

Chapter 31

The Roots of Motivation

In this chapter I will explore how the motivation to act, either in glorious compassion or in horrific malice, is not rooted in our thoughts or sensations or emotions but in our states of consciousness.

So what are thoughts? What are sensations? What are emotions? And most of all what are states of consciousness? The following chart holds these interrelated dynamics in an order that helps me share my experience of these dynamics, how I distinguish them, and how each relates to the topic of motivation.

States of Bodily Function	Thinking	<p>Thinking includes the human capacity for language, for art, for mathematics, often called the symbol-using capacity. Symbols are mental entities that stand for assemblies of imaged content. Images are a more primitive aspect of thinking. They are the multi-sensory reruns of specific experiences.</p>
	Sensations	<p>Sensations include the outwardly focused dynamics of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and the tactile sensations of the skin. Also included are the more inwardly focused sensations of pain, of muscular and bone movement, and of the chemical qualities in the blood and other fluid systems. We can consciously notice and distinguish all these varieties of sensation.</p>
	Emotions	<p>Emotions are bodily feelings, but they are energies that rise from the dialogue of the conscious self with outward experiences or with what we think are our outward experiences. Emotions come in pairs: anger and affection, fear and safeness, sadness and gladness, sorrow and contentment, anxiety and ease.</p>
States of Con- scious- ness	<p>Consciousness is a deep enigma. It is the core self, the deep me, the noticer, and the doer. Consciousness is not thinking, it is the thinker. Consciousness is not the sensations; it is the sensor. Consciousness is not emotions; it is the self that is having these feelings. Consciousness is that within the body that knows itself experiencing and using these bodily functions. Here are names for some of the deepest states of consciousness:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Trust and Despair Compassion and Malice Freedom and Bondage</p>	

Trust and Despair

Despair is not an emotion; it is the absence of trust. And trust is not an emotion, it is a state of consciousness that can exist along with any emotion. We can live in trust and still be angry. We can live in trust and still be fearful. We can live in trust and still feel affection or safeness. We can live in trust and at the same time experience all the variations of sadness and gladness, sorrow and contentment, anxiety and ease. Trust is not a feeling: it is a willingness to have whatever feelings we have. Trust is an openness to and a curiosity about what our feelings mean. Trust is a willingness to feel our feelings and use them to identify what is happening to us. Trust can also put our feelings to work for us. Anger can be useful to the trusting person. Fear can be useful to the trusting person. Trust is trustful of anger and fear as well as of affection and safeness. Trust is an effortless letting be of our emotions. And trust is an effort to manifest freely our emotional richness. Deep trust trusts what is real. Our emotions are real and therefore part of what deep trust trusts. Deep trust is also trustful that despair is a doorway back to the deep trust of the Real. Trusting persons invite the despairing to the community of trusting the Real.

Compassion and Malice

Similarly, Malice is not an emotion; it is the absence of compassion. Malice has many forms including a sentimentality that replaces the true courage of self affirmation. Malice is also a substitute for enchantment with Being and outgoing being with others. As a deep state of essential consciousness, compassion has many forms but none of them can be understood as a state of emotion; compassion can exist alongside any emotion. We can live in compassion and still be angry. We can live in compassion and still be fearful. We can live in compassion and still feel affection or safeness. We can live in compassion and at the same time experience all the variations of sadness and gladness, sorrow and contentment, anxiety and ease. Compassion is not a feeling: it is a willingness to have whatever feelings we have. Compassion is an openness to and a curiosity about what our feelings mean. Compassion is a willingness to feel our feelings and use them to identify what is happening to us. Compassion can also put our feelings to work for us in our relations with others. Anger too can be useful to the compassionate person. Fear can be useful to the compassionate person. Compassion is compassionate toward anger and fear as well as toward affection and safeness. Compassion is an affirmation of our being an emotional being. And compassion is an effort to manifest freely our emotional richness and to assist others to do the same. Compassion is compassionate toward what is real. Our emotions are real and therefore part of what compassion is compassionate toward. Compassion is also compassionate toward self and others in our estrangement from the real. Compassion seeks to assist self and others to open to experience the hell of despair so we can be welcomed home to the glory of Reality.

Freedom and Bondage

Bondage is also not an emotion; it is the absence of freedom. And freedom is not an emotion, it is a state of consciousness that can exist along with any emotion. We can live in freedom and still be angry. We can live in freedom and still be fearful. We can live in freedom and still feel affection or safeness. We can live in freedom and at the same time experience all the variations of sadness and gladness, sorrow and contentment, anxiety and ease. Freedom is not a feeling: it is also a willingness to have whatever feelings we have. Freedom is an openness to and a curiosity about what our

feelings mean. Freedom is a willingness to feel our feelings and use them to identify what is happening to us. Freedom can also put our feelings to work for us. Anger can be useful to the free person. Fear can be useful to the free person. In its free actions, freedom freely employs anger and fear as well as affection and safeness. Freedom is an affirmation of our being an emotional being. And freedom is an effort to manifest freely our emotional richness and to assist others to do the same. Freedom is free to live what is real. Being freedom is what is real; bondage is a substitute for freedom. Our emotions are real and therefore part of what freedom freely enjoys and uses. Freedom is the absence of the compulsion to act out our feelings in some addictive or unconscious way. Freedom is also free to address estrangement from the real – to assist self and others to open to experience the hell of despair so we can be welcomed home to the glory of Reality.

Motivation and Emotions

Emotions attend our actions and enrich our actions, but they do not motivate our actions. Motivation is a deeper dynamic than our emotions. Motivation is rooted in these profound dynamics of consciousness: our trust or despair, our compassion or malice, our freedom or bondage. It may seem sometimes that we are motivated by our anger or fear, but most of us can recall times when we have not acted-out our anger or when we have acted courageously in spite of our fear. Fear probably evolved in our psyches because it aided our species in fleeing dangers. And anger probably evolved in our psyches because it aided our species in fighting challenges to our survival. But these associations can trick us into believing that we need to be angry to fight for social justice, and we do not. Injustice may anger us, and we may find that anger useful. But the motivation to act and to shape the quality of our social action comes from a deeper level. We are motivated by our compassion first of all, or by our lack of it. We are motivated by our trust or by our lack of it.

We are motivated by our freedom or our lack of it. This is a very important awareness. We do not have to drum up anger to act boldly. And we certainly do not need to act out our anger in some thoughtless manner every time we are angry. But also, we do not need to hold our anger in contempt or think that we have to replace it with affection. We can learn to let our feelings be our feelings, and we can learn from our feelings. At the same time we can distance ourselves from addictive obedience to what we think our feelings are urging us to do.

Living beyond our feelings is not always easy to realize in our practical living, for our feelings are very subtle and our awareness of them may still be emerging. Also, we may be unconscious of the extent of our malice and how it joins forces with our anger. We may be unconscious of the extent of our despair and how it joins forces with our fear. We may be unconscious of many other ways that our consciousness and our emotions are mingling.

The key point here is that we cannot trust our emotions to be an absolutely trustworthy guide. Our emotions are doing their job, but they can be misleading. Emotions are a valuable energy that arises in relation to both our perception of the external world as well as from the current state of our consciousness. If our state of consciousness is malice and our thinking about the world erroneous, our emotions will guide us to do malicious things in a supposed world that does not exist. On the other hand, if our current state of consciousness is compassion and our thinking about the world is relatively accurate, then our emotions will tend to be in line with the actions that our compassion envisions and motivates us to do.

Motivation and Sensations

It is also a mistake to view our sensations as an absolutely trustworthy guide. Consciousness needs to notice our chemically initiated signals such as hunger, thirst, and sexual desire, but these signals must be evaluated by consciousness in order to pursue optimal living. A worm may almost entirely obey these signals, but humans have evolved consciousness and thinking to assist us in choosing more wisely than a simple rendering of obedience to these important signals. Pain and muscle sensibilities also require thoughtful consciousness. Even our seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and tactile sensation require thoughtful evaluation for best-case actions. Our consciousness, not our sensations, is the source for our best-case actions. And our twisted consciousness is the source of our malice, bondage, and despair.

Motivation and Thinking

Thought can also be a misleading guide to the life of action. Thought is genuinely and positively motivating only to the extent that it awakens our trust, compassion and freedom and gives guidance for the engagement of these motivating forces in the external world. Thought can also give guidance to the motivating forces of despair, malice and bondage.

And our thinking can be grossly mistaken about ourselves and our the external world. In the best case scenario, our thinking is still incomplete, evolving, changing, never arriving at any final certainty. Thinking is enormously useful, but still fragile in its holds on Truth.

A “belief” is a thought to which we are committed, so our beliefs play an important role in our motivations. We need to notice, however, that commitment is a dynamic of consciousness, not a dynamic of thought. It is commitment that makes a thought a belief. Thoughts can float through the mind like passing clouds. Thoughts can be without impact on our motivation until they become beliefs. It is when we capture a set of thoughts in the net of commitment that we have beliefs that are being acted upon.

A ministry to our beliefs is actually a ministry to our commitments, even though the attention of this ministry seems to be on our thoughts. The key question we need to ask about our beliefs is, “Are they true?” That is, are they in accord with Reality with capital “R.” Trust, compassion, and freedom have to do with affirmations of Realty. Despair, malice, and bondage have to do with commitments to self-constructed “realities” we have substituted for Reality. Our despair results from our conscious or unconscious unwillingness to live in the real world or be our true selves. Malice and bondage also result from our conscious or unconscious rejection of realism. It is through our commitment to illusory beliefs that we keep ourselves in the pains of despair, malice, and bondage. When we question a belief, we are actually questioning a commitment of consciousness. That is, we are questioning whether our commitment is illusory – whether our beliefs are truly believable even to ourselves. When we examine the sort of living that our beliefs lead us into or how we would be different without those beliefs, we are assembling data that may reveal to us the illusory nature of those beliefs, which includes revealing the illusory nature of the commitments of consciousness that underlie those beliefs.

Thinking is not the main root of realistic motivation. It is trust, compassion and freedom that provide the root of positive motivation. Accurate thinking is important for effectively manifesting our trust, compassion, and freedom. But thinking is a tail on the dog of conscious motivation. The tail does not wag the dog. It is the dog of consciousness that wags the tail of thinking, including the thinking of this chapter.