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Personal Reality and Consciousness

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The Tree of Life Foundation

Across the millennia sages of all sorts have admonished us that life as we experience it is an illusion. Our experience is a projection of our own attitudes, which precludes our ability to experience True Reality. No two individuals experience life in exactly the same way, even if they have undergone exactly the same life experiences. This is true because experiences do not determine our reaction to them. We do, as a function of the meaning that we ascribe to various events. Meaning derives from context, or one's frame of reference. Essentially, our motivation, which arises from our values and beliefs, both determines and limits our ability to understand or give meaning to the events we encounter in life. In life it can truly be said that attitude is everything. Attitudes are cohorts of thoughts which persist over time. They are a result of our past conclusions concerning the meaning of that which we have already encountered. We thus understand what is now encountered only in terms of our past conclusions. While this seems logical, and perhaps desirable, this method of relating to the world inevitably leads to projecting the past onto the present. In effect, our attitudes result in a perception of the world that creates events and emotional responses which reinforce that which we already believe. In short, we engender a self perpetuating and self fulfilling system. Once our mind concludes meaning, that meaning becomes, at the very least, our personal reality. We defend our point of view, for we know that it is true, regardless of what others may think or say.

The effect of various attitudes is reflected in their physiologic consequences. All thoughts generate energy. Certain types of thoughts generate low energies that are harmful to us. The association with high energy thought fields leads to health while the association with low energy patterns leads to disease. High energy patterns have a calming and strengthening effect on the body, and low energy patterns create stress. Stressful reactions are the result our tendency to respond to various stimuli via habitual thought patterns, i.e., through our own frame of reference. Stressful reactions are thus the result of interpreting currently encountered stimuli through our past. Many alternative therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, massage, aroma therapy, and reflexology are designed to, and do, correct the results of energy imbalances. However, unless the underlying attitudinal pattern at the source of the energy imbalance is changed, the illness tends to return.

That thoughts generate energy which affects our bodies is beyond question.

Approaching the mind from entirely different perspectives, both David R. Hawkins, M.D., Ph.D., and the Nobel laureate Eric Kandel, M.D. have concluded that the mind, through our thoughts, influences our physical beings at the most elementary levels. That thoughts not only influence the chemicals in our bodies, but even turn genes on and off, and cause the brain to reconfigure itself!

Other research indicates that this effect is accomplished via the impact that the energy of our thoughts has on the energy pathways known as meridians. The organizing

centers (Acupuncture treatment points) of the meridians are responsible for biological morphogenesis. They retain all of their growth functions after morphogenesis and communicate with one another to maintain proper bodily form and function.

Kinesiologic testing can demonstrate that the connection between the mind and body is immediate. Positive thoughts make our bodies strong and negative thoughts make us go weak. Since the body's response is immediate, our physical being is influenced from instant to instant by our changing thoughts and emotions. It is the continuity and reiteration of various thought patterns which can ultimately result in manifest disease. Thus, while ideas of all sorts pass through our minds, it is the ones we habitually entertain that impact us the most.

Fortunately, the mind-body connection is a two way street: we influence the meridian energy via the energetic pattern of our thoughts; we can also influence the energy pattern of the meridians via direct or indirect stimulation of the meridian points themselves. Proper stimulation of the meridians influences the pattern of energy emitted by the brain, and can destabilize the self-perpetuating energy fields of disease states. The energy fields of disease states are created by our thoughts, and always precede observable disease states. Research has shown that reliable changes in the bioelectric potential of meridian points occur months before any physically observable signs of breast cancer appear in women for example.

Health ultimately rests on letting go of our negative world views, and adopting an actively positive perspective. Dr. David R. Hawkins, MD, PhD in "Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior", categorizes the range of negative and positive emotional attractor energy patterns which influence man. Dr. Hawkins subdivides attractor patterns into interrelated aspects of consciousness which he terms "God-View", "Life-View", "Emotion", and "Process". Each aspect of consciousness is contained within separate "Levels of Consciousness" (LoC), which range from low energy states of normal awareness to high energy states of enlightenment. Dr. Hawkins' insights into human consciousness, and its relationship to our physical being, are the keystone upon which AFT has been constructed. The latter part of this paper provides descriptions developed by the present author, by LoC, of the characteristic thoughts and ways of perceiving that are related to these aspects of consciousness. Before presenting these descriptions it is quite important to have a more detailed context through which consciousness may be understood.

An individual's existence does not begin with his conception nor his birth. We are not our bodies. Rather we are eternal beings of light energy, who have communication devices we call bodies. Our bodies, through the influence of the meridians, become a reflection of the projected energy of our being. As eternal beings, existing in a temporal physicality, the energy of our current "Here-now being" is influenced by the energy of our past existence. This influence is our Karma, a constant energetic breeze that colors the context of our current and earliest awareness. At the end of our current physical form our eternal energy, the True You, will carry unfinished remnants from this life, in addition to past life unfinished remnants. What are these unfinished remnants? They are energetic attractor fields which maintain our separation from All-That-Is, which in turn maintains our duality. When we no longer generate low level energy patterns we exit the temporal physicality and become one with All-That-Is. While this may seem to be an unrealistic goal, it is the path we are all on, and we will remain on until the journey is finished. Every step toward this goal is, in itself, a step toward freedom and a step toward love. Love is ultimately total freedom and total acceptance. Love is beyond forgiveness; Love sees no errors in need of forgiveness.

Our Karmic energy influences our "God-View". "God-View" is concerned with authority relationships. First, are our beliefs about God's relationship to man in general and more specifically to us individually. Second, it refers to how we, often unconsciously, relate to ourselves and to our fellow man. For each of us God is seen as an entity with an attitude. The key question is whether or not God is friendly. The lower the energy level of our view of God, the less friendly we perceive God to be, and the less tolerant are we of ourselves and of others.

Our "God-View" strongly influences our "Life-View" of reality. "Life-View" is the meaning we ascribe to the events and other stimuli in the world. If God is perceived as punitive the world is likely to be seen as frightening; a place filled with opportunities to be punished for our errors and lapses. If we, as God, are loving, we overlook "other's transgressions" and the world is likely to be seen as benign.

"Emotion" refers to the subjective experience that derives from our "God" and "Life-Views", or what we feel. We become anxious when we see things as frightening and when we anticipate punishment. Conversely we feel reverence when we perceive God as loving, or when our context is one of love. Negative emotions arise as perturbations, or harmonic disruptions, in our energy being. These perturbations are transmitted through our bodies via both the meridian energy pathways and the central nervous system. Peace may accurately be seen as the absence of energy perturbations.

"Process" refers to our characteristic response, in both thought and action, to our "God-View" and "Life-View". In other words, how does our world work, or function in a practical sense. We withdraw from that which is frightening, become enslaved by our exaggerated desires, destructive when blamed, aggressive when antagonized, and give up when resistance seems futile. Obsession results from overly valuing something that we feel is being denied to us. Aggression originates from an antagonistic "Life-View", and a belief that vengeance is justified given the insult received.

One of the most difficult things for us to grasp is that our upsets, whatever form they may take, are a product of our own view point. Upsets of any sort indicate that we value something other than peace and harmony. This is both our trap and our freedom. It is all our choice! This means that God, the world, individual circumstances, other's actions, and everything else outside of our personal view point, our attitudes, is totally innocent! We cannot play victim and point the finger at anything outside of ourselves! We do create our personal reality ... Really!

Below is this author's partial description of some of the ways we generate and perpetuate negative attractor energies and thus entrain a negative personal reality. Rarely does anyone operate solely from one of the perspectives noted below. Rather, each of us shifts constantly from one perspective to another in relation to our motives and intentions in the moment. We have choice, but we carry a significant burden of history and inertia. Nevertheless, we can each operate from an enlightened perspective, at least for moments at a time. We can all find ways to laugh in the face of our hardships, and to forgive our own and other's foibles or missteps. Changing our perspective, letting go of our negative reactions and views of the world, even for a moment, is of significant value to us. As it turns out, positive energy is vastly more powerful than negative energy. Even a few deliberate moments of viewing a situation, ourselves, or another, from a truly positive perspective will noticeably change our lives for the better.

Change requires motivation born of intention. Intention, hopefully, arises from conscious awareness of personal self interest. Most people do not want to change. They believe that their beliefs are justified, correct, and that those who hold different beliefs have somehow "missed the boat". Most people, even if unhappy, want to continue to view and operate in the world as they have always done, only achieving a different outcome. It is sometimes very difficult to awaken to the idea that you will surely achieve the same, or similar, outcomes if you keep doing the same things! It is even more difficult to accept that our physical being, our very body, is part and parcel of that actual outcome.

It is easy to judge the descriptions offered below as harsh, undesirable, and otherwise unacceptable. They are in reality descriptions of all too human behavior, attitudes, and values. The descriptions really are us, at any given moment. Our beings ultimately reflect the energy of the thoughts we harbor, the actions we undertake, and the activities in which we participate. It is in our self interest to recognize the intimate relationship between our thoughts and our physical being. It is time to awaken to the responsibility that we alone hold. Only we have the choice as to the type of thoughts we provide safe harbor for in our mind.

Recognize in the descriptions below our common folly, and forgive yourself and others if you recognize some of yourself or others in what you read here. Further, acknowledge that any upsetting emotional state that you experience is the result of your own perspective. That you are choosing to impose your past experience on some current situation or individual(s). They are not at fault for your upset, you are! If you do not like how you feel then YOU must change. Acknowledge that you must have made a mistake in how you view the situation involved. This, of course, assumes that you have really not deliberately chosen to feel badly. Then, if you chose, you might intend to find a better way of handling what was recognized or experienced. There must be a better way of viewing or responding. Not everyone shares your upset, so why should you? Intention is the start of it all.

Definitions of Consciousness by Level and Category

LoC 20 - Shame

God-View - Despising. Regarding with contempt, distaste; condemning. Looking down on with disgust and loathing; seeing self/others as worthy of being insulted and degraded. The Shame based personality is alternately vicious, dangerous, accusatory, and paranoid, or, shy and withdrawn, feeling easily humiliated and believing that other's will see what they themselves know that they are. Some shame based personalities tend toward adopting rigid moral extremes, projecting their own shame onto others, who they then "justly" attack.

Life-View - Miserable Life is seen through a veil which colors all that is seen or experienced as anything from wretchedly unhappy to uneasy or uncomfortable. The world is lonely and sad and those entrained in this energy field can feel totally forsaken. Life is desolate, dreary, and unhappy, a pitiful place truly devoid of all comforts.

Emotion - Humiliation Humiliation is an intense embarrassment and sense of shame. Mortification is a more painful feeling than shame, that arises from specifically social circumstances when one is humbled in the estimation of others, or when a loss of self-respect is perceived. Low self-esteem is the hallmark of the shame-based personality,

which synchronously perceives and creates opportunities for humiliation and rejection in social situations.

Process - Elimination Synonymous with rejection, is a process of removing or getting rid of, especially as being in some way undesirable. It involves omission as being unimportant or irrelevant; leaving out, and ultimately eliminating, killing or by destroying, actively or passively. The Shame based personality is frequently shy, withdrawn, and introverted or on the other hand, bullish, rigid, driven, intolerant and overbearing.

LoC 30 - Guilt

God-View - Vindictive. Vindictive has a number of meanings: the most commonly understood meaning is to be vindictive, or spiteful, prone to revenge; inflicting or desiring harm, injury, or humiliation to befall another who is perceived as having caused some wrong. Another less understood, yet more common, meaning of vindictive to be prone to vindication, or justifying one's self rather than taking responsibility for one's own actions and or thoughts. Both aspects share the underlying commonality of unforgiveness, either of others or oneself. Those prone to vindictive thinking become obsessed with the wrongs that have been done to them and the need to expose their antagonists. Those judged guilty must pay ... forever. Those who cannot forgive themselves will ceaselessly avoid any responsibility for themselves by seeing their responsibility as being in others or in external forces as beyond their control. They thus avoid feeling guilty by being "right". Guilt-based personalities are preoccupied with sin, or wrongness, and its punishment. The belief in "pay backs", no matter how seemingly justified, is an example of vindictive thinking. Blaming influences external to one's self for one's actions or inactions is another example of vindictive thinking.

Life-View - Evil Viewing actions, behaviors, or situations as being morally wrong or bad, wicked, harmful, injurious, depraved, vicious and corrupt. Guilt is the land of victims, remorse and blame.

Emotion - Blame To hold responsible; find fault with; to censure another. Most blaming of others is the projection of ones' own guilt or shortcomings onto the other in order to avoid anticipated censure. Self-blame leads to self-recrimination, self-punishment, and suicide.

Process - Destruction To ruin or annihilate. Guilt-based personalities will manifest both self-sabotage and rageful outbursts aimed at others. Rage is frequently the result of seeing one's self in a mirror, and wishing to destroy the messenger.

LoC 50 – Apathy

God-View - Condemning Expressing an unfavorable or adverse judgment on; indicating strong disapproval; pronouncing guilty and sentencing to punishment. All individuals suffering from apathy feel condemned to their fate by forces beyond their control or influence. It is a position of ultimate powerlessness, in which even forgiveness is irrelevant.

Life-View - Hopelessness Life is bleak and barren; it is desperate and beyond any optimism: it is incurable, impossible to accomplish, solve, resolve, etc. Hopelessness is totally without energy, and opportunities cannot be seen or benefited from. Those with this life view are a millstone on those around them, and society in general. They are so

dependent on others that they can passively expire, literally, without external assistance. Those who have seen television commercials showing starving third world mothers listlessly holding their malnourished children, while flies crawl all over the both of them, have seen the face of true apathy. Why bother to brush the flies away? Flies are everywhere, and they will only come back again. Why bother to grow crops? The desert always wins. It has always been that way. One cannot change the nature of things.

Emotion - Despair A state of gloom, disheartenment, and loss of hope; giving up, lacking in courage and ambition. It can be so complete as to result in a more or less permanent state of passive acceptance of any and all adverse circumstances such as is demonstrated in the Stockholm Syndrome.

Process - Abdication. Giving up authority, power, control; feeling helpless and powerless to change and improve their lot in life people suffering from apathy quit, or just give up.

LoC 75 - Grief

God-View - Disdainful. Without honor or value; disgraced or tarnished. Disdain is shown in sarcasm, mockery, derision, ridicule, disrespect or other attacks on character; in calling or thinking someone a fool or stupid. Disdain is the projection of perceived loss onto the actions or inaction's of others: they are responsible for our troubles. Unlike the Guilt God-View LoC-30, the guilty viewed from this level of consciousness can be forgiven, if they mend their erroneous ways.

Life-View - Tragic Grief, sadness and regret are everywhere, and pathos is seen as the rule rather than an exception. Situations are seen as calamitous, disastrous, and doomed to destruction and loss; depression and sorrow are the price of life. The focus of life is the past, what might have been, what has been lost that can never ever be recovered. Dr. Hawkins describes this energy field as "the cemetery of life", and experientially it truly is.

Emotion - Regret A sense of loss, disappointment, dissatisfaction, or a feeling of sorrow, or remorse for a fault, act, loss, or disappointment. Regret is distress of the mind, sorrow about events of the past, what has been done or failed to be done, wrongs committed or errors that have been made.

Process - Despondency Strong feelings of melancholy, gloom, and despair; disheartenment caused by a total loss of all hope. Loss of hope flows from believing "that which was lost cannot ever be recovered". This level of consciousness accounts for the greatest number of mental health clients, and is the third most prominent LoC in the US today.

LoC 100 - Fear

God-View - Punitive At this level, the most common LoC found in the USA, there is an over-concern with punishment; an anticipation and belief in the rightfulness of punishment for one's offenses, or faults. Authority figures are sought who appear fearless and capable of defending or protecting the fearful. Punishment may take the form of withholding attention, affection, or love, or may be more active as in corporal or capital punishment. Forgiveness for one's offenses is possible only after punishment and contrition have occurred.

Life-View - Frightening Those entrained in the energy field of fear see only potential threats at every turn. Almost any situation can lead to the unwanted consequences, losses, or major embarrassments that are feared. The frightened are intimidated and easily manipulated in order to avoid their feared consequences.

Emotion - Anxiety Anxiety is an emotion of anticipation, a dread or concern about what might happen. Anxiety is to the future as Grief is to the past. In order to avoid anxiety people avoid or move away from that which is seen as fearful or uncertain. Avoiding looking bad, or not being seen as desirable, being alone or poor, are powerful social motivations and are the source of much attention and activity in this world.

Process - Withdrawal The down side of fear is paranoia, defensiveness, and avoidance. Fear always generates a pattern of "move away from" behavior, avoidance, and inhibition. Since anxiety is so common it is viewed as normal, unless its totally out of control, or causing too much inhibition of behavior.

LoC 125 - Desire

God-View - Denying Denial involves having what is wanted available, but not offered; being within reach, but withheld, refused, or unsatisfied. Denying is saying or being said "no" to when satisfaction is possible. Forgiveness will be given when what is desired is offered.

Life-View - Disappointing Not getting or having what is desired leads to disappointment. The most frequent cause of disappointment, and ultimately anger, is one's unmet expectations. Being denied is about wanting, and the energy field of Desire is the land of greed, of wanting what others have, of ceaseless accumulation, or having without gaining any enduring satisfaction.

Emotion - Craving The level of desire is the level of the addictions, where want is never satisfied. We can become addicted to almost anything: money, physical pleasures, attention, or things. Desire is a very powerful energy field which can positively lead to achievement in order to get what is wanted. Unfortunately, it can also be absolutely insatiable.

Process - Enslavement As an ongoing energy field, those caught in Desire can never truly satisfy their wants. They can never ever have enough money, things, or "highs". One desire satisfied only leads to another desire taking its place. Desire is totally without peace.

LoC 150 - Anger

God-View - Vengeance Vengeance is violent revenge. Vengeance is the inflicting of injury, harm, humiliation, or the like, on a person by another who has been harmed by that person. Anger shows itself mostly in terms of resentment, and stems primarily from frustrated wants. Want stems from exaggerated desires. The most common cause of anger by far is that of unmet expectations, especially the expectations of other people. Forgiveness can occur when the the harm has been undone or when satisfaction has occurred.

Life-View - Antagonistic Life for those in the level of Anger is about getting back at those seen as harming or frustrating or slighting the angry person. They are oppositional and actively hostile. They foster friction, conflict, and strife. They are in constant struggle, and tend to see others as adversaries with whom they must compete in order to get or keep what they want.

Emotion - Hate Hate involves feeling intense dislike, or extreme aversion for, or hostility toward, something or someone. That which is hated is detested, loathed, and despised. Hate is truly the opposite of Love.

Process - Aggression Anger most frequently is expressed by offensive action, attack, and explosive behavior. Anger is volatile, prone to rage, and is dangerous. Angry people act out their frustration physically, verbally, or through any other means by which they can hurt those they see as having committed an injustice.

LoC 175 - Pride

God-View - Indifference For the prideful person, whatever God is, he does not care about man, either through a lack of concern or lack of interest. Man is on his own, and must make his way by himself, and set his own rules. Man is what he makes of himself, because God really doesn't care. Forgiveness is irrelevant; the proud rarely say that they are sorry: people deserve what they get. The prideful God-View frequently emanates from an early rejection of moralistic views. Views that could cause the individual see himself as worthless, or unacceptable to those in authority. By setting their own rules, through their own actions, they can remake themselves in a more admirable fashion.

Life-View - Demanding For the prideful person life is an ongoing process of surmounting the demands of any situation, of being the first, or the best. Self-esteem is based on accomplishment. This is part of the down side of pride: being "second" is no better than being last. Pride is therefore assailable, and based on constant external accomplishment, without which it can be cast into shame or worthlessness.

Emotion - Scorn Anything less than the best or most desirable is treated with contempt, derision, mockery, or jeering. Pride is thus divisive and disdainful, and tends to be audacious, haughty, domineering, and overbearing. Given the opportunities it presents for the infliction of humiliation it has rightfully been deemed one of the "seven deadly sins".

Process - Inflation Pride carries with it a claim to superior importance. In order to be up, all others must be down; in order to be more others must be less. It is not enough for the prideful person himself to experience his or her own accomplishments, others must also be witness to and acknowledge their accomplishments, superiority, desirability, etc. Those caught in the process of inflation seek venues through which they may strut and display their self-imagined superiority.