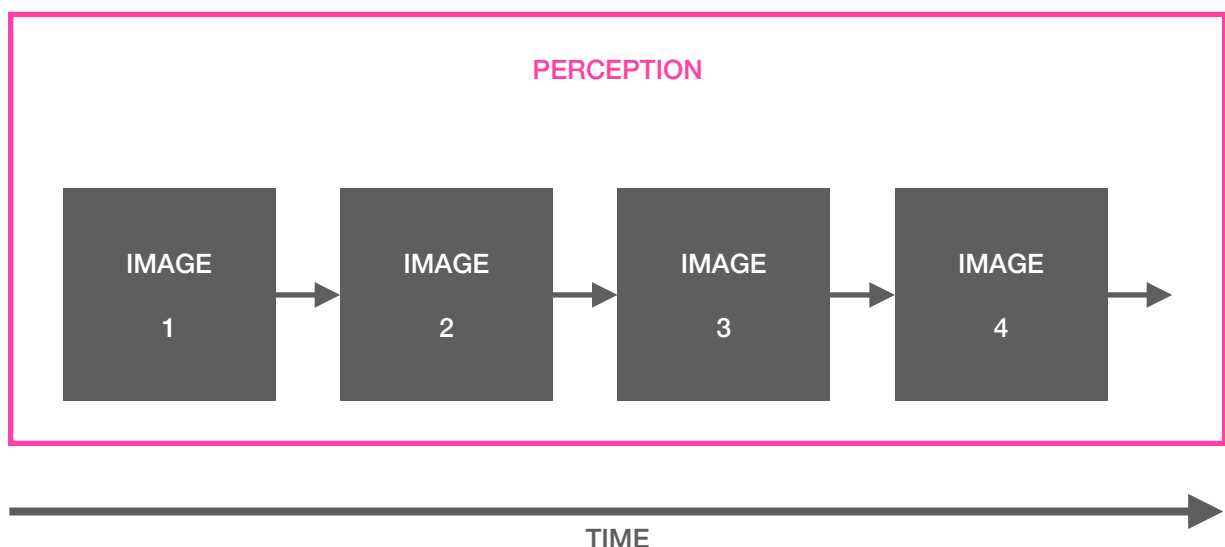


figure 2. images in the mind through time

The images are enticing because their content relates to the demand that desire originates from.

Examples:

Suppose one demands sex, the images that come to mind will be of a sexual nature.

Suppose one demands a cigarette, the images that come to mind will be about smoking.

The Urge

The urge is the function that grabs an image and pulls it into memory.

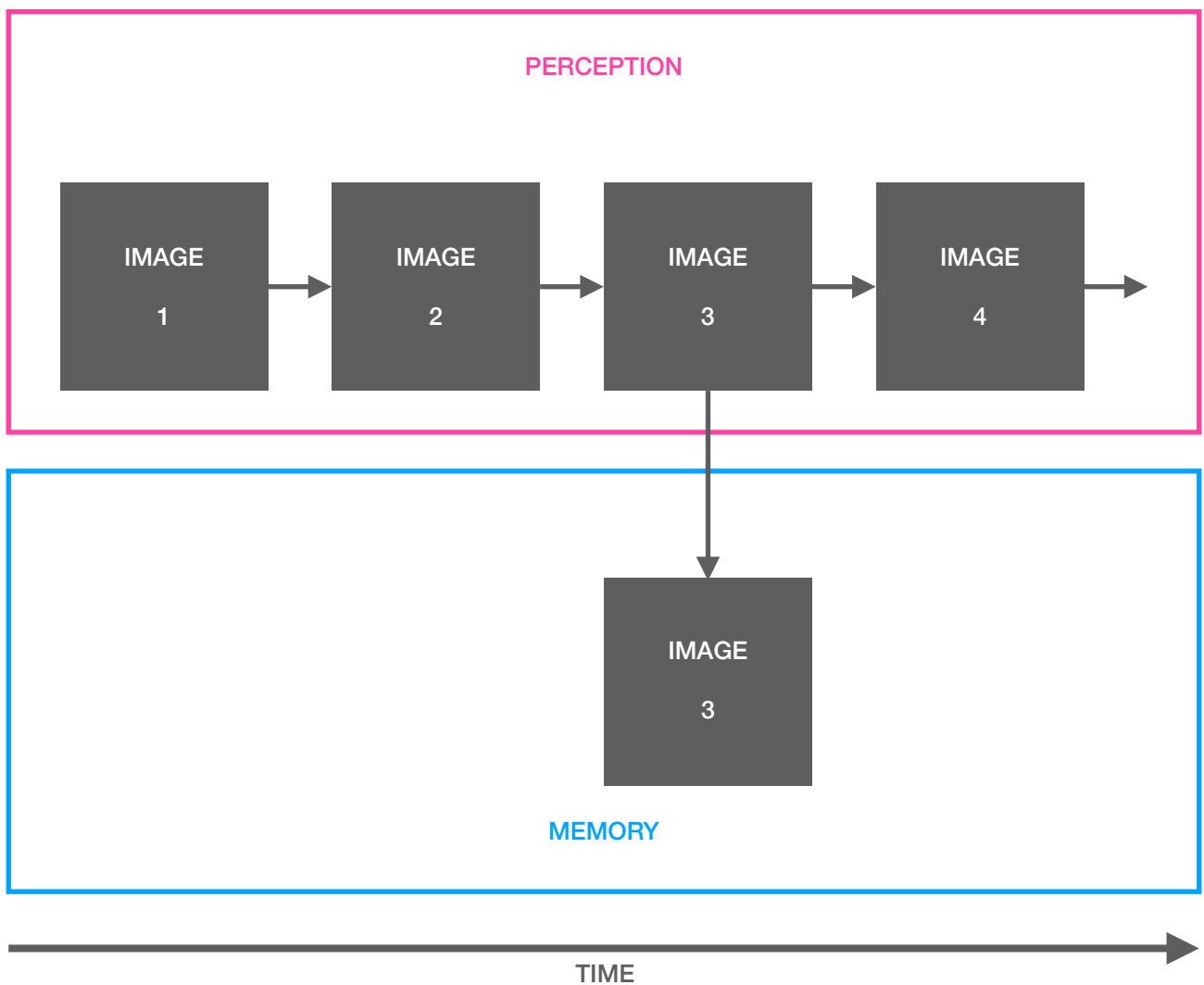


figure 3. the urge pulls an idea into memory

The image is pulled into a specific place in memory. Once the image has been grabbed, the **image** becomes the **blueprint** for one **actions**.

The Act of Decision

Decision is a process that involves the following steps:

1. The perception of an image
2. The urge to grab the image
3. The grabbing of the image

Once grabbed, the image is moved into memory and becomes the blueprint for action.

4. Action (behaviour) according to that image.

That is why the imagination stops at the point a decision is made.

The energy that was given to producing the images, follows the captured image into memory and acts through that to inspire action (physical behaviour).

NOTE: In the diagram below, the process of decision has been highlighted grey.

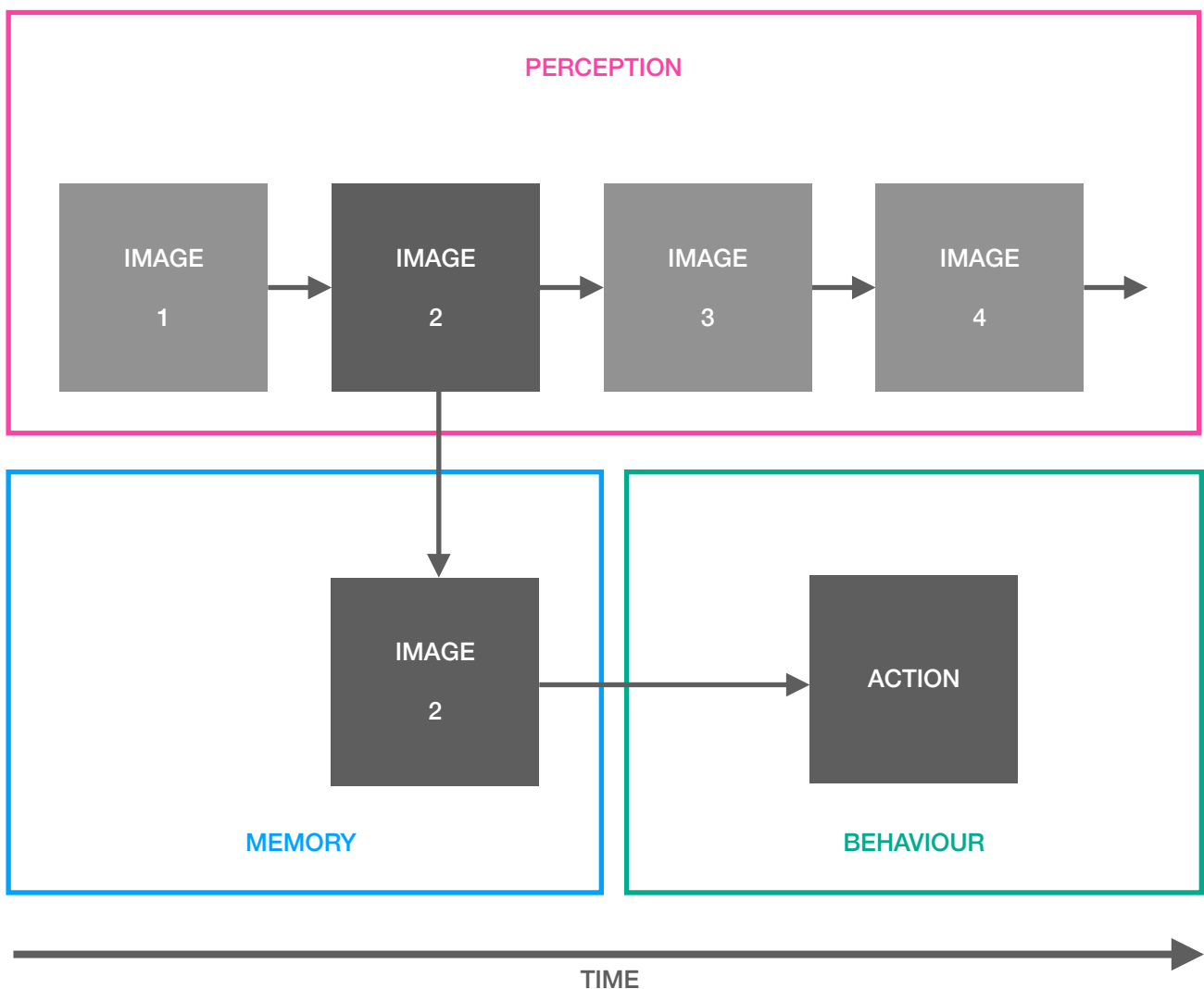


figure 4. action

The urge is experienced as a building up of tension that compels one to act. The decision to act is accompanied by an immediate release of tension. Consequently, that release of tension generates a hit of pleasure that makes one satisfied with their decision.

Example of Pleasure in the Release of Tension

You experience this hit of pleasure in the release of tension when you orgasm or defecate.

The Emotional State

The emotional state encourages the urge to grab an image.

The Push and Pull

The image pulls the urge towards it through enticement.

The emotional state pushes the urge towards the image through encouragement.

Conclusion

Desire contains three factors: the **image**, the **emotional state** and the **urge**. The process of making a decision involves the interoperation of these factors.

The urge is influenced by the images and emotional state:

The images entice the mind to make a decision.

The emotional state encourages the mind to make a decision.

The urge intensifies until a point where the mind succumbs to an image presented to the mind. The image is then pulled into a specific place in memory. Once the image has been grabbed, the **image** becomes the **blueprint** for one **actions**.

CHAPTER 15

THE REPETITION OF PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE REPETITION OF PLEASURE

We know pleasure is repetitive because we watch it in ourselves. Once we have found something that gives us pleasure, we notice our mind desiring to do it again and again. We see the same happen in other people too.

We know people who enjoy reading, and read often.

We know people who enjoy socialising, and socialise often.

We know people who enjoy music, and listen often.

Some people are fixated on a one pleasure and some people distribute their time over multiple pleasures.

A Single Pleasure

Person-A plays games every evening and weekend.

Multiple Pleasures

Person-A goes running on a Monday night, plays pool at the pub on a Tuesday night, goes out for a meal with his girlfriend on a Wednesday night, and so on.

So long as a person is able to (A) acquire enough pleasure from an activity, and (B) has the time, money, and energy to do it, they will continue to do the pleasure indefinitely.

In this chapter we look at why pleasure is repetitive.

How is the repetition of pleasure established?

One experiences an event and responds to it with pleasure. The event, and the corresponding pleasure, is recorded into memory. Once the mind has become aware of a means by which to attain pleasure, the mind begins calling out for that pleasure. The mind then concedes to that desire and decides to experience the pleasurable event again. That is the cycle of pleasure.

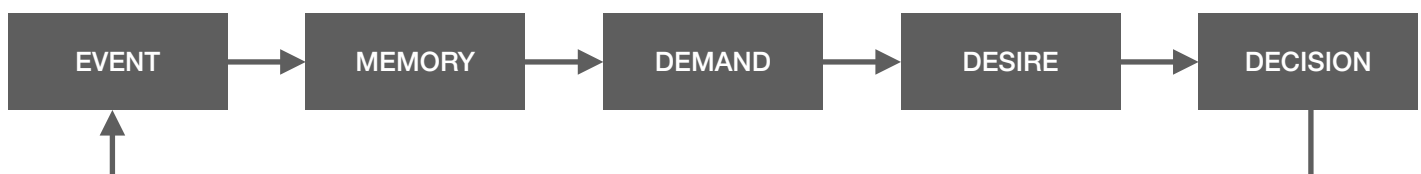


figure 1. the cycle of pleasure

The Demand for Pleasure

Thought is conditioned to demand pleasure.

The type of pleasure one demands is determined by memory.

Examples:

The memory of having a pleasant time with a woman will make the mind desire to meet the woman again.

The memory of having a pleasant time on holiday will make the mind desire to go on holiday again.

The intensity of the demand is also dependent upon the memory.

Example:

The memory of an event that brought one great pleasure will be desired more than an event that brought one minor pleasure.

Each time the mind concedes to desire and experiences the event again, the new experience is recorded and added to the memory one already has. Through this process the mind conditions itself further to that particular type of pleasure.

Example:

Every time one plays a game and feels pleasure, the experience is recorded into memory and strengthens the desire to play the game.

As the pleasure is repeated, the desire is not only strengthened, but the process is automated and becomes a habit. The person reaches a stage where they don't even have to consider whether they are going to play their game this evening, because they know absolutely that they are. In this way, the process of **demand**, **desire** and **decision** moves so quickly that it almost becomes completely hidden from conscious view.

The Root of the Pleasure Cycle

We know pleasure is cyclical, but where does the cycle originate from? We understand the process:

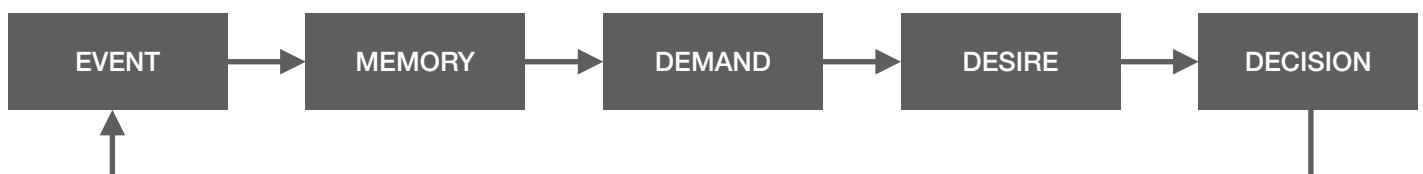


figure 2. the cycle of pleasure

Memory determines the particular form the pleasure takes and the intensity of that pleasure, but it is the demand for pleasure that lies at the root of this cycle.

The root of the cycle is not the event

Some people get pleasure from fishing, some people get pleasure from reading, the event is not important.

The root of the cycle is not memory

Suppose the mind did not have any memory of pleasure. It would experience some event in the future, acquire pleasure, and the whole cycle of pleasure would begin.

The root of the cycle is not desire

Desire acts in accordance with the demand. You cannot have the demand without desire.

The root of the cycle is not decision

The decision is the outcome of desire, it is not separate to desire.

The root of the cycle is the demand

In the very demand for pleasure, the cycle of pleasure arises.

Without the **demand**, there would be no **desire** and no **decision**.

Without the **demand**, there would be a memory of pleasure, but that memory would have no continuity (as the desire to experience the pleasant event again).

Without the **demand**, events would still innately give one pleasure.

One experiences the beauty of a mountain prior to any demand to experience that beauty again. The experience of beauty is a natural reaction to that perception of that mountain. The demand comes after one has had that first experience.

If there was no demand for pleasure, the cycle would end. The mind would still derive pleasure from direct perception (such as seeing a mountain), but following that experience the mind would not demand to have it again. For such a mind, pleasure would be solely a spontaneous occurrence and not something longed for.

At this point of our enquiry we have no idea whether the demand for pleasure should end or not, but it is the point we must penetrate into to continue our enquiry into the nature of pleasure.

Conclusion

The repetition of pleasure is established when a pleasurable event is recorded into memory. Once the mind is aware of a way to attain pleasure, the mind begins calling out for it. The mind then concedes to desire and acts to experience the pleasurable event again. That is the cycle of pleasure.

Memory determines the particular form the pleasure takes and the intensity of that pleasure, but it is the demand for pleasure that lies at the root of this cycle.

The root of the cycle is the demand

In the very demand for pleasure, the cycle of pleasure arises.

CHAPTER 16

THE ESCAPE TO PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE ESCAPE TO PLEASURE

The mind demands pleasure. It does not demand pleasure all the time, but on occasions it does. In this chapter we explore why the mind demands pleasure.

Why does the mind demand pleasure?

The demand for pleasure arises in response to suffering.

You may be feeling bored and demand the pleasure of excitement.

You may be feeling lonely and demand the pleasure of companionship.

You may be feeling inadequate and demand the pleasure of prestige.

There are many forms of suffering.

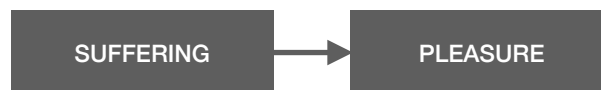


figure 1. pleasure as an escape from suffering

What is Suffering?

For the purpose of our discussion, suffering can be thought of as a mental disturbance that causes pain.

What causes Suffering?

The mind can be disturbed by a comment, a gesture, a thought or a feeling. That act triggers something in us that makes us feel insecure. The insecurity creates a mental disturbance that causes us pain.

How we respond to Suffering

Some experience disturbs the mind and causes pain. The mind wants to stop the pain, but does not know how to. Having no other option, the mind seeks to escape from the pain.

How does one escape?

The mind seeks pleasurable experiences that will make it feel better.

Examples:

When one is lonely, one may phone a friend.

When one is lonely, one may take steps towards acquiring a partner.

Strategies:

The mind develops both short-term and long-term strategies for handling suffering. In the example of loneliness, having a conversation with a friend alleviates

loneliness for a short time, whereas acquiring a partner guards against loneliness in the future. Additionally, taking steps to acquire a partner when one is feeling lonely, such as scheduling dates, can be enough to satisfy the mind in the short-term: simply the idea that you may not be lonely in the future is very pleasing to the mind.

How is Pleasure Derived?

Pleasure is derived through some form of experience, such as:

- Pleasing thoughts
- Pleasing feelings
- Pleasing relationships
- Pleasing activities

The Escape from Suffering

To end suffering, the mind seeks to escape from the experience of pain: the painful thoughts and feelings moving through one's mind.

Example:

Loneliness is the experience of isolation. In that state of isolation, the mind suffers.

To stop feeling lonely, the mind must stop the experience of isolation.

The Methods of Escape

The mind can escape from the experience of pain in two ways:

1. Avoidance
2. Distraction

To understand how these work, we must understand the basics of how a mental disturbance is created. A mental disturbance requires:

- A. a condition
- B. a trigger
- C. a thought

THE GENERAL PROCESS



figure 2. the general process

The Distinction between Avoidance and Distraction

Avoidance works at the level of the **trigger**.

Distraction works at the level of the **thought**.

Neither **avoidance** nor **distraction** effect the **condition**.

Exploring Avoidance and Distraction

Lets use the example of loneliness to simplify the explanation.

The **condition**: self-centred attitude
The **trigger**: being alone
The **thought**: isolation

PROCESS FOR LONELINESS

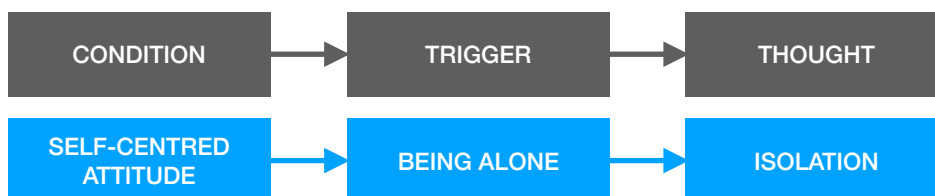


figure 3. the process of loneliness

Avoidance

Loneliness is triggered when one is alone. To stop loneliness, the mind seeks companionship to avoid being alone.

Here, companionship is the pleasure one seeks.

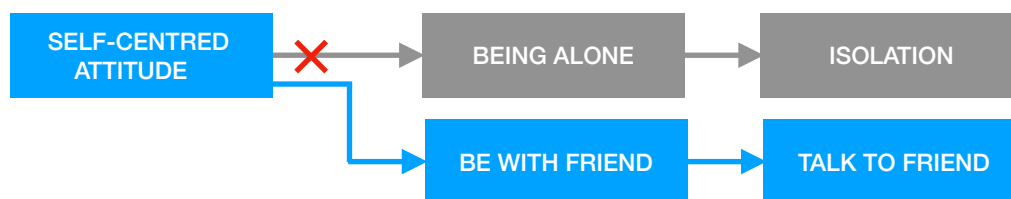


figure 4. the avoidance of loneliness through avoidance

Distraction

Loneliness is experienced as the thought of isolation. By distracting oneself, the minds attention is directed towards something else, so one thinks about that.

Here, the object used to distract oneself is the pleasure one seeks.

Example:

The object is a game. One remains alone, but plays a game.

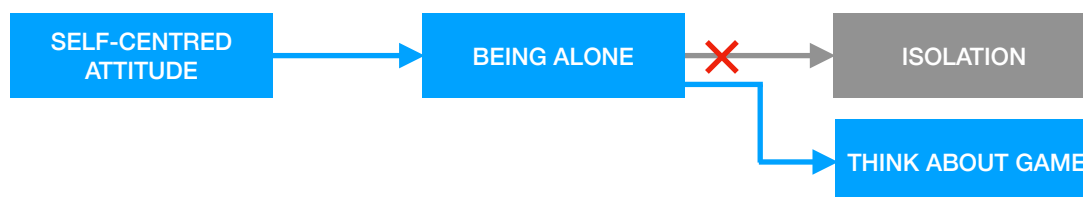


figure 5. the avoidance of loneliness through distraction

In both cases (avoidance and distraction) the acquisition of pleasure maintains the escape.

Why is escape not a sufficient response to suffering?

The reason why escape is not a sufficient response to suffering is because it does not effect the condition responsible for suffering, so suffering persists.

Why does the mind demand pleasure?

Pleasure is demanded as a means to **escape** from the **experience of pain** by **distracting** ourselves from the **thoughts that produce pain** or by **avoiding** the **trigger that causes pain**.

Conclusion

The demand for pleasure arises in response to suffering.

Example:

An experience disturbs the mind and causes pain. The mind wants to stop the pain, but does not know how to. Being unable to stop the pain, the mind seeks to create a new experience that produces pleasure.

Pleasure is derived through thoughts, feelings, relationships and activities. The mind uses these experiences to develop short-term and long-term strategies for handling pain.

The pleasurable experience acts as a form of avoidance and distraction from the pain.

CHAPTER 17

THE FRUSTRATION OF PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE FRUSTRATION OF PLEASURE

In the last chapter we stated that the demand for pleasure arose as a means to escape from mental suffering.

Examples:

When one is sad, one demands pleasure.

When one is lonely, one demands pleasure.

When one is hurt, one demands pleasure.

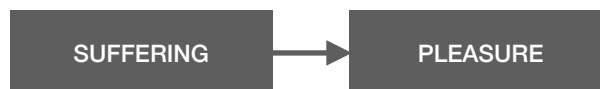


figure 1. pleasure as an escape from suffering

The factor responsible for suffering is one condition, and the factor responsible for pleasure is another condition.

Example:

Take the example of someone who plays video games because they feel lonely.

Condition 1: Suffering

The mind is conditioned to feel lonely when it is alone.

That condition makes one suffer.

Condition 2: Pleasure

The mind is conditioned to derive pleasure from video games.

That condition brings one pleasure.

Here we see that there are two conditions: loneliness and gaming. The loneliness causes suffering, and the gaming causes pleasure.

General Example:

When the mind suffers, it seeks pleasure

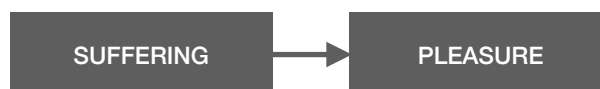


figure 2. pleasure as an escape from suffering

Specific Example:

When the mind feels lonely, it plays video games.

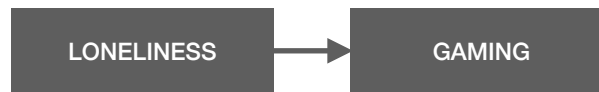


figure 3. gaming as an escape from loneliness

This is a case where one condition (gaming) is desired because of another condition (loneliness). The distinguishing feature here is that the condition that causes suffering is **different** to the condition that causes pleasure.

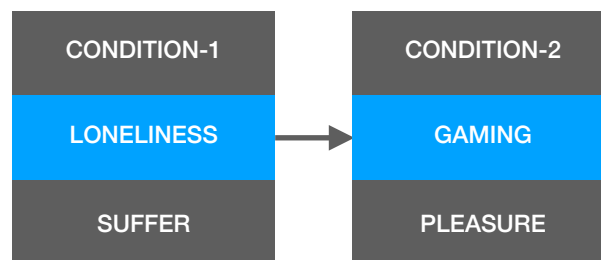


figure 4. gaming as an escape from loneliness (expanded)

In this chapter we discuss how a condition that creates pleasure is not solely pleasurable, but has another side to it. Once pleasure is established in the mind, the mind begins calling out for that pleasure again. The calling out for that pleasure is a form of suffering. We refer to this form of suffering as frustration.

The Suffering Intrinsic to Pleasure

Pleasure creates its own form of suffering through frustration.

Example of Frustration: Sexual Frustration

One gets pleasure from sex. When one has not had sex recently, one becomes frustrated. It is commonly called 'sexual frustration'.

Every form of pleasure breeds its own frustration.



figure 5. pleasure breeds frustration

That frustration is a form of suffering. Pleasure is demanded by the mind to soothe suffering. In the case of frustration, the condition that has produced the frustration is the **same condition** that the mind looks towards to soothe that frustration.

Example:

Sexual frustration demands sex.

Explanation:

The source of sexual frustration is one's past memories of sex that brought pleasure. Through frustration, those memories of sex are calling out for more sex. When one satisfies the urge and has sex, that experience is recorded into memory. That memory then forms the basis for future sexual frustration. This demonstrates a vicious cycle of pleasure.

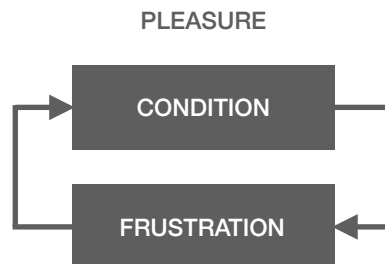


figure 6. the cycle of pleasure

So, pleasure is a self-sustaining form of suffering.

How Pleasure Sustains Suffering

Frustration creates a demand.

Example:

Sexual frustration demands sex.

The demand for sex is presented as a **solution** to the frustration. That is the illusion that masks the danger of pleasure. Sex is not the solution to frustration, sex is the reason why one is frustrated.

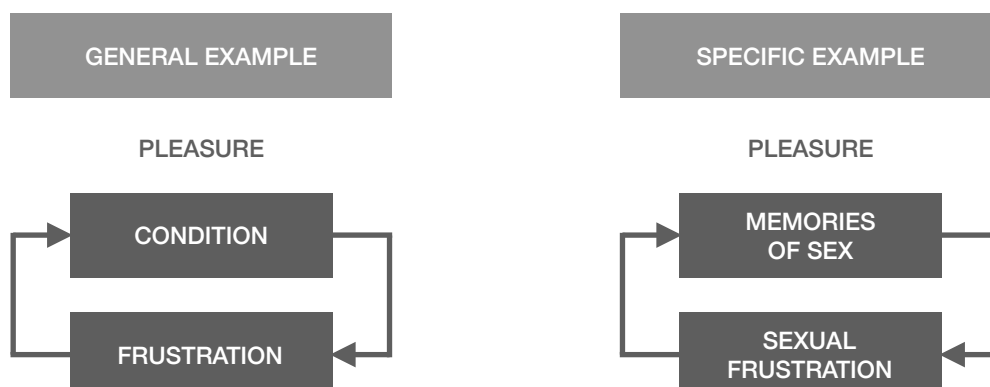


figure 7. the cycle of pleasure (expanded)

By conceding to the desire that results from frustration, the mind is conditioning itself to suffer.

Conclusion

Intrinsic to the memory of pleasure is suffering: the demand to have the pleasure again produces frustration which is a form of suffering.

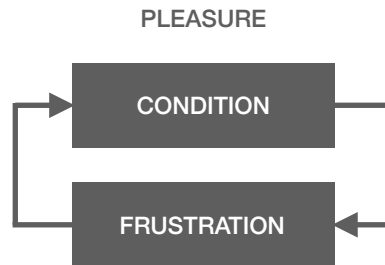


figure 8. the cycle of pleasure

CHAPTER 18

THE DECEPTION OF FRUSTRATION

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE DECEPTION OF FRUSTRATION

The deception of frustration is found in the misrepresentation of its appearance. The way frustration appears to the mind is the opposite of what it actually is. So, people respond to frustration in a way that they feel is helping them, but it is unknowingly harming them.

The Illusion of Frustration

The illusion is that the mind is ending a problem.

The reality is that the mind is building the problem.

The illusion is such that:

- What appears to be the solution is actually the problem.
- What appears to be the ending is actually the beginning.
- What appears to be the alleviation of the problem is actually the building of the problem.
- What appears to be liberation is actually imprisonment.

The illusion is dangerous because the appearance of frustration is the complete opposite of the truth of frustration. Simultaneously, conceding to the pleasure makes one care less about the suffering. It is a vicious trap because being in the trap makes you care less about being in the trap.

Caught in the Trap

When people are ignorant to the trap of cyclical pleasure, they respond to frustration by nourishing the pleasure. They drink that poison every day. They accept living a life with frustration, so they develop techniques to cope with frustration.

Techniques for alleviating the Frustration

The mind develops various techniques for handling frustration.

Concede to Desire

The most obvious technique to handle frustration is to carry out the demand and concede to the desire.

That is not always possible because you may be at work and unable to act out the pleasure. This is where the mind uses the notion of time to postpone action.

Postpone Desire

The mind makes an agreement with itself to carry out the desire at a later time when it is appropriate to do so.

The build up of frustration is a building up of tension. The purpose of the tension is to urge one into making a decision to concede to the desire. By making the decision to concede in the future, the frustration is lessened because the decision has already been made.

An analogy of postponement for one's mental state would be that one has moved from a kettle whistling loudly, to a kettle that is now bubbling gently.

Establish a Routine

Establishing a routine, such as carrying out the desire at a specific time of the day or week, keeps the frustration at bay.

Examples:

I will have sex this weekend.

I will play the game this evening.

It is a technique which involves both conceding to desire and postponing desire. It is actually the two technique mentioned above, rolled into one.

The technique compartmentalises frustration. It configures frustration to trigger while in specific locations and at specific times.

Example:

You establish the routine of playing a video game each the evening.

During the day, you won't think about it, but as soon as you get home the frustration flares up and you instantly start playing.

Escape from Desire

We distract ourselves to think about other things, but when the distraction wears off the frustration arises again.

Letting Desire Pass

Letting desire pass is the route that involves the most suffering because you have to sit through the whole process: the building up of tension and its inevitable decline into nothingness.

It is a fruitful observation because it shows that you (the one who chooses) has their decision making ability impaired by desire.

When the frustration reaches a peak amount of tension, you feel compelled to concede to the desire.

When the frustration has passed, you feel that conceding to the desire is not necessary.

It is crucial to see that there is no free thinker that chooses, and the compulsion to make a decision is, itself, an illusion.

The Trap of Routine Pleasure

Pleasure is used as a means to escape from suffering. Having the opportunity to escape from suffering makes the mind take suffering less seriously. If the mind was not able to escape from suffering, or refused to escape, suffering would become an issue of paramount importance in one's life. Because people can escape from suffering, they have the option to ignore it. The means of ignoring suffering is the acquisition of pleasure. So, in this regard, pleasure sustains suffering.

Pleasure takes time. Pleasure also becomes a routine, as we have discussed. Those individuals who escape from suffering become habitually entrenched in routine pleasure. Once people have discovered the particular types of pleasure that help them escape from their suffering, their life is set in that pattern.

I noticed this most starkly when I left my home for several years and later came back to visit. I saw the same people, in the same pubs, sitting in the same chairs, with the same people, telling the same stories.

Suffering and pleasure consume all one's time and energy, with only space being given to the things that are absolutely necessary for survival, such as a job to put food on the table.

Pleasure is the means by which people accept living life within the confines of sorrow.

Conclusion

Frustration offers a solution to the pain it creates: experience the pleasure again and the frustration will disappear.

Example:

Sexual frustration states that the frustration will end once you have sex.

However, the remembrance of sex is the factor that causes the sexual frustration. Thus, by having sex again, you strengthen the frustration next time.

Frustration presents itself as a solution, but it actually causes the individual to strengthen the problem.

That is the deception of pleasure.

CHAPTER 19

THE ENDING OF PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE ENDING OF PLEASURE

In the last chapter we discussed how pleasure created its own form of suffering through frustration, and by responding to frustration pleasure became a self-sustaining cycle.

In this chapter we discuss how frustration holds the key to ending the cycle of pleasure.

Why Does Frustration Arise?

Frustration is a desire born out of a lack of something.

Example:

Sexual Frustration arises from a lack of sex.

There is another desire that arises from a lack of something that we know very well, hunger.

Example:

Hunger arises from a lack of food.

You can make an interesting comparison between hunger and sexual frustration:

Comparison:

The desire for **food** arises from a **lack of food** and demands **food**.

The desire for **sex** arises from a **lack of sex** and demands **sex**.

By understanding that hunger and frustration have similarities in how they operate, we can explore what we know about hunger and investigate whether the same understanding can be applied to frustration.

Why are we hungry?

The object of hunger is not important, it is irrelevant whether one wants a sandwich or a smoothie. What one essentially wants is nourishment.

Hunger arises because the body needs nourishment.

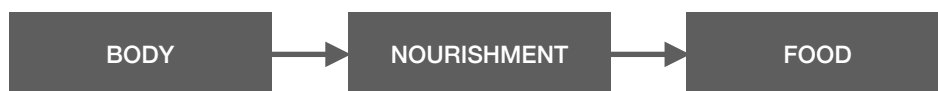


figure 1. nourishment

We can apply the notion of nourishment to frustration, and it gives us a possible reason that explains why frustration arises.

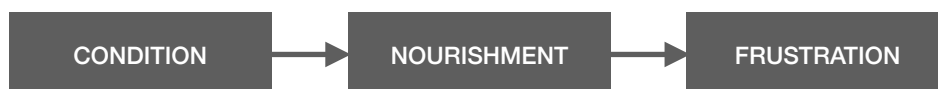


figure 2. frustration modelled by nourishment

As the body requires nourishment to sustain itself, it may be that the pleasurable condition (sexual remembrance) also requires nourishment to sustain itself.



figure 3. sustaining pleasure

For a condition to be nourished it must be thought about.

I must keep thinking about it, otherwise I forget it.

Example:

By thinking about sex, and having sex, the memory of sexual pleasure is nourished.

Thinking about the condition keeps it vital. Having new experiences keeps the condition relevant.

By reliving a past pleasurable experience, either physically or through imagination, pleasure is given a sense of continuity through time.

The remembrance of pleasure gives a sense of continuity in pleasure.

The remembrance of pain gives a sense of continuity in pain.

The notion of nourishment gives us:

1. An understanding of how pleasure is sustained.
2. A way of interpreting frustration.

Sustaining Pleasure

Pleasure is sustained by thinking about it and acting it out. By thinking about it and acting it out past memories are nourished and new memories are formed. That nourishment retains the vitality of the pleasurable memory and sustains its grip over the mind. Its grip over the mind is the intensity with which the pleasure is longed for and the intensity with which the frustration demands attention.

Cyclical pleasure is only sustained because the mind feeds it every day.

One is only obese because they eat too much every day.

One is only an addict because they indulge in their addiction every day.

Interpreting Frustration

Frustration appears to the mind as a demand for pleasure. Frustration is interpreted in terms of what it wants (pleasure), but not why it arose. The notion of nourishment offers clarity into why frustration arises.

Hunger arises because the body is starving.

Frustration arises because the memory is starving.

People handle frustration in terms of conceding to its demands for pleasure or resisting its demands for pleasure, but both of those activities nourish the pleasurable memory responsible for frustration. The notion of nourishment gives us a way of handling frustration that does not demand any action on the part of the observer.

When the memory requires nourishment, frustration arises.

What is frustration?

Frustration is the sound of the pleasurable memory starving to death.

Frustration reveals the root of pleasure to be suffering. As one is suffering, the pleasurable memory is dying. One can only make the decision to sustain its life by giving it energy, otherwise pleasurable memory naturally fades away.

The willingness to not nourish pleasure, is the willingness to end pleasure.

The Ending of Cyclical Pleasure

The ending of cyclical pleasure simply requires one observe the frustration. The observation of the frustration is the experience of the condition dying.

If you concede to the desire, the condition is revitalised and expressed.

If you resist the desire, the condition is revitalised and postponed.

Observation does not lead one to carry out the desire, but it is still not an act of resistance. When you observe frustration you will see that the act of observation contains no sense of resistance in it.

Observation is not the action that causes the condition to die. The condition dies all by itself. Observation is the action that pacifies the urge to concede to the desire or resist the desire. Observation is the action that allows the memory to die.

Why Pleasure Dies at Frustration

Pleasure is a cycle, it can be thought of as energy flowing round in a circle. The circle starts and ends at the pleasurable memory. The memory demands its continuity through frustration, the frustration produces desire, the mind concedes to the desire, acts out the desire, and records new memories. The frustration is the point that energises the loop. The frustration creates an intense energy that sets off the cycle.

You can think of the cycle of pleasure like a cyclotron.

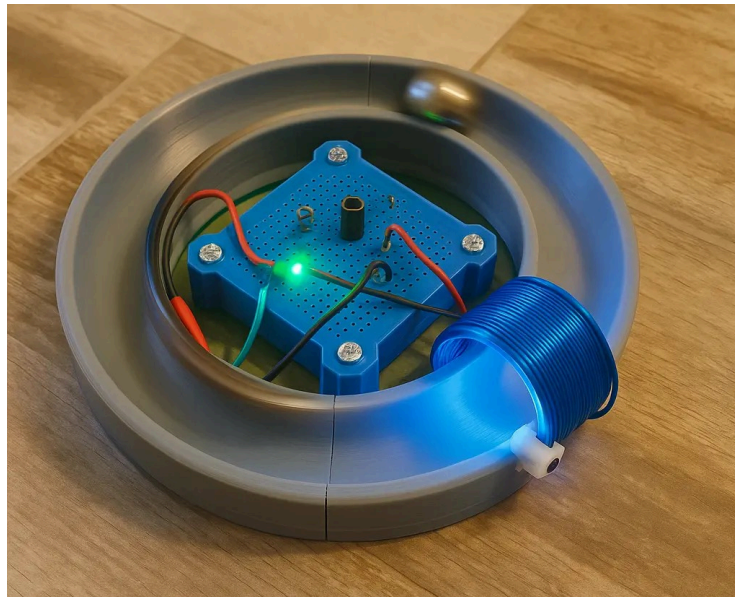


figure 4. cyclotron

When the metal ball goes through the coil of blue wire, it is propelled round in a circle. The ball is propelled with enough force that it reaches the coil of wire again. The process continues indefinitely, so long as the coil of wire is energised.

The observation of frustration is like deconstructing the coil of wire. As you are observing, the process is losing its vitality.

As you are observing, the condition is ending.

The Factors That Prevent Pleasure Ending

Some people want to end the cycle of pleasure but find they are unable to. The reason why people are unable to end pleasure is because they have insufficient knowledge of how thought operates.

Cyclical pleasure represents a mind addicted to a self-generated meaning. Understanding thought sufficiently inevitably results in the mind seeing the danger of that process and moving away from it.

Thought is the response of memory. Memory is an interconnected web of images. Each image holds its own meaning. A particular manifestation of memory, such as sexual desire, will not be fuelled by just one meaning, but by multiple meanings.

Example:

Sexual pleasure may be made up of:

1. The demand for power.

Part of one's demand for sexual pleasure may be found in domination. Domination relates to the demand for power.

2. Giving some meaning to life.

Pleasure gives meaning to one's life and without pleasure life would appear meaningless.

3. An instrument of manipulation.

One may be able to offer sex in exchange for getting what they want or being able to control another outside of the bedroom.

4. An escape from some other thing that causes you pain.

One may lack self-esteem and only feel validated through sex.

One may understand how pleasure operates, but if one still demands power, one's life has no meaning, one still demands to manipulate other people, or has low self-esteem, then sexual desire will not end.

The ending of pleasure is not simply a linear enquiry into how pleasure operates. One does not understand pleasure to a certain point and pleasure ends. Thought is the expression of one's whole understanding of life. So, any problem that arises from thought will be made up of the understanding of many areas of life. Those areas of life must be understood to effect a change in the whole system.

How do you find the areas that relate?

By observing the frustration you will see the other areas that are implied in it.

Example:

If part of your sexual desire is the demand for power, you will see the demand for power appear as part of the movement of desire.

What if one cannot ascertain the other areas that relate?

Sometimes you may not be able to identify the other areas that are implied in the frustration. This is because either your mind is not capable of viewing those subtler energies yet, the energies are there but mixed into a clump that you cannot differentiate into its constituent parts, or you are seeing the energy but are unable to discern its significance (like something being hidden right under your nose).

In these cases you have to put your enquiry in that particular direction on hold and begin to work on another area of the mind that is causing disorder. If you don't put that avenue of enquiry on hold and instead demand an answer, thought will imagine a satisfying illusion and accept it, and that will harm your enquiry.

Conclusion

Hunger arises because the body needs nourishment to survive. In a similar way, frustration arises because the pleasurable memory needs nourishment to survive. When the memory is starved of new experience, it withers away.

When you cease to concede to frustration, you observe the intensity of its demand weaken each time it appears. The frustration arises, intensifies, peaks, and subsides. Each time this happens it is weaker than the last.

After some time, you will notice that the memories of the past experience remain, but they cease to call out for re-experiencing. The mind is now unburdened of the past.

CHAPTER 20

PROCESSES THAT CONDITION THE MIND TO PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

PROCESSES THAT CONDITION THE MIND TO PLEASURE

In the last chapter we discussed how the cycle of pleasure can end, and how it may be prevented from ending by other factors that prop it up. In this chapter we provide a general overview of the different ways other conditions feed into pleasure to help sustain it.

The Processes that Sustain Pleasure

1. The Escape from Suffering
2. One Pleasure Links to Another Pleasure
3. Encouragement
4. Purpose
5. Frustration

The Escape from Suffering

People that are unwilling to face a certain kind of pain routinely escape from it into a particular kind of pleasure.

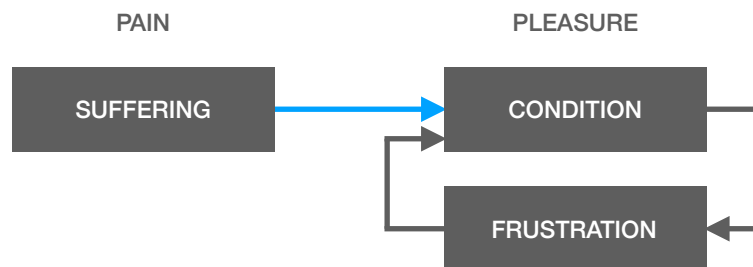


figure 1. the escape from suffering

Examples of this include:

- A. A pain that demands to be soothed.

Example:

One feels lonely, so they talk to a friend.

- B. Confusion demanding clarity

Example:

One feels confused, so they accept a belief.

- C. Emptiness demanding to be filled

Example:

One feels bored, so they demand entertainment.

- D. Stress demanding relaxation

Example:

One feels stressed, so they demand a distraction.

E. Lethargy demanding energy.

Example:

One feels tired, so they demand stimulation.

One Pleasure Links to Another Pleasure

The mind can condition itself to link pleasures together.

Multiple pleasures may be prevented from expressing themselves due to one central factor. For instance, multiple pleasures may be associated to the notion of being unhealthy. Most of the time the mind decides to be healthy, but on occasions it gives itself permission to be unhealthy. When the mind decides to be unhealthy, all the pleasures that are associated to unhealthiness become acceptable to indulge in.

The pleasures may also be associated to varying levels of unhealthiness. As the mind indulges in pleasures that pose a minor health risk, the mind becomes more open to indulging in pleasures that pose a greater health risk. In this way, indulging in one pleasure triggers the person to indulge in another pleasure.

Example:

Person-A is a non-smoker.

However, When Person-A goes out drinking, they smoke cigarettes.

Here, one pleasurable condition triggers the mind to indulge in another pleasurable condition.

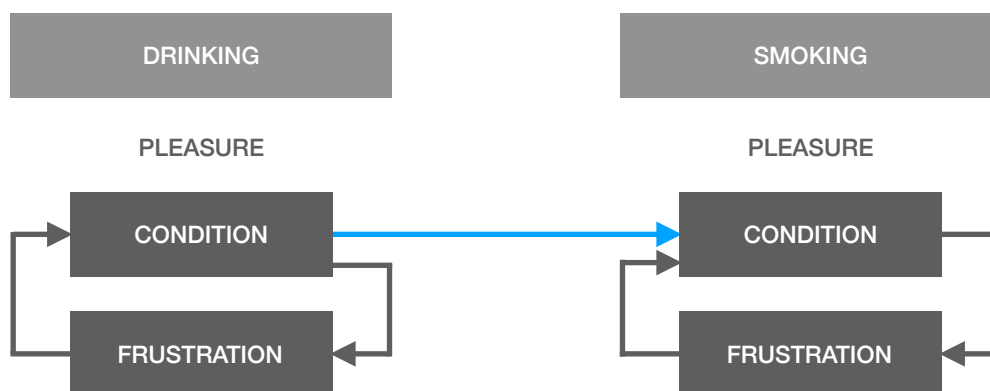


figure 2. pleasure links to pleasure

Over time this association between pleasures can become so habitual that a non-smoker will buy a pack of cigarettes before they go out drinking.

Encouragement

Encouragement is where one's actions are positively reinforced by others.

The actions one expresses publicly (on purpose) are those behaviours that are pleasurable and beneficial in same way. The encouragement from others is received as a reward for one's

behaviour, and is experienced as pleasure. In this way, encouragement gives vitality to one's pleasurable condition.

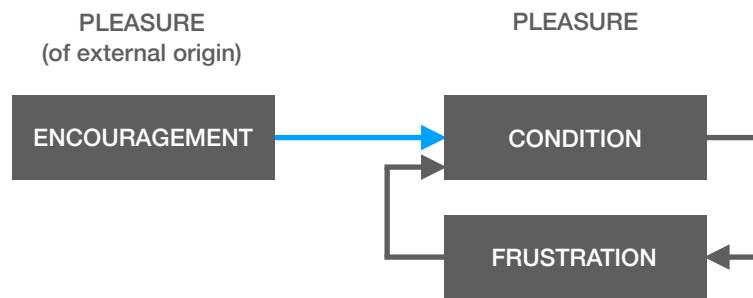


figure 3. encouragement

Purpose

The reason behind doing something is its purpose. The purpose establishes a goal and a direction. Out of that arises an energy (that we refer to as the will) to act in that direction to achieve the goal.

Example:

One may have a wife and children.

The purpose of keeping the family safe creates the goal of financial security and motivates one to behave in the direction of achieving that goal.

We refer to those who can establish a purpose for themselves as self-motivated individuals. A well thought out purpose often endures for decades, while the goals associated to it can change rapidly according to present conditions. The goals will be changed in accordance with one's awareness of better opportunities, but be resilient to change in accordance with negative public opinion, lack of support or excessive aloneness.

The goals set their own reward and punishment.

When one gets nearer to the goal, there is a reward (pleasure).

When one gets further away from the goal, there is punishment (pain).

Once one can establish their own purpose and goals, they consider themselves to be an independent person. Such a mind feels like its authentic self and, to a certain degree, unstoppable because there is nothing inside holding them back.

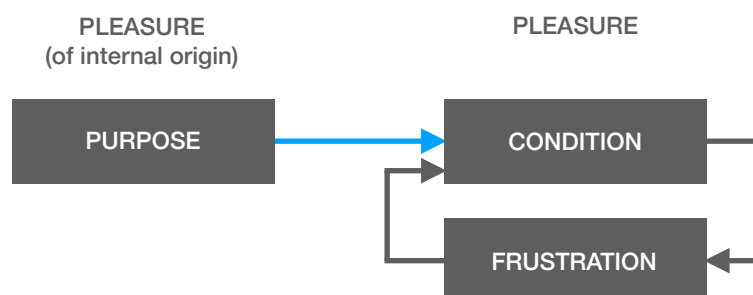


figure 4. purpose

Frustration

We have spoken about this at length in a previous chapter, but we mention it here simply for completeness.

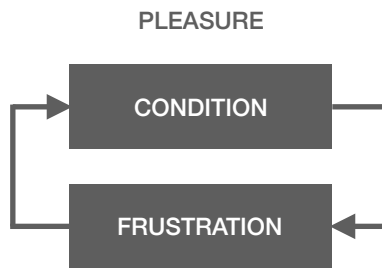


figure 5. frustration

Conclusion

The mind is conditioned to pleasure through the processes of encouragement, frustration, purpose, the escape from suffering, and the pursuit of a heightened sensory experience.

CHAPTER 21

A RESTLESS MIND PURSUES PLEASURE

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

A RESTLESS MIND PURSUES PLEASURE

A mind that demands pleasure can never be at peace. The closest it gets to peace is what it calls relaxation. Relaxation is a state where the mind is enveloped in a mild pleasure. There is a subtle stimulation present that the mind finds satisfying, and it makes the mind quiet to some degree. One experiences this when they are:

Meditating using a practice.

Walking through nature.

Watching the waves gently crash on the shore.

The mild pleasure is required to be in movement to keep the mind absorbed. If the mind is not absorbed, it becomes bored, and thought creates its own movement to absorb the mind by going off on random thoughts tracks.

Peace is only possible for a mind that can be still: unoccupied with no desire to escape from it.

When one is alone, one notices the mind cannot be still, it becomes agitated, impatient and restless. In that state, the mind searches for some pleasant experience to occupy it.

It looks outside of itself to find a pleasing thing to observe.

It listens to locate a pleasing sound.

It indulges in an activity to distract it.

It seeks to establish pleasing relationships with others.

It recedes into thought to create pleasing images.



figure 1. restlessness

I would say that restlessness is one of the basic motivations for each persons life.

You see this in everyone, the constant movement from one desire to the next, and never stopping. People appear to always have to be doing something.

Sitting with that restlessness is incredibly important because one sees the source of restlessness.

The source of restlessness is sorrow.



figure 2. sorrow is the source of restlessness

Remaining with Restlessness

At first when you enter this space (being still without pleasure), the sorrow that appears may be remembrances of past experiences that caused you pain.

People that hurt you.

Moments you embarrassed yourself.

As you remain with restlessness, the mind processes these experiences, they get settled in your mind, cease to have continuity, and no longer arise.

Once the mind moves past the personal sorrows it has picked up throughout its life, it comes to the deeper forms of sorrow that are common to the whole of mankind.

Loneliness

Anxiety

The sense of feeling lost in life.

The sense of one's life being meaningless.

As one examines these experiences, they too get settled. One then comes to the root of restlessness.

The Root of Restlessness

The **demand to become** something arises from the **fear of not being** something.

Restlessness is the fertile ground of becoming. That perception is insightful, because it shows two things:

1. The means by which one derives pleasure is dictated by the suffering that underlies it.
2. Restlessness, and the ways the mind responds to it, consume most of the mind's energy.

We see here that the mind has built a condition that makes it feel deeply inadequate and makes it feel like it:

must become something.

must belong to something.

must experience something.



figure 3. the condition underlying restlessness

Realising that suffering is a condition that can change, rather than a fact that cannot, is perhaps one of the most liberating perceptions a human being can have. It truly turns the tide and redefines what is possible.

No longer does the mind have to pretend to be:

- A. some great entity that has the capacity to escape from the sorrow.
- B. some great entity that is living a great life and has escaped from sorrow.

Now the mind simply has a curiosity to understand why it has built the condition responsible for sorrow.

It is like you have always been steering the ship, but now you have found the engine room.

It is an insight that begins a real inward movement.

Notice as well that the insight (that all this movement arises from the condition responsible for sorrow) has had a profound effect on the restlessness of the mind. The restlessness has not ceased, but the desperateness that previously attended to it has.

The desperateness originated from a sense that **something must be done** because **something could not be any other way**. Once the origin of restlessness is seen to be the condition responsible for sorrow, we see that it can be another way, so the ferocity of the energy subsides.

Conclusion

A mind that demands pleasure can never be at peace.

APPENDIX

1

THE EFFECT OF BOREDOM ON PLEASURE

Boredom shows how quickly a pleasurable condition can be alleviated. Boredom is the point at which the mind decides that it can no longer derive pleasure from the experience. The experience may be a person or an activity.

Prior to the experience of boredom one was likely obsessed with the experience and anticipating the pleasure one would receive through it.

Example:

One meets another person, likes them, and agrees to go out on a date.

Prior to the date one invests a lot of time and energy in the direction of that person. One flirts with them to stoke the flames of desire, and one thinks about them a lot in anticipation of the date.

When boredom arises, the quality of the relationship shifts immediately from pleasure to indifference.

Example:

When one goes on the date and finds the person boring, they immediately lose interest in that person, desire ends, and they seek to exit the situation.

It doesn't matter how long the pleasurable condition has been established in the mind, once boredom is felt, the pleasure is finished.

Example:

I used to train with nunchucks, the weapon popularised by Bruce Lee. I spent a long time using the nunchucks over many years. One day I became bored of the nunchucks and stop using them.

What is boredom?

Boredom is the reaction of dissatisfaction to the absence of pleasure.

When the mind believes the experience to not hold the possibility of pleasure, there is a lack of interest in it, no desire towards it, and a sense of indifference about it.

How does boredom arise?

Boredom arises from an understanding about the experience. As we said, the experience could be an activity or a person. The understanding one derives is the notion that pleasure cannot be derived from the experience.

Boredom can arise in response to a new experience or to an old experience that previously brought one pleasure.

When boredom arises in response to an experience that previously brought pleasure, some condition in memory has changed as a result of the understanding. The condition has changed from a meaning that holds the possibility of pleasure to a meaning that does not hold the possibility of pleasure.

Example: Singing

You sing as means to be accepted by the people around you. As you progress a skill in singing, you derive pleasure because singing represents the possibility of being socially accepted. One day, the people you are trying to impress say 'singing is stupid'. That statement invalidates your hopes of achieving social acceptance through singing, and this causes the pleasure you derived from singing to immediately evaporate.

Example: Nunchucks

I spent years training with nunchucks almost every day, and then one day I suddenly stopped. The factor that caused me to stop was the realisation that nunchucks would not give real power.

While I was performing with nunchucks in my youth, I felt this sense of power. As I progressed a skill in nunchucks, I felt the derivation of power increase. The factor that kept me doing the nunchucks was the pleasure my mind derived from power.

One day, while doing the nunchucks, I saw that the sense of power was an illusion. The understanding that resulted from that perception caused the notion of power to evaporate from my relationship with the nunchucks. So, I stopped doing them immediately.

The act of nun-chucking went from being meaningful to meaningless.

Perception of Time

The transformation of my relationship with the nunchucks in the present moment changed how I considered my history with the nunchucks.

When I felt the nunchucks were making me powerful, all the effort I put into that direction had value.

When the derivation of power was removed from the nunchucks, all the time I had spent doing them felt like a waste of time.

Considering the past to have been a waste of time meant that the mind did not desire to continue that direction in the future.

It is interesting to see how one's present understanding effects the appearance of the past and the aspirations of the future.

Persistence Through Time

Many years after giving up the nunchucks I found them in my draw when I was tidying my home. I went into the garden to do them again. While I was doing them, I had all the feeling I used to feel, but I didn't believe in them anymore. I thought to myself... 'how pointless' and felt bored.

Conclusion

Boredom is the reaction of dissatisfaction to the absence of pleasure.

APPENDIX

2

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE FIXATION OF PLEASURE

Once the mind becomes aware of an experience that gives it pleasure, the mind pursues that experience. In previous chapters we have spoken about the how that pleasure becomes a cycle. The consequence of the cycle is that the mind becomes fixated upon that experience.

The mind thinks about that experience.

The mind relives that experience.

The mind secures its access to that experience in the future.

The fixation inevitably results in the mind building its life around that pleasure. The pleasure narrows the depth and complexity of life down to a single superficial activity.

Example: A Surfer

Suppose one is interested in surfing. One thinks about surfing, goes surfing, purchases surfing equipment, makes friends with other surfers, watches surfing documentaries, and perhaps even gets a job as a surf instructor.

As the mind continues to indulge, it continues to accumulate knowledge about that pleasure and, over time, becomes an expert in that particular field.

It is interesting to see pleasure as an anchor. An anchor to one's thoughts, one's feelings, one's experiences, one's relationships, and one's lifestyle. One never strays far from their pleasure.

Like a stray dog walking the streets that keeps showing up at the house that feeds it. You may venture very far in your life, but you keep noticing yourself returning to the same spot.

Most people feel that pleasure liberates them, but they rarely consider the need to be liberated from their pleasure. When the mind unanchors itself from its fixation on a specific pleasure, you see it begin to explore the world. The liberation from the pleasure, liberates the mind from the narrow groove of thinking and behaviour the pleasure had trapped the mind in. The mind begins to branch out and look at others areas of life.

The Expansion of Pleasure

The fixation upon pleasure does not mean that one's time is spent indulging solely in the pleasure. The pleasure contains a dark side. You see, thought wants pleasure absolutely, so pleasure knows no bounds. It grows indefinitely without consideration for the territory it is expanding into.

The ideal is that one would live an orderly life and indulge in pleasure in one's free time, but pleasure does not operate that way. As the demand for pleasure continues to expand, one's ability to handle the necessary functions of life starts to deteriorate.

Example:

The demands for pleasure may:

- Keep one awake at night.
- Cause damage the body.
- Cause one to spend excess money.
- Cause one to take undue risk.

One watches their physical health, mental health, and financial health deteriorate as a result of the mind's insistence on pleasure. In response to this the mind seeks to control pleasure by confining it to a particular place in one's life, but it won't stay there. One watches desire overtake oneself

and pleasure breaks through the shackles of control. It feels like a genie that won't go back in its lamp.

The Sorrow of Fixation

The fixation of pleasure traps one in a superficial repetitive routine. Once that routine has been established for long enough, the mind feels sorrow when it considers the things it missed out on.

Conclusion

Pleasure is a cycle. The consequence of the cycle is that the mind becomes fixated upon a particular experience. The fixation inevitably results in the mind building its life around that pleasure.

APPENDIX

3

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE ATTRACTION OF PLEASURE

The mind wants pleasure, so anything in life that offers pleasure is seen to be attractive. Marketing plays to this in its adverts.

The debauchery of a clubbing holiday

The tranquility of a meditation retreat.

The pride of possession.

The underlying feature of any advert that doesn't inspire fear, is the pleasure that attracts. People also market themselves on social media platforms. They convey pleasurable lifestyles that are seen as attractive to others. In fact, much of what people post on social media is the exhibition of the pleasure they experience.

Pleasure in how they look.

Pleasure in an experience they had.

Pleasure in a self-righteous opinion.

You see this fact most clearly with respect to people who are rich. The thing they have, that most other people don't, is lots of money. That is the real rarity, yet they don't post pictures of their bank account balance. Why? Because people don't care about what money they HAVE, they care about what money they SPEND. A subtle, but important distinction.

The money sitting in the bank offers the opportunity for pleasure.

The money spent is the pleasure.

Money represents opportunity. This shows that people don't favour opportunity, but favour the pleasure that has been actualised from that opportunity. If people truly cared about something beyond pleasure, they would experience the spending of money as a weakening of that person's position, rather than a strengthening.

People in a pub won't spend one minute talking about \$250,000 in a bank because it's not exciting, but they'll spend weeks talking about a car worth \$250,000.

People's personal lives are built around pursuing pleasure and expressing to others the pleasure they have experienced. Conversations centre around the pleasurable experiences people have had in the past and the pleasurable experiences they anticipate having in the future. In addition to this, relationships are also formed around mutual pleasures. Friendships are formed around people who like doing the same activities and hold the same opinions.

Bonds are formed between people through pleasure.

To one extreme, the pleasure of sex forms a particular bond with someone that endures for a long time. Seeing someone you have slept with years later still causes you still feel something. That feeling isn't love or lust, but nonetheless there is this residue left from the past intimacy.

To the other extreme, when you meet someone for the first time and there is some exchange of pleasure between you, then each feels comfortable and there is a bond of trust and reassurance formed.

When you observe someone in a social setting that is funny, everyone in the vicinity becomes bonded to them and they become the centre of attention. It is the human equivalent of moths around a lantern.

Conclusion

The mind wants more: more money, more power, more beauty, and so on.

Loss is experienced as pain.

Gain is experienced as pleasure.

Pleasure is attractive because it signals to yourself and others that you are moving in the direction of getting more.

APPENDIX

4

THE CORRUPTION OF PLEASURE

The other day I was having lunch outside and saw a bird on a telephone line. Another bird came along, hopped on its back, they mated, and it flew off. The process lasted only a couple of seconds. When I saw the birds have sex for only a few seconds it got me thinking about why humans have sex for so long. I then realised, the reason why people have sex for so long is to get as much pleasure as possible from the experience.

Pleasure in building up to the orgasm.

Pleasure in the intensity of the orgasm.

It also struck me that the purpose of sex was different between birds and people.

For the birds, the purpose of sex is to reproduce.

For people, the purpose of sex is pleasure.

It was interesting to see how the meaning and activity of sex has been drastically changed by pleasure.

Birds:

The meaning is to create life.

They ejaculate as quickly as possible, and conserve as much energy as possible.

People:

The meaning is to enjoy themselves.

They ejaculate as slowly as possible, and expend as much energy as possible.

It was interesting to see how pleasure had turned an activity that was profoundly meaningful and efficient into something superficial and inefficient.

One way to look at the situation would be to say that there are two possible experiences a person can have with regard to sex:

1. Having sex to reproduce
2. Having sex to please oneself

While the existence of these two experiences is a fact, I couldn't help but get the sense that, to some extent, pleasure has been responsible for corrupting reality.

Conclusion

Pleasure drastically changes the meaning of an activity. When the purpose of an activity becomes the acquisition of pleasure, the mind loses sight of the actual purpose of that activity.

APPENDIX

5

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE REFUSAL TO GIVE UP PLEASURE

Once pleasure has become habitual, there is a reluctance to give it up. Implied in the very condition is the demand it be sustained.

We consciously refuse to give it up.

We are unconsciously resilient to giving it up.

We become aware of this unconscious resilience when we reach a point in our lives where we decide to stop doing it, and realise we can't. We feel irresistibly drawn to the pleasure, and enter into a conflictual relationship with it. We become aware that it is very difficult to break the habit.

There are many reasons why the habit persists.

For some, the pleasure is integral to their lives.

It is integral because their particular type of pleasure is the only way they know to get access to something they need.

Example:

Perhaps sex is the only way someone knows how to have a connection with another.

They resist giving up sex, in part, because of the demand to feel connected to people.

For some, the pleasure is the only 'high' they know.

The pleasure gives them a high, and their particular type of pleasure is the only way they know to access that state.

They refuse to give up the pleasure because they want to keep that high as a possibility in their life.

Interestingly, the high is enough, irrespective of how they come by it. Once people have found an activity that gives them that high, they rarely explore alternative pleasures to assess those highs, they just stick to what they know.

The surfers stay surfers, and the gamers stay gamers.

The One Who Refuses

It is important to ask yourself the question:

Who is the one that refuses pleasure?

Who is the one that accepts pleasure?

The mind that accepts or refuses pleasure is the same mind, it is the mind that is accustomed to that pleasure.

When the mind accepts the pleasure, the mind that is accustomed to the pleasure agrees.

When the mind refuses the pleasure, the mind that is accustomed to the pleasure contradicts the refusal, and conflict arises.

The purpose of making a refusal is to bring about change, but it doesn't result in change, it results in conflict. That is because the refusal has set up a desire that contradicts the established system.

One has the desire for that pleasure

Now, one also has the desire to not have that pleasure.

Part of the mind wants to change and part of the mind wants to remain the same, so there is this conflict produced. This state represents a mind that is fragmented and confused.

Real change comes from understanding.

Understanding Pleasure

Understanding pleasure is different to refusing or accepting pleasure because understanding is not divisive.

An opinion is divisive.

A judgement is divisive.

A choice is divisive.

Understanding is not divisive. The moment you have understood something, that understanding covers the whole field of thought. The understanding does not cause a contradiction between one part of the mind that thinks one way and one part of the mind that thinks another, the understanding is total.

An opinion, a judgement or a choice divides the mind and creates conflict. Understanding does not divide the mind or create conflict. Understanding enables the mind to move as a unified whole.

Conclusion

The mind refuses to give up pleasure consciously and subconsciously. The resilience of the mind to give up pleasure is most evident when we consciously choose to stop pursuing a particular form of pleasure, and discover we cannot.

APPENDIX

6

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE FEAR OF PLEASURE

People pursue pleasure as a means of escaping from sorrow.

Example:

To escape from loneliness, one gets a girlfriend.

The experience of loneliness is terrifying, and people do not want to experience it again. They develop a fear of loneliness and take steps to avoid it. Getting a partner is a means to avoid loneliness. So, we can look at the establishment of pleasure as a response to fear.

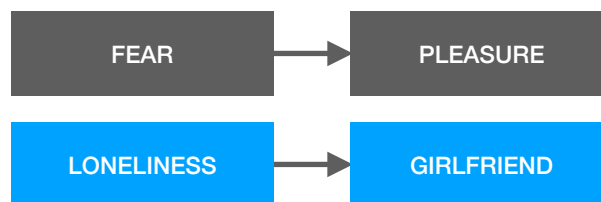


figure 1. the fear of loneliness

The mind finds solace in a girlfriend. Now, the interesting point is, the person then fears losing the girlfriend. One fears losing the girlfriend because the loss of the girlfriend would return the mind back to a state of loneliness. So, the escape to pleasure, creates its own form of fear.

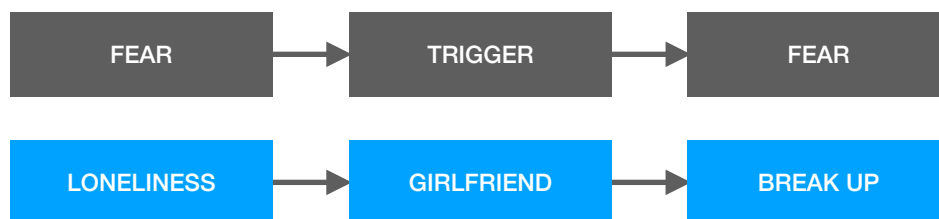


figure 2. the fear of breakup

When pleasure is used as a means to escape from sorrow, the network of escapes is actually one network of fear.

When in a relationship, the mind is focused on the fear of a break up. The fear of a break up essentially has its root in the fear of loneliness. The fear of a breakup is not a new kind of fear, it is actually the essential fear (loneliness) presenting itself in a different form.

The fear of a break up becomes a proxy for the fear of loneliness.

The fear of a break up becomes an interface to the fear of loneliness.

The Proxy

The proxy means that the fear continues to act and impact one's life, but it does so through a specific channel. The fear was previously very broad: any time one was alone, loneliness would arise.

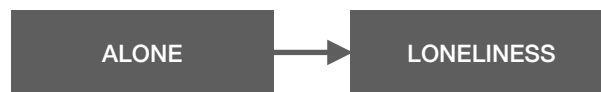


figure 3. loneliness arises

The establishment of the girlfriend has narrowed the channel of fear because one is no longer alone.

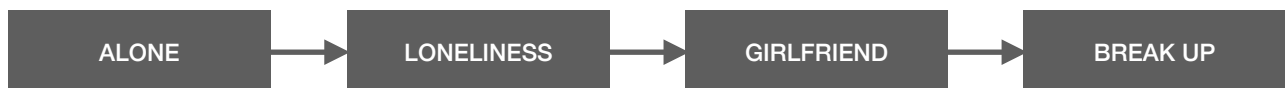


figure 4. loneliness channelled through a girlfriend

The Interface

The solution to fear is to face the fear. Some fears are real and the experience should be avoided, but some fears are simply imagined. The solution to imagined fears is to remain with them. Through remaining with them, the fear is alleviated by the gradual realisation that the imagination is not real.

Example:

I saw a young girl from Africa terrified when a white man entered her village, she ran off screaming and shouting something about how the white man was going to eat her. The mum brought her daughter to the white man and made the girl hold the man's hand for 5 minutes. Over that five minutes you saw the girls face change from absolute terror in tears, to calmness.

The fear of loneliness is an imagination. When one sits with loneliness, the whole thing naturally unravels as one observes the experience.

The proxy fear creates its own interface with the fear.

Prior to having a girlfriend, one came face to face with loneliness.

After getting a girlfriend, one rarely comes face to face with loneliness, they predominantly come face to face with the fear of a break up.

Coming face to face with the fear of a breakup will not free oneself from loneliness. In this way, the interface distracts the mind from the central issue, and also makes the essential fear much more difficult to locate and solve.

The proxy actually hides the fear.

Hackers use proxies to intentionally hide their identity.

The minds use of proxies unintentionally hides its conditioning.

Suppose a person has either been in a long-term relationship, or hopped from one relationship to the next, for many years. They may be completely oblivious to the root fear of loneliness and completely incapable of solving the essential problem.

Superficiality has its Root in Something Fundamental

In our example, the fear of loneliness and the fear of a breakup have a direct relationship, so it makes the root fear clear to see because the proxy is only one hop from the root. When the fear fans out to two or more proxies, the end proxy could be so far removed from the essential fear, that it becomes very difficult to distinguish what one is truly afraid of.

Example:

A man is going absolutely ballistic because someone scratched his car.

Essentially, the car isn't important. He is having that reaction because the car represents a status symbol. The status symbol is used because he is insecure. He is insecure because he demands a superior self-image to be accepted by people. He demands to be accepted by people because he has a fear of loneliness.



figure 5. the link between fundamental and superficial conditioning

No matter how superficial something appears, it has a fundamental root. While superficiality can cause people to appear different, they all share the same roots.

Example:

The ways people overcome loneliness is different, but loneliness is common to everyone.

When one begins to understand themselves they must start at the only place they can: what they are right now.

There is no such thing as a trivial experience because you never know the depths it will lead you to.

The Spread of Fear

Multiple escapes can be associated to a single fear.

Example:

The man who is insecure derives security from status symbols.

He may use a car as a status symbol.

He then fears his car being damaged.

He may use jewellery as a status symbol.

He then fears his jewellery being stolen.

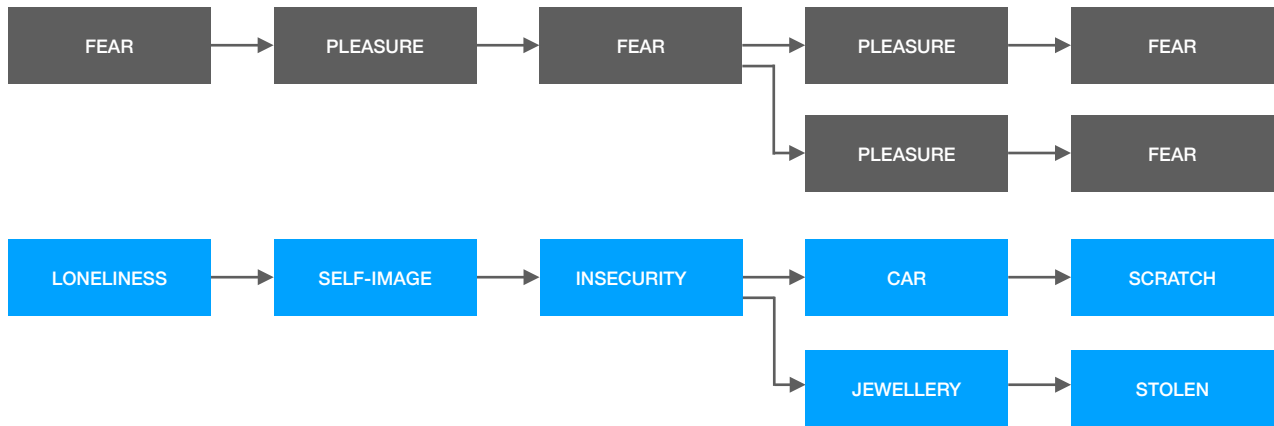


figure 6. The spread of fear

Here we can begin to see fear spanning out like a tree: trunk, branches and leaves.

It is, therefore, possible to solve fundamental fears, and wipe out entire structures of pleasure and fear from humanity.

Conclusion

The mind pursues pleasure to escape from pain. The mind then fears losing pleasure because it means returning to a state of pain.

APPENDIX

7

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE MEANING OF PLEASURE

What Pleasure Is

Pleasure is an emotional reaction to sensation.

Example:

You see a mountain, and feel beauty.

You hear music, and feel relaxed.

You think something, and feel excited.

The basis for the emotional reaction is memory. Memory responds to the sensation with pleasure.

The Modification of Pleasure

By cultivating memory, the pleasure one feels can be modified because the reaction is based on the knowledge one has.

The notion of hard work results in excess pleasure.

Example:

When a scientist solves a problem they have been working on for years, they experience intense pleasure.

When one reaches the summit of a mountain after a long hike, they experience intense pleasure

The notion of rarity results in excess pleasure.

Example:

When one sees a whale from their boat, they experience intense pleasure.

By understanding how the reaction is stimulated, the mind can direct itself towards the experiences it knows will be highly pleasurable.

Example:

A surfers knowledge of the ocean will enable him to find the best waves.

The cultivation of knowledge gives the notion of progression.

The Demand for Pleasure

The desire to pursue pleasure is based on memory. The remembrance of a past pleasurable event makes the mind's demand to experience the event again.

The Self-Centred Nature of Pleasure

The fact that pleasure is a reaction means that pleasure is, essentially, a self-indulgent activity.

The Significance of Pleasure

The role pleasure plays in one's life has been created by thought.

The reaction we call pleasure is the result of an understanding put together by thought.

The demand we have for pleasure is the result of an understanding put together by thought.

The pursuit of pleasure is the development of an ongoing understanding of the means to acquire pleasure. People build their lives around that pursuit and form their self-identity from it.

Example:

Those who seek the pleasure of power identify themselves as politicians.

Those who seek the pleasure of knowledge identify themselves as intellectuals.

Those who seek the pleasure of excitement identify themselves as adrenaline junkies.

The significance of pleasure is that it gives a purpose to life.

Pleasure gives one something to head towards.

Pleasure motivates one to act.

The Meaning of Pleasure

People build their lives around pleasure. When you speak to people they talk about the experiences that have pleased them in the past, and the experiences they hope to have in the future that will give them great pleasure. They direct their own lives through the pursuit of pleasure and encourage other people to do the same.

Pleasure is given an unquestionably high importance in the mind and becomes the meaning of people's lives.

The pursuit of pleasure is the demand by thought to experience an image made by thought.

The pleasure one has experienced in the past is directly related to the pleasure one hopes to experience in the future. The movement of pleasure through time is a continuity of similarity. The meaning of pleasure is to repeat.

The meaning of pleasure is to repeat the past, in a modified form, in the present.

Conclusion

The meaning of pleasure is to repeat the past, in a modified form, in the present.

APPENDIX

8

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE SELF-CENTREDNESS OF PLEASURE

The fact that pleasure is a reaction means that pleasure is, essentially, a self-indulgent activity. The self-centredness of pleasure causes society to fragment and people to appear as separate.

Fragmentation

One pleasure conflicts with another pleasure.

Example:

Person-A playing the drums disturbs Person-B reading.

One person is pursuing pleasure by doing X and another is pursuing pleasure doing Y.

Example:

Person-A fishes. Person-B plays football.

Not only is pleasure a self-centred activity, but it maintains a self-centred attitude to life. I don't know if you have ever seriously asked yourself the question:

Suppose you stopped pursuing pleasure, what would you do with your life?

You would have lots of free time.

You would have lots of energy, because you would no longer be dissipating that energy into pursuing pleasure.

You wouldn't be repeating the same pattern every day, so you would feel new.

You would be faced with your personal problems, societies problems and the worlds problems. You would not be able to escape from those facts because, without pleasure, there is no way to bury your head in the sand.

I think you would work every second of every day to solve those problems.

Every day we make the choice to ignore our problems.

Conclusion

The fact that pleasure is a reaction means that pleasure is, essentially, a self-indulgent activity.

APPENDIX

9

WRITTEN BY SILENT PERCEPTION

THE TRAP OF PLEASURE

You hear many people talking about pain being a problem.

Example:

People complain about hurt.

People complain about anxiety.

People complain about fear.

The complaint is centred around two objections:

1. The pain doesn't feel good.
2. The avoidance of pain limits peoples lives.

Example:

One who is anxious may not be able to leave the house.

One who is hurt may avoid forming relationships with other people.

One who has vertigo may never go up high.

As we know, pleasure feels different to pain. The mind appears to dislike pain, but like pleasure. Aside from this, pleasure is repetitive and limits one's life just like pain does. People become fixated on a particular type of pleasure and ignore other experiences of life.

The avoidance of pain limits people's lives.

The pursuit of pleasure limited people's lives.

It is interesting that people do not challenge the limitations imposed on their lives by pleasure.

When the limitation is the result of pain, people challenge the limitation.

When the limitation is the result of pleasure, people do not challenge the limitation.

Pleasure and pain have many opposites and similarities, but the factor that makes the mind content to live in limitation is the pleasure one experiences.

People object to the limitations imposed by pain because the feeling is bad.

People do not object to the limitations imposed by pleasure because the feeling is good.

People try to break out of the confines of pain, but people make a home for themselves in the confines of pleasure.

People live within the confines of pain because they cannot find any way out of it.

People live within the confines of pleasure because they accept living that way.

The trap of pleasure is the feeling.

The feeling lures one into the trap (repetition), the feeling keeps one repeating, and the feeling never causes one to question the repetition.

Pleasure is an anaesthetic to rationality.

I think the illusion is that, because people pursue pleasure, they feel they are in control of pleasure. That is why pleasure does not feel threatening or raise any alarm bells.

One feels they are choosing to step forward, rather than being driven forward.

Pleasure only becomes identified as a problem when the mind tries to stop and realises it cannot.

Conclusion

People object to pain because it doesn't feel good, and the avoidance of pain limits their lives. Similarly, the pursuit of pleasure limits peoples lives, but because it is not a bad feeling, they do not object to it.

The refusal to challenge the limitations pleasure imposes on your life is the trap of pleasure.