

The Psychology of the Future: Flourishing in the Flow of Evolution

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Center for Future Consciousness & The Wisdom Page

Part One

The Question: How Do We Create a Good Future?

- The Central Challenge of Human Life & the Central Issue Motivating the Study of the Future
- The Answer I propose is:

We create a good future—defined as flourishing in the flow of evolution—through the heightening of future consciousness, which is achieved by developing a core set of character virtues, most notably and centrally wisdom.

- Wisdom is the Means to Creating a Good Future - This Video, Focusing on the Psychology of Heightened Future Consciousness & Wisdom, Will Explain My Answer & Its Relevance and Importance to Your Future Life
- A Key Question To Begin With: What is a Good Future?
 - The Question of “What is Real?” Precedes the Questions of “What Should We Expect in the Future?” and “What is the Good?”
 - The Future: Should Be Consistent & Follow From with Our Best Understanding of Reality
 - The Good: What is Best - Our Compass for the Future - Should Be Consistent or Resonant with Reality - Should be Grounded in Human Nature

What is Real?

*“Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are.”
Bertolt Brecht*

“We are moving!” Teilhard de Chardin

Reality is Unsettled - Reality is a Collective Motion

- Ancient/Classical View of What is Real: The Quest for Eternity/Timelessness (Egyptians, Plato, Religion/Spiritual Traditions) as Most Real - Beginning of Modern Science -> A Stable Universe & Stable Laws (Newton)
- Modern Era: Steady Accumulation of Geological, Biological, Archeological, & Astronomical Evidence of Change - Discovery of Deep Transformational Time

Extending Millions of Years into the Past - A Dynamic & Historical Universe - Becoming & Passing Away, Order & Chaos

- A Future Directionality to Time (Revealed Through Thermodynamics & the Law of Increasing Entropy) - Discovery of Biological Evolution (Through Darwin & Others) & Geological & Cosmic Evolution - A Hierarchy of Evolutionary Levels as Outlined in Eric Chaisson's excellent *Epic of Evolution* (Simple to Complex) - Creativity & Novelty in Evolution - Most Recently, The Acceleration & Evolution of Evolution (The Means by Which Things Evolve)

"We are nothing else than evolution become conscious of itself." Julian Huxley

- Human History & Contemporary Times: A Reflection of the Dynamic Nature of Reality - The Accelerating Transformational Rush of Human Existence - Speed, The Exponential Growth Curve in Many Things, Stress, The Compression of Time, & Resistance to Change (Described in Toffler & Gleick) - Human Creativity & Competition Over the Future Contributes to Change/Evolution - Humans are Architects of Evolution - Facilitating Purposeful Evolution through Purposeful, Goal-Directed Change & Invention, Within Ourselves & World Around Us
- Both Individual Consciousness & Collective Human Reality - Dynamic, Developmental, Future-Directional, Purposeful, & Creative
- Consciousness: Individual Consciousness Flows into the Future & Self/Mind Purposefully Develops Over Time - There is an Evolutionary Flow to the Nature of Individual Consciousness - Consciousness is an Evolved Facilitator of Evolution Through the Creation of Ideas, Inventions & Products, & Personal Identities - "We Exist in the Flow of Evolution & the Flow of Evolution Exists Within Us."

"The basic understanding that life on this planet constitutes an interconnected system must be considered to be one of the great discoveries of science, perhaps as profound as the discovery of natural selection." Lee Smolin

- Evolution (Directionality to Time) is a Western Idea - Balancing East vs. West Views of Reality: As Richard Nisbett Notes: Circle vs. Line - Eastern Yin-Yang Theory of Reality - Complementarity, Reciprocity, Cycles, & Interdependency - A Universe of Interdependent Pluralism (The Western Idea of Interactive Open Systems) - Combining East & West - Reciprocal (Interdependent) Evolution
- How to Understand Reality/What To Expect in the Future is Reciprocal Evolution, With Humans Facilitating It - The Good Must be Consistent with (Something to be Realized Within) a Reality of Reciprocal Evolution - We Live in a Dynamic & Interactive Reality - There is No Getting Around It - The Question is How Do We Best Facilitate This Process - That is the Good Future

What is the Good?

"This is how the whole scheme of things works. All good things are difficult to achieve; and bad things are very easy to get." Confucius

“Imaginary evil is romantic & varied; real evil is gloomy, monotonous, barren, boring. Imaginary good is boring; real good is always new, marvelous, intoxicating.” Simone Weil

- Given the Structure & Possibilities of Reality What Should We Value & Pursue (Prescriptive)
- Historically the Good is What Supports Well Being - the “Good Life” - We Can Empirically (Scientifically) Determine What is Well Being - Argument from Samuel Harris
- Well Being is What is Excellent & Ideal within the Human Condition/Human Nature - Anchored to Reality of Humans
- Multi-Dimensional Nature of Humans & the Human Condition - Distilled from Human History (Ethics, Religion, Science, Politics, Psychology, Philosophy, Art & Humanities) - A Holistic Theory of Well Being: Character & Virtue - Inner & Outer Harmony (with Nature) - Peace - Balance - Cosmic Connection/Resonance - Individual Determination (Liberty) & Communal Harmony - Balance of Body/Health and Mind - Self-Actualization/Growth - Self-Respect & Respect of Others - Faith, Love, & Forgiveness - Humility & Openness - Development of Both Heart/Emotion and Mind/Intellect - Beauty - Creation - Meaning in Life - Material/Economic Well Being - Enlightenment & Knowledge - Power - Equality & Justice - Progress - Vocation & Accomplishment (versus Purchase) - Well Being of Surrounding Environment/Life
- Encompassing/Enveloping These Qualities & Bringing them to Life - Consistent with a Dynamic & Evolutionary View of Reality/Including Human Reality - Not a Static (or Perfectionist) Idea of Good ->
- Flourishing: A Dynamic, Growth Oriented Concept of the Good (Holistic, Consistent with Reality & Well-Being in Human Psychology, Derived from Positive Psychology, A “Living” Metaphor, Occurring Within & Facilitating the Overall Flow of Evolution)
 - Growth and Accomplishment
 - Purpose (or Direction) & Meaning in Life
 - Creativity and Self-Transcendence
 - Positive Emotionality (Love, Happiness, Wonder, Hope)
 - Cognitively Expanding Conscious & Knowledge States (Through Experience, Learning, & Thinking) - Growing Toward Enlightenment
 - Health & Vitality (Physically & Psychologically)
 - Embedded within a Flourishing Environment
 - Active Engagement & Contribution to the World - Flourishing Spreads
 - Creating Mutually Beneficial Social Relationships (Creating Positive Evolving Reciprocities)
- Virtue and the Moral Imperative

“Happiness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself.” Spinoza

How Do We Realize Flourishing? Through Virtue

Virtue Theory of Happiness, Psychological Well-Being, & the Good Developed by Aristotle, Spinoza, & Seligman

- Virtues are Esteemed Character Traits & *Personal Accomplishments* Based on the Belief & Purposeful Aspiration & Striving Toward Excellence within Yourself
- Exercise & Pursuit of Virtue Leads to Well-Being, the Good, Happiness, Success, & Flourishing - An Active Agency Theory of the Good Life & Good Person (We Create the Good Life & the Good Self) - The Good Future Doesn't Just Happen - It is an Accomplishment - Flourishing is An Accomplishment
- General Moral Imperative: Through Virtue, With Purpose & Effort, to Flourish Individually & Contribute to the Flourishing & Evolution of Humanity (and Nature & the Cosmos) - Humans are Influential & Purposeful Agents in the Ongoing Creation of the Good Future
- Summary: The Good Future, Realized through the Self-Development & Exercise of Virtue, is Flourishing in the Flow of Evolution

Heightened Future Consciousness

"... the ultimate gift of consciousness is to navigate the future in the seas of our imagination..." Antonio Damasio

- The Primacy of Future Consciousness

Future Consciousness (Including Anticipatory Emotions, Foresight, Imagination, Goal Setting, Purpose, Planning, & Thinking) is the total integrative set of psychological abilities that humans use in anticipating, understanding, approaching, coping with, & creating and directing the future.

- Consciousness Directionally Flows into the Future (The Psychological/ Experiential Arrow of Time) - Consciousness Doesn't Stand Still
- Consciousness & Behavior is Purposeful (toward the Creation of the Future) - We Act with Intention to Create a Future
- Critical Factor in Rise of Human Civilization (Through Future Directional Purposeful Creation/Foresight) (As Described in *The Evolution of Future Consciousness*) - Produced Tools, Partnerships, Agriculture, Economic Trade, Habitats & Cities, Art, Philosophy, & Myth, & War
- Future Consciousness is Central Function of Self-Conscious Human Mind (Of Consciousness) - Guidance System/Facilitator for Evolution of Individual Consciousness (Our Identity/Aspirations/Goals) & Humanity - Engine Behind Evolution of Evolution within the Human Mind
- Flourishing is Realized through Heightened Future Consciousness - Producing Purposeful Growth & Evolution into the Future

Pulling Together Flourishing, Virtue, & Future Consciousness

- The Virtues of Wisdom and Heightened Future Consciousness

The Capacity for Future Consciousness can be Significantly Enhanced Through the Development of the Virtues of Heightened Future Consciousness

Character Virtues Define Excellence Across the Psychological Dimensions of Heightened Future Consciousness

- Self-Awareness and Self-Responsibility (Honest Self-Reflection, Self-Control, & Realization & Practice that You are the Architect of Yourself & Your Future - Opposite of Helplessness/Irresponsibility)
- Realistic Idealism and the Pursuit of Excellence (Informed & Thoughtful Belief In & Pursuit of Excellence in Life - Opposite of Nihilism & Relativism)
- Self-Growth (Aspiration & Realization of Transformation, Direction, Improvement, & Self-Transcendence in Life - Willingness to Change - Opposite of Stagnation)
- Love of Learning (To Value Learning & Knowledge - To Be Open, Curious, & To Wonder and Question - To Stay Informed - Opposite of Arrogance & Closed-Mindedness)
- Love of Thinking (To Enjoy Using One's Mind - To Enjoy Developing the Skills of Thinking)
- Expansive Temporal Consciousness (Understanding the Past & the Possibilities, Probabilities, & Preferable Directions of the Future - Big Picture of Time - Seeing How Your Life Fits Into the Big Picture of Time)
- Cosmic Consciousness (Understanding Big Picture of Everything - Global & Ecological Awareness - Opposite of Egocentrism & Living in the "Here & Now")
- Hope and Courage (Being Optimistic & Acting in Spite of Fear - Facing Uncertainty of the Future - Opposite of Pessimism & Avoidance/Escape)
- Love and the Appreciative Spirit (Gratitude, Pursuit of What You Love - Energizing Future Consciousness)
- Discipline, Tenacity, and Deep Purpose (Commitment, Effort, Persistence in the Face of Adversity - Long Term Central Purpose in Life)
- Ethical Pragmatism (Identifying the Good & Engaging the World to Realize It)
- The Creative Spirit (The Future is the Act of Creation & We are All Participating in It - A Skill & Personality Disposition)
- Balance and Temperance (Balancing & Integrating Multiple Virtues - Opposite of One-Sidedness & Extremism)

Wisdom as Synthesis - Ongoing Journey of Self-Development - No Perfection

Part Two

Self-Responsibility & Self-Control

- Self-Responsibility: The Cardinal Virtue - Acknowledging & Practicing Self-Control - Virtues as Self-Accomplishments Require Self-Responsibility - Must Believe Have Power to Determine (and Improve) Your Character & Behavior to Develop Any Virtue
- Psychological Determinism and Freedom (Two Views of Humans & the Future): Human Nature Deterministic - Biological, Genetic, Historical, and Environmental Factors Determine Consciousness & Behavior - Seems to Absolve the Person of Responsibility/Control; Contrary View - Future & Self as Possibilities - Control Over Self, Reality, & Future - Through Self-Awareness & Understanding, Awareness of Future Possibilities & Choices, & the Practiced Activity of Self-Reflection & Deliberation Enhance Self-Control - Paradoxically Understanding How You are Determined Opens Up Possibility of Control - (As in Science & Technology) The Application of Knowledge of Nature Generates Power & Control - Behavior & Thinking Dramatically Different if Believe Have Control vs. Believe that You Don't Have Control
- Self-Efficacy: SE Necessary Element in Self-Responsibility - SE (or Realistic Confidence) is the Belief in Your Capacity to Control the Future (Can Vary Individually & Situationally) - Open to Practice & Success Effects
- Internal vs. External Locus of Control: Contrasting Perceptions & Beliefs of What Types of Events Determining Your Life (Inside vs. Outside) - Must Believe in ILC for Self-Responsibility
- The Theory of Willpower and Self-Control: Baumeister - WP & Failure of WP is Biggest Predictor of Success & Failure/Problems in Life - WP Has Four Functions - Control Thoughts, Emotions, Impulses (Temptations), & Performance (Perseverance) - Finite Energy Concept of WP (Can Use Up) - Apparent Individual Variation/Effectiveness - Greater WP (vs. Impulsivity/Presentism) -> Greater Happiness
- The Development of Willpower: Muscle Strength/Exercise Analogy - Practice, Act & Rest, Relate to Personally Important Goals & "Lofty Elevated Thoughts," Establish Orderly Habits in Life & Orderly Environment, Use for Positive Goals vs. Negative Ones (Resisting Temptations), Create Clear Bright Lines (What You are Going to Do), Make Public Commitments, & Set Priorities (Be Realistic - The Biggest Failure Regarding WP)

Key Summary Point:

Self-responsibility is the foundational virtue of heightened future consciousness and the capacity for self-reflective self-control can be strengthened or purposefully evolved through (self) knowledge and disciplined, psychologically informed practice. At its core heightened future consciousness requires that the individual takes responsibility for their future, which includes their own personal development.

The Ecology of Future Consciousness

- Reciprocity & Flourishing within the World: Humans & Environment are Distinct Yet Interdependent - Self as Open System Requires a World in Order to Exist & Flourish - Dynamic Evolutionary Becoming in a Dynamic Evolutionary Reality
- Affordances of Environment: Functions/Uses/Opportunities (Food, Water, Surface of Support, Habitats/Protection, Objects & Materials for Tools, Social Others) Necessary for Ways of Life
- Positive & Negative Affordances (Support vs. Interfere with Ways of Life/Flourishing): Common Psychological Reactions Very Different (Hopeful/Happy vs. Depressed/Fearful)
- Environmental vs. Individual Control: Environment Doesn't Control/Determine Behavior/Consciousness - Individual Selection, Interpretation, Thinking Ahead, & Creation of Environment; "You May Be What You Eat, but You Can Chose What You Eat." - "You Can Create a Heaven in Hell, but Why Go Through the Trouble?"
- Social Ecology: Central Element in Flourishing/Life Satisfaction/Mental Well-Being - But Individual Determination in this Reality - Self-Initiative Needed to Cultivate & Develop Social Virtues (Trust, Compassion, Altruism, Honesty) Will Determine Social Ecology/Environment - Draws Others Toward Person - Different Types of Social Ecology Amplify & Dampen Individuals/Creativity -> Be Thoughtful in Selection
- The Virtue of Love: Positive Emotion + Skill/Virtue/Art - Facilitates Positive Engagement with World - Facilitates Oneness/Self-Transcendence - Starting Point for Future - Pursue What You Love - Amplification of Cognitive Capacities
- Humans & Technology: We Exist Within Accelerative Technological Evolution - Throughout Our History Humans are Cyborgs (A Functional Synthesis of Biology & Technology) & Embedded within Technological Environment - Are Interdependent with Technology -> Reciprocity Theme - Enhance & Dampen Human Capacities - Strive to Become a Wise Cyborg - A person who creates, selects and utilizes technologies to facilitate the pursuit and exercise of wisdom
- One with Nature - One with the Universe: Many Would Argue that We Should Identify/Connect/Be Concerned with a Bigger Reality - We Should Place Ourselves in Bigger Context; Cosmic Consciousness, Transcendence, Ecological & Global Consciousness; Moral Imperative - We Should Contribute to Evolution of Nature & the Universe

Key Summary Point:

We will flourish and evolve in the future in a self-guided, actively selected and created reciprocal relationship with the (future) evolving world.

Emotion: Hope, Fear, Despair, Happiness, and Wonder

"I feel therefore I am." Antonio Damasio

"Since man is above all future-making, he is, above all, a swarm of hopes and fears." Ortega y Gasset

- Fundamentals of Emotion: Core of (Future) Consciousness & Personal Identity - Reciprocal/Interactive Connection of Emotion (What We Feel), Behavior (What We Do), & Cognition (What We Think) - Strong Connection of Positive Affect & Well-Being/Flourishing - We Have Control & Responsibility of Emotions
- Positive & Negative Anticipatory Emotions (Feelings About Something Expect to Happen) - Hope, Fear, & Despair: Starting Point of Fredrickson's Broaden & Build Theory - Positive Emotions Generate More Expansive/Sensitive/Creative/Transformational Cognitive States-> Improves Perception, Imagination, Thinking & Behavior; Hope - Approach, Energizes Goal Thinking/Positive Anticipation; Fear - Avoidance - Dampens Cognition - Generates Stasis -> Depression/Despair - Failure of Future Consciousness (Hopelessness & Helplessness)
- Guiding Future Emotional Evolution: Great Influence in the Heightening Future Consciousness - Gain Awareness & Taking Responsibility - Cognitive, Behaviorally, Physical, Environmental Approaches - Reinterpretation & Focusing on/Being Grateful for Positive Aspects of Life - Cognition & Behavior Changes Impact Emotions
- The Pursuit of Happiness: Distinction of Authentic vs. Momentary Happiness; Authentic Happiness (Long Term or Sustained) = Growth/Progress, Engagement, & Accomplishment - Experience of Flourishing - *Happiness Project*, Rubin
- Necessity & Value of Negative Emotions: Negative Emotions as Habits of the Mind Dampen Capacities/Motion Forward - Yin-Yang (Contrast) Theory of Pleasure/Pain - No Pain (Agony/Effort/Deprivation), No Gain Theory - Struggle & Deprivation Builds Tenacity - Number & Degree of Traumas Correlates with Well Being, Character Strength, & Wisdom
- Wonder, Awe, & Astonishment: State of Being Open/Questioning/Humble/Curious/Courageous in Response to Surprise/Uncertainty/Vastness as Positive Emotional State -> Propels Growth & Love of Learning/Thinking -> BB Theory - Connection to Enlightenment & Peak Experiences - See Vast Possibilities/Adventure/Uncertainty of Future as Wondrous/Awe Inspiring is Critical Feature of Heightened Future Consciousness

Key Summary Point:

Although negative or painful emotion seems necessary & valuable in the development of character & a deep appreciation of what is positive & good in life, as a cultivated set of virtues, positive emotions (including hope, love, happiness, and wonder) are the energizing core of heightened future consciousness. As a basic reciprocity, when you flourish, you feel good & when you feel good, you flourish.

Motivation: Stability & Change - Optimism & Pessimism

"...there are two kinds of people in the world: the vulnerable and the dead."

Edwin Locke

- Motivation and Purpose: The Intentional Self-Directed Quality of Human Behavior & Thinking Toward Achieving Goals or Ends - Fundamental Future Focused Directionality of Human Psyche - Impetus & Intention of Future Consciousness; Holistic Synthesis of Thought, Emotion/Bodily Feelings, Desire, Value, and (Often) Action; Motives as Habits & Self-Reinforcing (The More You Do, the More You Want to Do - Good & Bad)
- Stability and Security vs Growth and Adventure: Basic Polarity in Human Motivation - Approaching Uncertainty/Risk/Change with Courage/Excitement vs. Fear/Avoidance; Why Do People Resist Change (Growth) - Multiple Factors - (Security/Safety/Close-Mindedness/Fear of Failure & Success/Impulsiveness); Why/How Do People Change/Grow - Approach Positive/Escape Negative, Internal/External Triggers, Sudden/Gestalt vs. Gradual/Piecemeal, Change Self-Narrative, Tenacity/Persistence
- Optimism, Pessimism, and Realism: Optimism - Belief that the Future Will be Positive/Good/Better - Belief that One Can Positively Affect the Future - Belief that Misfortunes are Short-Lived, Limited in Effect, and due to External Circumstances - Confident/Persistent/Meet Challenges/Realistic/Approach; Pessimism - Belief that the Future Will be Negative/Bad/Worse than the Present - Belief that One Can Not Positively Affect the Future - Belief that Misfortunes have Long Term and Pervasive Effects and are due to the Individual - Doubtful, Hesitant, Defeatist, Don't Meet Challenges, Engage in Avoidance/Distraction; Self-Fulfilling Prophecies; Optimism Always Superior to Pessimism in Life; Open to Modification (Seligman)
- Evolution and the Virtues of Growth: Purposeful Self-Responsible Pursuit & Enactment of Psychological Growth (as Basic Motive in Life) is Expression/Evolution of Evolution - Pursuit & Realization of Self-Growth is Key Feature of Flourishing & Happiness - Requires Optimism - Reflects Dynamic/Directional Nature of Well-Being - Virtues of Deep Purpose, Hope, Courage, Love of Learning, Temperance, Creativity, Tenacity/Discipline Support Self-Growth

Key Summary Points:

Encompassing both approach & avoidance, the needs for stability & change, & the mindsets of optimism & pessimism regarding the future, motivation is the purposeful future-oriented directionality of human consciousness & behavior.

To flourish entails growth motivation, as an expression of our advanced evolutionary nature, guided & empowered by the virtues of heightened future consciousness.

Purposeful Behavior

"There is no try. There is do or don't." Yoda

"All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare." Baruch Spinoza

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*"The journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one's feet."
Lao-tzu*

*"What you do everyday matters more than what you do once in a while."
Gretchen Rubin*

- Key Steps to Growth & Success
- Commitment & Decision: Uncertainty in Life/Future Requires Courage in Decision, Choice, & Commitment - Thinking/Imagination Both Empowering/Disempowering
- Necessity of Action (Again, Thought Can Undermine) - Tomorrow Land Syndrome - Future is Now/Feeding the Future Everyday
- Focus: Short Term Discipline & Eliminating Distraction - Effect of Practice - Focus is a Habit
- Flow: Must Find & Cultivate Flow - Challenging & Engaging Tasks - Lose Self-Consciousness - Find Intrinsically Motivating Tasks/Goals - Generates Growth
- Rhythm & Discipline: Create & Commit to Stable Schedule - Monitor/Remind - No Excuses/Exceptions
- Grit and Tenacity: Grit/Tenacity Out Predicts IQ Regarding Success; Necessity of Challenge & Adversity in the Development of Tenacity; Tenacity/Grit is the Capacity for Pushing Ahead When the Going Gets Tough (Which It Will) - Hence, Tenacity Grows through Practice; Future Consciousness in Action (vs. Distraction, Lethargy, Defeatism, Helplessness, Impulsivity)
- Journeys & Destinations - Journeys are Great but the Achievement of Goals is Reinforcing & Markers for Ongoing Growth - Motivates Behavior - Need Both Js and Ds for Happiness & Flourishing
- Wisdom, Deep Purpose, and the Management of Life: DP is Overarching Direction in Life - Expansive Temporal Consciousness, Transcendent Purpose - Provides Framework/Order/Meaning for Day-to-Day Activities - Motivates/Provides WP/Tenacity for Day-to-Day Activities - Evolves in Life - Central Virtue; Wisdom Requires Deep Purpose - Wisdom is Capacity to Organize Time, Life, Realize Good Life & Good Future - To Flourish & Realize Happiness - An Ethical Accomplishment

Key Summary Point:

Set in the context of a hopeful and optimistic mindset, there is a set of critical steps that generate success in purposeful behavior and lead to psychological growth. Following a rough sequential order, these steps are: Commit, act, focus, flow, self-discipline, practice, persevere, and achieve, all enveloped in a sense of deep purpose.

Part III

Learning, Memory, & Knowledge

"Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness...when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it...this is the condition of children & barbarians, in whom instinct has learned nothing from experience." George Santayana

- The Psychology of Knowledge & Learning; Learning - The Acquisition of Knowledge - Skills & Understanding
- Memory Builds from Learning - An Active/Creative, Interpretive/Categorizing/Meaning-Seeking, Selective, Integrative, Value-Imbued, Continually Restructuring Process Providing an Ongoing Understanding of What Is Being Learned in the Present & What Has Been Learned from the Past
- Provides (Relative) Stability & Foundation of Self-Identity
- Context for Experience of the Present - Presentism -> Primitive/Infantile Mind - Experience of the Present Always Influenced/Interpreted by the Past
- Basis for Growth - Learning & Memory is an Evolution of Evolution - Usurps Genetics - Changes Can Accumulate More Quickly/Over Lifetime - Basis of Individual & Cultural Evolution
- Basis for Expanding Temporal Consciousness & Foresight/Anticipation - As Awareness of Past Develops Sense of Future Develops - Anticipate Based Upon What Learned/Remembered
- Deep vs Surface Learning: Challenge in Education - Continuum - Necessary in the Development of Wisdom
 - Surface Learning (Learning without Understanding): Fragmented, Nothing Changes in Deep Psyche, No Transference or Application Value, No Thinking, No Self-Reflection, Extrinsic Motivation & Negative Affect, and Passive
 - Deep Learning (Learning with Understanding): Synthesize Big Picture, Penetrates & Reorganizes Core Values, Concepts, and Beliefs, Transfers and Application Value, Entails Thinking, Self-Reflection, Intrinsic Motivation & Positive Affect, and Active - Supported by Virtues of Love of Learning/Thinking
- Facilitating Deep Learning - Think, Compare, Over-Learn, Connect, Personally Relate, Debate, Create, Explain/Teach/Converse About, Use in Action & Problem Solving

Key Summary Points:

Memory of the past, acquired through learning, but selectively structured and interpreted, is the knowledge foundation for both present and future consciousness. Deep learning is the key to ongoing life transformation and essential to flourishing and the development of wisdom.

Thinking, Understanding, & Consciousness

"I think, therefore I am." Rene Descartes

"The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts." Charles Darwin

- Perspectives, Theories, Paradigms, World Views, and Narratives: Perceptual (Perspectival) Foundation of Consciousness & Knowledge; Theory as Selective, Interpretive, Integrative Explanation - Theoretical/Belief Nature of Facts/Consciousness -> What "is" & what is "good"; Paradigm -> Theory & Way of Life; World View -> Theory/Paradigm of Reality & Good & How to Live; Psychological Inclination to Frame Understanding in Form of Stories; Grand Narratives - Embody World Views - Stories of Reality - Framework for Historical & Future Consciousness - Describe, Explain, & Evaluate Past & Present & Prescribe the Future - Multiple Theories/Paradigms/World Views/Grand Narratives of the Past/Present/Future; Personal Narratives - Stories We Tell Ourselves About Ourselves (Provide Meaning & Purpose to Our Lives)
- The Ethics and Psychology of Beliefs: Belief in Truth/Value of Narrative & Connection of Personal & Grand Narratives Significantly Motivates Behavior - Gives Hope/Optimism - Problems with Commitment - Closed-Mindedness/Arrogance, Lack of Growth/Flexibility; Ethics of Belief - Morally Obligated to Evaluate - Balance of Right to Believe & Responsibility to Virtues of Learning/Thinking; Psychological Value - Invigorates Growth, Deep Learning, Flourishing, Wisdom
- Modes of Knowing and Understanding: Right/Left Brain, Male/Female, Rational/Intuitive; Nisbett - East is Circle, Tao, Context, Holistic, Interdependency, Community & Balance - West is Line, Syllogism, Discrete Objects, Analysis, Individuality, Autonomy, Either/Or, Dualism; Globalized Wisdom is Thinking Like an Evolutionary Taoist
- Directing the Flow of Consciousness: Moral Imperative of Taking Responsibility for Thoughts - Multiple Explanations for Lack of Control; Key Factors in Control - Knowledge/Understanding of Self/Consciousness, Set Goals for Change, and Attentive Practice - Similar Principles for Success/Growth - Future Consciousness of Consciousness; Methods - Cognitive Therapy, Critical Thinking, Behavioral Therapy, Mindfulness & Meditation, Environmental Change, Surrendering to Higher Power, Self-Reflection/Standing Back - Gaining Increasing Objectivity & Centeredness, Changing Narrative
- Nature and Purpose of Thinking: A (Conscious) Mental Activity involving the Creation, Inter-Connecting, and/or Evaluation of Ideas or Beliefs, often taking a Sequential Form & involving Internal Dialogue - Transcendent to both Perceptual Knowledge & Simple Memory - Often Involving Hypothetical, Imaginative, and Abstract Content - We Create Theories/World Views/Narratives through Thinking - Highly Evolved Psychological Capacity; Instantaneous (Insight) vs. Sequential; Can Think About Thinking/Evaluate What We Think & How We Think; Thinking is a Skill -

Standards & Virtues of Thinking - Humility, Courage, Autonomy, Integrity, Honesty, Perseverance, Fair-Mindedness; Reflects Character - A Moral Virtue

- Thinking About the Future
 - Levels of Excellence - Imaginative vs. Habitual, Optimistic vs. Pessimistic, Systematic vs. Fragmented, Competently (CT Skills) vs. Poorly, Informative vs. Ignorance, Expansive vs. Short-Term, Purposeful vs. Meandering;
 - Functions - Anticipate/Predict, Evaluate/Inspire, Guide/Control/Create, Prescriptive; Develop Theories/Narratives & Compare; Develop Visions/Scenarios/Narratives - Multiple Possibilities - Science Fiction; Strategies & Plans - The Ability to Construct a Hypothetical Series of Connected Actions Intended to Lead to the Realization of an Identified Goal(s) - Principles of Realistic & Effective Planning - Realism, Priorities, Monitoring, Avoid Overload, Anticipating Obstacles, Concrete Actions, Ecological Loops of Thought & Feedback, Balance of Commitment & Flexibility

Key Summary Point:

Consciousness, understanding, and thinking (including thinking about the future) are perspectival, contingent, and relatively chaotic and uncontrollable, yet indeterminately self-reflective, self-expansive, self-evaluative, self-integrative, and self-improving achieved through the practice of a set of cognitive virtues.

Imagination & Creativity

“...every work of art comes into being in the same way as the cosmos – by means of catastrophes, which ultimately create out of the cacophony of the various instruments that symphony we call the music of the spheres.”

Wassily Kandinsky

- Imagination: The Possibility Space in the Human Mind: The Ability to Create & Manipulate Mental Images or Hypothetical “Perceptual-like” Realities in our Minds - Derived from, but not Limited, to Perceptual Experiences & Memories - Basis of Foresight, Visioning, Scenario Building, Science Fiction, Goal Setting, Creativity; Freedom of Human Mind; Reciprocal Amplification with Thinking & Positive Emotionality
- Evolution and Creativity: Originally a Gift of gods/God; Creativity in Nature - Order out of Chaos, Competition & Synthesis, Levels of Emergent Novelty, Unpredictability - Humans are Participatory & Increasing Understanding of Natural Creativity Leads to Greater Creativity - Knowledge is Power - Creativity Becoming Self-Conscious
- Psychology of Creativity: Four Stages (Preparation, Incubation, Illumination/Gestalt Insight, Verification); Bisociation; Right/Left Brain (Synthetic/Analytic); Personality Type (Adventure/Risk/Courage, Self-Actualizing); Positive Emotion & Flow
- A Theory of Creativity: Problem Solving/Hard Work/Persistence/Discipline/Frustration & Chaos & Play - Escape from Familiar toward Diversity; Left (Analytic) vs. Right (Holistic); Divergent (Chaos)/Convergent (Focus); Linear/Insightful;

Uncertainty/Perplexity/Negative Emotion vs. Insight/Positive Emotion; Thought/Emotion; Individual Effort/Collective-Social Stimulation

- Creativity and the Future: The Future is the Act of Creation & We are All Participating Within It; Understanding Creativity is Evolving Evolution/Innovating Innovation; Heightened Future Consciousness is Desire & Capacity to Create the Best Possible Future; Contributory Factors - Spirit of Adventure, Courage, Hope/Optimism, Discipline & Tenacity, Creating/Recreating Goals, Love of Learning & Thinking, Cultivate Imagination, Sense of Personal Growth & Self-Transcendence

Basic Summary Point:

Creativity, involving a balanced synthesis of oppositional qualities, is the making of order out of chaos, which often involves as a prelude the making of chaos out of order.

The Self & the Self-Narrative

*“People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself.
But the self is not something that one finds. It is something that one creates.”
Thomas Szasz*

- The Nature of the Self: The Agent, Center, Integration, Narrator, Audience, & Coordinator of Consciousness - A Necessary Object of Consciousness (Self-Consciousness) Distinguished from the World
- Self-Reflectivity and the Evolutionary Self: Self Has Evolved through History; Self Reflects Growing Self-Reflectivity & Self-Control in Universe; Self through Self-Awareness & Control, Evolved Psychological Capacities, and Purpose Enhances Evolution
- Levels of the Self: Damasio Theory - Body Feels the Body in the World as the Foundation of the Self (Core Self); The Autobiographical Self - Ongoing Core Self Contextualized in Memories & Anticipations - Self as a Narration - Continually Created/Recreated - ABS Brings Reflection, Deliberation & Anticipation - A Deliberative, Future Focused Self - Done through Ongoing Narration (Storytelling) of Experience - Contextualized, Sequentialized Meaning Drawn from Memory/Anticipation Given to Self by the Self (a Self-Creation) - Basis of Culture, Myth, History, Literature; Conclusion - Self Consciousness is an Ongoing Experienced Self-Narrative the Self Tells to Itself about Itself (as Author, Character, & Audience) - Gives Ongoing Meaning, Purpose, & Coherence to Life - Connects Past, Present, & Future - Can Evolve/Transform Narrative Activity
- Evolving the Personal Narrative: Connection of ABS & Personal Narrative; The Foundational Story We Use to Interpret Experience; PN at Core of Interpretive Mind Set of Personal Experience; Wilson - Story Editing (Changing PN) Produce Long Term Psychological Changes - Write Out “Life as a Book” - Raise Self-Consciousness - Reinterpret Past - Identify Future Personal Narrative & Ideal Future Personal Narrative & Rewrite

- Rewriting the Ideal Future Self-Narrative: Enhances Self-Awareness, Self-Responsibility/Self-Empowerment, Greater Coherence/Meaning/Purpose to Life, Directs/Inspires Self-Growth - Empowers Evolution, Flourishing, the Good Future
- Assignment - Articulate an ideal future personal narrative that is centered on the growth of wisdom (cultivation & practice of the virtues) & that if followed, will facilitate flourishing in the future for oneself & the world

Basic Summary Point:

I am evolution self-conscious, purposeful, and evolving. I create myself through the ongoing future-directional, self-reflective story (personal narrative, real and ideal) I tell myself about myself within the context of the story (grand narrative) I tell myself about the world.

The Life of Wisdom

*“Believe those who are seeking the truth;
doubt those who find it.” Andre Gide*

*“He who searches for wisdom is wise; he who
thinks he has found it is a fool.” Al-Farabi*

Wisdom Defined:

Wisdom is the highest expression of self-development, the synthesis & application of the virtues of heightened future consciousness.

It is the continually evolving understanding of & fascination with both the big picture & personal dimensions of life, of what is important, ethical, & meaningful, & the desire & creative capacity to apply this understanding to enhance the well being of life, both for oneself & others.

- The Centrality of Wisdom: Integrates Virtues of Heightened Future Consciousness - Ideal Future Self-Narrative Should Center on Wisdom - Wisdom is Means to Well Being, Good Future, & Flourishing - Development of Wisdom Preferable Direction for Future Psychological Evolution
- Wisdom Faces Forward: An Evolutionary Future-Focused Vision of Wisdom - “Wisdom connects the heritage and lessons of the past and contemporary knowledge and awareness with the thoughtfulness, hope, ethics, and creativity needed for the future. Wisdom involves an expansive synthesis of temporal consciousness; it combats the excessive narrow “presentism” of today.”
- The New Enlightenment and the Age of Wisdom: What are Humanity’s Grand Narratives? Do We Possess any Credible & Inspiring GN for Future of Humanity that Resonate with the Positive Evolutionary Possibilities for Humanity? History of Visions to Improve Humanity - Contemporary Pluralism of Competing Narratives -

Expression of Ongoing Process of Purposeful Psycho-Social Evolution - Call for a "New Enlightenment" - "Age of Wisdom" Based on an Evolutionary Future-Focused Theory of Wisdom - Mega-Crisis Primarily Ethical, Psychological, & Social - Need a Positive Approach & Vision that Defines the Good Future (Dynamic & Holistic) Aligned with Virtues of Wisdom; Provide Grand Narrative Context for Personal Narratives & Lives - Contributing to Age of Wisdom as Central Moral Imperative

Basic Summary Point:

A future focused, evolutionary vision of wisdom should be the guiding light for our personal development and our future psycho-social evolution.

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