

The Principles Underlying Life Experience: The Beauty of Simplicity

by

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Mind, Thought, Consciousness...

These are the principles that explain and describe the creation of our experience of life, our perceived “reality”.

Mind: The energy of all creation, both formless and in form.

Thought: The capacity to create form from formless energy.

Consciousness: The awareness of the process of creation, and of what we have created.

This paper will demonstrate the simplicity and grace of the three principles, the foundations of the understanding of how the mind works and thus how people create their lives. It will describe the power of understanding the principles to affect the well-being of humanity.

Without reference to principles, any conceptual framework, regardless of its elegance and logic, is no more than a set of arbitrary theoretical explanations that freeze-frame experience without explaining it. Without any conceptual framework, in contrast, the principles stand alone as a profound, powerful statement about the human experience and the dynamic creative power of the human potential.

The Principles as a Foundation

The three principles bring clarity and simplicity to a field of study that has become increasingly complex. The principles ground teaching about thought in a realized truth about life. A realized truth is an insight, an intuitive recognition of something that transcends knowledge, observation and experience. Once discovered, such a realization then deepens knowledge by bringing order to, or making sense of, puzzling observations and experience.

Principles are universally true and are at the heart of life, regardless of whether they are known. For example, the principle of gravity determined the movements of heavenly bodies observed by people from the first awakening of man's curiosity. Although numerous, diverse explanations were devised by many people in many cultures preceding the discovery of the principle of gravity, none of them actually satisfied all questions. Every explanation led to more explanations, or to further questions that complicated the explanations. People continued to rely on analysis, speculation and superstition to arrive at new explanations.

Gravity has been a universal law or principle since the dawn of time. It has been the logical force behind observable phenomena all along, undiscovered, yet consistently determining certain relationships and events in the universe. Gravity, once discovered, was not **an** explanation; it was **the** explanation, the operating principle of the relationship between masses of matter. Once the principle of gravity was seen, the relationships between objects became understandable and predictable. The realization of the principle of gravity eased mankind's superstitions and fears. It filled the gaps in understanding and laid questions to rest. **It fundamentally changed the direction of human inquiry.** With the matter of **how** objects relate to each other resolved, people were able to look to the possibilities opened up by their deeper understanding.

Principles Open a New Era

As with the principle of gravity in regard to matter, the principles of Mind, Thought and Consciousness resonate as essentially and universally true explanations for human behavior. The

principles offer an overarching logic that unfailingly accounts for the whole spectrum of human experience, without exceptions. Within these principles are the answers to deep questions about the mysteries of human experience. The discovery of these principles eases superstitions and fears in that realm and ushers in an age of new discoveries about the possibilities for humanity.

Merely knowing that there *are* principles at work at the source of our moment-to-moment experience of life evokes certainty and confidence in people. Understanding the principles provides assurance and hope to people by addressing fundamental human concerns, such as:

- Why do people get upset?
- Why are some people frightened of things that do not frighten others?
- Why do negative past events plague people in the present?
- Why is it hard for people to accept change?
- Why do people react differently to the same things?
- Why does life seem unbearably painful sometimes and remarkably wonderful other times?
- Why do some people sustain peace of mind even in the worst of circumstances, while others find peace elusive even in the best of circumstances?
- Why does happiness seem to occur at random in people?
- Why do seemingly “sane” people “go crazy”?
- Why can some people get over things and truly change their lives, while others seem stuck in cycles of stress and distress?

The principles shift the direction of inquiry about human psychological life and mental well-being completely. **No longer is it plausible to look to multiple outside forces to understand experience; the principles turn cause and effect inside out.** The causes we had been studying -- external factors such as childhood conditioning, past traumas, environment -- turn out to be *effects*. The principles clarify that there is one and only one source of experience: the use of the ability to think brought to life via the continual experience of thought as reality. Thus, the principles deepen inquiry, turning attention away from the **content** of thinking and the outcomes of thinking and focusing attention on the **process** of creating thought and experience, the very fact of creating life from the inside out.

This fundamental shift in the direction of inquiry only makes sense in the context of principles, just as eliminating “angry deities” or the influence of mankind’s will as possible causes of

astronomical events only made sense in the context of gravity. Without principles, any explanation is as possible and as good as any other. Principles impose discipline on inquiry; they establish the truth and integrity of a field. Once principles are known, there is a test of consistency for all further speculation in that field.

The more clearly the principles are understood, the more the understanding resolves concerns about the content of thought. To the degree that people know they are always forming thought, that the thoughts they form moment-to-moment are translated into apparent reality by their consciousness, they know that every so-called reality is a fleeting, ephemeral product of their own minds at work.

The Principles in Ordinary Terms

There are innumerable ways to express the principles simply in plain, everyday language. What follows are a series of pragmatic descriptions of the principles at work.

This is what the principles mean: When any thought is created within your mind, it is manifested as real through your senses at the moment it enters your mind. Whatever is on your mind **is** your world -- **at that moment**. If a person's mind is seething with thoughts of vengeance, he will experience a hostile, dangerous reality. If a person brings past misfortune to mind, she will have the experience of a person in difficulty. If a teenager entertains ideas of self-doubt and inadequacy, that young person will feel self-conscious and uncomfortable. The feeling comes from the senses that are informed by the thoughts that are created within each person's mind, moment-to-moment.

If a person thinks a green lizard is crawling across the floor, he will "see" a green lizard. The person's senses would register the thought of the lizard. If a child awakens from a nightmare about a monster and continues to think of the monster, the child will remain terrified. If a grieving person's mind fills up with gratitude at the funeral of a deceased friend, that person will suddenly experience warmth and love.

Every moment is new; every moment holds the potential for new creation. **When a new thought comes to mind, the person's life changes -- at that moment.** If a person thinking discouraging thoughts suddenly entertains a funny memory, that person will experience humor -- at that moment. If a person ruminating about his disappointment in people suddenly thinks of the compassion of his neighbors, that person will feel warmth and good will -- at that moment. A continual flow of new thoughts brings a continual flow of new sensory data.

With each change in thought, there is a corresponding change in the experienced reality of the thinker of that thought. When people see the one-to-one link between thought and experience, they gain perspective on life. Changes in their experience of reality no longer look as though they are precipitated at random by outside events or forces. Fear and hopelessness and other negative feelings look like thought-events, rather than horrible life circumstances. At the other extreme, euphoria and gratitude are thought-events, as well. It is as much within the realm of the thinker's power to bring joy to mind as it is to bring despair to mind.

Seeing the emergence of experience from the process of thinking brings people peace of mind, no matter what they are thinking. It is as difficult to frighten yourself with your own thinking as it is to scare yourself by making faces in the mirror. No matter how you contort your expression, you know it is your face in the mirror and you know that you are creating the contortions and you know you can stop doing it, or change the expression. The only "force" in life becomes the power of creativity; outside forces or influences dissolve.

"Reality" is not "out there"

The principles explain and de-personalize differences between people by reducing those differences to the lowest common denominator of the equation for experience. Each person continually thinks his own thoughts, and consciousness continually makes those thoughts "feel" and appear real to that person.

Because every moment-to-moment thought seems to be absolute reality to the thinker, because thought determines the only reality each person can possibly know, regardless of the external world, two people standing side by side in the exact same circumstances will always have entirely unique experiences. No one can ever truly “know” another’s reality.

The story that follows offers a simple example:

A feature appears on television detailing the discovery of a new strain of virus. A family watching the program together hears the same news. The father generates the worrisome thought that this discovery will affect the stock prices of drug companies in which he has invested. The older daughter becomes fascinated and decides to investigate the information for her upcoming term paper. The mother fears that her best friend, a missionary, could have been exposed to the virus. The older brother is excited and runs to the computer to see whether people are talking about the virus on Twitter. The younger brother is grossed out and takes notice of the details of the symptoms to scare his friends at school. The three-year-old daughter on her father’s lap is absorbed in watching the dog chase a bug and is totally unaware of the television program. The grandmother dismisses the whole idea as “nonsense” and gripes that TV reporters will say anything to shock people. The grandfather drifts into a reverie about how simple things were when he was a boy and no one had ever heard of viruses.

Each person has received the same “news” but had an entirely different experience of it. Each person’s in-the-moment thoughts were unique. Each person’s perceived “reality” of the news of the discovered virus was separate and distinct. Each person’s memory of the story will be shaded by his/her thoughts during the story.

The principles do **not** suggest that there was no actual television program -- that there is no external reality. The principles illustrate that any “objective” external reality can never be known by any human being. The only reality any human being can possibly experience is the one that is brought to life via that person’s *thought+consciousness*. It would be illogical, if not ludicrous, to suggest that the television program -- the external reality -- was broadcast differently to each person. But it is obvious that each person heard and saw the story in a unique, individualized way, determined by each person’s thinking.

If the family were to talk later about watching that program, they might each be surprised at how differently they saw it. Chances are, they would find each other's points of view and recollections interesting and let it go at that.

But if the same family were facing a critical life event -- perhaps moving to a new city -- the gap between arguments and harmony could only be filled by understanding the principles that govern experience. If each person understood that his or her own *idea>>experience* was unique, and neither more nor less valid than those of the others, the family members could face their disparate feelings about the move without rancor. They would accept their differences as part of life and see that what they all had in common was the variable moment-to-moment "reality" of their thinking.

And if the same family were facing a "crisis" in life -- an assault on one of the family members for example -- understanding of the principles would be a balm to heal the deepest of wounds. **The principles give the power of experience to the person, not to life events.** A "devastating" life event is a thought-event as soon as it has passed, just as the news of a virus is a thought-event for each person as soon as it is broadcast.

Although the principles illuminate the power of thought to create each person's experience of life, and the powerlessness of circumstances to determine any person's experience, they do not in any way suggest that people can use their minds to bend or change circumstances. No matter how hard any one of them thought about it, no member of the family watching television could "cause" the actual program being broadcast to change. But any member of the family could change his/her thinking in regard to the program, including not thinking about the program at all.

The principles empower people with the knowledge that through *thought+consciousness*, people have the innate ability, the inherent power, to neutralize the reality of circumstances within their own minds, to come to peace with the past, to see the pathway to resolution of any life situation as an internal experience.

Redefining “abnormal”

Seeing the operation of the three principles demystifies the enormous, changeable range of emotions and feelings that make up the spectrum of human experience, from hallucinations to incapacitating terror and profound distress, to stress and pressure, to well-being, good will and euphoria. Regardless of any person’s state of mind in any moment, it can be understood simply through recognition of the principles at work. And regardless of how volatile or dramatic a shift in any person’s state of mind is, it can be explained through recognition of the principles at work.

The principles erase the frightening distinction between “normal” and “abnormal” and establish all human experience as a natural continuum of potentialities. Along this continuum, any and all experience is possible and explicable because people can create any thought, and experience is always changing because people are constantly thinking. What is “normal” and natural is that human beings will experience life through thought brought to the senses via consciousness moment-to-moment.

When people see the principles, they see that there is no “abnormal” at the level of thought creation because *thought+consciousness* is the natural and inevitable flow of creation, regardless of the moment-to-moment content of the thought. What people call “abnormal” is only in the content of thought. The content of thought, however, is variable and loses its power as soon as the thinker recognizes it as an aspect of his own capacity for thought, not a “problem” or “fear” imposed on him by the world. Anything can be changed with a change of thought.

The profound significance of the principles is that the ability to form thoughts and to make thoughts appear real via consciousness is the **only** source of each human being’s life experience. The implication of this is that life happens **through** us, not **to** us. People continually create thoughts. Consciousness, through the five senses, brings those thoughts to life so that they appear to the person as reality. Every person’s reality is linked, one-to-one, with his/her thoughts in that moment.

With that understanding, people lose their fear of their own thoughts, regardless of how fanciful, how bizarre, how disturbing or even how euphoric those thoughts might be. Understanding that the process of creating thought is a constant fact of human life allows people to see how to improve the quality of their own lives permanently because no apparent reality is fixed and people can continually generate different thoughts.

People who have long considered themselves different, or felt alienated from others because of certain thoughts that bedeviled them, see, through the principles, that they are simply human beings doing what human beings do. Recognizing the humanity of their plight, they are set free from the labels they or others may have imposed on them. And once set free, they can change with confidence that no thought has power over them, regardless of how often it passes through their minds or how strange or compelling it seems.

Principles are Simple

A quality of principles is simplicity. Principles make things clear and easy to grasp. A straightforward statement of principles speaks to the essence of things, not to complexity.

Mind is the energy of all creation, the origin of the infinite flow of thought and experience. It can only be defined by inference because our thinking is a part of the creative process we call Mind, but it is not all of it, nor can we separate ourselves from it to see it whole. We know, for example, that there is a life energy because the organs that participate in that energy do not generate it. A brain by itself does not function; a heart does not beat; a nerve does not respond. Everything operates not on its own, but through connection with the creative power of life.

The principle of Mind is understood as a spiritual truth that grounds what is observable. The principles of Thought and Consciousness are the evidence of Mind, the evidence that we are part of creation.

Thought is the capacity of human beings to create form from the formless. The energy is flowing through us -- indeed we ARE that energy -- and we have the ability, via mental activity, to create “thought” from that energy. We “know” life via thought.

Consciousness is the capacity of human beings to be aware of experience and to be aware of the creation of experience. What we “know” as life becomes experienced as real via our senses. Each person’s reality is constantly being formed in this way, so each person “knows” a life that is uniquely generated via *thought+consciousness* moment-to-moment. Consciousness is also awareness that we are the thinkers creating that experience.

As people attempt to articulate their understanding of the principles, they develop concepts to further describe and explain their experience. The concepts are metaphors for that experience. **They are made up via the principles they seek to describe.** Concepts, therefore, are forms that thought takes, variable and subject to change. But principles remain constant; principles refer to the world before form. The ability to create concepts does not vary; the products of that ability are infinitely variable.

For example, just as the study of life experience is becoming grounded now in the principles of Mind, Consciousness and Thought, the study of aerospace technology has long been grounded in the principle of gravity. The ability of mankind to conceptualize air and space travel is a function of increasingly profound understanding of the principle of gravity (as well as other principles of physics). Without an understanding of principles, such conceptualization would be impossible or would be a matter of such high-risk, speculative trial and error that it would be foolish to consider.

Breaking Down the Principles

Another way to clarify the principles is to show how they mesh, like gears, to explain life. Working together, they provide an explanation of life; separately, they could not do so. By breaking the principles down, it is possible to show (1) that all three principles must be in place

for human life to exist and (2) that they are inclusively and exclusively explanatory of life. There is nothing missing when they are meshed.

If there were no Thought and Consciousness, only Mind, there would be no way to know creation. One way to see this is to consider a house that is hooked up to an electrical source, but has no wiring or plugs or appliances. With no outlet for the energy, the energy would be invisible, unknowable, and untapped. It would be an eternal unrealized potential.

If there were no Mind, only Thought and Consciousness, the metaphor would be the reverse. The house would have wiring and plugs and appliances in place, but no power to operate them. Thus the capacity to create light, heat and activity from power would be in place, but there would be no way to energize it.

If there were no Consciousness, only Mind and Thought, people would not experience their thoughts. Life would be like a truly silent movie on a blank screen. There would be no way to appreciate, to experience, to **feel** life. Images, ideas, other mental activity would continually take place in a lifeless parade through the mind of a person who would neither see, feel, touch, smell or know the connection between that mental imagery and life itself.

If there were Mind and Consciousness, but no Thought, people would have the experience of energy with no form, no “reality” by which to sort it out. Life might be like a buzz or a hum or a vibration or a brightness with no mental activity to form it.

Working together, however, the three principles perfectly explain how human beings create and experience their daily lives. Nothing is missing from the explanation. Knowledge of that, realization that there are principles at the heart of life, offers the promise of peace of mind.

Summary and Conclusion

The principles awaken understanding within people. The principles are profound and moving, yet they are grasped by people on a common-sense level. People intuitively recognize deeper

truths -- principles -- and they find it impossible to argue about or intellectualize such truths. The principles speak directly to the heart and resolve questions.

The conceptual ideas that emerge from these principles and become the “body of understanding” or the “practices” of people who seek to explain and understand life seem inevitably logical as an extension of the principles. Each concept adds metaphorical and experiential richness to the sparse, but elementally true, expression of the principles. When it is evident to people that their concepts are grounded in principles, the credibility and power of this teaching as a vehicle for improving the quality of thinking of humanity is vastly increased.

Resources:

Banks, S. (1983) Second Chance. Tampa, FL. Duvall-Bibb Publishing Co.

Banks, S. (1990) In Quest of the Pearl. Tampa, FL. Duvall-Bibb Publishing Co.

Banks, S. (1998) The Missing Link. Vancouver, Canada. Lone Pine Publishing.

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