

Article

The Key to Happiness in Existence

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ABSTRACT

Having come to understand recently the nature of the relation that creates what the Individual apprehends as emotional experience, I share here my view on the secret of happiness. In essence, *happiness is a song that each Individual composes and plays for him/herself*. And when you are trying to get someone else or the world to be your dancing monkey, playing your song in an effort to force others and the world around you into an arrangement that you think will reflexively evoke within you a wanted emotion, then you are not playing the song of happiness. And if you are not playing the song of happiness then you are playing its opposite, because for Existence, which is what we all are, there is no third option.

Key Words: secret, happiness, Existence, Tao, emotional experience, relationship, uncertainty principle, existential mechanics.

This essay could have been called *How to Create Wanted Rather Than Unwanted Emotional Experience*, but that's not as catchy a title. Nonetheless, that's what this essay is about, since happiness is a word that indicates a state in which an Individual is experiencing a positive or wanted emotion.

That having been said, here is the secret of happiness: Happiness isn't found, but has to be created, in each moment, by you, the Individual who is apprehending the particular emotional experience. Here is another part of the secret: if you are not creating happiness, i.e., a wanted emotional experience, then you are creating the opposite, i.e., an unwanted emotional experience. And here is the final part of the secret; as the Individual that is apprehending the emotional experience, you and you alone determine, according to a choice you are making either consciously or unconsciously in each moment, whether you create and apprehend in any moment, in any now, a wanted or unwanted emotional experience.

Our situation is such that we have no choice but to create and apprehend in each moment some emotional experience. However, although we have no choice but to create and apprehend an emotional experience, we do get to choose whether the emotional experience we create and apprehend in any moment will be of the wanted or unwanted variety. However, for reasons that I will go into in the following paragraphs, most people not only don't know that they have such a choice, they are also unaware that they are already making that choice in every moment, whether they know it or not.

Contrary to popular assumption and belief, experience isn't something that just happens to you, rather it's something that is created according to some relation in which you, the Individual that

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is apprehending the experience, must be involved. That is, we tend to think of experiences, and especially physical experiences, as things that are there as we experience them to exist whether we experience them or not, as things that we just happen to stumble across or have thrust upon us by random chance or the unseen hand of fate. However, this is only what appears or seems to be the case, in the same way that while standing in the middle of Illinois the Earth appears or seems to be flat. In actuality though, the Individual that is apprehending the experience always plays a central role in creating the wanted or unwanted character of whatever experience they are apprehending, regardless of whether that experience is of the emotional, mental, or physical variety. Put another way, experience is never Experiencer independent, but is always Experiencer dependent.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that the Experiencer dependent nature of experience was actually discovered over one hundred years ago when physicists uncovered the phenomena of wave-particle duality and quantum uncertainty, finding that the more they were able to create an experience defining one physical characteristic of a quantum system the less able they were to simultaneously create an experience defining the opposite or complementary physical characteristic of that same quantum system, humanity remains, by and large, unaware of the Experiencer dependent nature of experience.

And the reason humanity remains unaware of the Experiencer dependent nature of experience, despite the evidence to the contrary these phenomena provide, is a result of an unavoidable and inviolable limitation of experience that has as its basis the very Experiencer dependent nature of experience revealed by these phenomena. That is, the unavoidable and inviolable limitation of experience that is responsible for the phenomena of wave-particle duality and quantum uncertainty is the same limitation that makes it impossible for any Individual to understand what these phenomena actually say about the nature of experience, and therefore about the nature of experiential reality, as long as that Individual holds fast to the opposite idea, i.e., to the idea of experience as being Experiencer independent, as being something that is there as we experience it to exist whether we are experiencing it or not.

The unavoidable and inviolable experiential limitation, which applies to all experience of every sort, is as follows: *It isn't possible for an Individual to be involved simultaneously in the mutually exclusive relations necessary to create the simultaneous apprehension of opposite or complementary experiences.* Again, the reason this experiential limitation exists is because experience, rather than being Experiencer independent, is always Experiencer dependent, always created as the product of a relation in which the Individual that is apprehending the experience is involved. And for every relation in which you are involved in any moment that creates what you apprehend as a particular experience, be it an emotional, mental, or physical experience, there is an opposite mutually exclusive relation in which you can't, in that same moment, be involved, but which, if you were involved in that relation instead, would create what you would apprehend as the opposite experience.

Wave-particle duality and quantum uncertainty are not special cases that apply only to experiences being created at the quantum level. To the contrary, these phenomena are the manifestation of a limitation that applies to every experience of every sort, which limitation I call

the principle of the preclusion of an Individual's simultaneous apprehension of experiential opposites or complements. What this principle means, in essence, is that if you are in one relation creating one experience then you can't simultaneously be in the opposite relation creating the opposite experience. You can't feel good while feeling bad, and vice versa. You can't see what lies North while facing South. You can't know that the Earth is round while knowing it to be flat. You can't believe in evolution while at the same time believing that the world was created in seven days. And finally, you can't know that experience is Experiencer dependent while knowing it to be Experiencer independent. For a given Individual, experience is always one or the other, or only a portion of both, this or that, or some of this and some of that, but never ever, ever ever ever, fully this and fully that at the same time for the same Individual.

It's this unavoidable and inviolable experiential limitation that's responsible for experience being able to function as a veil that hides our True Nature from us. When experience functions in this way it's called maya, and is considered an illusion. However, the world of experience isn't an illusion. Experience is real, it's just not as real as we think it is, and therein lies the illusion. When we ascribe to experience the quality of objective existence, of Experiencer independent existence, we are superimposing upon experience a quality that it doesn't actually possess, and it's then and only then that the world of experience can be called an illusion, in the same way that seeing a snake where there is actually a rope is an illusion.

It's not that there isn't something there where experience seems to be, it's just that what's actually there isn't an experience. And when an Individual thinks that what they are experiencing is what's actually there, then what's actually there becomes obscured, in the same way that the depths of a pool of water remain hidden as long as one remains mesmerized by the reflection that lies on its surface. And like someone mesmerized by and lost within a reflection on the surface of a pond, we come to think that the world is composed of what we experience, composed of objects, composed of matter, composed of atoms and molecules, but that isn't what the world is composed of, that's only what the world seems to be composed of, in the same way a calm body of water can seem to be composed of whatever reflection lies on its surface.

And so it is that instead of knowing ourselves as the creators and apprehenders of experience we instead come to know ourselves in terms of what are only experiences e.g., as men, women, black, white, tall, short, fat, thin, pretty, ugly and on and on and on. And in knowing ourselves in this way we lose sight of what it is that's actually there, lose sight of what lies beyond the reflection of experience, and in losing sight of that we lose sight of our True Nature because, as it turns out, what we are isn't different or other than what's actually there underlying the reflection of experience.

Of what then is the world composed if it's not composed of what we experience? What is it that's actually there where experience seems to be? Lao Tzu called it the Tao, I happen to call it Existence, others call it by other names. In my terms, the world is composed of Existence that's being in relation to Itself and creating and apprehending experience as a result. That is, what the world is actually composed of isn't other than that which apprehends experience. Put another way, the world is composed of the same substance that Exists directly where you are, composed of the non-physical, non-experiential Consciousness that is, at this very moment, apprehending

these words as an experience. Put still another way, what actually Exists where you are isn't different or other than what actually Exists everywhere else as well. It's just that when you, as what Exists directly where you are, are in relation to what Exists directly over there, you don't apprehend what's actually and directly there because what you apprehend is a reflection that's created as a product of that relation, and we call that reflection experience.

Underlying the surface reflection of physical experience is a flowing River of Existence, a flowing River of Being, a flowing River of Consciousness, and as Individuals we are Drops in that River, and as such our Nature isn't different or other than the Nature of the River Itself. The River has the ability to direct its ceaseless flow, to project Itself this way or that, and we, being of the same Nature, have that same ability, and we call that ability our *free will*. We do not have the ability to dictate to the River its direction of flow, nor does the River have the ability to dictate to us our direction of flow. The River flows as it will and we flow as we will, or put another way, the River flows in the direction it wills Itself to flow and we flow in the direction we will ourselves to flow.

Thus, as Individuals we are free to direct our ceaseless flow in any direction we want, regardless of the direction in which the River is using its will to direct its flow. However, although we are able to direct our flow independent of the direction of flow of the River, because we are Drops in the River we cannot take ourselves out of the River, cannot ever separate ourselves from the River, and so *there is a fundamental and unavoidable relation between our Individual direction of flow and the direction of flow of the River Itself*. And it's in understanding our relation to the River, the relation between its direction of flow and our direction of flow, that it becomes possible to understand what emotional experience is, how we create it, and most importantly, how we and we alone determine, according to our in the moment exercise of free will, whether we are creating in any moment an emotional experience that feels good or feels bad, that's wanted or unwanted, positive or negative, attractive or repulsive.

All experience is the product of some relation of Existence to Itself, and *it's the relation between our Individual direction of flow, determined by our exercise of free will, and the direction of flow of the River Itself that creates what we apprehend as our emotional experience*. It's right there in the word, sort of; e-motion, the product of relative Existential motion, the product of the flow of Existence relative to Itself. And if you can understand that this relation always exists, is always taking place, beneath the surface, beyond the reflection of physical experience, then you know what you need to know in order to understand the actual basis of every emotion that you have ever experienced or will ever experience.

As stated previously, our Individual involvement in the fundamental relation that creates emotional experience is unavoidable. Put another way, we have no choice but to be involved in the relation that creates what we apprehend as emotional experience. However, although that relation is unavoidable, our involvement in that relation is variable, as our involvement in that relation (like every relation in which we can be involved) has two possible mutually exclusive orientations and so two possible mutually exclusive emotional products. Specifically, using our free will we can choose to flow our Individual Existence in a direction in which there is *alignment* between our Individual direction of flow and River 's direction of flow or, using our

free will we can choose to flow our Existence in a direction in which there is *opposition* between our Individual direction flow and the River 's direction of flow There is no third option.. Those are the only choices and we have no choice but to choose one or the other, choose one direction of flow or the other, in each and every moment, whether we know it or not, and most do not.

If an Individual in any moment chooses a direction of flow that creates a relation of alignment between their direction of flow and the River 's direction of flow, that Individual, in that moment, creates and apprehends a positive, attractive, and wanted emotional experience, i.e., they feel good. Conversely, if an Individual in any moment chooses a direction of flow that creates a relation of opposition between their direction of flow and the River 's direction of flow, that Individual, in that moment, creates and apprehends a negative, repulsive, and unwanted emotional experience, i.e., they feel bad.. It's as simple as that. What's not so simple, while immersed in and mesmerized by the reflection of physical reality, is actually making the choice that causes you to create and apprehend a wanted rather than unwanted emotional experience. Nonetheless, this much is certain; if in any moment you are experiencing a wanted emotion then you are choosing, in that moment, either consciously or unconsciously, a direction of Individual flow that is in alignment with the River 's direction of flow. Conversely, if in any moment you are experiencing an unwanted emotion then you are choosing, in that moment, either consciously or unconsciously, a direction of Individual flow that is in opposition to the River 's direction of flow.

Emotional experience is literally, and I mean literally and not figuratively, what you feel as the River of Existence flowing in relation to your own Individual Existence. When you swim downstream you feel one thing and when you swim upstream you feel the opposite. When you swim downstream you feel the flow of the river carry you along effortlessly, and when you swim upstream you feel your movement resisted by the flow of the river. Likewise, the attractiveness of wanted emotional experience is what you feel as you swim downstream with respect to the River of Existence, whereas the repulsiveness of unwanted emotional experience is what you feel as you swim upstream with respect to the River of Existence. We want to experience wanted emotion because it's attractive and it's attractive because it's an experience created as the product of aligned Existential flow, the product of a relation where our Individual flow is augmented by the flow of the River of Existence from which we are inseparable. Conversely, we don't want to experience unwanted emotion because it's repulsive and it's repulsive because it's an experience created as the product of oppositional Existential flow, the product of a relation where our Individual flow is resisted by the flow of the River of Existence.

The first step toward regaining control of your ability to consciously choose the quality of the emotional experience you create and apprehend in each moment is understanding that you actually have such an ability, which is to say, the ability to conjure either wanted or unwanted emotion regardless of external circumstances, rather than as a reflexive reaction to perceived external circumstances. i.e., feeling good when you perceive good things and feeling bad when you perceive bad things. Unconscious reflexive and reactive emotional creation is the only real bondage there is, as your emotional experience (which is the most fundamental and consequently most important type of experience there is, considering that we want everything we want because we think that in getting what we want we will feel better, i.e., experience a more wanted or less

unwanted emotion) is then bound to things over which you have no control. Those are the bonds from which we all seek to free ourselves, the bonds that keep us the emotional slaves of circumstance. But as these are bonds that we ourselves construct and maintain, albeit unconsciously and so unknowingly, it's only we who can free ourselves from them.

Freedom is the opposite of bondage, and in this context freedom is having the quality of what you create as your emotional experience not tied to external circumstances, not tied to things over which you have no control. Freedom is being able to create a wanted emotion just because that's what you want to feel, regardless of what's going on around you, or even within you. There is no god in this Universe or beyond that has the ability to cause us to flow this way or that, that can force us to make one choice or the other regarding our in the moment direction of flow, which is why it's called free will, i.e., the ability to freely choose the direction in which your Individual Existence will flow. And whatever you choose, that choice always places you in either a relation of alignment or opposition with respect to the direction of flow of the River of Existence.

All that having been said, let's turn our attention to the exercise of free will and the nature of the choice we are making in every moment, in every now, either consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or reflexively, that determines our relation to the River and, consequently, the quality of the emotional experience we are, in any moment, creating and apprehending.

What exactly is the choice that we make in each moment that determines our relation to the River, that determines whether we are, in any moment, flowing with our against the River of Existence? To understand this choice it's necessary to recognize the complete and utter autonomy of every point of Existence. Every Drop in the River of Existence is an autonomous Individual, possessing by its nature free will and so the ability and obligation to choose its own direction of flow in each and every moment, which is always now. Because of this it isn't possible for any point of Existence, for any Individual, to determine the direction in which another Individual flows. However, it's possible for an Individual, if they have lost sight of their True Nature, to think that such a thing is possible, to think that they can use their force of will, their innate ability to determine their own direction of flow, to determine the direction of flow of another Individual by pushing or flowing against them, as if the other Individual were an object one could spray with a hose to make go this way or that.

It's as if in each moment you are given a single coin and you can spend that coin on either controlling your own direction of flow or trying to control another Individual's direction of flow. But you can't do both in the same moment, it has to be one or the other, and if you are spending it one way then you can't be spending it the opposite way. Put another way, for every effort we make at trying to control a direction of flow other than our own, we lose the ability to control our own direction of flow. No matter how much it seems that it should be or is possible to bend other Individuals to your will, or for you to be bent to their will, it just isn't. The River knows this and so doesn't try. We don't know it and so we spend our lives trying. And in that trying we inadvertently and unknowingly flow ourselves in opposition to the River and then wonder why we feel so bad.

Learning to control one's own direction of flow and thereby one's relation to the River, and consequently the quality of emotional experience one creates and apprehends, is the most subtle art there is. I myself am but a novice in the practice of that art, having only come to understand relatively recently the nature of the relation that creates what the Individual apprehends as emotional experience. Nonetheless, having come to understand that relation I have put that knowledge to use and am much happier as well as happier more often as a result.

Having recognized this underlying and unavoidable relation, as well as the choice we make that determines our involvement in it, it now seems to me that explaining the counter-productivity of trying to impose one's will upon other Individuals, in whatever form they might appear, is one of the main points of the *Tao Te Ching*, as illustrated by the following passages and portions of passages [from a translation by Stephen Mitchell](#).

"The Master does his job
and then stops.
He understands that the universe
is forever out of control,
and that trying to dominate events
goes against the current of the Tao."

"Return is the movement of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao."

"In pursuit of knowledge,
every day something is added.
In the practice of the Tao,
every day something is dropped.
Less and less do you need to force things,
until finally you arrive at non-action.
When nothing is done,
nothing is left undone."

"True mastery can be gained
by letting things go their own way.
It can't be gained by interfering."

"If you want to be a great leader,
you must learn to follow the Tao.
Stop trying to control.
Let go of fixed plans and concepts,
and the world will govern itself."

"Trying to control the future
is like trying to take the master carpenter's place."

When you handle the master carpenter's tools,
chances are that you'll cut your hand."

"The Tao nourishes by not forcing.
By not dominating, the Master leads."

The message: Try to impose your will and you will not be flowing as the Tao flows and such actions will have the opposite of their intended result, i.e., you will create unwanted rather than wanted experience. Conversely, do not impose your will and you will be flowing as the Tao flows and such actions will have their intended result, i.e., you will create wanted rather than unwanted experience.

There is no point of Existence, no Drop within the River, that wants to do other than create and apprehend wanted emotional experience. Thus, the saint and the sinner are both moved by the same desire, and differ only in their method of approach. Even those who seek to be free from desire only seek that because they think that being free of desire will feel better than having desire. You can no more be free from desire, from being attracted to that which is wanted, than you can cease to Exist, and you can't cease to Exist, you can only change your Individual perspective, which is to say, the position from which you, as an Individual point of Existence, are being in relation to the rest of Existence and unavoidably creating experience as a result. Every point of Existence, every Individual, has no choice but to create, in each moment, either a wanted or unwanted emotional experience. There is no third option. However, every point of Existence gets to choose the quality of the emotional experience it's creating because every point of Existence determines its own direction of flow and so determines the nature of its involvement in the unavoidable relation responsible for the creation of emotional experience.

There is absolutely nothing ever wrong with wanting to feel better. It's our prime directive, as it were. And what feels better than feeling really really good? Feeling even better, experiencing an even more wanted, more positive, more attractive emotional experience. All evolution, not just organic evolution, but also the evolution that proceeded and made possible the emergence of what we apprehend as organic life, is driven by this prime directive, is Existence being in relation to Itself in new ways as a means of creating an always more wanted emotional experience for Itself. Underlying what we apprehend as empty space, the atom, the molecule, the plant, the fly, the snake, the bird, etc. etc., is Existence doing the same thing that we, as Existence, are doing in each and every moment, which is trying to feel better, trying to create a more wanted emotional experience. In essence, Existence is a joy junkie, and we, being not other than Existence ourselves, are also joy junkies. The only difference between us and the vast majority of Existence, between us and the River, is that we have just temporarily forgotten how we can potentially, in every moment, internally supply our own fix, whereas the River has not.

Sat Chit Ananda. Existence Consciousness Bliss. This series of words refers to Existence that is fully aligned with Itself and so creating and apprehending, i.e., conscious of, what is, in that moment, in any now, the most wanted possible emotional experience. Existence being conscious of the bliss it creates, because it feels better to create and apprehend bliss than the opposite of bliss, and because even God has to create and be conscious of one or the other. And as Existence

we can ourselves, in any moment, be either Existence Consciousness Happiness (wanted emotion), or we can be Existence Consciousness Unhappiness (unwanted emotion). The choice is ours.

Now having to make such a choice through all of eternity may seem like a burden, but that's only how it appears from our present perspective, where our True Nature is obscured by the reflections of mental and physical experience. For Existence that knows what it is, choosing to create emotional wantedness rather than emotional unwantedness is no more difficult than if you, in each moment, had to choose between placing your hand in a bowl of cool or boiling water. The choice only seems difficult because we are making it blindfolded, so to speak, unaware of the cause and effect relation between our exercise of free will and the emotional experience we must unavoidably apprehend as a result. Understanding the choice the Individual simply leaves their hand in the bowl of cool water. Not understanding the choice the Individual tries to grab at this or that, and as a result sometimes their hand winds up in the bowl of cool water while at other times it winds up in the bowl of boiling water.

We all want to be happy, and you will likely find yourself more often having that experience rather than its opposite if you can understand that happiness isn't an object, not something that is found, not something that can be grabbed on to. To the contrary, *happiness is a song that each Individual composes and plays for themself*. And when you are trying to get someone else or the world to be your dancing monkey, playing your song in an effort to force others and the world around you into an arrangement that you think will reflexively evoke within you a wanted emotion, then you are not playing the song of happiness. And if you are not playing the song of happiness then you are playing its opposite, because for Existence, there is no third option.

But don't take my word for it. Just pay attention to what you feel as you go through the day involving yourself in various relations with the world and other Individuals. And when you find yourself feeling a negative emotion you will, if you are aware, find yourself pushing against something or someone, exercising your free will in an effort to control a flow other than your own. And when and if you find yourself doing that, just stop doing it, *stop pushing against whatever you are pushing against and see what happens to how you feel*. And if you are able to do that you will then, in that moment, know your true power, and your only real power, because all other experiences that you create must, as a result of the inviolable experiential limitation that makes it impossible for an Individual to simultaneously create opposite experiences, align with the wanted or unwanted quality of the emotional experience you are unavoidably and yet freely creating.

To learn more about how physical experience is created, as well as the limitations inherent in the creation of experience, I recommend my article, *The Experiential Basis of Wave-Particle Duality and The Uncertainty Principle*, published in the [Prespacetime Journal, Vol 2, No 4 \(2011\)](#).

To learn more about how Existence evolves into that which underlies what we apprehend as the world around us as a result of becoming involved in the progressive relations with Itself that create what it and we apprehend as emotional, mental, and physical experience, I recommend my series of four articles

collectively titled; *Existential Mechanics: How the Relations of Existence to Itself Create the Structure of Reality and What We Experience as Reality*, recently published in the [Journal of Consciousness Exploration and Research, Vol 2, No 9 \(2011\)](#).