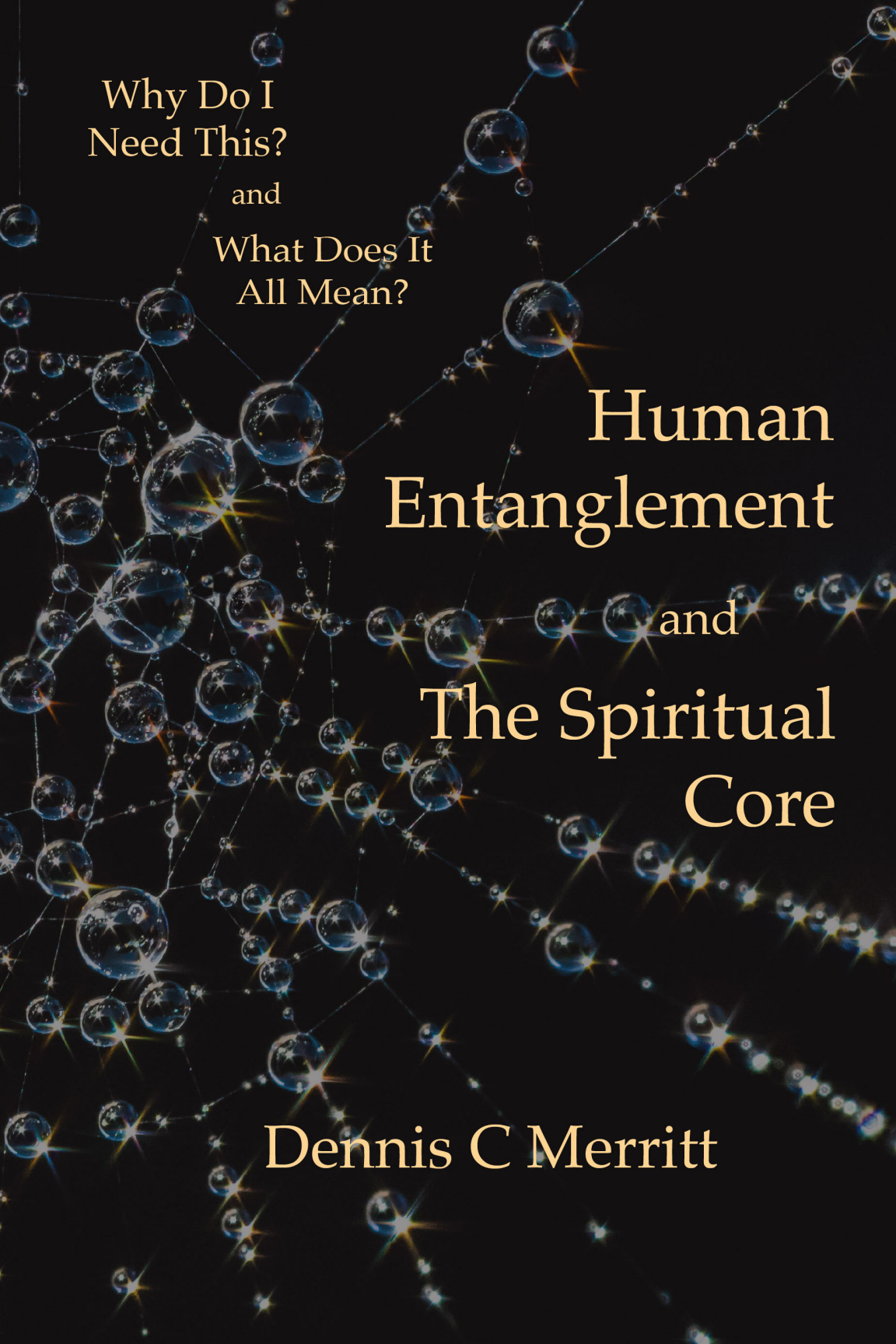




Why Do I
Need This?

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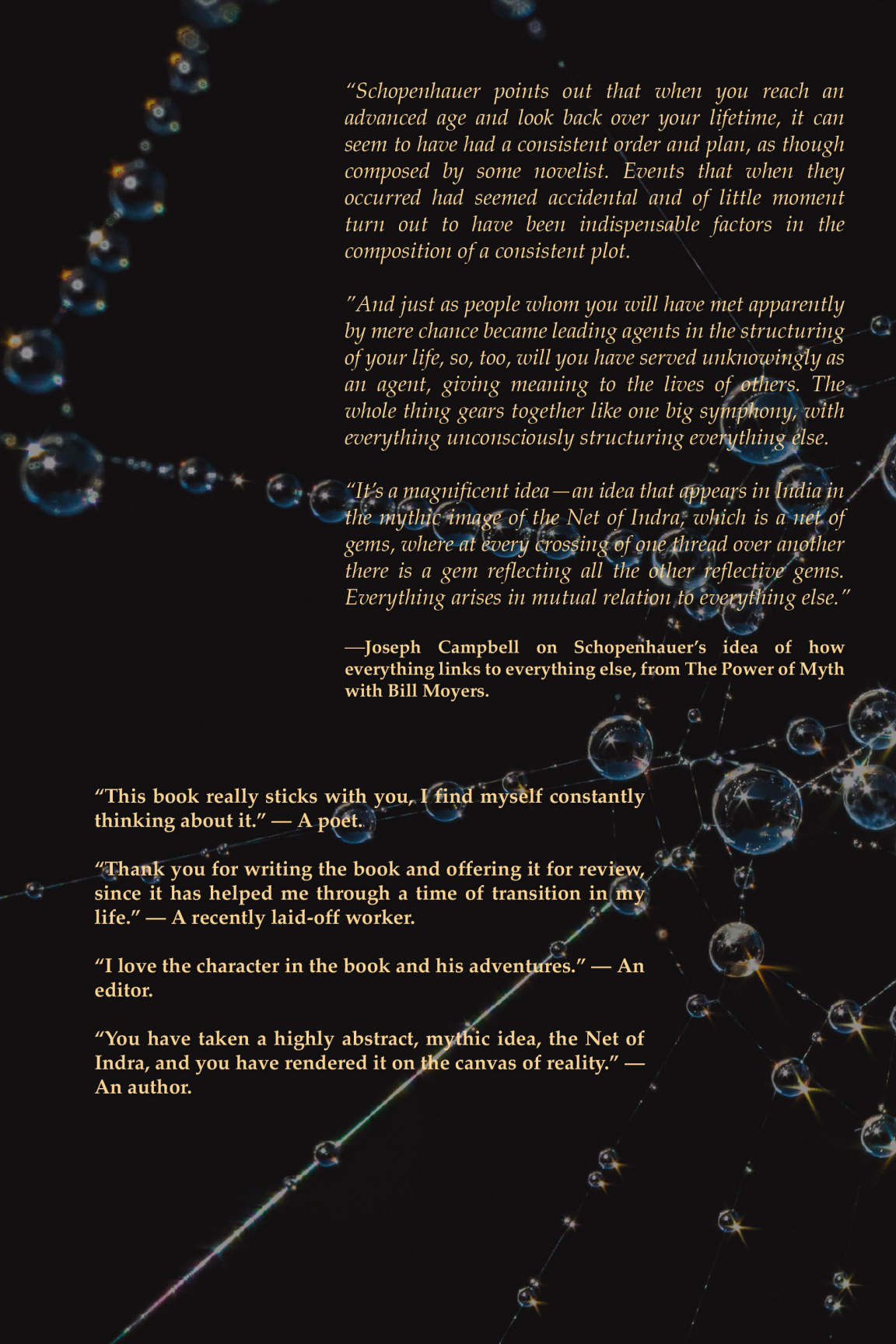
What Does It
All Mean?

Human Entanglement

and

The Spiritual Core

Dennis C Merritt



"Schopenhauer points out that when you reach an advanced age and look back over your lifetime, it can seem to have had a consistent order and plan, as though composed by some novelist. Events that when they occurred had seemed accidental and of little moment turn out to have been indispensable factors in the composition of a consistent plot.

"And just as people whom you will have met apparently by mere chance became leading agents in the structuring of your life, so, too, will you have served unknowingly as an agent, giving meaning to the lives of others. The whole thing gears together like one big symphony, with everything unconsciously structuring everything else.

"It's a magnificent idea—an idea that appears in India in the mythic image of the Net of Indra, which is a net of gems, where at every crossing of one thread over another there is a gem reflecting all the other reflective gems. Everything arises in mutual relation to everything else."

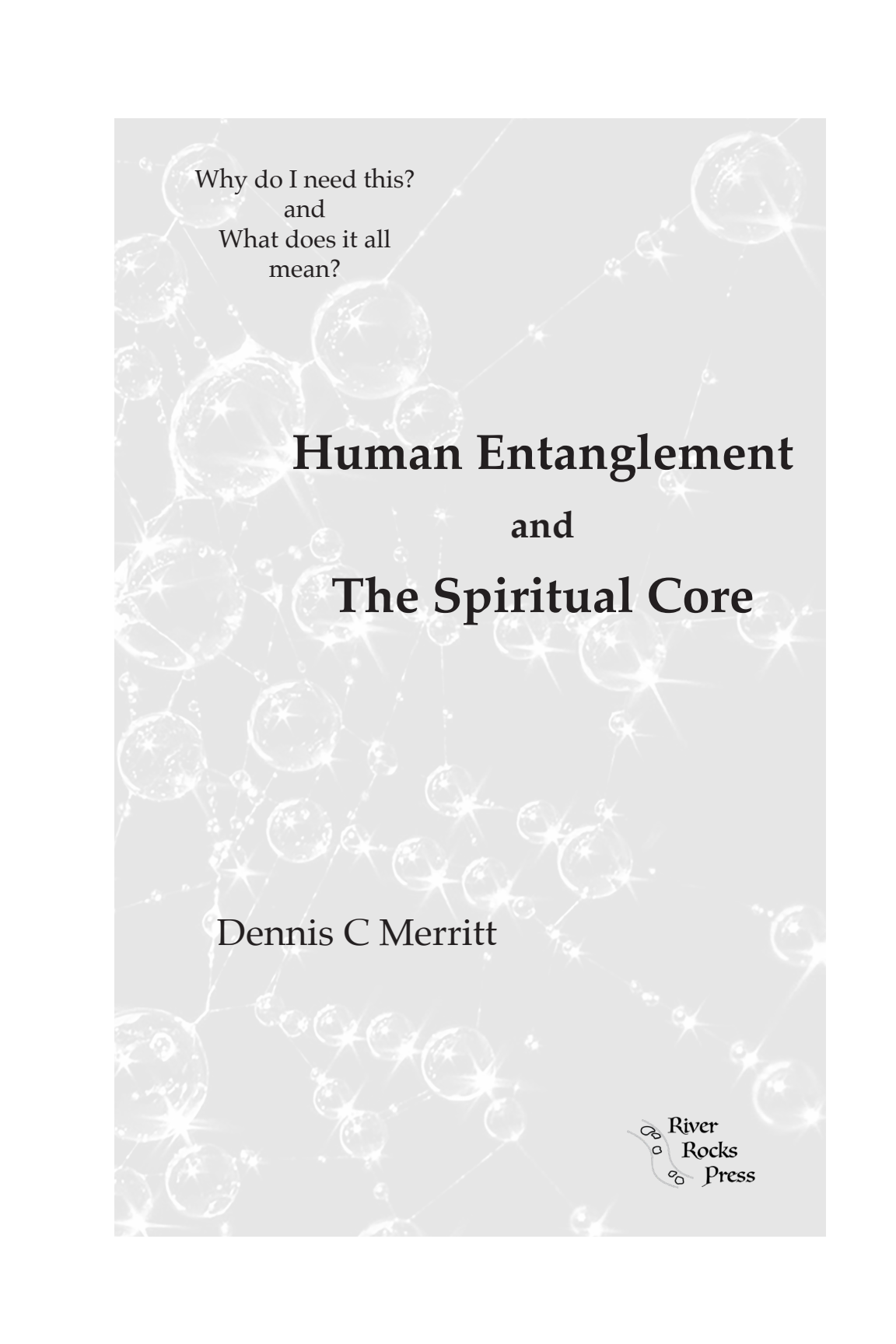
—Joseph Campbell on Schopenhauer's idea of how everything links to everything else, from *The Power of Myth* with Bill Moyers.

"This book really sticks with you, I find myself constantly thinking about it." — A poet.

"Thank you for writing the book and offering it for review, since it has helped me through a time of transition in my life." — A recently laid-off worker.

"I love the character in the book and his adventures." — An editor.

"You have taken a highly abstract, mythic idea, the Net of Indra, and you have rendered it on the canvas of reality." — An author.



Why do I need this?
and
What does it all
mean?

Human Entanglement and The Spiritual Core

Dennis C Merritt

 River
Rocks
Press

Human Entanglement and The Spiritual Core
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Dom Komarechka's *Shimmering Darkness*



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www.denniscmerritt.com

for
Sid
&
Mary

"This book really sticks with you, I find myself constantly thinking about it." — A poet.

"Thank you for writing the book and offering it for review, since it has helped me through a time of transition in my life." — A recently laid-off worker.

"This is a story that needs to be told—it is the lay introduction to some very important ideas." — A minister and therapist.

"I stubbed my toe the other day and said '#!@*&' Dennis Merritt—you've got me thinking about things I don't want to think about." — A secretary.

"You have taken a highly abstract, mythic idea, the Net of Indra, and you have rendered it on the canvas of reality."
— An author.

"I love the character in the book and his adventures." — An editor.

"This is the best book I've ever read." — A therapist who's read more books than anyone I know. (She later toned it down to "one of the best" but she said "best" first and I'm sticking with it.)

"Those who know the Way, don't speak of the Way. Those who speak of the Way, don't know." — Lao Tzu*, a long time ago.

"This is me, speaking about the Way." — The author.

* He spoke that.

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Preface

“In each of our lives there are seemingly magical coincidences that, if not convincing us there is a higher force at work, at least cause us to wonder. In each of our lives there are also random, sometimes painful, events that, if not causing us to disbelieve in a higher force, at least cause us to doubt. At times we feel the master of our destinies and at others the victim of fate. Our lives and the world can seem good one day and filled with evil the next. In short, life often seems contradictory and confusing.

“The contradictions lead to age-old theological debates about the existence or non-existence of God or a god-like force. They lead to philosophical debates of free will versus destiny. They make us grapple with the ideas of good and evil and ask why they exist in our individual lives and the greater world beyond as well.

“This is a book about an old and simple idea that makes sense of the contradictions and confusion at all levels—personal, global and metaphysical. It is a beautiful idea that simply and elegantly explains the connections between us all and it all, but it is also a deeply troubling idea that can disturb the dark secrets we keep within.

Human Entanglement

It is an illogical idea, but it has an intuitive power that eats away at more rational views of life. It is not an idea that can be proved right or wrong in debate—it either feels right or it doesn't. All any of us can do is try it on and see how it fits.

“When it feels right, all the pieces of your life, the lives of those around you, and the world around begin to click into place. It leads to understanding of theological and philosophical issues such as free will and determinism, whether or not God exists, and how there can be a benevolent God in a world with evil. It presents a framework for better understanding any system of religious belief. It leads to understanding of the interconnections between us all that are the world we live in. It helps us understand a global horror such as a war and a personal one such as the death of a loved one.”

— 1992 *Reflection* Introduction

This was how the book *Reflection* started when I first wrote it in 1992. I explained the idea as a way to better understand one's life and also to understand the larger metaphysical sorts of questions we all have from time to time.

A number of people at the time, including total strangers, which was key, read draft copies of the book and told me how it had changed their lives, how it had made them understand. That's why we, Mary Kroening my wife and business partner at the time, and I decided to self publish it.

Why self-publish? I actually had a literary agent in those days who had placed my two books on the logic programming language, Prolog, for me with Springer-Verlag. Those were challenging/fun books to write since Prolog requires a very different way of looking at programming. It's not like other software languages, and I think those books, which still sell

today, did a good job at explaining the underlying concepts that made it such a different and powerful software tool.

My agent shopped *Reflection* around to various publishers who might publish such a book. The feedback was always that it was a good book, but they couldn't sell it. My agent had said if I was Dr. Dennis C Merritt, renowned expert in Jungian Psychology or the like, he could sell it. He said if the stories were not from my life, but say, from Marilyn Monroe's, he could sell it.

But I'm not a renowned expert, nor am I famous. However, the book had touched people, so we decided to self-publish. I did most of the writing and then the reading and incorporating of the many reviewer's comments. Mary worked the introduction and did the layout and got the copyrights and the ISBN numbers and the printer and—self-publishing then meant making your own large print run—we ordered 2000 copies.

We sold hardly any. I moved those heavy crates of books from one place to another, from Massachusetts to Ohio to maybe three houses in North Carolina. Finally I'd moved them enough. I kept some and threw out around 1,900 books.

In 2016 we, now Nancy and I, took our first steps towards living in Shelburne Falls, MA, and there I got some small interest in the book. The world of self-publishing had changed, and I had moved my two Prolog books to Amazon, so I decided to do the same with *Reflection*. I moved the text to Scrivener, an excellent tool for writers, added some stuff, removed some stuff, and then in 2017 created a PDF file and sent it up to Amazon. There it was self-published again. Wow, so much easier!

It still didn't do well, but I had a bunch of author's copies which I could sell or give away. Periodically I'd give a copy to someone, and then, never hear back. I don't know if people just didn't read it, or did and didn't like it, or even got started. I don't know if they were just being polite and thought I was nuts, or the book was nuts, or maybe it wasn't well written, or maybe it was but they just weren't interested in the topic... I didn't know.

So I did what I do and moved to a new project and wrote another book that looked at something from a different point of view, explaining the underlying concepts. It was *Jazz Chords for Baritone Ukulele*. It presented a way for meshing the music theory of jazz with the geometry of a baritone uke's four strings and fretboard. It sells pretty well for an un-marketed, self-published book.

My arguably different ways of looking at software development and jazz music attracted readers, but the same approach towards life itself, with *Reflection*, didn't.

Then I got some positive feedback on *Reflection*, someone said it really did help them make sense of their life. OK. Then some more no responses. Then a few more people liked it and they started telling me their own stories of *Reflection*. It touched them.

I had gotten into the design of books and had done one for Eve Christoph, *Eve's Eden*, a very mystical sort of book about channeling the energies of the goddesses, full of wonderful stories. Eve loved *Reflection*.

Eve is clearly someone who thrives in the world of ideas of mystical sorts of energies, except, I'm not like that! I'm a very logical person who tends to look at things from different points of view. It's what my Prolog books are. It's what my jazz book is. It's what *Reflection* is, it's me, very logically, looking at life from a different point of view. One that does, maybe, resonate with more mystical sorts.

Well then Eve's mother, Rosemary, read the book. She's a professional psychologist, and academic, and the owner of more books than anyone I've ever met. (And she's read them all.) She read *Reflection* and said it was the best book she'd ever read. Well she backs down a little on that now, saying maybe it's one of the best books she's read. But still, she and Eve encouraged me to update it again. OK.

I was working on the book design and showed my work to Maureen Moore, a professional book designer. Aside from excellent commentary on the layout, she read it and noted that

it was a book that would appeal to people like Eve, but not someone with an empirical mind such as hers.

I told her that she was exactly the sort of person I was trying to write it for, and asked her to explain why it didn't work for her. So she went through the whole book and marked up all the bits that were jarring to her, and that could be explained by coincidence and psycho-somatic sorts of reasons and also where my words simply did not communicate what I claimed to be trying to say.

So now, with tremendous thanks to Eve, Rosemary, and Maureen I'm embarking on another telling of the story, maybe doing a better job of what I claim I'm good at, explaining a different way of looking at things.

(Note that the writing in this latest revision is a collaboration between me at 46, me at 71, and now, me at 80 and has sections from all of us, but mostly it's still the work of my 46 year old self.)

The old title, *Reflection*, was kind of ambiguous and was trying to cover maybe too much of what I wanted to say. I knew what I wanted it to mean, but it wasn't clear readers did. The book also had, and still does have, two very different parts. In the first edition they were called "Practical" and "Theoretical," and in the second "Feelings" and "Thoughts."

Part I is full of personal stories, the real experiences that shaped my thinking about the phenomenon I called "Reflection" that I believe connects the reality we observe to something deeper inside of us. I don't suspect those stories will convince anyone else of the truth of my observations, but that is not their intent. More I hope that they inspire the reader to look at the reality of their own lives and see if they see the same sorts of connections I saw. Whether they do or not, I believe the very act of looking has value in better understanding one's life.

That first part is now called *Human Entanglement*, which draws on the imagery of quantum entanglement, where atomic particle's states are synchronously connected to each other.

Since the first part uses the Rolling Stones lyric about how one doesn't always get what one wants, but gets what one needs, the subtitle for the first section is, "Why do I need this?"

Part II ponders, in the abstract, what it might mean if the phenomenon is real and happening all the time, and how considering that puts various philosophical, psychological, and spiritual ideas in a different light.

That part is titled *The Spiritual Core*, because I do believe it explains a lot of what's happening beneath the experiences of life. It's subtitled, "What does it all mean?"

Note that it can be annoying or even dangerous to try to apply the ideas in this book to other people's lives. No one can really understand how another's reality connects to the needs of their inner self, or even if it does at all.

I often get asked if I mean to imply it's at work for X, where X is some horrid example from a life well removed from my own. The answer is that I really have no idea how the idea applies to other individual's lives, or even if it does.

That is kind of the point of this book, to inspire others to exam their own lives and to see how their observed reality might be related to their inner self. To see the two moving together, and to see how this phenomenon really can lead to a better understanding of the greater connection between us all.

Dennis C Merritt
Shelburne Falls, 2026

Reflection Hypothesis

"[The 19th C German philosopher Arthur] Schopenhauer, in his splendid essay called 'On an Apparent Intention in the Fate of the Individual,' points out that when you reach an advanced age and look back over your lifetime, it can seem to have had a consistent order and plan, as though composed by some novelist. Events that when they occurred had seemed accidental and of little moment turn out to have been indispensable factors in the composition of a consistent plot.

"And just as people whom you will have met apparently by mere chance became leading agents in the structuring of your life, so, too, will you have served unknowingly as an agent, giving meaning to the lives of others. The whole thing gears together like one big symphony, with everything unconsciously structuring everything else.

"It's a magnificent idea—an idea that appears in India in the mythic image of the Net of Indra, which is a net of gems, where at every crossing of one thread over another there is a gem reflecting all the other reflective gems. Everything arises in mutual relation to everything else"

—Joseph Campbell on Schopenhauer's idea of how everything links to everything else, from *The Power of Myth* with Bill Moyers.

I write this introductory chapter as I cross the decade boundary into my 80s. Schopenhauer is right. Looking back, it all seems to have followed a plan, from Russia's 1957 launch of the Sputnik satellite that inspired the creation of an accelerated high school electronics program, in which I was enrolled, to my sitting here today as a technical writer trying to craft logical explanations of the magic behind it all.

There were the people, just as he says. Like in 1969 when my future wife Ann wound up walking over the same bridge as I, at the precise time that would change both our lives. In the late 1980s I was trying to make it on my own outside the corporate world, and was running out of money when Peter, an old colleague I hadn't heard from for years, called out of the blue with an offer to hire me on a contract basis writing for James Martin, the most famous computer author of the day. In the mid 1990s, we were struggling to get a new small company going and had created a \$100 product and advertised it in the magazines of the day. We only got one response, from Fred, an Army Colonel, who didn't want the product but rather to hire us for some long term government work that launched the company on its way.

There are many more individuals who played key roles at key junctures of my life, critical to the transitions from one chapter to the next.

And incidents, large and small. Like I once had to do a small job at work involving an obscure technology, and later that experience was crucial in making a major career change. That small incident rippled though my entire professional life.

Finding a doctor taking new patients is difficult in Western Massachusetts, and I had a medical issue that needed attending. Pretty discouraged, I was walking around town when a dog on a leash bit me, not bad, but the human on the other end

The Spiritual Core

of the leash was, yes, the perfect doctor, who, because of that incident, took me on as a patient.

I've had so many such incidents in my life that it simply didn't make logical sense to my logical mind that these illogical events were just coincidence. And so this book.

"That's too coincidental to be a coincidence"

—Yogi Berra

The key word in the quote at the start of this chapter is "seems." Does it just "seem" like it was all part of a plan? Are they all coincidences? Or did each have a normal explanation? Could it just be my mind creating patterns where none exist? Like seeing faces in clouds?

Or is there something real happening? Something fundamental? And if so, what is it?

I claim to be looking back with the hindsight of being 80, except I've always sensed something else was going on, like in my early 20s when I spent all my time rock climbing when I should have been going to class in college, and flunked out, but some of my climbing friends were working at M.I.T. and told me they could get me a job working with them on the Apollo project and teach me how to program computers, which then became my life's work.

There's always been a part of me that watched events like those unfold in my life, and I just observed, and thought "hmmmm."

I claim not to be a woo-woo sort of person, to be a rational, extremely logical sort of person, except for a while in the mid 1970s my wife and I got involved with Ramona Garcia, a New Hampshire psychic (and another key person in the story of my life), who introduced us to psychic phenomena and different ways of looking at the world.

Did I go over to the woo-woo side? Well not really, but it had opened my mind to the idea that there could very well be more to what's happening than that of which we're aware.

I experimented with psychic functioning at the time and my conclusion was that I could never, with my experiences, convince anyone else that it was real. Those predisposed to believing in that sort of thing would accept my experiences as proof without question. Those predisposed to be skeptical would respond with "that was just a coincidence" or "it could easily be explained by..." But for me, and anyone, having had the experiences, they were real.

And therein lies the problem with the ideas in this book. Consider ESP. Some believe in it, and some don't. The problem is, there is no possible way for ESP to work, and a rational, scientific person knows that. So if someone claims to experience ESP, then there has to be some other explanation.

Except, what if there's evidence for it despite us not knowing how it could possibly be? Is the evidence to be ignored because there's no known mechanism for it?

Stephen Gould in *Ever Since Darwin* points out how science can blind itself with the story of Continental Drift. Back in the 1950s some scientists pointed out the jigsaw-like way the Americas could interlock with Europe and Africa, proposing the continents were once connected.

Those scientists were ridiculed. Then they discovered fossils and geologic features connecting the continents. Still, they were further ridiculed and considered naive crackpots and were told that all that evidence could be easily be explained as coincidence or arising for some other rational reason. Suggesting the continents had drifted was a sure way to lose a job in a geology department.

Why was that? It was because the geologists of the time "knew" that the Earth was one big solid rock. Solid from the surface to the very center. That was the accepted geophysical model. Given that, there was no way the continents could

move and anyone suggesting it was clearly ignorant. So, even though there was strong evidence suggesting the continents had drifted, there clearly had to be a different explanation since it was impossible that they had.

Then a major change happened, new knowledge of the core of the earth was discovered and it turned out it's not one big rock, but in fact plates floating on a molten core! The continents could drift! And very soon all of geology was singing the Continental Drift song.

I think it's that way with something like ESP. Although we don't know how it could happen, I believe the evidence is there that it does, and the evidence shouldn't be discounted just because our physical model of how the universe works doesn't support it.

And so it is with this book. It is a book filled with evidence for a theory about a phenomenon that connects us all. Evidence for connections for which there is no possible explanation a rational, scientific person could accept. Evidence that requires dropping normal concepts of cause and effect and even time itself, concepts which are the foundations of rational, scientific thought...

Or at least scientific thought as it was in the 1800s when we believed that our five senses and rational minds were adequate for understanding everything. When we believed that common sense made sense.

But science has changed. Time isn't what it appears to be and quantum entanglement upsets all of our common sense ideas of the way things interact.

Science now knows that nothing is, at least at the very tiny, sub-atomic level, or, at the very large, cosmological level, how it appears.

In this book I put forth the idea, the hypothesis, that there is a phenomenon happening at the human level of reality that also challenges common sense concepts of time and cause and effect. This certainly is not a new idea, but what I try to explain

Human Entanglement

is that, rather than being some abstract sort of thing, like “all is one,” or “God is everywhere,” it is a hypothesis that can be tested / observed by each of us in the reality of our individual, day-to-day lives.

Unfortunately, there doesn’t appear to be any way to scientifically create tests to prove or disprove the hypothesis. The only way to see it is through introspection, and so, all I can offer for evidence is stories from my own life, and those close to me. These, by themselves, like my experiences with ESP, probably won’t convince anyone, but my hope is that they will cause others to examine their lives and look for similar connections.

There is a side benefit to doing this. Even if the idea is completely bogus, simply by looking, as I have, one can often find a measure of peace and clarity.

The only problem then, is coming up with a word to describe the phenomenon connecting reality with self. While not perfect, I like “Reflection” because it avoids implying that either “causes” the other, but rather that both move synchronously in time.

Part 1

Human Entanglement

Human Entanglement

“Quantum entanglement is a physical phenomenon that occurs when pairs or groups of particles are generated or interact in ways such that the quantum state of each particle cannot be described independently of the others, even when the particles are separated by a large distance—instead, a quantum state must be described for the system as a whole.

“Einstein and others considered such behavior to be impossible, as it violated the local realist view of causality (Einstein referring to it as “spooky action at a distance”). Later, however, the counter-intuitive predictions of quantum mechanics were verified experimentally.”

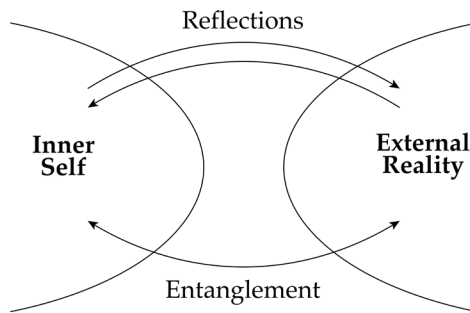
— Wikipedia

I’ve always been fascinated about how, if one learns the jargon for a specific area of knowledge, one already knows a lot about it. Like baseball, if you know what a strike is, a ball, a home run, an out, a stolen base... then you know a lot about baseball. And if you’re just learning about baseball, first you learn those terms. Because you can’t talk about baseball without them.

My problem with this book is I’m writing about something for which there isn’t a jargon, so I found it necessary to create

one. Just as baseball does, I take words that already have a meaning, and then add a new meaning.

I've already introduced one, **Reflection**. It's inspired by the Net of Indra, the Hindu concept of all reality being a net of gems where each gem reflects all the others. Reflection is intended to capture the details of how each of our inner selves can be reflected in external reality; or external reality can be reflected in our inner selves.



A key concept of this book is that those Reflections happen at the same time, that there is a synchronous connection of inner self and external reality. That is what the term **Human Entanglement** is intended to capture.

The idea is that just as elementary particles can be “entangled,” meaning they are in a very real sense just one particle connected over distance, humans and their realities can be connected in the same way, with inner self and external reality changing synchronously over time.

There is a fair amount of overlap between these two terms in this book, with Reflection being used more for individual connections between self and reality, and Human Entanglement for the larger web of us all being connected.

The next chapter introduces the remaining terms needed to talk about Reflection before getting into all of the real life examples illustrating it.

The Idea

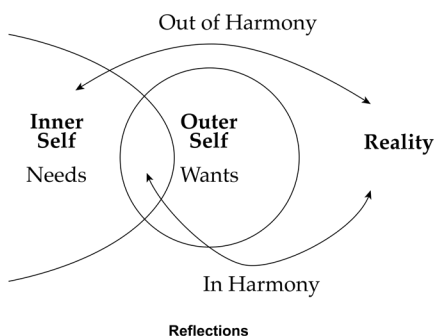
"You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometime you just might find you get what you need."

— Rolling Stones

The lyric suggests there is a difference between wants and needs. Wants are near the surface of our consciousness, resulting from well thought out plans for our lives. Needs are not so rational, emanating from an inner emotional state of which we may or may not be fully aware.

The quote implies that the reality we experience often seems to reflect those inner needs, rather than those more carefully thought out wants.

When wants and needs agree, life seems harmonious. When they are different, life seems dissonant. It might look like this, with wants and needs sometimes overlapping, sometimes not.



The Spiritual Core

This book was written because of the many times I found my reality was a reflection of something inside. I began to always ask, “why did I need that?” And, more often than not, found answers.

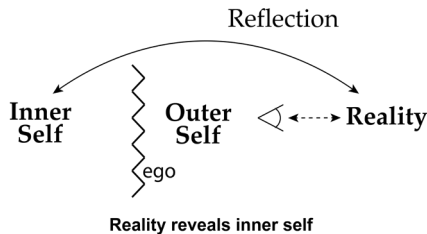
Sometimes the answers were pleasant as something worked out great for me, like the first informal bike race I entered on a lark that inspired me to get into serious bike racing, which then consumed me for the next three years.

Sometimes they were unpleasant, like the severe case of crotch rot which let me know it was time to move past bike racing.

And sometimes I just didn’t have a clue. Is that because there was no reflection? Or was it that there was, and I just couldn’t see it?

Well that’s for each of us to ponder, but for me I saw reflections so often that I concluded that it was happening all the time and I just wasn’t always able to see it. But following that thought through is for Part II of this book.

This is Part I, the beginning, looking at some of the times in my life where the reflections were clear, and which might inspire you, my reader, to discover the same.



The key is that one’s inner self (needs) are often hidden to us, probably by our egos. If Reality is a reflection of those needs, then it can be used to reveal that inner self to us.

Jargon

These are the words that are used with a specific meaning unique for this book.

Wants — desires of our conscious, rational self, of which we are very much aware.

Needs — deeper emotional stirrings of which we may or may not be aware. Unlike the normal definition of “needs,” this encompasses deeper sorts of feelings.

Inner Self — that part of us from which the needs arise (like soul, heart, subconscious).

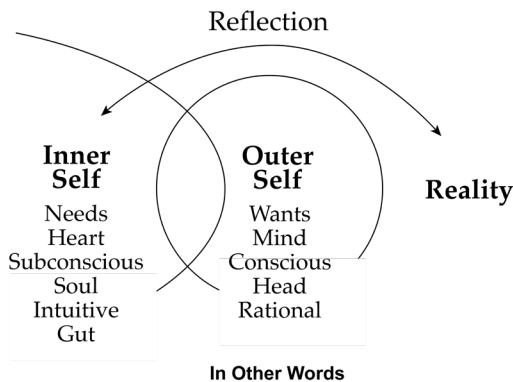
Outer Self — that part of us from which the wants arise (like consciousness, ego, rational self).

External Reality — that which is real and observable.

Reflection — the way in which external reality is a mirror on the needs of inner self. As such it can be used to better understand one’s inner self and needs.

Human Entanglement — the synchronous reflections happening all the time.

Of these terms, “wants” and “needs” are the most troublesome because of their normal meanings. Think of them as somehow encompassing all these words:



Cast of Characters

I first wrote this book in 1992, a period of great change in my life. For this third release of the book there are changes, but mostly to the beginning and ending material. The bulk of the stories used to illustrate Reflection are the same as when I wrote them back then.

During that period I was embarking on a new career, with a new wife. I was in my early 40s.

The principle characters in the book are myself, my new wife Mary, and my best friend Sid. Like me, Sid and Mary were fascinated with the correlation between their internal emotional states and the external events of their lives. Both had uncommon honesty in talking about those correlations.

Other characters appear, but they are usually represented by simply an initial, because my ideas about their inner states are just conjecture. No one really knows what others are feeling.

In each of the stories it is important to look at them from multiple points of view or levels. At the surface are the normal emotional reactions to the situations, but moving down a level, closer to the inner-self, the stories change and a different tale is told. By seeing the stories on both levels you can see the turbulence of life as we normally perceive it, and the hidden harmony below.

Illness and Injuries

“80% of all visits to a doctor’s office involve a complaint with a stress related component.”

—Health Stop video

Health issues are perfect for exploring the reflective relationship between reality and some inner need, where need in this book might refer to some inner tension that needs to be expressed. With health we can simultaneously observe the reality of some malady and our emotional state within, and ask, are they linked? Do they reflect each other? Clearly we might not want some malady, but is some need filled by it?

Simply asking the question can lead to better self-awareness. Sometimes nothing will be seen, but what if a reflection is found? Well, it’s natural to wonder what that’s about.

It really doesn’t matter. Maybe it’s part of the larger mystical sort of idea presented in this book, or maybe it’s just stress, or maybe just a coincidence. Whatever, there is benefit to beginning to look and understand the relationship.

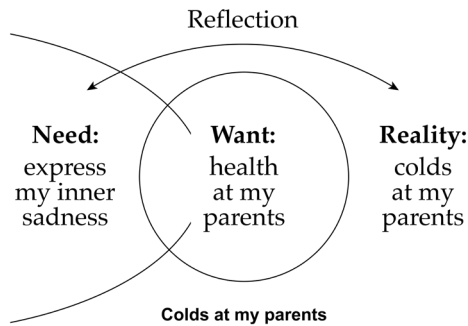
For me, it was asking these questions about the relationship between my body, my mind and my emotional state that gave me my first understandings of Reflection.

My Colds

I had started to learn a bit about the power of mind for dealing with health issues. I decided to try it out on these colds I used to get like clockwork, twice a year, when I visited my parents.

On the next visit, sure enough, cold symptoms started to hint that they were on their way. I then used my mind, I meditated, I visualized, I willed that cold not to materialize.

It worked for awhile, keeping the cold away during the visit, but when I got home, that cold came roaring through. What amazed me was that, not only couldn't I stop it any longer, I didn't want to stop it. I thoroughly enjoyed the explosive releases of the sneezes, the wailing on my nose, the watery eyes, and wallowing in bed.



The cold was clearly a strong emotional release, but of what emotion? The symptoms of a cold are not unlike those of sadness. When we cry our eyes water and our noses often run.

As I pondered this I began to become aware of a deep hidden sadness in me concerning my parents. I cannot to this day explain exactly what it was, but it was clearly there. It was related to feelings unsaid, to yearnings unfulfilled in what appeared to be a perfectly happy family.

While not being able to name it, I had become aware of it and could bring it into my consciousness, or, in other words, expand my consciousness to include this part of my previously

hidden emotional needs. The colds had been a perfect Reflection of that inner sadness. Once I could address the sadness more directly, the colds occurred less frequently.

It was a powerful learning experience for me. Neither cold remedies, nor the power of positive thinking could really combat those colds. Only by understanding the painful, suppressed part of me that was reflected in the colds did the colds begin to abate. Only through exposing the lie to myself, that everything was fine with my parents, did I become healthier.

I was in my mid-twenties at the time, at the age when one makes further steps toward self-hood, independent of parents. The understanding of the inner sad connections helped me on that journey.

My Backaches

In my 30s my career had taken me from a jeans-wearing software developer to a suit-wearing, briefcase-carrying software salesman. This wasn't the software we know today, this was software that ran on the 1980s large multi-million dollar corporate mainframe computers (that weren't as powerful as an iPhone). The software we sold was database management software, essential for running a business.

The software cost a quarter of a million dollars and the sales cycle could take six months or more, with numerous on site visits to potential customers, working the various people involved with some corporate buying decision.

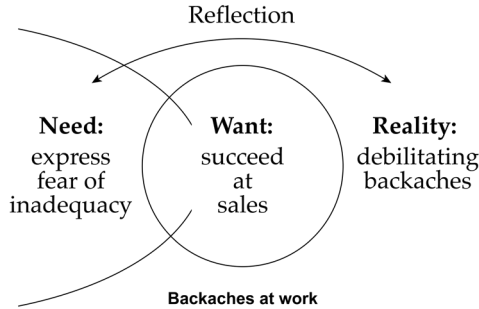
There were four other vendors actively wanting the business and competition was fierce. Success in these sales situations was key to a company being able to thrive. I was expected to bring in over a million dollars in sales.

That's when the backaches started.

Coming from a technical, not a sales, background, I felt I was in over my head. I wanted to succeed on this new career path, but inside I had doubts. The backaches were a perfect Reflection of those inner fears. As with the colds, the symptoms

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of the back aches matched the inner fear. I couldn't hold myself up, it was painful to move about and the only respite was to lay flat on my back.



At the time, I didn't really understand what was going on, and, as I recovered, I jumped back into my sales career. And then the backaches came back, and I rested and recovered, and jumped back in again. This cycle recurred throughout my entire sales career. Once I finally got out of sales, the backaches left as well. If I'd learned from them earlier I might have saved myself a lot of pain.

Just as the colds did, the backaches exposed a lie I told myself. It was the lie that I felt confident I could succeed in sales. As I've moved amongst different jobs since, twinges of pain come and go in my back, almost always when I feel I've over-extended myself. Now I know to back off in those situations.

This view of disease, that it is an indicator of some inner need, is an extremely uncomfortable one. The very nature of both my inner sadness with my parents, which couldn't be expressed, and my insecurity in my proclaimed sales ability, was such that I didn't want to admit either to myself, let alone anyone else.

Before understanding either of them I would continue the lies, both to myself and those around me. I would tell my parents how sad I was to be sick during the visit; I would tell my sales management how frustrated I was to be laid up when I could be out selling.

Understand that these weren't the deliberate, scheming sorts of lies. I thought I was telling the truth. They were lies to myself to keep the inner secrets secret because I didn't want to confront my sadness in one case or my insecurities in the other.

I don't mean to imply that everyone with colds is sad, or everyone with backaches is insecure, just that those were the Reflections I saw in my life.

I do mean to imply that if there is pain, then looking for some inner, hidden factors just may lead to increased self awareness. The factors may be similar to mine, or they may not. The chances are it might take, as it did with me, several recurring incidents before the connections become clear.

Good? Bad? Just Is.

*It is important to understand, that even though our language uses the words "disease" and "illness," which imply something wrong, the state of having a cold or backache is not, from a Reflection point of view, anything wrong. It just is, and it reflects an inner **need**. In fact, one might even consider them good. The colds gave me the emotional release of my sadness that I could not give myself; the backaches let me lie down and rest, a rest I couldn't give myself.*

*The pain of both the colds and the backaches was not the pain of the disease, but the pain of having my **wants** thwarted. I **wanted** to be healthy and happy with my parents, but the sadness came through; I **wanted** to be a successful salesman but my insecurities came through. In either case, by dropping the **want**, the pain disappears, even if the facts remain the same. When I knew I was releasing sadness, the cold felt good; when I was avoiding selling, lying on my back and reading a book felt good.*

Reflection is not a way of healing or of getting what you want; it is just a different way of looking at things. In these case, the colds and backaches were mirrors, revealing more of myself to me.

Crotch Rot & Bike Racing

If one takes a sport seriously, it's easy to have a gap between professed wants and more ambiguous inner needs, and easy to have injuries that reflect that gap. Take for example my experiences as a bicycle racer.

In this book I tend to concentrate more on the unpleasant aspects of life, because those are the cases that are harder to understand. But when wants and needs are in harmony, the experience is joyous. In bike racing I experienced both the joy and the pain.

Bike racing, for three years, fulfilled a strong need in me to prove I could be a competitive athlete. I skipped kindergarten, and because of that was always the youngest in my class, which meant I was never really competitive, athletically, with my class mates. This is something that can affect the self-worth of a growing boy. A desire to prove myself in an athletic competitive field had been lurking about in me for a while.

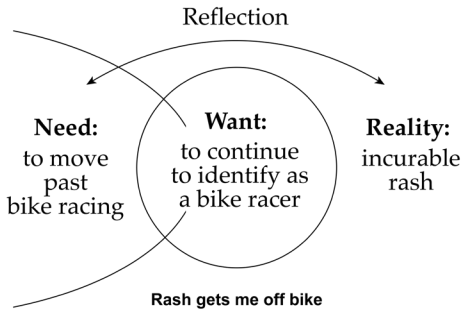
I had been rock climbing, and that had filled a need in me, proving I could do something athletic. But it wasn't head-to-head competition. I was ready for more.

My entry into bike racing, like most things, was not really planned. It just happened one day that a friend told me about an informal bike race and asked if I wanted to try it. I soon became hooked, bought a good bike, trained hard, was racing in all the local races and even won a few trophies. I had become a competitive athlete.

After the first successful years, though, things stopped going so well for me in bike racing. This was the mid 1970s and bike racing was on a tremendous upswing. The competition was getting tougher faster than I was getting better. In the third year, despite being in the best shape of my short career, I was doing worse. It was frustrating.

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Further, the long training hours were taking too much from both my family and professional lives.



My wants and ego were still strongly tied to bike racing and the new sense of identity the sport had given me. But my original need that had gotten me into bike racing had been satisfied. New needs were developing that were pushing me in a different direction, but my existing wants were not in tune with those changing needs. This was the set up for a perfect, painful Reflection.

The result? For the first time in those three years, I developed a severe rash in my groin that made it extremely painful to sit on a bicycle seat. All sorts of medical cures failed to work. The only remedy was to get off the bike and stay off for a while.

My wants and needs were out of harmony. My self-image still wanted me to race, it felt I would lose face if I quit. But I needed to quit. The rash got me out of bike racing and let me move on to the next phase of my life. It exposed my lie of wanting to continue in bike racing.

Had I been more aware of Reflection at the time, it probably all would have been obvious to me, but it wasn't. I professed frustration at being forced off of my bike, but I definitely felt a sense of relief.

This is often the clue for understanding, a feeling of relief, or release of some kind of pressure, when something which

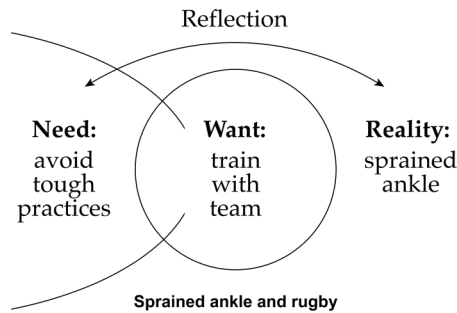
is supposedly bad happens to you. That feeling points at the inner needs being expressed.

Sprained Ankle & Rugby

An example of how perfect the Reflection of sports injuries can be came about during Mary's involvement with women's rugby. She first got involved with rugby by responding to a notice in the paper from a woman's rugby club recruiting new players. She was interested because, while not particularly athletic, she enjoys team sports and was looking for one to get her in better shape.

Unknown to Mary at the time, the team was perennial national champions. These women were tough. They trained and played hard in the fall and spring seasons, working towards the national championships in late May.

In the summer they relaxed, by just playing scrimmages at practice and having a fun tournament on Cape Cod involving seven players on a team, rather than the normal fifteen, and shorter periods.



Mary's first season with the club left her with mixed feelings. She really enjoyed the camaraderie of the team and the laid-back summer practices and sevens tournament, but, not being as athletic as most of the team, she had hated the tough spring and fall practices. Further, the seriousness of the competition

left her with few opportunities to play, as she usually sat on the bench.

As the winter break leading into her second year was ending, Mary found herself filled with inner conflict over what she liked and didn't like about rugby. She was forcing herself to run and get ready for the tough spring season, yet she dreaded it as well.

How could she escape the lie that she wanted to train hard, how could she miss the brutal spring practices, how could she maintain the camaraderie with the team, and how could she play the more laid-back summer season?

One week before the first practice she sprained her ankle. The injury was perfect. The sprain was just bad enough to limit spring training, but mild enough to be healed in time for the summer practices and games that she thoroughly enjoyed. She still enjoyed the camaraderie throughout by taking photographs of the team during the tough spring season, and, when the ankle was better, went on to play for the winning team in the summer sevens tournament.

Nobody wants a sprained ankle, but in this case it fit Mary's needs perfectly and exposed the disharmony in her attitude towards rugby. She knew it as soon as it happened. As her third season approached, she decided not to play, feeling that the team wouldn't want her if she couldn't make a full commitment, but she regretted the loss of the summer season. Again, and this time joyously, her reality reflected her inner needs better than her conscious outer-self. The club called her late in the spring to invite her to play in the summer season. And, again, her team went on to win the sevens tournament.

Whether the reality appears good as in Mary's last rugby tournament and my entry in bike racing, or bad as in Mary's sprained ankle and the rash that stopped my racing, the reality accurately reflected inner needs. The events appeared good when wants and needs were in sync; they appeared bad when wants were out of sync with needs.

Work

"The true use of speech is not so much to express our wants (needs) as to conceal them."

—Oliver Goldsmith

Work is an area of our lives where it is very easy for our wants and needs to get out of harmony, and for striving and shoulds to prevail.

***Shoulds** — the clearest indication that wants and needs are not in harmony is the use of the word "should." When we think we "should" do something it often implies that thing goes against some deeper needs.*

The desire to secure ourselves against the future and the desire to stay afloat financially are often strong enough to cause us to ignore voices within that are pushing for change.

For me, work was the next place, after health and athletics, that I began to see Reflection more clearly, especially during my thirties as I moved from a technical career path, programming computers, to a sales career path, selling expensive main-frame software.

As with all of life, reality and inner needs were not static during this period, but changed over the course of my sales career. Three stages might be the beginning, in which every-

thing flowed smoothly, the middle in which my good luck with accounts turned to bad luck, and the end when I was fired.

Luck and Sales

I had been involved technically with computer software during most of my 20's. In my early 30's I started to have the desire to have my own business, rather than work for others.

Towards this end, I left aerospace to take a job with a software vendor that sold expensive main frame software to large companies. I was hired as a programmer, working on the internals of the software, but I wanted to learn more about the customer service and sales ends of the business.

Without any planning, the opportunity to do just that simply materialized. The sales force was trying to sell to a large aerospace firm but I was the only one in the company with knowledge of the software needs in aerospace. So I was asked to help with the sale, and went onsite in St. Louis.

My efforts helped secure the sale, management was impressed, and I was given fancy sales training and the opportunity to open a branch sales office in California.

Here then was the beginning of a cycle that is typical of so many cycles in life. It just opened up for me. My inner need to grow beyond the technical aspects of computing was fulfilled through no conscious effort on my part. This is the wonderful, joyous side of Reflection.

Early in my sales career I got "lucky" and closed two major deals in record time. It looked like initial goal of learning sales morphed into reality of a sales career. My wife quit her high paying technical job since we could both live on all the money I was going to make.

After those initial successes I started to become uncomfortable in sales. I didn't seem to fit well with the other sales people. I didn't really like the career-oriented managers and vice-presidents I had to deal with in making the sales. I didn't like the pressure of having to close deals in order to pay my

mortgage. Yet my ego and desire for money kept me fighting, striving to be successful.

This is when my “luck” went bad (and the backaches started). Accounts didn’t go my way. The most telling example was a large company with many subsidiaries that mandated that each subsidiary should buy our product, which meant lots of sales territories got a sale with no work. Except the subsidiary in my territory was the only one that couldn’t afford to buy because it depended on the Mexican economy that had just collapsed.

Note — everything so far might be explained with psychology, sub-conscious, etc., except here the crash of the Mexican peso reflected my inner needs. Could it be?

These failures were, of course, the only way to resolve the situation. My inner needs were pulling me away. My outer wants were keeping me in. Failure, and failure “outside of my control” was the way to meet my needs.

The failures eventually led to being fired, providing me with release from the sales career, after teaching me everything I needed to know about sales.

Career change

Being fired leads to insecurity, but there was really no reason to worry. I was quickly rehired into a product manager position, a job that requires understanding of both the technical details of products and the needs of prospects and customers. It paid well, was not high pressure and fitted my combination of technical and sales knowledge perfectly.

The footnote to this story is I was able to prove myself in sales after I was fired, thus reflecting perfectly not only my need to get out, but my need to succeed as well. Since I was rehired into the company, they let me hold on to my accounts

for the remaining two weeks left in the quarter. I hustled those last two weeks and brought in 125 percent of my quota for the quarter. They let me hold on to another account I had worked on for awhile and I closed that in the next quarter for a half a million dollars putting me way above what would have been my sales quota. I was no longer in sales so it was safe to succeed at selling.

It is important to note that I certainly wouldn't have told the story like this when it was happening, and this is one of the reasons it is so hard to see Reflection at work in the painful parts of other people's lives. When I was being fired I protested vigorously. I was angry at being summarily let go and further angry that my sales management could not see I was just having "bad luck." I complained to all around about the unjustness of it all, and about my desire to be a salesman. In fact everything I said pointed to a view of life that is exactly opposite of Reflection, that is, the view that people can be victims of random fickle fate.

Why did I tell the story as a victim then? Because my ego was wrapped up in my desire to be a highly paid salesman. I could not admit to myself that I really wanted to get out of sales and back to a more stable salaried position.

But the lies I told were only about the painful parts of Reflection, the failures and eventual firing. For the joyous part of the sales experience, the entry into sales and the early successes, I freely admitted being in harmony with forces of destiny. It is only when the forces were moving contrary to my wants that pain occurred and lies covering up inner needs were told.

The sales story also illustrates the perfect fine-tuning of reality with inner needs. Notice that I was not simply fired from sales, I was fired from sales and rehired into a different division so that I could hold onto some sales work. I fulfilled both the inner need to get out of sales and to prove that I could succeed in sales. If I had succeeded in sales while still in sales, my ego and wants for financial success would not have let me

quit. Only the precise reality of being fired and rehired in a different capacity in the same company could meet all of my needs regarding my sales career.

They also met my financial needs, because the salary in the new position was a good one, and while not equal to that of a successful salesperson, was certainly more than I was making as an unsuccessful one. Further I got a couple of nice big commission checks on top of the full salary for closing the few deals I carried over.

As with the illnesses and injuries, the pain of being fired from sales was only painful because of my outer desires to stay in sales. Being truly honest, it was in fact much more joyous than painful to be fired, because I left the stress behind. The degree of pain in any situation is related to the degree of the disharmony between the wants and needs.

The degree of anger is also related to the same disharmony. Had I been even less in touch with my need to move on, I would have been even angrier at being fired. Had I been more in touch I might have even resigned from sales before being fired.

The Boss' Girlfriend

Mary was involved in a similar work story that also showed the perfect way reality can reflect complex, ambivalent inner needs. She had risen from the technical computing ranks into management and had always wanted the opportunity to further expand her experience to running a business. She was eventually given the opportunity in the form of the general manager job at a small software company. At first, she had made great strides in cleaning up the operation of the company, but the pressure of the job was getting to her and she developed constant headaches at work.

While able to do the work, she was not as comfortable with the full business of the company as she was with simply the technical side of creating software products. She needed to move on, but her self-image wanted her to reach these higher levels

of business management and her ego would not let her simply leave. Only a bizarre external reality reflected her need to get out of the general manager position, while still leaving her with full credit for having done an excellent job. The reality moved her back to the technical management end of the business she was most comfortable with.

It started when the owner of the small company left his wife and had an affair. His new girlfriend started participating in running the company, although she was totally unqualified. Those close to the owner, including Mary, told him it was bad business to have his girlfriend messing around in the company business, and eventually he agreed to tell her she was being phased out.

A few days later the girlfriend was trying to give direction to Mary, which Mary questioned, reminding her of the owner's plans to phase her out. It turns out the owner hadn't gotten around to telling the girlfriend she was being phased out, and she was furious. Stuck between Mary, his general manager, and his girlfriend, he made the obvious decision and relieved Mary from the general manager position giving much of the responsibility to his girlfriend.

Awful, horrible, unjust, but a perfect Reflection of Mary's inner needs. It all worked out for the best as the boss kept her in the position where she developed software products and received royalties from them, which was really the part of the business she enjoyed. She also had the sympathy of pretty much everyone in the company who told her she was the best general manager they had had.

Here we see the acausal relationship between inner needs and reality. There was nothing in Mary that caused the situation with the boss' girlfriend to unfold as it did, but yet its unfolding perfectly fit Mary's changing inner needs. Her need to leave the business side of the job and her inability to let it go were perfectly reflected by both the boss' commitment to Mary in development, because of the good work she was doing, and the need to replace her on the business side with his girlfriend.

The reality we experience is often complex and filled with conflicting messages. Those messages accurately reflect conflicting needs in the inner self as well. In this case Mary received two distinct messages—that she deserved the job and that she was fired. These reflected inner needs to be recognized as a good manager and to not have the responsibility of proving it any more.

As I did when fired, Mary felt relief, but she was also angry. The anger came from the pain, and the pain came from the reality of being fired that was in conflict with the want of keeping the job but in harmony with the need to get out. On the other hand, she reveled in the resulting recognition and support from her co-workers, which came from wants and needs in harmony seeking recognition for a job well done.

Artificial Intelligence

Besides major events in the work place, like getting hired or fired, the general state of work reflects inner needs. A lot of what we may perceive as dissatisfaction in a job is actually just not knowing what we really need. This was the case with my movement into an exciting (for me) new area of technology that gave me both joy and pain.

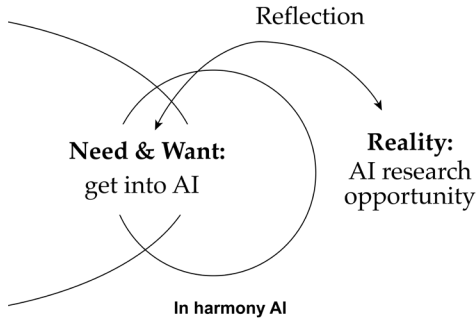
The position I took after sales gave me the space to explore new areas of technology that the company might pursue. I started to play around with the newly emerging computer field of artificial intelligence (AI). (1980s)

The shift into artificial intelligence was one of those changes that just flowed and was an example of the difference between striving and hard work. I became the local guru of AI as the result of a lot of hard work learning and experimenting with the technology, but I never had to force myself to do the work—it fascinated me and drew me in. My inner needs and conscious wants were in harmony.

My work in AI also illustrated how events can seem to be either acts of free will or destiny. On the one hand, it was

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much of my own initiative that kept me going in AI. On the other hand, various pieces of AI technology just kept opening for me as if by magic.



For example, before getting involved with AI, I was writing a computer game for my own enjoyment using conventional programming technology. Unrelated to this project, I decided for the first time to attend one lecture in a series of lectures on computer science given by a local computer club. That lecture happened to be about the AI computer language, Prolog, which was the perfect solution to the problems I was having writing my computer game.

From that meeting I wound up building my game and other AI applications and writing two books on Prolog. It was as if my destiny over those years was to become a Prolog guru. Events outside of my willful control led me in that direction, but my own initiative kept me going. So depending on my point of view, either destiny took me along a path in AI or my free will took me along a path in AI. Both are true, and when needs and wants are in harmony, then free will and destiny feel the same as we exercise our free will to pursue our destiny.

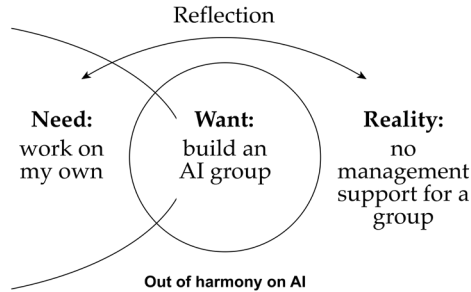
But it wasn't all roses for me with AI at my job. I still wanted money and power at work. I saw the business opportunities of AI and tried to get the company to move into AI in a big way.

Management wasn't really interested, but they were aware of the marketing value of having an "AI look." They gave me

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the space to experiment freely, trotted me out for occasional presentations, but never provided the support to do anything more serious.

I hung around the water cooler complaining to my peers about my frustration with the company's lack of vision and support.



But what was really happening? How did this acceptance of my personal efforts in AI, but rejection of my larger plans for AI reflect my inner needs? The truth is I felt very insecure in my ability to pull off a major new effort. It was much easier to just say this is what we should do, have management say no, and then feel righteously indignant, than it would have been to actually make it happen. I was scared of the responsibility. So my reality reflected an inner need where I looked good, management looked bad, I got sympathy, but I didn't have to produce on a large scale.

I got to play with the technology by myself. I built small experimental systems and gave talks on Artificial Intelligence at meetings with customers, all things I really enjoy. I avoided tight supervision, which I hate, and I avoided the responsibility of having to build and manage a significant corporate investment. All the while saving face—it wasn't my fault I wasn't building the larger group and systems we should have been building.

My reality of getting into AI (joyful) and my reality of not being given the full support to build the AI group I asked for (painful) were both perfect Reflections of my inner needs. The only difference is in one case the needs were in harmony with

my wants and in the other they weren't. The complex reality of partial fulfillment of my expressed AI wants was in fact a perfect match to my inner needs—not just close, but perfect.

Interruptions at Work

I find Reflection not only working in the large scale job situations as illustrated in the previous stories, but in small day-to-day events as well. For example, on a day when Mary kept interrupting my work after we'd started our own small company.

I was angry with her constant interruptions and asked myself, why do I need this aggravation? The answer popped into my head. I really didn't like the project I was doing, but it was something I felt I had to get done. I was striving, going against the grain. The reality of Mary's interruptions, which prevented the work from being done, was a perfect Reflection of my inner conflict. My anger, then, was really not at Mary, but at that inner conflict that I was unwilling to confront.

Similar things happen all the time at work. When something inside is not happy with the work being done, something outside gets in the way. When the work is flowing from within, nothing outside gets in the way. The external blocks are Reflections of internal blocks. Similarly, external smoothness of an endeavor is a Reflection of internal harmony.

Family

“How is an Island a part of the land (asked the kitten)?”

And the fish told the kitten how all land is one land under the sea.

The cat’s eyes were shining with the secret of it.”

—Golden MacDonald from *The Little Island*

For me, looking for Reflection in my family life meant delving into the most painful parts of my life. It is in my relationships with women, my children, and my parents that I am probably the most out of harmony with my inner self, or in other words the area of my life in which I practice the strongest self deception. Because it is the area with the least harmony, it is the area that has the deepest pain.

During my 20’s and 30’s I saw the different effects of Reflection in my work and play as described in the previous chapters, but those areas of my life were in general more harmonious than not. I did not have to look that deep to find both the joyful and painful parts of Reflection.

Family was different for me.

Second Divorce

While I had begun to see how Reflection worked in some cases, I was not willing to explore or accept that it was a working principle for my family life. Because of this, I did not see Reflection as an all pervasive phenomenon, but rather as an amazing curiosity for some parts of my life.

It was only as I went through my second divorce and saw the same repeating patterns with my second child and a step-parent role that I finally saw how even this area of my life was filled with perfect Reflections, and the pain associated with my relationships was related to a self-image that was very different from who I really was.

Looking back on my second marriage I can see Reflection throughout it, but I never wanted to acknowledge any of my inner feelings at the time. The thought of introspection about my family situation was frightening. Even in this there was perfect Reflection, for my second wife was also afraid of introspection and we both avoided as much as possible talking of the tensions within. The marriage ended with my affair with Mary and an ensuing divorce.

The divorce fight, and all its pain, reflected my complex inner needs at the time. During the marriage I projected the image of being a totally reasonable person whose mate was the cause of all the problems. I continued to project that image during the divorce.

I was positioning myself as the sane one trying to dissolve the marriage quickly and fairly, in contrast to my ex-wife who was a raving lunatic with ridiculous demands, hell bent on carrying the divorce on forever, fighting over every little detail.

But the reality of her irrational fury was a perfect Reflection of the pain I felt inside. While on the one hand Mary was just the person I needed in my life at the time, I still felt awful about breaking up the seventeen-year marriage. I felt guilty guilty guilty. Further, I felt guilty about the years of self-deception and lies during the marriage. I don't think I can ever articulate

the many layers of guilt, lies and self-deception, but it is clear to me that my ex-wife's anger and the legal hassles she was putting me through were my penance.

So, while I was in some sense the "victim" of abuse during the divorce, it filled a definite need in me and my guilt over my behavior during the marriage.

I needed abuse for another reason as well. If my ex-wife became a reasonable understanding person, then I would have been crazy to leave her. I was having serious doubts about the change in my life. By acting at her most insanely combative, she helped make me hold fast to my decision to leave. If she hadn't, it would have been very difficult for me to stay on my course of action.

I needed the divorce fight for yet another reason. I was angry at her for what I perceived as her years of disrespectful behavior towards me. I was always afraid to fight in the marriage. I was afraid to fight after the marriage. She forced me to fight. Using the lawyers and courts I could fight and win. I could feel righteous and listen to judges support my position.

So, while the outward appearances were of an unreasonable hostile wife preventing both herself and husband from rebuilding new lives at great expense to both, the situation was a perfect Reflection of at least three of my inner needs. While I would hesitate to admit I wanted it, it was clear that I needed the drawn-out pain and agony of that divorce, and that it perfectly reflected my own inner turmoil.

It is not that I created the abusive aspects of my ex-wife, nor did I create the positive aspects of Mary and our blossoming love, yet both were accurate Reflections of my inner self as it went through changes. My inner changes and life changes were in perfect harmony. The "good" and the "bad" were both parts of the exact same phenomenon, Reflections of my inner self.

One could look at the reality of my life at the time, ignore everything I said about how my life was, and get a perfect understanding of exactly what I was feeling inside—even a better understanding than I might have had myself. The

growing love, the nature of the relationship with Mary, the protracted divorce, the anger and fighting, all told the story more accurately than I ever could have.

The reality certainly told the story better than I was telling it at the time, because, as is so often the case, the words I spoke were not designed to communicate what was happening, but to protect the self-image I was trying to project. The conscious outer-self is the one that is speaking and it is not always in tune with the inner-self. Reality, on the other hand, is.

Christmas Fight

It was sometime after the divorce that I was involved in a big fight with Mary that showed me even the most painful events in life are Reflections of the inner self. The fight was on a Christmas day before a visit from my daughter.

Due to trading of visit days, my ex-wife and I had agreed to have the week-long Christmas vacation visit start on the day after Christmas, but she forgot and told my daughter it would start at 2:00 p.m. on Christmas. Mary had expectations that we would be alone for all of Christmas and wanted to keep it that way.

Given the situation, I said I wanted to see my daughter, partially because my ex-wife had also made plans and wanted to bring her over. There were tears in my daughter's voice on the phone as we tried to figure the day out—her parents were fighting over her Christmas visit, not to have her, but to not have her.

I really wanted to get her and fix the pain, so I made arrangements to pick her up. Mary, then, started feeling horribly sorry for herself, claimed I didn't love her, laid guilt trips on me for ruining Christmas for her and was basically, in my eyes, a jealous brat standing between a father and his daughter, whom he loves very much. I was so furious I punched a hole in the wall. It was the second time in my life I reached that level of fury. (The first was a similar situation when my ex-wife was interfering

with a visit between myself and my daughter. Both incidents were over interference with my daughter, again showing how deeply hidden feelings lead to the most disruptive realities.)

It is easy in this reality to blame my ex-wife for using my daughter as a weapon, and easy to blame Mary for being childishly jealous of my daughter, but if I look inside I see deep lies that reflect themselves in my discordant reality.

While I love my daughter deeply, I can feel trapped by her, or more precisely, I can be trapped by my own image of how I should behave as a father. This leads to adaptive behavior towards my daughter and denial of my own needs, thus creating internal stress, but I keep it hidden, because I am afraid to admit to myself that there is a part of me that needs to be myself apart from my children.

It was here that I finally saw for the first time the full effects of Reflection. It was here that I saw the horrible beauty of the symmetry between inner self and external reality. At that emotion-filled Christmas holiday, I was clearly a victim of my ex-wife's screw-up on dates, Mary's oppressive behavior, and my child's hurt at being caught between her parents—and yet I wasn't. The movie being played before me was the same one playing inside me.

The anger I felt at both Mary and my ex-wife and the hurt I drew from my daughter's pain were anger and hurt derived from my own inner conflict with myself and my children. I was striving to reach my kids, but external forces were standing in my way. Those external forces were just expressions of those parts within me that were afraid of my kids, that were afraid of having to be someone I'm not. The anger at my ex-wife and the anger at Mary were really angers at myself for not being true to myself with my kids.

As always, the extreme pain of the situation was due to the distance between wants and needs. I needed some separation from my daughter, but I wanted to be constantly close to her. The reality of the divorce, and Mary standing in the way of visits perfectly reflected the inner need but thwarted the want.

As we began to understand the forces within and accept them, the reality began to change. My ex-wife did not use visitation as a battleground anymore; Mary's jealousies (typical in step-parent type situations) began to subside; and I don't try so hard to be the perfect father.

It was only by searching for the inner self reflected in the actions of both my ex-wife and Mary that I was able to begin to understand the turmoil within me. Up until that point, any introspection would have stopped short at my view of myself as a caring and loving father, and self pity at the way I was treated by the selfish women in my life.

Further, by understanding my turmoil within and how the reality of Mary's behavior was a Reflection of that turmoil, it became much easier to forgive and accept her behavior.

This story was also pivotal in understanding the magical symmetries of Reflection, for while Mary's actions were part of my reality reflecting my inner self, my actions were part of her reality reflecting her inner self, as will be shown in the next chapter.

Pairs of Perspectives

The invading soldier said to the Buddhist monk blocking his way "Don't you realize I can drive my sword through your stomach?"

The monk replied, "Don't you realize I can wrap my stomach around your sword?"

—Zen story

Up to this point, all of the stories have been about how I saw Reflection in the events and circumstances of my life, or Mary in hers. Those stories illustrate the phenomenon in isolated incidents. Whether there is magic behind them, or some simpler explanation doesn't really matter. Hopefully they are useful examples of one way to look at one's life.

The implication of the stories, though, is that one's external reality is a reflection of the needs of one's inner self. What about the situation where two or more people share an external reality? That shared reality is then reflected in each's inner self, but those inner selves might be different. Further, each is, themselves, part of the external reality of the other.

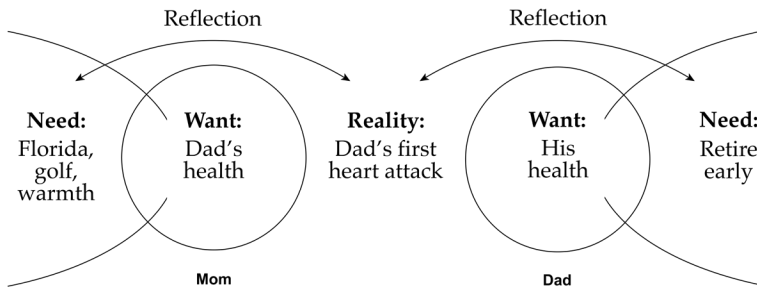
This is a mind-boggling thought, but bear with me and consider the following stories of how two or more individual's shared realities Reflected everyone's inner needs in a synchronous way.

My Father's Heart Attacks

My father had two heart attacks that were clearly part of both his and my mother's realities, reflecting each of their inner needs at the time. The second one, at 72 ended his life. At that point he had lived a full life but had gotten in a rut in retirement and was worried about finances. The good pension he retired on had been eroded over the years by inflation. He didn't think he could continue to support my mother in their retirement life style. Longer life would give him more of the same and added financial burdens. A quick death by a heart attack removed him from the picture and would leave my mother in a more maintainable financial situation.

I was with him in the hospital for the brief time before he finally died. He was at peace.

This was in sharp contrast to his first heart attack he had fifteen years earlier. I was with him in the hospital then as well. He was really agitated. He had things to do. He was afraid of leaving my mother without the support she might need. It was clear, in retrospect, that at that time he was tired of being a workaholic and wanted to give my mother some more good years with the pension he had earned from years of dedication to a single company.



He was not ready to die from his first heart attack and it served a useful purpose for both him and my mother. It got them to an earlier retirement, and time in the sun in Florida with golf,

good friends and the warmth retirement should bring, all while they still had a number of years of good health remaining.

But by the second heart attack, he had fulfilled what he wanted to do. He had given my mother the fun of retirement. He was done with the routine. But she wasn't.

For my mother, my father's death ushered in a new phase of her life. While the love for my father was there, my mother, in her early seventies was not done living her life. My father was slipping into more sedentary old age. He was holding my mother back.

She was ready when he died and did not mourn for a long. She started living her life with vigor. It was time for her to fly on her own and she was doing it. She became more active in many different clubs—golfing, painting, playing bridge, and going to the theater.

So both of my father's heart attacks reflected inner-needs for both my mother and my father. They were in harmony on both and I think they understood each other.

It is important to understand that the terms "good" and "bad" do not apply to my father's heart attacks. One of the biggest flaws with ideas that connect inner-needs with disease are the assumptions that, one, the disease is bad, and two, it is the fault of the person, and only that person, having the disease.

The first heart attack was a point and event in life that was tied to his inner self and directions as well as the inner self and directions of my mother. It was neither good nor bad. It reflected his inner needs as well as the inner-needs of those around him, specifically my mother.

Likewise, the second heart attack was his time to die. He left himself a few days to say his good byes, but I could tell, in retrospect, that in the years before his death the life had gone out of him. It was time—for him and my mother both.

The Perfect Job Offer

At work, the pairs of Reflections are harder to see because people are more guarded, hiding their inner-selves as best they can, but still, the stories are there. My first full-time writing job appeared like magic for me and it was clear I appeared like magic for my employer as well.

I had left a normal job situation to try to make it on my own. I was hoping to move from programming computers to writing about them and, while I had one academic book contract, it did not pay anywhere near enough to live on.

I was almost out of savings, and in desperation started to look for a real job. I went on an interview and found a great job, but having tasted the independent life, the thought of being constrained to regular job hours and commuting to work was repugnant to me. I really didn't want to do that again, but I had not been successful at finding sufficient work on my own. The tension and need within me was reaching a peak.

The phone rang. It was P, a guy I had worked with 15 years earlier, and whom I had briefly met about 4 years earlier. He had started his own company publishing books about computer technologies and he needed a new writer to maintain his growing list of titles. The call came like magic and filled my inner-needs perfectly. It meant a steady income and work at home on my own schedule. It also meant practice at writing which was where I saw my career going.

But my availability, skills, and situation also filled his needs exactly. For him it was finding an individual with an in-depth knowledge of computing and a desire to write, thus helping him grow his company.

Each of us was a perfect Reflection of the inner needs of the other at the time.

There was actually more magic in the story. The reason I wanted to start writing about software was that I was inspired by James Martin's computer science text books. I was amazed at how easy he made it to understand complex technical subjects.

The company P had started was a publishing company for various James Martin publications, so I got to work for the writer who had inspired me to start writing, and even wound up doing some ghost writing for him.

Mary's Interruptions

The earlier example of Mary interrupting my work is a smaller scale example of synchronous Reflections at work. As explained, it was clear that her behavior was a perfect Reflection of my own discomfort with the task I was working on. It was also clear that my anger at her was really anger at myself for being committed to finishing a task I didn't want to be involved with. But how was I and my difficulties a perfect Reflection of Mary's inner self?

Mary sometimes clings to those close to her and it makes her feel bad about herself. In the example, she was trying to get me to focus attention on her rather than my project, but she also felt bad about the interference with my work.

I got mad at her and told her to stop. It was really my anger at myself, but she needed my anger. It was created by her guilt at interfering and feelings about her clinging behavior.

The timing was perfect. Mary's need to cling and be told off coincided perfectly with my need to express my lack of ability to concentrate on the job and get angry.

Both of us were in the same movie. Both of us can be seen as the center of the movie. Our needs were entirely different, my lack of harmony with my work motivation and her lack of harmony with her clinginess. The two meshed perfectly in the reality we both shared.

This balanced view of the interaction makes perfect sense to both of us, but it would be very easy for either of us to feel as if we were victims of the other. I could easily maintain the point of view that I had work to do and my anger was solely at Mary for her irritating interruptions. Mary could easily maintain the point of view that I was inattentive to her needs and

boorishly tied to my work. Both of these views would be the ones expressed by our conscious outer-selves protecting our self-images.

As always, however, each of our realities spoke the truth more accurately than either of us could express it. The reality of her interruptions perfectly reflected my inner difficulties with the task—my protestations that I wanted to work in peace did not. The reality of her being ignored and then being snapped at perfectly reflected her inner tension over clinginess—her claims that I was rejecting her by working too hard did not.

Here we see the full impact of synchronous Reflections. The situation can be explained entirely as a Reflection of my inner-self. It can also be explained entirely as a Reflection of Mary's inner-self.

Golden Gate

Mary got the opportunity to build and manage a software group within a larger software company. Here we can see intersecting Reflections in various manager-employee situations.

Mary had won national science fair prizes for her work with the first kit personal computers (PCs) in the late 1970s, and was now, in the 1980s, to create a PC product for corporate use that would connect PCs to the large mainframe computers of the day. It was to be called Golden Gate.

The company had previously only provided software for the those large, take up a whole room, main frame computers that ran big businesses. The programming of the large mainframes and small personal computers was fundamentally different and this caused tension in the company. The programmers of one generally did not understand or respect the programmers of the other, calling each other's machines either toys or dinosaurs.

There was also a generation gap amongst the programmers. The mainframe programmers were all in their thirties and had been programming those machines for the last decade. The PC programmers were all in their twenties.

Mary, also in her twenties at the time, had a need to prove herself to the world, and the need was filled as the group grew and the product came into being. Her need to succeed was reflected in the people she hired—mostly, like herself, bright motivated young programmers willing to work hard to create a new and better product. The various people in the group Reflected different needs for Mary.

For example, J was a free spirit who defied normalcy everywhere he could. He was also a talented programmer and a major contributor to the project. Mary, who plays by the rules maybe more than she likes, needed J in the group to provide that sense of freedom. He was a symbol of how even if you don't play by the rules, you can be successful. The fact that Mary was a Reflection of J's needs seems obvious as well. Mary was a manager who would give him the space he needed and trust him to complete his portion of the project without tight supervision.

Another programmer who reflected a need in Mary was D. The microcomputer programmers in Mary's group were a minority in a company that mainly programmed large mainframe computers. They were not well respected by the seasoned mainframe programmers who had built the company and in general thought the micros were toys. Earning their respect was important for Mary. This need was filled when D, one of the best, if not the best, mainframe programmer asked to be transferred to Mary's group because of the challenge and enjoyment of programming micros.

While the project was in general a success, and the group functioned well as a whole, there were glitches as well. These too reflected inner needs in Mary, such as P, the first person she had to fire.

The personal computer product being built by the group required connections to large mainframe computers. Mary felt confident about the personal computer software, but was unsure of herself on the mainframe connection. P was hired to write that connection and, initially, Mary was happy to leave

it to him because she was afraid of that area of technology. That fear, however, ate away at her as a manager. She wasn't comfortable being responsible for an area of technology she didn't understand.

Her internal turmoil about needing to understand the mainframe connection and being afraid of it was reflected in P's having difficulty building it. Eventually Mary was forced to fire him. This reality reflected Mary's inner need by forcing her to overcome her fear of the connection software. She had to jump in, understand the technology, and remedy the problems. The thorn in her side—an area of the project she did not feel comfortable with—had been removed.

As a result of P's difficulty Mary overcame a fear of an unknown area of technology and learned she had the power to fire as well as hire. Her troubles with P were not just random bad luck, but were a perfect Reflection of her inner needs.

From the other side, we can only speculate on P's inner needs, but he was an extroverted person in a very technical job that was probably over his head. (Many of the most technically capable programmers are introverted.) The firing removed him from that technical responsibility and left him in a support role in another area of the company that required more people interaction and less technical skills. The new job seemed to be a much better fit and the firing for him was probably very similar to my mercy-killing firing from sales.

Here then are three examples of individuals whose style, success and failure perfectly reflected the inner needs of their manager. In each case it also seems clear that the manager's style and presence reflected the inner needs of the employee as well.

Cast Party

Family tensions are Reflections of the constantly changing inner-needs in the family unit. Given the heights of emotion and the possibility of more open honest communication, family

relationships are a good place to see Reflection at work from multiple points of view.

For example, battles between adolescents and their parents are a well known fact of life. It is also commonly understood as the mechanism by which the adolescent leaves the nest and the parents willingly let him or her go. The issues, behaviors, and fights that happen reflect the inner needs of those involved.

I remember one fight with my son during his later high school years. He was in a school play and it was time for the cast party, one of the more important social events. At the same time he had not been doing his school work and had been grounded. He was allowed to be in the play but not to go to the party unless he finished his work.

He didn't do the work, but on the night of the cast party he said he was going anyway. We had a confrontation and he asserted control over his own life and went despite my objections. Yet rather than being angry or hurt, I felt a sense of pride. I was glad to see him asserting himself and taking a strong position. It seemed a very positive step for him. It also made me feel more confident in his ability to make it on his own in the world. That type of independence seemed more important to his well being than completed school work.

From his point of view, I'm sure the incident had similar meaning. He was making his own decision and taking control. Only by not doing the work was he (and I) able to set up the situation for the conflict. It was one that reflected both of our inner-needs to establish changing roles in each other's lives.

Christmas Revisited

The previous chapter contained the story of my fight with Mary over a Christmas visit with my daughter. Mary's behavior, blocking the visit, reflected perfectly my own inner turmoil in regards to my children.

So what did it look like from Mary's side?

The same situation was also a perfect Reflection of Mary's inner self. From her point of view, the loving relationship she had with me went to pieces whenever my daughter visited because I withdrew my love from her and adaptively focused it on my daughter instead. This particular case was worse because the unexpected early start to the visit would ruin her expectations for a Christmas with just the two of us.

How did this painful situation reflect her inner self? Well she often demands adaptive love herself, trying to control how she is loved. This is especially true on days like Christmas or a birthday that require special treatment. But she doesn't like that behavior in herself, and seeing it in my relationship with my daughter makes her angry. The fact that this incident occurred on a Christmas that was supposed to follow her expectations of what a loving Christmas should be, heightened the anger.

The fight filled inner needs in Mary by giving her an outlet for her anger at my adaptive behavior, an anger she couldn't express when I was adaptive to her. The fact that the fight triggered my anger back at her reflected her dislike at her own demanding behavior from me. Just as Mary's anger at me reflected my dislike of my adaptive behavior, my anger at her reflected her dislike of her demanding behavior.

The fight filled another major need of Mary's by freeing her of the self-induced pressure to make our Christmas together exactly what a loving Christmas should be. "Special" occasions always create stress for her because of expectations of what they should be and fears that they may not meet those expectations. The fight was a perfect way to release that tension.

So, just as Mary's jealous behavior was a perfect Reflection of my inner conflicts, so my adaptive behavior was a perfect Reflection of hers. Further, having the fight on Christmas reflected all of the emotional turmoil associated with that "special" day.

From both our points of view, the other's behavior was extremely painful. Her jealous interfering with my daughter

hurt me deeply; my withdrawing my love from her when my daughter visited hurt her deeply.

On the surface, we could, and did, react in typical ways. I claimed I withdrew my love because of her jealous behavior; she claimed she was jealous because I withdrew my love. We could have each found friends in whom to confide about the abysmal behavior of the other and get sympathy for our plight as victims.

These types of typical reactions to such a situation are based on a desire to shift the blame for a painful situation to someone else. The more painful the situation, the stronger the desire to fix the blame elsewhere. This is because the pain is directly related to how far out-of-harmony the needs of the inner-self are with the wants of the outer-self.

The Christmas fight was extremely painful because, for each of us, it was a Reflection of deep parts of us we would rather deny. This desire to deny the inner-self is exactly the emotional barrier to understanding Reflection. It is the desire to deny that leads us to formulate versions of the story that conform to outer-self wants rather than inner-self needs.

This story also illustrates all of the logical difficulties with Reflection, for there are many aspects of it that simply do not make sense from a cause-and-effect view of the world.

My personal insights came from taking full responsibility for Mary's jealous behavior. Does this mean Mary doesn't have to take responsibility for her own behavior?

Likewise Mary's insights came from taking responsibility for my adaptive behavior. Does this mean I don't have to take responsibility?

In fact, we each have to take full responsibility for both the other's behavior as well as our own. My adaptiveness and Mary's jealousy are both Reflections of my inner self as they are of Mary's. We are, in a sense, not only fully responsible for our own behavior, but fully responsible for the other's as well. **This is the heavy burden of Reflection.**

But, because Mary's behavior is a Reflection of me, and mine a Reflection of hers; neither one of us is a victim of the other, and neither is to blame for the other's misery. **This is the wonderful freeing aspect of Reflection.**

Once the pain had subsided from the Christmas fight, and we had time to reflect, it became clear how fully we were connected in this most painful part of our relationship. The whole situation, despite its pain, had an incredible, terrible, symmetric beauty.

Peking Ravioli

I find Reflection is constantly at work during the trivial aspects of life as well as the large ones. Just as deep inner needs were reflected in the Christmas fight, so were inner needs met in the night Mary got more than her share of the Peking Ravioli.

Whenever we get Chinese food, we always order our mutual favorite appetizer, Peking Ravioli, which has six to a serving. We each eat three, and knowing how much we each like them, neither of us would ever think of even asking for some of the other person's share. These understood rules are part of a pattern that neither of would consciously break.

But one night, when we ordered Chinese food to take home, after I had had a big lunch during the day and Mary had had none, Mary got four ravioli and I got two. Ordinarily, I would eat my three whether I was hungry or not. Never would Mary take one of mine. Here's how she happened to get four that night.

I only put two on my plate to begin with, intending to eat the third later, and ate some of the other food, which I really wanted more of that night. Mary devoured her three, and then noticed the last one sitting in the box. Knowing I always took my three, she assumed they had mistakenly added a seventh ravioli, and asked if she could have that seventh ravioli. Even though I have never seen a seventh ravioli in twenty years of eating Chinese food, I accepted her comment at face value and said sure, since I wasn't that hungry anyway. When I went to

eat my third ravioli, more out of habit than desire, of course it wasn't there.

In this case, Mary felt guilty about eating my ravioli. This is because in her state, she could not imagine me not wanting mine, since she wanted hers so much. Yet, by the full force of Reflection, she did not need to feel guilty, for the only way she would have gotten my ravioli was if I needed to get rid of my ravioli, which, in fact I did.

But she had to get it through misunderstanding because, even though I didn't really want mine that night, I would have forced myself to eat it. I was not in touch with myself enough to say, "I'm not that hungry tonight, do you want one of my ravioli?" Her taking it was not only all right, it did me a favor and got me where I really needed to be.

Our dogmatic behavior pattern with the ravioli was broken that night just as we both needed it to be, but not intentionally. The whole situation with the ravioli can be understood 100 percent as perfect Reflections of each of our inner selves.

Yellow-Doored Green Corolla

I had bought a used green Toyota Corolla which was in good shape, had a good radio, but no tape player. I enjoyed music and wanted a tape player (I did mention I wrote this a while ago, didn't I?), but could not justify the expense. While not in desperate straits, there was significant financial pressure in my marriage at the time. So I had an inner conflict between my need to listen to music and my inability to justify buying a tape player. This conflict had been working its way into my soul for a few days.

The conflict was reflected in a ridiculous accident. Someone tried to pass me on the right as I was making a right turn into my driveway. They literally went up on the sidewalk to hit my car in the passenger side door. I knew in an instant they had bought me my tape player.

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It worked out great all around. I got the money from the insurance company for a new door, went to a junk yard and got a door (yellow), put it on myself and used the rest of the money for the tape player.

There were more positive effects. In spite of what it sounds like, I do not work on cars and often feel machines are at odds with me. This incident broke that mold for me. I enjoyed going to the junk yard, finding the door and installing it.

What about the other side of the story? The person who hit me was a freshman in college who had just learned he had flunked out of school. He was on his way home to tell his parents who lived less than a mile down the road. He was obviously filled with worry, and getting close to the point of confrontation with them. What better way to diffuse the situation than by throwing a car accident into the equation. I'm not sure what was going on inside him, but clearly the accident served some purpose for him related to the stress. Maybe a diversion, maybe a way to incite more punishment, but surely, somehow, his inner-needs and mine were both reflected perfectly in that crash that day.

Arithmetic of Blame

"An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all."

—Oscar Wilde

A common place we often see confusion in life is in the difficulty we have deciding who is to blame for something. In a conflict situation, for example, each person tries to place blame on the other. Yet, I know when I am in these situations I often feel inner doubts. I can see how the other person is to blame but at the same time I feel it is my fault as well. It is confusing and disturbing as first one view, then the other takes control.

Guilt and anger are constantly at war over distribution of fault, not only in individual cases but in society as well. Listen, for example, to the arguments over who is to blame for the impoverished in our society. At times it can seem it is the poor's own fault for not trying harder to better themselves, and at times it can seem as if it is society's fault for shutting off the opportunity for self help. Each view can look reasonable, but we cannot accept both, because, if it is society's fault, then the poor are not to blame, and if it is the poor's fault, then society is not to blame.

Our difficulty with trying to fix the blame is also reflected in our courts of law. A huge amount of money is directed to lawyers and courts trying to determine who is to blame for what.

Reflection implies the task is not only difficult, it is impossible. Reflection implies there is a major flaw in our arithmetic of blame.

Our normal arithmetic of blame is based on the assumption that there is a total of one hundred percent responsibility for anything, and that that one hundred percent is divided among those involved. For example, the conventional arithmetic says if you and I have an accident, blame can be proportioned in a number of ways. It can be 100 percent your fault implying I am zero percent to blame; it can be the other way around, 0-100; it can be mostly your fault but a little my fault, say 80-20; or we can both be equally to blame, 50-50.

This arithmetic makes us shy away from accepting responsibility and encourages us to prove the other person is at fault, thereby making us blameless. Any degree of responsibility we accept lets the other person off the hook to that same degree.

Among friends sometimes the argument is exactly the opposite. That is, each wants to accept responsibility and you hear "It's all my fault" "No, no, it's all my fault." Again there is an argument because both can't be at fault with the normal arithmetic of blame.

Reflection let's us replace this arithmetic with the notion that everyone is fully one hundred percent responsible—there is no partial responsibility and there is no split responsibility. Each incident is a perfect Reflection of the inner selves of all involved.

With this understanding the struggle over fixing the blame and the negative connotation of responsibility disappear. In the case of an accident between two people, innocence and guilt are no longer important if both accept full responsibility, 100-100, not 50-50, but 100-100. If both know that they are simultaneously fully responsible, then both can safely explore and quest after the inner selves that are reflected by the accident.

While 100-100 responsibility does not make common sense, it does make intuitive sense. It completely explains the ambivalent feelings during a argument. Yes, it is all my fault and, yes,

it is all the other's fault. It completely explains the difficulty we have in fixing blame in courts of law. It completely explains the difficulty we have in deciding who is to blame for the impoverished in our society.

Accepting the 100-100 arithmetic of blame changes the way we approach responsibility in a way that is both terrifying and freeing.

It is terrifying because it means opening up to the possibility that the full mess of our lives is a perfect Reflection of our inner selves, or in other words, that we are fully responsible.

It is freeing because it means whatever we are doing, however we are affecting the lives of those around us, is a perfect Reflection of their inner selves as well.

We are responsible, but we are not to blame.

The best way to begin to understand this 100-100 interconnection between two people is to find someone with whom you can be as honest as you are with yourself. It requires you being willing to take responsibility for the other's behavior, both good and bad. It requires being able to accept and listen to the other's similar acceptance of responsibility.

This complete honesty is safe because in a 100-100 relationship each is fully responsible for everything that happens, including the actions of the other, and yet neither is to blame.

Understanding this 100-100 phenomenon makes you much more tolerant of other's faults, as well as your own. Your partner needs the manifestations of your flaws as much as you do.

Health problems become more complex when viewed in this light. Not only is one person's ailment a Reflection of that person's inner self, but of the inner selves of those around as well, clearly requiring a non-cause-and-effect view of things.

For example, a loved one's ailment or problem can reflect an inner need to nurse that person. This pattern was illustrated by H, a mother who expressed feelings of inadequacy, who didn't know how to love her child. But when her child was sick H went into overdrive taking care of whatever was wrong. Since the

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child's first illness, the child has gotten sicker and sicker, thus getting the love from that H has difficulty giving otherwise. And H has got her child in the only mold that lets her feel like a loving mother. So the child's recurring ailments are a perfect Reflection of both the mother's and child's inner-needs.

Helpers and Helpees

Those who know IEFBR14 don't speak of it. Those who speak of IEFBR14 don't know.

IEFBR14 is ever without action, yet nothing is left undone.

— The Tao of IBM 360s

There is a common relationship between helpers in our society, such as doctors, therapists, and counselors of all sorts, and the people they help, call them patients, clients, or helpees in general.

Reflection implies that the helper and helpee are connected in a 100-100 relationship. The helpee fills the helper's needs just as fully as the helper fills the helpee's needs. The helper is not on a higher plane. Each reflects the inner needs of the other.

The relationship can be simple, such as someone with a leaky pipe in their house that needs fixing, and a plumber that fixes it. The homeowner needs the leak fixed, the plumber needs the money for the job. Harmony.

The following stories illustrate some of the connections I've seen between helpers and helpees.

IEFBR14

I became aware of this aspect of Reflection while working as an in-house computer consultant at an aerospace company. I worked with the central computer facility and it was my job to help the engineers, who were not as familiar with computers, use the computer to solve their engineering problems. This was at a time in my life when my own interest in computers had me on a steep learning curve.

During this period, I was struck by what seemed to be an amazing coincidence. Whenever I learned an exciting new technical trick, engineers would immediately start coming into my office with problems to which it was the answer.

For example, when I had learned of the mysteries behind IEFBR14, people would stream into my office with problems to which IEFBR14 was the answer. There I was solving problems for them that were on my own learning curve.

(IEFBR14 was an IBM mainframe program that literally did nothing, but by running it one could access all of the operating system functions available when any program was run. Many thought IEFBR14 did something, but it didn't, and understanding that led to a deeper understanding of the relationship between a running program and the underlying operating system.)

The needs of the helper and helpee can be totally different, but the shared reality is the same. In my case, as a counselor for engineers using the computer, I needed to solidify my understanding of the applicability of IEFBR14. The engineers who came to me needed to solve some engineering problem on the computer. I helped them solve their problem, they helped me further my knowledge and insight into IEFBR14.

Just as the questions requiring IEFBR14 started after I had learned about it, so, after a while, the questions came less frequently as I became more grounded in it's mysteries.

Psychiatry

The relationship between healers and patients in the field of psychiatry is almost a cliché, with it being said psychiatrists are a little nuts themselves. Why would you enter psychiatry unless you had deep questions about the workings of your own mind? And what better person to counsel others on the workings of their minds than one who has questioned his or her own? The psychiatrist and patient are working on the same problems. To be more precise, the reality they share reflects the inner needs of both.

The success or failure of a healer has to do as much with the healer's inner needs as the helpee's. If they are learning, growing, feeling good about themselves and what they are doing, they will have positive results. They will get patients that need to be helped. On the other hand, if the healers have doubts about themselves, and their techniques, then those doubts will be expressed in their reality. They will get patients that do not need to be helped. In either case, the healer's and patient's needs are perfectly reflected in each other.

Cream of Wheat vs. Eggs

My daughter, Mary, and myself were sitting in a New Hampshire diner for breakfast. We were all hungry, but, at the time, Mary was trying to lose weight. She was agonizing over the menu choices that looked good to her. She wanted both the cheese omelet and the pineapple muffin, but knew eating both would be too much.

Then my daughter piped up with what she wanted. She wanted both the Cream of Wheat and two eggs, more than she could eat.

Mary immediately started to council and advise her on the problem, explaining how that was too much and she would have to choose which she wanted more.

My daughter's problem was a perfect Reflection of the problem Mary had just worked out. By telling my daughter what to do about her breakfast dilemma, Mary was really reasserting her decisions on her own breakfast dilemma.

So Mary reflected my daughter's need to have control put on her over-ordering and my daughter reflected Mary's need to reaffirm her own decisions on not over-ordering. Both were connected, 100-100, helper and helpee.

It was a beautiful sequence of Reflections. Mary's dilemma, followed by my daughter's ordering, followed by Mary's advice, all just flowed, each perfectly reflecting the other in turn.

The connections between us all, and the beautiful harmony of life, with all its bumps and wrinkles is there for us to know and understand every day—in this case it was there one morning in a New Hampshire diner with too many good choices for breakfast.

Ludite Technology Evangelist

P was the editor-in-chief of a computer information subscription service that could best be described as evangelical. It touted the advantages of using new software technologies for running businesses. It derided stuck-in-a-rut companies that refused to update to these new productivity-enhancing technologies.

The information service claimed that those who wouldn't change were not changing because of old habits and fear of accepting new technologies. The publication educated people on the new technologies and advised them on how to adapt those technologies.

The publication was written using word processors and personal computers (late 1980s). The word processor being used was old and inefficient. Everybody in the office decided to switch to a new and better word processor that would improve all of their productivity—everybody, that is, except editor-in-chief P.

P refused to learn the new technology. He had others convert his files for him. He couldn't stand to change. In general, the state of computer software in the office was abysmal and did not take advantage of any of the new personal computer technologies designed specifically to help a small publishing company such as his.

Here was a perfect example of the helper sending out a message which was really aimed at himself. The strength of his message to learn and use new technology, and the fervor with which he promoted it, were directly proportional to the depth of his own resistance to new technology.

Three Therapists

Near the end of my marriage, as I was about to start a new life with Mary, I encountered three therapists, all illustrating the Reflections between therapist and patient. While at least two of the three were very professional, it was still not possible for them to stop their own biases from showing through in therapy.

The first therapist was Z, recommended to me by Mary. Z saw me as a horribly constrained and pained individual. She met with my ex-wife and saw her as the constraining force. Her therapy encouraged me to learn to be free. While she didn't say so directly, it was clear that I could improve my mental health by leaving the constraints of the marriage with my ex-wife.

This is a message I wanted to hear. This is the message Mary wanted me to hear. It turns out Z had gotten divorced herself in her forties, affirming her own independence. My case clearly reinforced her life decisions.

My ex-wife, not happy with that outcome, wanted to try another therapist and found J. He was an excellent counselor who provided me with many valuable insights, but a very different person from Z. Unlike the informal mess at Z's, J's home, where he met his patients, was immaculate. He explored all sides of the issues, but when pressed talked about the values

of arranged marriages, the love that comes from years of commitment, and the problems of simple infatuation.

While not directly saying so, it was clear that, to him, marriage was commitment and work and the more rewarding course in my life would come from working on the marriage. This too was a message I wanted to hear—it was the other side of my indecision. It was the message my ex-wife wanted me to hear.

After one of the sessions, I caught a glimpse of J and his wife, and in that glimpse saw a cold and formal relationship. Just as Z was reaffirming her life decisions, it seemed J was reaffirming his. I opted to listen to Z and follow my heart.

After the separation, my ex-wife and daughter were going to another therapist, E, whom I also went to a few times. We had a lot of trouble getting together. We both missed sessions. When a patient misses a session it usually indicates they didn't want to go, and I admit that, but what about when the therapist misses the sessions? She didn't want to see me either.

When we finally connected she told me outright that the problems in many relationships were entirely due to narcissistic men like myself. She is counseling my ex-wife and I'm sure that message is well received.

The three therapists I had seen all gave me insights I needed, and helped me understand myself. That is, I needed to understand the three aspects of relationships at the time of the breakup of the marriage—love which comes from hard work and dedication, love which comes from the heart, and the grief caused by narcissistic behavior.

It should be clear at this point that the inner self is not always a simple place. It is just as complex as the external reality we live in. Oftentimes our reality will include conflicting messages, but these conflicting messages are themselves a perfect Reflection of what is happening inside. In this case three different therapists were all part of my reality, each reflecting different aspects of my inner conflicts, as I was part of theirs, presenting issues that they were dealing with themselves.

Father Bruce Ritter

Father Bruce Ritter was the founder of Covenant House, a shelter for kids who live on the streets. The kids he helped were the down-and-out of our society, the ones with no family, often selling themselves on the streets for survival. His program grew tremendously with many shelters in major cities across the country. Eventually he ran into trouble. There were allegations of sexual contact made by a few of the kids in his care.

Father Bruce Ritter's difficulties expose our unrealistic expectations of figures in public light. We like to project the myth that Father Ritter was a pure and holy man, who out of the goodness of his heart chose to devote his life to helping the unfortunate kids whom fate had landed as victims on the streets.

This myth does not make sense. Father Ritter is drawn to the environment he works in for a reason, just as we all are drawn to our vocations. I always had a love for logic and a desire to help other people. It is no coincidence my career is built around helping people use computers. It is no coincidence Father Ritter works with troubled street kids.

Father Ritter understands this. The reason his book, *Sometimes God Has a Kid's Face*, is so powerful, is that this truth comes through. He recognizes that he gets as much from the kids as they get from him. They trigger a deep nerve within him that allows him to articulate their stories so well.

The depth of his feelings come out in a passage in the book describing his interaction with a pimp trying to give money to Covenant House. Initially, he is very angry but then says:

"I know a lot about mixed motives. I'm the world's expert on mixed motives—my own—trying to disentangle the good from the evil, to unravel the knotted skein of my better self...the weeds growing with the wheat..."

and suddenly I am overwhelmed by my kinship with this man, for we are both sinners hoping in the mercy of God and His forgiveness."

—Father Bruce Ritter in *Sometime God has a Kid's Face*.

This is not a man on a pedestal, but rather a man who exemplifies the highest, humblest Christian ideals, a man fully aware of his own sin, made compassionate by it, and willing to devote his life to helping others in need. He is perfect for his ministry—he grows, his kids grow, and we are all the richer for it. His honesty and compassion set him apart.

Were the charges against him true? Whether they were or not, I suspect they hit sensitive nerves within him, but it is precisely that sensitivity that makes him so good at what he does, and why he has dedicated his life to his work. He is fighting the demons within himself just as I was wrestling to understand IEFBR14.

His problems with Covenant House really only came about as his organization grew big enough to be in the public light. There, we refuse to accept that Bruce Ritter's greatness and weakness were inseparable—we want to idolize the greatness and deny the weakness. But once we destroy him for his weakness, we also destroy his greatness.

This Book

It was over thirty years ago that I first wrote this book. But it's just in recent years events started to push me to make this rewrite.

It is simply amazing the number of small Reflections that just keep popping up these days. It's like when all those people showed up in my office at work needing help with IEFBR14.

Just the other day I wanted to talk to Paul about something, and it was the day to take trash to the dump, but I kept stalling going to the dump and when I finally went that was exactly when Paul was there.

The Spiritual Core

A member of a community I used to live in had died and they were doing something for her on the Internet. I have 30,000 pictures on my computer and my screen saver shows random ones to me, and that morning as I first looked at my computer, a wonderful portrait I'd taken of her popped up, which I then found and contributed. (For the mathematically inclined, there was a 1 in 30,000 chance that would happen.)

I needed to find someone to help shovel snow this winter, but those people are hard to find, all booked up, but then as I was outside talking to Heather across the street, Will showed up, and he does theirs and although his schedule was full, didn't mind doing mine as it was easy and across the street from where he'd be anyway.

I really wanted some time to talk to Mo about my book and she has these once a month meetings where people share what they've been working on, but there was a big snowstorm so nobody came except I live just a block away and trudged through a foot or more of snow and was the only one there and had some wonderful conversations about how to proceed. Much of the new early writing is a result of those conversations as well as touch ups and minor reworks to the rest of the stories.

I recently got Aldous Huxley's book, *The Perennial Philosophy* which is a book about the spiritual core, and it's very dense and I only read a little at a time, but it seems the readings often line up with the parts of the book I'm working on.

These things just keep happening way more than usual these days, and I shake my head and think, OK, I'm working on the book.

Larger Webs

"It was as if everybody who wanted to get off, got off."

—Survivor of Cincinnati plane crash on mood inside the plane as it filled with smoke.

It is when we start to look at larger webs of connections that the Reflection hypothesis really begins to assault common sense. Yet this idea that everything is connected is at the core of various schools of religious, philosophic and scientific thought.

Scientific? Yes—some are pondering that quantum entanglement of the particles of our very beings ties us all together. I don't know about that, but I do know we can, from a personal perspective, look at the larger webs around us and ask how we might be connected to them.

While this implication of us all being connected is hard to accept, logically, I find the idea so compelling on an individual and pair basis that I find it hard to believe that the 100-100 Reflections of two people do not become 100-100-100-100-100... Reflections for situations involving many people.

The problem with trying to see if this is true or not, is we can only really look within ourselves and see if it makes sense for us, and maybe some close to us who we know well. Each person will have their own inner needs, and often those will be concealed so it's pretty much impossible to tie together other individuals.

Whether or not we know other's inner selves, we can still always look for our own connections to all about us. For example, the emergence of computer programming as a career fit perfectly my skills and needs as I entered the job market; the collapse of the Mexican economy reflected my need to fail in sales; and the San Francisco earthquake saved me from teaching a seminar series I needed to avoid.

Here are some webs of connections radiating out from some of my shared realities.

Ripples from My Father's Heart Attacks

The state of health of one individual is a Reflection of the inner needs of all of those around. We have already seen how my father's first heart attack met both his and my mother's needs.

It was also a major point in my own life. I was just coming of age as a young man, and my father, in the hospital, scared, told me to make sure I took care of my mom if he died.

Suddenly I was shown the vulnerability of my father and the responsibilities I would have towards my family. For me it was almost like a ceremony of becoming an adult. It came at a time in my life when I needed that type of message.

My father's first heart attack also fit the needs of his company. At the time the company was moving its offices from New York City to New Jersey. My father, who commuted from Long Island (opposite New York from New Jersey) would have to relocate for his last years of work. The company had the problem of relocating a senior executive who would retire in a few years anyway. The heart attack triggering early retirement resolved the relocation problem for the company.

In this case my father's heart attack met his need to slow down, my mother's need to retire in the sun and fun, my need to understand the changing family dynamics, and my father's company's need to deal with an aging executive and relocation.

Ripples from My Divorce

Looking at my own divorce, I can see how it reflects the needs of others involved as well. It stems from mine and my ex-wife's turmoil, but also fills a need for those that touched us as well.

Mary views much of her childhood as a battle with a powerful mother. That same movie is played out with my ex-wife and myself. Mary has a need to fight with my ex-wife that relates to her issues, and through me she gets that opportunity.

Children in divorce are always hard to understand, but my daughter kept destroying her counselor's model of the world by saying she was glad her father left because now she gets more time with him. This is a direct expression of one of her needs that were met by the separation. She got to see her father outside of the tense atmosphere of the house.

The affects of the marriage on friends also fit needs. At least two married couples that were friends found the break-up of my marriage threatening. Clearly it was playing out hidden movies of their own marriage that they were avoiding dealing with. Being close to our break-up put their own doubts and issues on the table before them.

My divorce went to court, unlike most divorces. The long battle with my ex-wife clearly filled my needs but it was also perfect for J, the new (and least expensive) person in the law firm I went to. It was her first opportunity to actually go to court and argue a case before a judge. Our inability to settle fit her needs perfectly.

The long drawn out divorce then was a perfect Reflection of my inner needs and presumably my ex-wife's as well, and just as perfect a Reflection of inner needs of all of those around us. The degree changes from person to person and the types of needs are different, but we were all interconnected.

Teachers and Their Classes

A fifth grade teacher, H, is proud of the way she teaches and her ability to establish rapport with even the most difficult kids. She is tough with her kids, not at all mushy, and commands their respect. By the end of the year, they are working hard for her.

Her style is different from the teacher in the next classroom. That teacher lavishes praise on the kids with individual comments such as “You look wonderful today.” The kids light up with this directed attention and praise, and H sometimes wonders if the other teacher’s approach might not be better than her tougher approach.

Yet H has noticed that the other teacher’s kids are generally emotionally weaker than her kids, and that they need constant attention. She has often looked at the kids in the other teacher’s class and been glad she didn’t have them. The other teacher has looked at some of the tough kids in H’s class and been glad she didn’t have H’s kids.

Just as the kids need the teachers they get, so too the teachers need the kids they get. H is teaching her kids to be strong because she wants to be strong. She needs to teach that lesson to others to learn it herself. Her kids reaffirm the lessons she needs to learn herself. She needs the kids as much as they need her.

Likewise, we can only assume the other teacher needs to play a more nurturing role with her kids and that they need it that way as well.

Plane Crashes

The events that have always fascinated me are plane crashes. All aboard a plane that goes down have, in a sense, if Reflection really is universally true, agreed it is time to crash.

Stories abound of people who should have been on a plane that crashed but for some bizarre reason were not due to last minute changes. Similarly, there are people on the plane who

had not originally planned to be. It's like there's this shifting about as the passenger list settles in.

Some direct evidence of this phenomena comes from an incident in Cincinnati a few years ago. Shortly after takeoff, a plane developed problems. It returned to the airport and burst into flames on landing. The plane was filled with smoke. All but 17 of the passengers escaped from the plane. Those 17 died of smoke inhalation.

The comment of one of the survivors gave an indication of Reflection. He said it was very strange on the plane as they were escaping. It was as if, he said, everybody who wanted to get off, got off.

I have had a more direct experience with plane problems myself. I was out of harmony with the work I was doing and had signed up to teach a series of seminars that would require lots of travel. The seminars would be lucrative for me, and easy, but they were not what I wanted to be doing—yet I couldn't let go of the money and the opportunity.

I had constant visions of plane crashes, I thought I was going to die flying to one of my seminars. I have flown a lot in my life, but for the first time I was really scared of flying.

Those fears were expressed through a friend who was involved in not one but three near airplane disasters over a short period of time. It seemed he was losing control of his life and you could see the near airplane disasters as a message expressing that turmoil. It was as if he was flirting with death.

The second of his incidents was a particularly scary missed landing in San Francisco. The third happened a month after that in a similar experience in Boston. After the Boston plane was safely down, he was telling a stewardess about his experience in San Francisco. It turns out she was on that same flight. She decided to quit her job as a stewardess.

So there were at least two people on those planes whose inner-selves needed the reality of near plane disasters. A stewardess wanting to leave the profession, and my friend out of

The Spiritual Core

control with his life. Two people who both needed the message of near plane disasters. It seems no coincidence that both were on both planes. It seems no coincidence that I was this close to these stories based on my own fear.

Part 2

The Spiritual Core

The Spiritual Core

“Philosophia Perennis—the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality...”

—Aldous Huxley’s introduction in his 1944 book, *The Perennial Philosophy*

Huxley’s book, *The Perennial Philosophy*, is about the spiritual core. It is what the term “perennial philosophy” means. (I had to look it up.) Huxley mentions the term was first coined by Leibniz in the 1600s, but goes back well before that time. The term refers to the idea that there is a shared truth underlying all religious, philosophic and psychological doctrines. It’s not a new idea.

Huxley’s book is a thorough, and very dense, exploration of the idea.

This book is yet another look at that same concept, but with a much simpler framework, and vocabulary. That is that we can view human life with three components: an inner self (needs/heart), an outer self (wants/mind), and observable reality. Others, including Huxley, have different words, different concepts, more or less complex models, but for this book those three components, and the relationships between them, which were explored in Part I, can be used to view larger ideas of life in a different light.

A Logical Look at the Illogical

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."

— Albert Einstein

I think there are actually three, but Einstein had already thrown out the middle, or second one, when he wrote that.

The situation is that there are times when something seemingly miraculous happens, times when reality seems to perfectly meet inner needs in an almost magical way.

However most of the time, external reality seems like a sequence of random events, having nothing to do with individual goals and aspirations. These more common times affirm the common sense view that there is no deep connection between external reality and inner self.

The question, then, is, what kind of model of life can be used to explain both the occasional, seemingly, magical connections and the more common seemingly randomness of life?

The possibilities fall into three broad categories.

1– The Universe is mechanistic, events are random, but sometimes coincidences occur that make it appear as if there are connections where, in fact, none exist. (The human brain is an excellent pattern matcher, finding patterns everywhere, even where none exist -- this is how superstitions start.)

2– There is a larger force that sometimes intervenes in our lives, watching over us if you will, but mostly leaves us to our own devices in a mechanistic Universe.

The Spiritual Core

3— Everything is connected to a deeper inner self, but most of the time, due to the influence of our outer self (ego/ wants/ mind), we fail to see the connections, making them appear random and mechanistic.

Consider the second view first. While probably the most common view, it is simply not intellectually satisfying. While it explains the data perfectly, it just doesn't make sense that there is some force, God? the Universe? that only periodically meets our needs and other times leaves us alone.

It is for this reason that many thinking people have opted for variations on the first view. That view is logically consistent and intellectually satisfying. Those holding this view might be atheists, or might believe in a higher force that started the whole thing rolling eons ago but is not involved in our day-to-day affairs.

While intellectually satisfying, the view that there is a logical explanation for everything has the downside of somehow taking the fun out of the more magical moments in life.

What about the third view? Because it postulates a uniform mechanism that explains all situations, it is as intellectually satisfying as the first. It is also more emotionally satisfying than the first view because it recognizes that those magic moments are, in fact, magical.

These remaining two views can be summarized as:

1— It's all mechanistic, but just seems magic sometimes.

3— It's all magic, but just seems mechanistic sometimes.

There are two serious drawbacks to the third view, one logical and the other emotional.

The logical problem is the third view defies common cause-and-effect logic. (That's why it's called magic.) If my external reality meets my inner needs, and your external reality meets yours, and I'm part of your reality and you're part of mine... well you see the problem. The third view can only be seriously

Human Entanglement

considered if one is willing to question the very nature of time and cause-and-effect reasoning (as current science does).

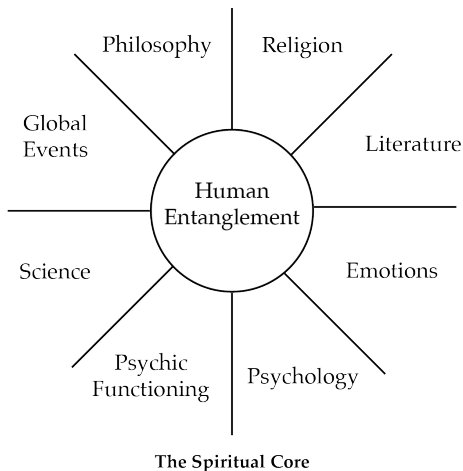
Even more challenging than the logical problem, is the emotional problem. Just as the first view is no fun because it takes the magic out of the times when things just work out perfectly, the third view can be devastating because it implies there are deep connections at work when things all go to pieces. It means our realities reveal more about us than we might like. The third view is not for the feint-hearted.

For me, I've opted for the third view simply because there have been too many times, some documented in Part I, where it's seemed magical. No one time would have convinced me, but the continuing experiences have.

This isn't to say I always see Reflections, and, in fact, most times I don't. But I see them so often that it makes more sense to me that Human Entanglement is real and that I'm just not always seeing it. This view has the pleasant side effect of providing more peace in my life.

For you, my reader, it's not really necessary to actually adopt the third view. But for the sake of reading on just assume it's true and see how so many of our concepts about life look different from that point of view.

From here it's a journey of the mind, and a fun one. Enjoy.



Religion

Calvin: "This whole Santa Clause thing just doesn't make any sense. Why all the secrecy? Why all the mystery? If the guy exists, why doesn't he ever show himself and prove it? And if he doesn't exist, what's the meaning of all this?"

Hobbes: "I dunno... isn't this a religious holiday?"

Calvin: "Yeah, but actually, I've got the same questions about God."

**—From Bill Watterson's Calvin and Hobbes collection,
*Yukon Ho!***

I'm neither a theologian nor an academic, but do have a passing knowledge of a number of spiritual traditions and am intrigued with how the idea of Human Entanglement might be used to view them in a different, maybe even clearer, light.

For any religion, there are traditions and texts and dogma and buildings and rituals and all sorts of things. The question is, are they based on something real, something spiritual? Or are religions just human constructs useful for social organization? Built on superstitions?

The thought in this section of the book is that there is something real happening, but that it defies common sense. People experience it from time to time, both in a positive, joyous, sort of way, where something good happens just when needed, or

in a negative, guilty, way, where something bad happens that we know is connected to something inside. What to make of those experiences?

I suspect the whole history of religion has to do with humans being aware of the sorts of experiences I described in Part I, and then trying to come up with an explanation of what it was all about. The experiences can easily make one feel as if someone is watching over you, which naturally leads to ideas of God or some god-like force.

This book, of course, is me coming up with my own ideas of what it's all about. I've tried to focus on just the phenomenon of those experiences, calling it Reflection on an individual basis and Human Entanglement in the whole. I've enjoyed the mental exercise of seeing how the idea correlates with spiritual teachings and seeing how it might let us strip away the more human constructs in religion (which do have value as social constructs) and look at just the underlying core phenomenon.

Animism

Animism is a belief system that sees no distinction between the physical and spiritual world. It isn't a formal set of beliefs, but rather what anthropologists have observed as a common world view among indigenous peoples. These weren't any kind of logically produced beliefs, but simply what must have appeared as intuitively obvious to those in the early days of human societies.

That world view is similar to what Reflection implies, that the inner self and external reality are synchronously connected. I suspect the "primitive" world view of Animism was then the basis of more formal religions developed by peoples as they formed more complex societies.

It's interesting that there are two different philosophical takes on Animism. One is that it is pure superstition that people with more rational minds have put behind them. The other is that it is an awareness of the pure spiritual connection that is

gradually being lost as our rational and scientific views dominate our current thinking.

Reflection implies the latter and provides a way for each of us to explore that connection in our own lives, and then maybe decide which view makes more sense.

Animism goes further than believing it's just people's souls that connect the physical and spiritual worlds. It also assumes all creatures, and, all things, are connected in the same way. This might appear to go beyond what's been suggested so far in this book, but the next chapter has a section on gambling that talks about our connection with the inanimate.

Religion and Psychology

The vocabularies of religion and psychology can be seen as describing Reflection at different levels. Religion gives us the words to talk about God and the larger oneness of everything implied by Human Entanglement, but religion is semantically weak for digging into the grimy ways we relate to our day-to-day realities.

Psychology, on the other hand, gives us the words to talk about the day-to-day effects of Reflection, down to details of slips of the tongue and nervous habits, but is semantically weak when dealing with the full 100-100 reality of Entanglement.

Some religions, such as Hinduism, do have terms for dealing with the details of Reflection, and some psychologists, such as Jung, have wrestled with the larger web of acausal connections between us all, calling it Synchronicity.

Both religion and psychology have similar goals, which in terms of Reflection can be described as trying to bring the inner and outer selves more in harmony.

In religion, the inner self is God working through us, and the seekers of the spiritual path try to listen to and understand God's will. They reach a point of understanding that their works are not their own, but God's.

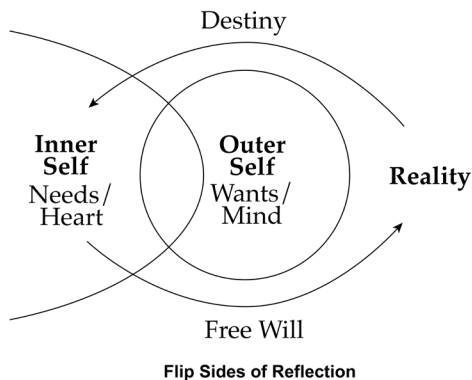
In psychology the inner self is the subconscious mind, which psychotherapy attempts to bring into the conscious mind, the outer self. Therapy also aims to help people find what they really want, or need in life, and help them move in a direction that will satisfy those needs.

Reflection does not run counter to other ways of searching for truth. Whether you look for truth in fundamental religion, psychology or new age philosophy, Reflection is simply a tool for gaining clearer insights. Many of the ideas of Reflection overlap perfectly with ideas from these other disciplines, only the means of expression are different. To be sure there are some real differences, such as with the strong cause-and-effect component of psychology, but there are far more similarities.

The following sections point out some of the more obvious connections between Reflection and religion.

Free Will vs. Destiny

This classic debate comes from only seeing one side of Reflection at a time. One is either aware of reality reflecting inner self, or inner self reflecting reality. The debate disappears when you realize both are happening at the same time, that neither is causing the other, and both are moving synchronously together.



God

If one chooses to believe in God, then we can think of Reflection as the manifestation of God, it is how we know God exists. This provides a single idea of God—God of the Jews, God of the Christians, and Allah of Islam.

For all the reasons Reflection is difficult to come to grips with, this idea of God is difficult to come to grips with. Further, the difficulties with understanding God this way are the same as the difficulties most people have with more conventional ideas of God.

This God is difficult to approach because this God is about our inner-most selves and our connection to all around us. Because this is a place we would rather avoid, the spiritual quest is difficult and the way is cloudy. Further, because our leaders on the spiritual path are all ordinary people like ourselves, with common sense to reconcile and self images to protect, they obscure the path as often as they illuminate it.

This God is both fearsome and benevolent, providing not what we want, but filling our innermost needs. The filling of needs makes God seem perfectly benevolent when our needs are in harmony with our wants, but when our wants are out of harmony with our needs then this is a terrible, fearsome God—perfectly aware of the lies we tell ourselves and revealing them to all through our reality. This God is a God we can all know and understand, each on a personal level, but because of the disharmony between our wants and needs it is a God we would rather try to deny.

This idea of God immediately answers the major question most people raise when questioning the existence of God.

Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

The question is actually easy to answer, the problem is the answer isn't pleasant. God perfectly meets our inner needs—whether we call that good or bad is a human activity, not a Godly one. The main point of most of the stories in this book is to show that bad things happening to good people is an illusion—a lie we like to tell ourselves.

We cannot really say bad things happen to good people because we cannot really say what is good and what is bad for someone other than our self. We cannot judge whether someone's reality is good or bad, and we cannot judge whether a person is good or bad. Two examples showing this semantic difficulty are the stories of my being fired from my sales job and the Christmas fight I had with Mary.

In the first case an observer of my work situation might think that I was a good person at work who suffered the bad fate of being fired. To hear me grumble and complain at the time of firing would reinforce that view, but in that case, while maybe I was good at work, the firing was not bad for me—it pushed me along the career path I needed to follow.

In the second case an observer watching us at home might see a good father blocked from his daughter by a bad fight. This example is the opposite of the previous one. Here the reality of the fight was bad, but I was not the good father I appeared to be.

In both cases, the ego of my outer-self certainly tried to project the image of bad things happening to a good person, but looking deeper inside revealed the inner harmony of both situations.

When we look at others it might certainly seem like bad things happen to good people, because that is what they would like us to believe, and really, who are we to judge, but when we look honestly within our own lives I don't believe that is the conclusion we will reach.

Even so, for those particularly painful aspects of our own lives, we will continue to create the illusion for others that a

bad thing has happened to a good person. On the other hand, we will freely acknowledge God working for the parts of our lives where our wants are in harmony with our needs.

The problem with evil is not God's problem, but our own. It is a problem with our unwillingness to really accept responsibility for our lives as they exist.

OK, I know that many ask about some distant unimaginable horror and how it could possibly be a Reflection of some inner need. (Part of the problem is my use of the word "need." It really is more just something inside that reflects what's outside.) When we hear news stories of horrors around the world, it might certainly seem like bad things happen to good people.

There are a couple of explanations as to why it might appear that way. One is that the people involved want us to believe they were good people that a bad thing happened to. Another is we are unable to imagine any sort of inner state that would lead to such a horror. And there is a third possibility, and that is that Reflection simply doesn't work in everyone's life, or even anyone's. The idea is bogus.

I really have no idea about what is happening with the Entanglement of people in situations we can't understand, but I do have two stories hinting that maybe Reflection does apply.

One was a talk I gave to a small group of people on Reflection. Most of the audience wasn't really interested, but afterwards a woman came up to me and thanked me profusely. She told of her son dying last year and how nobody was able to understand that it wasn't a bad thing for her. Everyone wanted to console her in her grief, but she explained it wasn't like that for her.

This is one of the situations where it's hard for most people to imagine the loss of a child being somehow in harmony with someone's life, but for her it clearly was and those consoling her caused more discomfort rather than less.

The other was a friend who kept asking me if Reflection applied to the starving children in Africa. It turns out I had

given a copy of the book to a another friend in Mozambique, Africa, one of the three poorest countries in the world. I asked him if he thought it applied there. He said, oh yes, it does.

Christian Concepts

I was raised with some relatively boring Christian teachings, that is, I went to a Protestant Sunday school each week, because my parents thought I should, but it was nothing more than that. As an adult, I was never a church goer but did have some friends who were ministers with whom I enjoyed discussing theology.

Many concepts in the Christian tradition can be interpreted through Reflection.

Surrender to God's will—A fundamental principle is to surrender yourself to God's will, to let God work through you, and to have faith that God will take care of you. In terms of Reflection, these are all ways of saying we should understand and listen to the inner self, to quiet the ego of the outer self and bring it in harmony with the inner self. The details of exactly how to do this vary but the core idea is the same.

Prayer—The introspection of asking yourself why, is prayer. When you pray for what your inner needs are, you recognize your inner needs, you are more true to yourself, blockages are removed, and your prayers are answered. When you pray for what your outer self wants, and those wants are out of harmony with inner-self needs, then those prayers go unanswered.

We often hear stories of the miracles brought about through prayer or other meditative healing techniques, but the miracle is not where we think it is. Prayers for a different reality, such as the healing of an incurable disease, are sometimes answered, but they are answered because the inner needs of those involved have changed so that the disease is no longer necessary.

The Spiritual Core

The miracle of a cure is not the reversal of the physical trend of the disease, but the reversal of the inner needs reflected in the disease. Our inner needs are very difficult to get at, and in the case of disease very difficult to admit. Our prayers in these cases are much more driven from our wants to see the disease be healed and a denial of the inner needs filled by the disease. This is why these prayers go unanswered more often than not.

As always with Reflection, cause-and-effect logic confuses thinking about the nature of the power of prayer. We can look at successful prayer as having caused the change, or, we can look at a heart-felt desire to pray as an intuitive understanding that we sense a change about to happen. The relationship between the prayer and the outcome is not as it appears.

Sin—Sin is often described as coming from semantic roots meaning out of harmony. Righteous behavior comes when the inner self is in harmony with God's will. Acts of evil, or sin, come from the wants of the outer self, out of harmony with the inner self. Sin and evil are related to being in or out of harmony, not to any absolute standard of right and wrong. Evil comes when the self-image denies the source within. As humans, it appears impossible for us to fully merge the inner and outer selves—so, each of us is a sinner.

Satan—The story of Satan, the fallen angel, has wonderful symbolism of being out of harmony with the inner truth of Reflection. All of the other angels realized their power and existence were derived from the grace of God working through them. Satan believed he alone was responsible for his deeds, and thus fell from grace. He continues to tempt us into thinking our self-image is accurate and in control. The good things are our own doing and the bad things are out of our control. He takes us away from the search for the inner source.

The cartoon angel and the devil each whispering in an ear? The needs and wants of Reflection.

Confession—Confession is one way to combat the evil, it allows us to circumvent the outer self by revealing our inner most desires and needs in a private, safe environment. We become more in touch with the force within us. It cleanses us and makes us feel good.

Forgiveness—Forgiveness comes from the fact that each of us is the center for his or her own reality. The evil we do only really affects ourselves. We do not need to feel guilty about the effects on other people because their reality is a Reflection of God working through them as well. So we are forgiven in that the God within us is really responsible for everyone's reality, whether we appear to have messed it up or not.

Trials—Christianity speaks of God's trials for us and how to use those trials to learn to lead a life closer to God. This is, of course, identical to the main message of this book, which is to look at the trials in the reality of your life and learn of the inner needs they reflect.

Grace—Finally, grace is the power of God looking after us. If one truly lets go and gives life over to God, then one will lead a more harmonious life by following inner needs without the interference of the wants of the outer self.

Old Testament

If you understand God as the force behind Reflection, then it is much easier to find God in the Bible and distinguish between the inspired texts and those texts with a more human agenda. The beginnings of the Old Testament express a view of God very similar to a concept of God as understood by Reflection.

The story of the Garden of Eden tells of the split between self-image wants and inner needs. As Adam and Eve became conscious of their inner needs they were ashamed of their

nakedness. This is the same sense of shame any of us must feel today if we fully accept Reflection—that our reality perfectly reflects our inner needs. Adam and Eve tried to cover their nakedness, projecting a self-image different from their inner needs, just as we all cover ourselves today.

The story of Joseph and the robe illustrates the difficulty with defining good and bad. He was sold into slavery to the Egyptians by his brothers and basically had a tough time of it, but when he was eventually reunited with his brothers he forgave them because he understood it was God's plan to get him to Egypt and eventually the rest of the Israelites as well. What appeared to be a bad thing happening to a good person was really perfectly in harmony and one of the cases where the future had been reflected in the present.

Later, when the Egyptians enslaved all of the Israelites and Moses led them out of Egypt, the Bible makes it clear that even though the Pharaoh wanted to let them go many times, God hardened the Pharaoh's heart and made him attempt to stop them. For many, this is a mystifying part of the story, but with God as Reflection it makes perfect sense. God was working through the Egyptians as well as the Israelites. The evil of the Pharaoh was as much God's will as the miracles that saved the Israelites. The good of one could not exist without the bad of the other and both were the work of God.

In the wilderness when the Israelites were out of food, God provided them manna. Each day enough manna for everyone appeared, but it was impossible to hoard it or save it because it spoiled overnight. The Israelites could do nothing else except trust in God to meet their needs each day, and He did.

This idea of trusting in God and not in our own endeavors is the theme of one of the first stories of the Bible. Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, both made sacrifices to God. Cain was a farmer and Abel a shepherd. Cain controlled his own destiny through farming. Abel was a nomad going wherever the grass grew greenest.

God liked Abel's offering but didn't like Cain's. Why? Because Cain was playing God with the plants and Abel wasn't. And what happened? Cain was jealous and killed Abel, just as today those that are slaved to their work and life style resent those that attempt to live freely. And what was God's punishment for Cain? He and all his descendants were forced to make their own living from the earth, and it would be hard.

Today, there is a little of Cain and Abel in each of us, and just as in the Biblical story, the Cain in us is jealous of the Abel, and the Cain in us drives us to a life of toil and worry as we try to secure our own futures because we fail to trust in God.

After the creation stories, most of the early stories in the Bible are told as true stories about real people and their relationship with God. Good things happened to good (righteous) people and bad things happened to bad (unrighteous) people. God made it clear if the Israelites were good, things would go their way, if not, they wouldn't.

This strict view of God, good, and evil, is first challenged in the book of Job, which raises the question of why bad things happen to good people. But it is interesting to note that, unlike the characters in the preceding books, Job is presented as a purely fictional character. He is a caricature created to illustrate extreme bad things happening to an extremely good person. This is in contrast to all the stories up to that point which clearly connected real individual's righteousness and their fate. Was Job fictional because the author(s) of the book of Job couldn't find any real examples?

Eastern Religions

Because Eastern religions are not as much concerned with the word of God as with the experience of God, it is easier to see the connections between them and Reflection. Many of the ideas that can be jelled from Eastern religions are similar to ideas that result from thinking about Reflection.

Karma—an idea similar to fate, only it carries one through this life and into other lives as well. It presents a cyclical view of life with the message that the cycles must be broken to reach a state of higher peace. If we don't learn the lessons in this life, we will be reincarnated and have to try again. Reincarnation isn't good news, it is more like being left back in school.

The view that life is composed of cycles of lessons that repeat until learned is one that is quickly picked up by looking at life through Reflection. Our realities keep repeating until we get to a state of understanding our connection to that reality, and then we move on.

All within each and each within all—this is a cosmic view shared by many Eastern religions that says the entire Universe is contained within each of us, and each of us is contained within every other part of the Universe. It is illustrated by the Net of Indra, and is exactly the world view that is implied by the 100-100-100... connections between us all as described by Reflection and Human Entanglement.

Reality is an illusion—for many in the East, the reality of our senses, called external reality in Reflection, is only an illusion, and true reality is found within. The goal of meditation and other religious disciplines is to get to the true reality within, moving beyond the illusion. An understanding of Reflection is probably an intermediate step on this path. It shows how inner self and external reality are related, and maybe as the truth of this relationship is internalized external reality becomes less important.

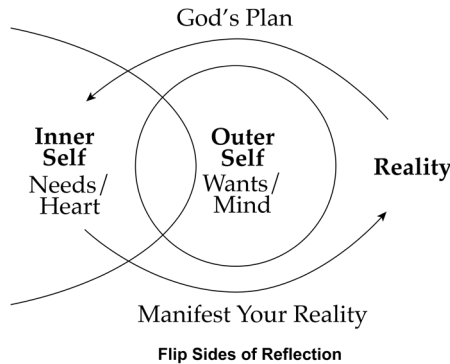
Becoming one with the Universe—the goal of some Eastern religious disciplines is to reach a sense of oneness with everything. Reflection implies we are already at that state and only need to look within to discover how. The goal here is to merge inner self, outer self, and external reality, understanding that the lines between them are simply constructs of our minds.

Yin and yang—the world is composed of opposites. There cannot be light without dark, good without evil, male without female. For each pair of opposites, the seeds of each side is contained in the other, that is the two are intimately connected.

The realization of the connections between opposites is a step towards a state of spiritual enlightenment in which all duality is seen as a construct of the mind and illusory. The idea of opposites having their seeds in each other describes very closely the sense of Reflection when two people interact. Each person is a Reflection of the inner self of the other.

New Age

There are current philosophies, religions, spiritual ideas that fall under the general heading, New Age. A theme that runs through them is “Create Your Own Reality.” Note that this is the flip side of the sense of a godhead working through us.



There is a problem with just looking at the positive, manifestation, side of Reflection. It relies on cause-and-effect logic and concentrates on the individual without seeing the connections between us all. Further, if good thinking leads to good things, then the bad things must come from not thinking enough good thoughts. This makes it difficult to admit that anything is wrong in your life. It can also lead to a hierarchy of spiritually correct people with associated ego involvement. One can be proud of

how highly spiritually evolved one is, and look condescendingly on those below.

As the Lakota Sioux say to Kevin Costner in *Dances with Wolves*: “You are the most spiritually evolved white person we’ve ever met,” and Costner’s expression acknowledges that he knows it as well.

This encourages and leads to the telling of more lies. It becomes even more important to cover up the bad in our lives, so as not to reveal that we might not be as high on the spiritual ladder as we might like others to believe.

It is interesting that older concepts of religion, such as Christianity, avoid this trap, although some of its practitioners fall into it anyway. The Christian concept recognizes that we are all sinners, disconnected from our inner selves. It also recognizes that it is all right. Jesus made it clear that the lowliest sinners are as welcome, if not more so, than the high priests. This recognizes the depth of the lies at both places with those of the high priests more complex and damaging than those of the lowly sinners.

But many do not want to know about or understand the darker sides of ourselves and our lives. It is this part that is missing from much New Age thinking, and it’s this part that is pushed to the rear in much Christian thinking.

Psychology’s appeal is probably in large part due to its acceptance and understanding of the dark forces within us. Yet even today that is being weakened by more “feel good” forms of therapy that deny the darkness.

Reflection is an attempt to explain both the light and the dark, show them as one and the same, and bring about a more honest understanding of ourselves and our lives.

Panpsychism

I only recently discovered this term (Author 2017). I was fascinated to learn that the current, common-sense mechanistic world view only became dominant in about the mid 20th century, and that varieties of panpsychism, which is a lot like Human Entanglement, held sway for most of human history.

This jives with my recent readings of books written in the 19th century. Hawthorn, Melville, Dickens and Crane all provided glimpses of this in the psychological discussions of their characters. The most striking might have been the physician in the Scarlet Letter, who said he could work on the minister's symptoms, but couldn't heal him unless he understood the soul lurking beneath the symptoms. Captain Ahab, however, is right up there with him.

Here's the start of the Wikipedia article. I recommend reading it to get a better idea of the history.

"In philosophy, panpsychism is the view that consciousness, mind or soul (psyche) is a universal and primordial feature of all things. Panpsychists see themselves as minds in a world of mind.

Panpsychism is one of the oldest philosophical theories, and has been ascribed to philosophers like Thales, Parmenides, Plato, Averroes, Spinoza, Leibniz and William James. Panpsychism can also be seen in ancient philosophies such as Stoicism, Taoism, Vedanta and Mahayana Buddhism. During the 19th century, panpsychism was the default theory in philosophy of mind, but it saw a decline during the middle years of the 20th century with the rise of logical positivism. The recent interest in the hard problem of consciousness has revived interest in panpsychism."

Human Religious Edifices

If you accept the idea that there is a real, not superstitious, spiritual core, then specific religions can be understood as having been built on top of that core. The complex theologies, elaborate structures, and rules of behavior we know today are all creations of human minds working from those core experiences, the same experiences that shaped the early Animist's religion.

The rules for behavior come more from wise men than God and serve two broad purposes. Some are intended to encourage spiritual growth, and others to enable society to function harmoniously.

The Seven Deadly Sins are deadly in the sense that they prevent one from spiritual growth. For example, a constant concern with food (gluttony) interferes with getting in touch with your inner self. On the other hand, commandments against killing, adultery and lying make for a better society.

Man-made rules of behavior can steal the focus of religion, actually taking people further from the spiritual core. The rules become primary, the idea of God more abstract, and life starts to appear totally disconnected.

The early Mendicants provide a clear example of human rules destroying the essence of a religious movement. The Mendicants started with the purest of religious ideas, they decided that instead of staying in the monastery and providing for their own food and shelter, they would go out in the world and preach without concern for their food or shelter. They were to trust God to provide.

This glorious idea of God is exactly that which Reflection might indicate. But their own, human, ideas of how God should provide blocked them from being open to God. They set rules. They would only carry one bowl to be filled with food. They would live lives of poverty. They had limits on what they would accept as gifts. So instead of preaching and letting God take care of them, they followed rigid man-made rules of what they thought was God-like behavior. The Mendicant movement

died out with its members being beggars and nuisances to the rest of society.

By accepting the dogma of another we become lazy and avoid the real work of philosophy or religion. We avoid looking within for the forces that make sense of our individual existence.

"If most of us remain ignorant of ourselves, it is because self-knowledge is painful and we prefer the pleasures of illusion."

— Aldous Huxley in the Perennial Philosophy

Psychics, Science & Gambling

"Sir Isaac Newton secretly admitted to some friends: He understood how gravity behaved, but not how it worked!"

—Lily Tomlin, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe.*

Assuming Reflection is true leads to different points of view on these topics.

Psychic Functioning

I once took a course that promised to teach psychic functioning. They kept their promise and I enjoyed the course, but their task was easy because they knew something most people who take the course don't, that is, that we all function psychically, but for one reason or another don't recognize it.

The course took a very pragmatic approach. It didn't claim to prove psychic functioning exists, it simply taught it. At the end there was a simple test. If you didn't feel you had performed psychically, then you could have your money back. (In fact, when I took the course they returned the money if you were not satisfied in any way.)

The course taught meditation techniques that are used to perform psychically. It also taught what it called active meditation. In active meditation you visualize what you want to happen in life, and often, miraculously, it happens.

As I was experimenting with psychic functioning I had a number of remarkable things happen. They ranged from simple tricks such as cutting a deck of cards at the jack of diamonds on demand to major miracles like curing leukemia.

The leukemia story is a typical psychic story with proof for the believers and plenty of room for doubt for the skeptics. A friend's boyfriend was diagnosed with leukemia and given six months to live. This friend did not believe in psychic nonsense but she was real scared and asked for help. A few of us meditated and actively visualized the leukemia leaving the boyfriend's body. A month later, during a routine follow up, the doctors examined him, tested him and said they were really sorry, they must have made a mistake with the earlier diagnosis because he was healthy, there was no leukemia.

In a less dramatic case a neighbor's daughter had a bed wetting problem to an age that started worrying them. I meditated and visualized her problem disappearing and the bed wetting stopped the next day.

I have stories of failures as well. A scientist could not prove psychic phenomena by my experiences, but there was always a sense that something different was happening with the successes that convinced me it was real.

That something different is not explained by cause-and-effect reasoning. I do not believe, for example, that my active meditation on the bed wetting problem caused the bed wetting to stop. It is more that my meditation and the end of the bed wetting happened at the same time. Not coincidentally, but connected as in Reflection.

The bed wetting incident filled many needs. The neighbor's daughter needed to get past that phase, and this was a catalyst. I needed to learn more about psychic functioning, and my being able to help showed me more of the magic. The neighbors were

fascinated with, but skeptical of psychic phenomena and needed a close hand example of it. These same types of interconnected needs were at work in the leukemia story as well as in my many other experiences, both positive and negative.

The successful psychic healing experiences are simply another example of the helper/helpee relationships discussed earlier. I needed to learn about the mind and its affects on reality, and I needed the successes to bolster that understanding just as I needed the engineers to come to me with problems for which IEFBR14 was the answer. And, just as the engineers needed my help, the people who came to me for psychic help needed my help. As I began to understand both the power and the limitations of psychic functioning my reality was no longer filled with psychic wonders, just as I when I fully understood IEFBR14 I stopped getting asked questions for which it was the answer.

The limits were clear in my experience with the colds I got at my parents. I used active meditation to visualize the colds disappearing, and could, with will power and meditation, defeat the colds—but only for awhile, as they kept recurring. It was only after realizing the underlying need for the colds that they disappeared—without the need for active meditation.

This difficulty with psychic functioning as a way to cure is an example of a more general phenomena. Any cure, whether magical or non-magical, is more likely indicative of change rather than an instrument for change. For example, I have an on-again off-again relationship with yoga. When I do yoga I feel better. It would be easy for me to extol the virtues of yoga for making you feel better, but when I don't feel good, I don't feel like doing yoga. There seems to be a natural cycle of emotional ups and downs. My desire to do yoga follows that flow. It is not at all clear whether yoga makes me feel good, or feeling good makes me want to do yoga.

The same is true with all remedies. We sense the cycles of our lives and know when we are ready for change. At those

times we look for some catalyst for change, such as yoga or vitamins or a cure from the doctor. The “cure” works, but it is not causal. Rather it works because it is in harmony with changing inner needs.

Science

Science and logic have become so prominent in Western thought that they are, in a way, the dominant religion of our time. The belief in underlying logical explanations of things is so strong that it even blocks scientists from accepting scientific evidence that does not have a logical explanation.

This tendency among scientists was illustrated by the debate in the 1950s over the theory of continental drift. The theory states that the continents were originally all joined, and have gradually drifted apart over time. The origins of the theory are apparent simply by looking at a globe. The continents appear to be related in jigsaw puzzle fashion.

The first scientists to propose the theory accumulated solid scientific evidence, such as rock formations and fossils that existed in corresponding pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, showing it was more than just the shapes that matched up. But these first scientists were ridiculed. Their evidence was always explained as bizarre coincidence and never accepted as proof of the continental drift theory.

As explained in Jay Gould’s book, *Ever Since Darwin*, the reason for the ridicule was simple. The opposing scientists could not imagine any mechanism by which the continents could drift. As far as anyone knew at the time, the continents were solid pieces connected to the solid core of the earth, and anyone who suggested they could move must be nuts, even if the evidence indicated it was true.

The minority group of scientists who argued in favor of continental drift did not know how it happened, but insisted that it happened. They were on the losing side of the argument, since the bulk of the scientific establishment thought they were nuts.

Then a new theory about the interior of the earth was developed, called plate tectonics. This new view of the earth saw the center as not solid, but as made of molten lava. The continents are part of a crust floating on the molten center. They could move! Suddenly the scientific climate swung completely around. All of the evidence was trotted out again as proof conclusive of continental drift and the theory was universally accepted in the scientific community.

If the scientific community won't accept scientific evidence it doesn't believe in, how then can inexplicable non-scientific evidence have any credibility with scientists, and thus the majority of our society?

Today, while there is evidence for psychic phenomena, religious experience, and Reflection, there is no logical or scientific explanation. As such they are not accepted by a significant portion of the scientific establishment. There are many who have seen the evidence and believe, but, just as the scientists who first believed in continental drift were, they are ridiculed by the more rational elements of society.

Being closely associated with the scientific and logical world, I have always been fascinated by how much the scientist's belief in logic resembles the religious zealot's belief in a supreme being. My favorite example of this was a conversation overheard at a party.

Two individuals were arguing about the existence of God. One was extremely smug in the power of his logic to interpret the world. He felt there was no God. The other asked him a hypothetical question: "What if when you die you find out you were wrong and are confronted by the supreme being?"

He replied: "If that is the case, I will simply inform him he did not provide me with sufficient evidence to verify his existence."

He was serious. Even hypothesizing a supreme being he insisted the supreme being would bow to the power of his logic.

And yet, his logic and science are weak. A good scientist always examines the basic assumptions. In this case, what if logic does not explain everything? What if there are phenomena which the logical portions of the brain simply cannot understand? Is it logical to assume that all is logical? In fact it is not and, ironically, this has even been proved logically. Gödel showed that all logical systems must contain inconsistencies.

The ability to reason is a capability of human beings that makes it easier to survive. It is as integral to our ability to compete with other life forms as a shark's teeth are to its. Looked at this way, it is just a tool for survival.

But what if cause-and-effect reasoning is not appropriate for understanding the bigger issues of the cosmos? It is useful for planting, harvesting, and hunting but not necessarily for understanding God. Yet it is how our brains work.

Science itself has produced a number of theories and observations which today cause it to begin to question its own logical foundations. It might be the case that the scientific mysteries of the universe are not explained by cause-and-effect either. Often the common sense experience of our senses turns out to be wrong, scientifically. Who would think we are mostly just space? (Our atoms are mostly space.) Who would believe that our clocks go slower when we go faster and that our mass increases? (Relativity.) Who would believe that logical systems cannot be perfect and always contain paradoxes? (Gödel's Theorem.) Who would believe it is theoretically impossible to precisely measure anything? (Heisenberg's principle.) Scientists today are coming up with bizarre theories of the universe that include changing directions for the arrow of time and up to eleven dimensional space.

Some scientists have even presented anthropocentric theories of the origin of the universe that sound a lot like Reflection. The Universe is the way it is because if it weren't we wouldn't be here to question it.

Even our logical scientific theories are not always based purely on scientific evidence, but rather are elaborate structures designed to support some deeper, intuitive belief. That is, often times logic isn't used to reach an understanding of something, rather logic is used to defend an already held belief.

This phenomenon was documented in *Ever Since Darwin*. Jay Gould describes old theories on race in which whites were supposedly superior to blacks, and he ties these theories directly to the racist beliefs of the time. He then ridicules them and presents his own theories. He scientifically shows that race should not be used to subdivide any species, let alone humans. He proves his point with studies of snails.

Much as I admire Jay Gould, and in fact concur with his sociological beliefs, he too has used science and logic to support his beliefs. As part of the liberal northeast academic community one can only assume he has progressive racial beliefs. His science and logic support those beliefs.

Another example occurred around the turn of the century when scientists were wrestling with the Ether theory. Either there was an ether, some substance that pervaded all space, or there wasn't. We are taught today that the debate had to do with how light waves propagate. Either they were vibrations of the ether as sound is vibrations of the air, or they were something else.

But the debate was more than that. The ether was also believed to be the plate tectonics of God. If there was an ether then there was a physical place for the energy of God. The ether debate was more than science, it was atheistic rationalism versus a belief in God. When scientists proved there was no ether they also proved there was no possible mechanism for God or any other spiritual phenomenon. This is the spiritual heritage that has pervaded most of the twentieth century.

But the spiritual climate is changing, and our scientific view of the world along with it. Physicist Fritjof Capra, in *The Tao of Physics*, draws remarkable parallels between the insights of modern physics and ancient Hindu thought. He describes a

degree of connection between elementary particles that is very similar to the way Reflection describes connections between people. Thus the title, *Human Entanglement* for this version of this book.

Current research into the paranormal shows how unscientifically scientific data is used. I do not know enough to form my own judgments of scientific experiments in psychic functioning, but I do know that believers in psychic functioning claim that countless repeatable experiments have shown it is real.

I also know that non-believers claim there has not been a single conclusive repeatable experiment. Here are scientists for and against using the same body of experimental results to support their deeper beliefs.

But if you have had psychic experiences then you believe in them and all the experiments in the world are irrelevant. If you want to see if there is anything to the paranormal, the best place to look for evidence is in your own life.

So it is with Reflection. We do not know, and may not be capable of understanding, how it works, but we can look for evidence of it in our own lives. It is like the situation with the old pro-continental drift scientists. The pieces look like they fit, my personal evidence says it is real for me, but I have no idea how it could work.

Maybe someday someone will discover the plate tectonics of Reflection?

Until then, we do not have to reject the idea but can continue to gather evidence.

Games of Chance, Scientist vs. Mystic

Having seen how reality and people's inner selves reflect, it becomes natural to ask how the other things in our environment interact. It is a little anthropocentric to assume that people are the only things reflecting reality. Reflection might be true of not only all other living things, but maybe inanimate ones as well. While this is a staggering thought, it is exactly what the first animists knew (not believe, they simply knew it) and what modern physicists are telling us with quantum entanglement.

In one sense this section is a look at the light side of Reflection, but in another it is the most critical section. The fall of the cards in either a poker game or a Tarot reading behave the same. It is here that the scientist and mystic absolutely disagree. The scientist claims probability rules, the mystic claims something deeper is at work.

It is exactly this debate that caused Jung to fall from grace with his peers, as he explored the mysteries of the I Ching and proposed there might be something to it.

Reflection can reconcile the mystic and the scientist. The mystic sees connections and meanings in the deal of the cards, the roll of the dice or the casting of the I Ching. The scientist sees probability, coincidence and superstition. Both can be seen as flip sides of Reflection.

From time to time professional conferences have brought me to Las Vegas where I enjoy the opportunity to try my hand at the games of chance. Being of a scientific mind, I know the odds are in favor of the house and I cannot win at Las Vegas. With this attitude I lose fast and regularly.

On one trip I decided to try to beat the odds by playing with a different set of needs. I combined my need to try something different with other's needs to win at gambling.

I went to my friends at work and told them I would double their money in Las Vegas—or lose it all. My right pocket was my gambling pocket. I put one hundred dollars of my money

in it and anyone else could invest as they saw fit. Whatever percentage of the money was originally theirs, that percentage of the right pocket would be theirs at the end.

It would certainly be a boost to my ego to double their money. Only a few people saw fit to invest, but they were people I felt had good luck, and a good sense of humor.

The conference went for a week. I nursed \$25 a night for every night I was there, and, as I normally expected, the house odds kept eating away at it. I mostly played the \$2 blackjack tables because you could play there the longest before losing your money.

On the last day I still had \$40 in my right pocket and it was an hour before we had to leave. My gambling experiment had not paid off. But, there was time for one more shot. I said I would either lose the money or double it.

I went back to the tables, but this time with a mission. I had a different sense. I felt like a winner. I looked for a table with a dealer that looked like a loser. I started betting \$5, because I didn't have much time. I was winning. I upped the bets to \$25 and immediately got hands that allowed me to split my cards and double my bets, magnifying my winnings. In a few quick hands I had made up the losses of the week and doubled the original money.

I repeated the same trick in a casino in Australia on another business trip. After having lost all evening, I took the small amount of remaining gambling money and put it on a single 36 to 1 number on the roulette table. I won, just about exactly doubling everybody's investment in me.

In both cases I had a sense something good was going to happen at the end of my gambling period. In both cases I came back and filled my need to pull off a neat stunt for my friends. In both cases the outcome was a perfect Reflection of my inner-self.

Cosmic Wimpout is a cult dice game, appealing to those who like to look for karma in the dice. There are five dice with different patterns on the faces. By rolling different patterns you

score points. It is, however, the mechanics of a turn that make the game interesting.

On a turn you roll the dice. If there is no score, the dice pass to the next player. If you score some points, you can either keep them, or roll again trying to gain additional points. If at any point you fail to score points you lose all the points in that turn.

The game is further complicated by a number of rules which force you to keep rolling the dice even when you would rather stop. It is not uncommon to rack up hundreds of points (in a game which goes to 500) in a single turn and then lose them because you were not allowed to stop rolling and failed to add additional points.

You might say this is just another game of chance, but not so say the devotees. It's a game of karma and the best karma wins.

Mary and I frequently played Cosmic Wimpout and it is often clear to us that there is more than just chance working. The vibes will twist and turn during a game, but we can sense who will win and why. Those that play Cosmic Wimpout know this.

These feelings are not unique to Cosmic Wimpout. Anyone who has played cards has had the sense at one time or another that the right cards would or would not show up. Golfers know when the 30 foot putt will drop. Celtic fans know Larry Bird's final shot will win the game at the final buzzer. Often things which should be governed by luck and statistics seem to be driven by something else.

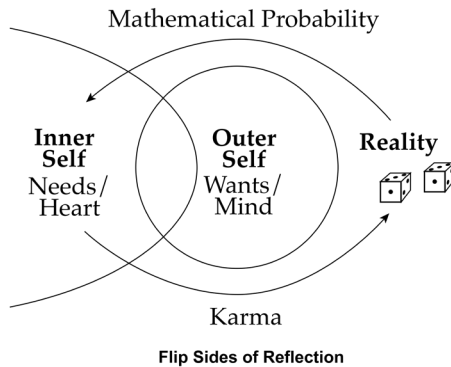
With my admitted mystical bent, I accept this. Reflection would clearly indicate the dice come out the way we need them to come out and I've had enough anecdotal experiences at cards, Las Vegas, and Cosmic Wimpout to bear out my feelings.

But my scientific side understands probability theory. To find out more about the dice, Mary and I kept a running total of our Cosmic Wimpout scores. After 20,000 points each we were only a hundred points away from each other. The laws of probability held true.

So now I had both sides of an argument. I could scientifically demonstrate that the dice follow normal laws of probability,

and, I could give anecdotal evidence that the dice are directly related to both Mary's and mine inner feelings.

How can these two points of view be reconciled? It is only our belief in common sense cause-and-effect reasoning that makes the two seem to contradict. Cause-and-effect implies that either the dice are driven by feelings or they are driven by probability. The mystic and the scientist each takes an opposing point of view.



But this is exactly the same difficulty discussed in the earlier chapters of the book in regards to the interactions between two or more individuals. With people, each being a perfect Reflection of the other can only be understood by dropping cause-and-effect thinking and accepting 100-100 responsibility.

The same is true of the dice and the people. You might say the people are a perfect Reflection of the inner-self of the dice, just as the dice reflect the inner-selves of the people.

So when I am feeling good and winning best reflects my inner self, so too the dice come out on my side. It cannot be said that my inner state gave me good rolls, or that the good rolls created my inner state. They both happen at the same time, joined together by the same web of Reflection that ties us all together.

So, the mystic and the scientist meet at the dice table. The mystic claims to be in touch with the rolling of the dice. The scientist shows the dice follow normal statistical patterns. Neither

understands or respects the other, yet both are right when understood in light of the 100-100 proposition of Reflection. The scientist understands the one hundred percent responsibility of the dice as an explanation of the outcome of the game; the mystic understands the one hundred percent responsibility of the player.

Mathematics of War

Consider the Cosmic Wimpout log we kept, how, at the detail level of each game, it seemed that there were connections between the outcome of the game and our competitive feelings at the time. Yet, the log shows that over time the dice behaved precisely as probability theory would predict.

Harper's magazine had an article by Gary Greenberg in the June 2017 issue that described the exact same phenomenon, only with war. The article is based on the work of Lewis Richardson, a mathematician who made some of the early breakthroughs in weather forecasting, and then applied those same ideas to attempts to forecast incidents involving loss of life. He called them 'deadly quarrels' and gave them order of magnitude ratings that ranged from bar room fights to full blown world wars. The ratings ranged from 0, a single murder, to 7 for conflicts where millions died.

Richardson gathered data on deadly quarrels of all orders of magnitude, and did statistical analysis on the hundreds of them involving greater than 317 deaths (2.5 on his scale).

The analysis used Poisson's methods to see if outbreaks of violence correlated more to human events, or were simply following mathematical predictions. The results indicated deadly quarrels, did indeed, follow normal probability distributions.

With Mary's and mine Cosmic Wimpout games we could look at each game and see reasons for why one or the other of us won and lost, but still the dice follow mathematical patterns of random behavior.

With wars, we can look at each and analyze all the factors that led up to the war and yet still those wars occur following normal probability functions.

Coincidences

Random phenomena seemingly linked to human situations is described in the workplace as Murphy's Law—"If anything can go wrong, it will, and at the worst time." We joke about it being a law, but it is because we have all seen it happen so much that we call it a law. It happens a lot in the computer software industry. Software projects are notorious for being behind schedule, which leads to management pressure. That's when the machines fail. That's when the chips burn out. What better way to not have to take responsibility for the late delivery of work?

In any major project where the participants are under tremendous pressure, and their self-images are on the line, the best thing to happen is some external phenomena which prevents completion of the project. Murphy's law follows naturally from Reflection.

Once a chip burnt out on my personal computer that was dramatically related to my inner feelings at the time. It was not related to a deadline, but rather software piracy. (Mid 1980s)

A major problem with software for personal computers back then was the ease with which it could be copied. It was as simple as taping a record with a tape player.

In the work place, the real problem was that it was easier to steal software than to buy it. I could just copy my neighbor's disk in a minute, rather than having to order the software. So you wound up with basically honest people stealing software simply because it was more convenient.

To prevent this, the software vendors tried to devise schemes to prevent the software from being copied. Still other vendors, however, made money selling programs which copy "copy-pro-

tected” software. One such program was Copy II PC. The use of those programs was the subject of great ethical debates within the software industry.

My own ethics on piracy were relatively simple. There were two types of software I convinced myself it was all right to copy (maybe wrongly, but the important point is I was comfortable with my ethics). One was utility type software that my employer had purchased, making it all right in my mind for me to make a copy for my home machine, which I often used for my employer’s work. The other was arcade type games that I would never actually buy myself and did not use much so the vendor was not losing any potential business.

Someone at work lent me their copy of Sargon, a chess playing program. I was fascinated with the art of building game playing programs at the time and was very impressed with the program. On the opening screen of the program it gave the authors’ names. Real people had written this great program.

I then proceeded to use my Copy II PC program to make a copy of Sargon for my own use. As the disks were churning, I was suddenly overcome with guilt. I distinctly felt like I was ripping these people off. They had written a great program, and were trying to make a living from it, and I was stealing it to use for my own enjoyment.

Seconds after this guilt overwhelmed me—click—the machine stopped churning and went dead. A chip had burned out preventing the illegal copy from being completed. (This, by the way, was the only time in my 50-odd years of experience with computers I had a chip burn out.)

The next day I bought my own copy of Sargon, stole a chip from work to fix the machine, (my ethics said that was all right since I used my home machine for my employer’s benefit as well) and felt absolved of my guilt.

The key point is Sargon was not a trivial game I would not have purchased myself, nor was it a utility that my employer purchased. Copying it fell outside of my own ethical limits. This was real stealing in my own mind and I was caught.

Random Topics

"Terror is the anticipation of your own negative potential"

—Joseph Brodsky

This chapter looks at common emotions, events, concepts and what they might mean, if in fact, full 100-100-100... Reflection is true. So, assume it's true and follow along seeing how each of these things looks from that different point of view. And maybe marvel at the symmetries that emerge...

Other's Lives

Even when we begin to see Reflection working in our own lives, it is much harder to see how it works in anyone else's. This is partially because it is very difficult to put yourself in another's shoes. Because their inner-self is different from yours, you cannot see how they relate to their reality.

Further, we all hide the truth of Reflection from other's eyes as well as our own. In the stories I have told I have tried to show the truth as I now see it, but anyone knowing me at the time of the stories would have probably heard different versions that didn't indicate how much my messed up reality was really a Reflection of my own inner self.

My bike racing friends thought my yeast infection was bad luck, my salesmen friends thought my firing was bad luck,

and my closer friends have pity on me for my bad luck with women. They have all heard the stories the way I wanted to tell them, not how they really were. So these people, if looking for evidence of Reflection, would not have seen it in my life.

This is true for all of us, and it is for this reason that the best place to look for Reflection is within. However, once seeing how much it works within, then it becomes easier to see it working in other's lives as well. In particular, it is easiest to understand other's whose realities are similar to yours.

For example, I met a woman who was taking Yoga to help cure her severe back problems. The problems started after she had left her husband. In a separate conversation she told of severe allergies that miraculously cleared up on leaving her husband.

While she was telling her story as that of a woman struck by random diseases, her reality was telling a story of someone smothered by her mate, not able to assert herself and expressing it through allergies. Leaving the marriage provided the inner freedom that removed the need for allergies, but added the fear of having to make it on her own—reflected in the backaches.

For me, this view evokes a level of compassion that goes well beyond that which would be felt for someone who was just the victim of random ailments. Here we see a human being struggling against inner weaknesses to make it in the world. Hiding behind her brave front I see myself and feel her pain.

Anger

Anger looks different in light of Reflection. In the story of Mary interrupting my work, I was angry at Mary. Anybody looking at the situation would clearly see Mary interrupting me and assume my anger at her was justified. It's true I was angry at Mary, but Mary and her actions were a Reflection of my inner self. Her interruptions reflected my inner conflict. My anger was really at the disharmony within myself, not Mary. Mary was the messenger in my reality telling me of my internal state

that I was trying to ignore. Her behavior reflected my dissatisfaction with the “shoulds” driving my work.

This is a general pattern. When there is a disharmony within us, it is reflected in a disharmony in our reality. We are angry at the inner turmoil but do not express that anger at our selves. Instead, that turmoil is reflected externally and there we can freely express our anger at it.

For example, I was driving home after midnight one night when there was little or no traffic on the road. I came to a red light on the four lane road I was on and stopped. I felt a little ridiculous stopped at the red light when there was no traffic in either direction, but there I was. Then another car pulled up alongside, the driver looked both ways, and continued ahead through the red light.

I was furious at him—but he had done nothing dangerous, nor had he done anything to harm or even inconvenience me. Why was I so angry? I was angry at myself. I was inhibited. My own life force was held in abeyance by a light that was red in the middle of the night. Stopping at red lights makes sense at a busy intersection, but not when there is no traffic. To mindlessly follow the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law leaves one spiritually dead. I was angry at my own fear to freely go through the light. The other driver’s appearance, just as I was wrestling with my own inhibition, was a perfect Reflection of my desire to be free. My anger at him was my anger at my own inability to be free.

Fear and Worry

If our reality is a perfect Reflection of our inner needs, then you might think there is nothing to fear. In one sense this is true, but it is more often the case that it is exactly the intuitive knowledge of Reflection that causes fear. The fears, then, are well founded and related to a sense of an inner need that is in conflict with an external want.

Fears based on inner conflicts happen all the time. For example, worry about not getting a good raise probably reflects a sense that the raise isn't deserved. Fears of muggings might reflect feelings of vulnerability.

The existence of a fear doesn't mean it will come about, although it might. It means that reality includes the emotion of fear which is reflecting the inner self.

It is important to understand that, like external reality, inner self is complex and sometimes contradictory. The best example of this is the common love-hate relationship that often develops between people who are emotionally close to each other. If love-hate is in your inner self, then you can expect a reality that includes touching and warm moments intermixed with painful fights. Together they perfectly reflect the inner love-hate.

It is common to worry about the death of a loved one, one Reflection of love-hate inside. While we might have strong needs for the loved one we might also feel trapped and need to escape. These trapped feelings are a need that can be fulfilled by the death of the loved one. Because the conscious outer self is more likely aligned with the love part of the inner self and denies the hate part, the sensing of the reality that might be reflected by the hate part causes the fear.

Fear, like anger, reveals a disharmony between inner needs and outer wants.

Guilt

People often feel guilty in situations where any common sense person might want to tell them it's not their fault. But the guilt makes perfect sense in light of a 100-100 view of Reflection. A person feeling guilty in such a situation is sensing the inner need connecting them to whatever it was. What's more is that inner need was changing, synchronously with the changing events leading up to the guilt feelings.

Even though such a person did not "cause" whatever occurred, the sense of the Reflection to the events is what is

behind the feeling of guilt. To counsel such a person that “it’s not their fault” is actually counsel to bring them further from understanding themselves, their heart, and encourages them to listen instead to the outer self wants/mind.

Criticism

Reflection applies to the communication we hear—asking why makes sense here as well. Why did I need to say that? Why did I need to hear that?

The criticisms we hear are often Reflections of our own inner doubts. We might fight with them or accept them—but either way they are part of our reality. Mary criticized me for not fighting in the divorce as much as I could, she pushed me into fighting more—but this was my reality. I was angry at my ex-wife and wanted to fight but was afraid to. Mary’s criticisms picked up that conflict within me.

Arguments

Arguments between two people can show exactly how connected the two people are, and how each point of view reflects the other’s inner self. This is illustrated by Mary’s and mine ongoing debate about marriage.

She wanted to get married and I didn’t. She claimed it is only right for us to acknowledge each other as man and wife, to agree to make a commitment to our relationship, and to stand up and be proud of that relationship. I claimed marriage is an attempt to preserve the status quo and the fact that we are in love today is more than anyone can ask and better than what most have. I claimed we did not need the institution of marriage to prove our love, and based on my experience of two divorces knew that marriage does not secure one from separation.

This is an emotional debate for us, but if we both stop and become really honest with each other, it turns out the debate is

almost the inverse of what it appears. I yearn for the stability, love and respect of marriage—Mary fears the commitment and ties.

Even though we tried, I'm not sure either of us fully understood the twists and turns we each took on this issue as we dug deeper and deeper inside. When I was feeling close to a married state, Mary pulled away; when she was feeling close, I pulled away. Both our fears and desires for the ideals of a couple were reflected in our own and each other's arguments.

I deny my desire for marriage through my arguments against it, Mary denies her fear of marriage through her arguments for it. Within each of us were the seeds of the other's arguments, like in the classic Yin/Yang symbol.

(We since got married.)(The marriage lasted 20 years.)

Humor

Everything said in jest comes from some part of us. The reason humor is such a potent way of communicating is it lets us express inner feelings in a non-threatening way. It lets us express feelings as if they're not really ours. It's just a joke, so it is not really us.

But because it is the truth, it feels good. It evokes a physical reaction, the shaking of our chest cavity, explosive sounds, tears—a relaxation of tension in the areas we often keep sealed up.

Those who can laugh at anything can tell the truth about anything. I remember being at my uncle's wake with my two cousins. We were standing together and it was all very sombre until one of us said something that got us laughing and laughing til we cried. The laughter let us release the emotions we felt.

Fiction

Stories that capture the interconnections between us all are more interesting than those that don't. The interconnections can be captured symbolically, as in ancient myths, or with interconnected characters in modern stories, such as Luke and Darth Vader in Star Wars, or Batman and the Joker.

The more complex the interactions the better the story. When the good guys reflect the bad guys, and the bad guys reflect the good guys, and the distinctions are not always clear, you have a story with real human interest. When the Israeli Nazi hunter is driven by his own dark forces the story becomes more interesting.

Lonesome Dove, for example, was an enjoyable book for these reasons. The interplay between the main characters showed the need each had for the other. The other characters also fit the same pattern. They did not exist in a vacuum. In general each made sense as part of some other character's reality.

In addition to people interactions, interactions with events and surroundings make an interesting story. Great fiction writers understand this and create characters that shape and are shaped by their circumstances. *Gone With the Wind* is a classic in this vein, with Rhett, Scarlett, and the Civil War all interconnected.

Any of William Kennedy's novels show this interaction. *Legs* clearly shows the web between the lawyer, Legs Diamond, and prohibition. The lawyer needs the excitement of Legs. Legs needs the stability of the lawyer. Both interact with the events that shape them.

Stories, whether on film or in print, that do not have this sense of Reflection do not grab us as strongly. When a bad fate befalls some good character for no good reason, then the story fails to have the same impact as when we can see the connections between the protagonists.

Justice

The difficulty with finding justice has to do with the arithmetic of blame. Our justice system tries to find out who is guilty and mete out punishment accordingly. With this system it is not possible to assume the victim is responsible because then the perpetrator of the crime would be innocent.

But Reflection does not destroy our criminal justice system. By understanding the victim and the criminal are both one hundred percent responsible we can console and help the victim, and at the same time try the perpetrator as fully one hundred percent accountable for his or her actions no matter how obvious it is that the crime Reflected some part of the victim's inner self.

What's more, the fact that the criminal is caught fills an inner need in the criminal, such as the need to be punished or the need to have society, through jail, relieve the criminal from responsibility for day-to-day life. The web goes further, for those who punish the criminal also are having inner needs met.

The entire reality of the criminal justice system fills the inner-needs of all those participating, as well as the inner-needs of those watching.

Health Care

It is often the case that we feel ashamed of our ailments. This sense of shame, when it exists, comes from the intuitive sense that the disease is indeed a Reflection of some inner turmoil we would rather have hidden.

What we want to do is hide that sense of shame, and this is a major service that the medical profession provides. By presenting mechanistic explanations of disease, doctors allow us to avoid looking at the inner needs. I do not believe they are very successful. The few general practitioners I know express frustration that they can do very little for the majority of their patients.

And this is the way we need it to be. The common cold fills a tremendous need for escape in our stressful world. An employee cannot miss work nor a student school without a disease as an excuse, and a cold is the minimal disease required. Until that need goes away I doubt doctors will find a cure for the cold.

The medical profession could be of far greater service if it worked with an understanding of Reflection. Doctors could bring all their technology to bear on illness but still encourage the patient to look within. They could ease the pain, fix what's broken, and at the same time steer us towards a better understanding of our inner selves.

Doctors, lawyers, and insurance companies are the price we pay for not understanding Reflection. Doctors try to externally manipulate our bodies, lawyers work to fix the blame and fault, and insurance companies get rich as we try to protect ourselves against the unknowns of our lives.

Note the phrase "nurse back to health." Nobody gets "doctored back to health." A nurse responds to one's inner need/heart.

Beauty

An old saying, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, is obviously true. The way someone visually appears to you is an exact Reflection of how you feel about that person.

Our bodies are part of our reality reflecting who we are, and as such our bodies will be attractive to those who are attracted to us. Absolute ideas of beauty have nothing to do with attractiveness.

While waiting in line at the supermarket I noticed a Cosmopolitan article titled "Plain Women Who Get Men—What Have They Got?" The tone of the title struck me as funny. The whole premise of the magazine, that with proper dieting, makeup, exercise, and clothing you can make yourself attractive, is laid to question by these plain women who get men. But

getting men has everything to do with what's inside and nothing to do with what's outside.

This is another area where our society continues to help in the spread of lies to cover up inner feelings of inadequacy. It is much easier to blame a lack of popularity on a physical trait and say you are working on being more popular by changing the way you look. It is much more difficult to take responsibility for your relationships and ask yourself why.

Maybe the best way to fully grasp this idea is to look at those in the later years of their lives. With our emphasis on perfect youthful bodies nobody over seventy qualifies as "beautiful," but some old people are very pleasing to look at and others are not.

We are quick to understand with the old why this is so. We talk of a friendly old man, a gentle woman, and an understanding face. We also talk of bitter old men and crotchety old ladies. These descriptions are of both how the person is and how they look. We recognize that the energy flowing through them is related to their appearance and it is our reaction to that energy that makes them appear either beautiful or ugly.

The same is true when we are young.

Commitment

It is not clear that one can ever promise commitment to anything but attempts at complete honesty. To commit to a job or relationship does not really mean much. The commitment can always be broken. In fact, if the situation does not fit the inner needs, then the commitment will some way be broken or distorted, like it or not. To force oneself to stay in a situation that is not in harmony is to live a lie. Living a lie provides no service for anyone.

On the other hand, if total honesty were the commitment, then there would not be a problem. If two people were comfortable with each other, and could be totally honest then there would be no need for the false security of commitment.

There is no need to worry about a relationship breaking. If you worry about the other leaving, then that is an indication that some part of you needs that person to leave—probably not a part you would like to acknowledge, but definitely there. It does not need to be denied, however, because that fear will be reflected in the other's needs as well.

We all change all of the time. It is trying to hold the status quo as we change that causes much of the difficulty in life. Acceptance of this constant change seems to be a key factor in long successful marriages, where the couples often say the one long marriage was really more like a series of different shorter marriages, just with the same two people. Only honest and open communication can let those changes occur.

Lies

Lies are at the core of most difficulties in life. We lie to ourselves in defending our wants over our needs. We are afraid to talk of our inner needs, needs of which we may only be slightly aware.

I doubt it is possible for a human to live a life without lies, but it is possible to become more truthful than we are. The scary part about Reflection is it indicates our realities expose our lies.

Honesty

It is commonly recognized that a lack of communication is often the source of problems between people, but even when people talk, the words are often meaningless. This is because most talking is aimed at protecting self-images and is therefore not honest.

For example, there was a time when Mary and I were slipping into old patterns. I was feeling trapped and pressured to be more in love than I felt. I was feeling the urge to get out. Mary was acting loving and that made it worse.

Mary pushed us to talk as we have before, but as we talked about how we missed the closeness we were still distant. The words meant nothing. We were both acting close, pretending we were in love but not feeling it.

Then it started to come out. In fact Mary was thinking I was a bit old and lacking vitality, she was losing respect for me and was fantasizing about establishing a relationship with someone younger—building a family. The love she was professing for me was not real. It was a cover up for what she was really feeling. She was pretending because of her fear of the truth inside her.

I told her my fantasies of getting out, how I felt trapped, how I wanted to escape, and how I wasn't feeling good about her. Once we had both spoken the truth within and confessed the lies about pretend love an amazing thing happened. We no longer had to pretend, became very comfortable, and, became very close again, for real.

Complete honesty is possible if you believe in Reflection. It is all right to tell someone how you honestly feel because those feelings reflect some inner need in them as well.

Love

What is love? Might love be the ability to accept someone as they are? To know, understand, and accept their inner self? Their needs/heart?

Someone who loves you is someone you feel safe with. You can be completely relaxed and drop whatever facades your outer self might be holding on to. When two people feel this way towards each other, then they know the comfort and security of having their inner selves, their needs/hearts, connected.

This is the type of love that ideally happens between parent and child—total acceptance of each other despite the faults.

It is the love between lovers in the early parts of a relationship when there is nothing to hide, or lose. Each can be as honest as possible with the other.

The trick then, is to keep that honest connection alive. Unfortunately that becomes difficult as each's needs/hearts change. Both remember how it was in the beginning and are reluctant to express their changing inner self. So their outer selves, wants/mind, take over and tension and disharmony result.

If, on the other hand, a couple can continue to admit to each other their changing selves then they can continue to share the connection that brought them together in the first place. If Reflection is real, then this is safe because the other's needs/heart is changing as well, in perfect harmony.

From love between individuals Reflection points the way to larger and larger circles of love. Someone who can accept and understand many different types of people just as they are is someone who can love large numbers of people. This is the message of universal love presented in some religions. It is also the key to the success of Mr. Rogers' children's TV show. He tells the kids he likes them just the way they are. It is exactly what they need to hear.

Death and the Party of Life

It's kind of fun being 80, as I hang out with other 80 year olds and our impending demise is just a perfectly normal topic of conversation. We all wonder when and what will finally bring us down.

At least among those I talk with, we're pretty much OK with it, and are just doing whatever feels right with our remaining years. This gave me a different perspective on the more frequent deaths happening around me.

It's not like they were tragically struck down and taken from us. It's more like they decided it was time to leave. It as if life is a party with all of our friends, but as the night goes on, one-by-one they gradually decide it's time to go home.

Professional Wrestling

You might be thinking there's a problem here. Does one really want to spend their whole life constantly examining all the Reflections in every little aspect of life? While it might bring some peace and understanding, that doesn't sound like fun.

There's a Japanese word describing an audience assuming some performance is real, all acting and behaving as if it is. This is best illustrated in the world of professional wrestling. On the one hand, everyone knows it's an act, but on the other, everyone acts as if it's not. The wrestlers, the referee, the announcers, and the fans all act as if the drama unfolding in the ring is real. It's fun.

And so it is in life. We can all participate in the drama, the joys and sorrows, fully immerse ourselves, and yet, at the same time, take some comfort in understanding the underlying harmonies below.

Global Webs

"... all of us have grown used to the totalitarian system and accepted it as an immutable fact, and thereby actually helped keep it going. None of us are only its victims; we are all also responsible for it.

"It would be very unwise to think of the sad heritage of the last 40 years only as something foreign, something inherited from a distant relative. On the contrary, we must accept this heritage as something we have inflicted on ourselves. If we accept it in such a way, we shall come to understand it is up to all of us to do something about it."

—Excerpt from Czechoslovakian President
Vaclav Havel's 1990 New Year's Day address (as
Czechoslovakia emerged from the USSR)

Following the implications of Reflection, the entire world situation is a manifestation of each of our inner selves, but the degree of closeness or distance we have from any given situation indicates how much a part of us that situation is.

While we are all connected by Reflection, there are some realities which are close to us and some which are far away. My reality includes my own divorce. For those around me my divorce is also part of their reality and reflects their inner selves, but not to the same degree. For some of my close friends, the

failure of my marriage brings to the surface their own fears of difficulty in their marriages. They have remained married, so the reality of my divorce is not as extreme for them as it was for me, but my divorce is still as much a part of their reality as mine.

These ideas extend to the entire world. The issue of freedom in Eastern Europe is a Reflection of all our inner selves, but more so for those people in Eastern Europe.

When we read about famine in other parts of the World, it makes us reflect on our own fear that there will not be enough to eat.

Natural Disasters

In 1978, the Boston area was hit with blizzard on top of blizzard. It rated us the status of a national disaster. The reserves were called in to help clear the streets. Hundreds of vehicles were stuck and abandoned on the major highways. People were forbidden to drive. The state simply shut down for a week.

I don't know what the news coverage of the blizzard looked like from the rest of the country, but I imagine it had a lot to do with the tragedy of it all, but talk to anyone that was in it and you get a different story.

It forced us all to relax. We couldn't go anywhere. We had to spend time with our families and neighbors. There were no pressures. We couldn't go to work. We couldn't go to school. We couldn't go to any of the other types of commitments we had. All we could do was hang around the neighborhood.

The weather turned beautiful, with crisp clear winter days, wonderful to be out in, and tons of snow. It was better than any real vacation, which so often has all the pressures of non-vacation time. This was forced relaxation for all of us and was a time fondly remembered by at least everyone I know who lived through it.

It certainly seems to have reflected an inner need in all of us.

Living in Boston, I didn't have the contact with the San Francisco earthquake that I had with the Boston blizzard, but I wondered about the quake, and got hints from one person who was there.

That person in San Francisco was a public relations person working with a company I was analyzing. All our communication, by phone, was purely professional.

Shortly after the quake, I was talking to her about arranging a meeting with the company she was representing, but she wanted to talk about the quake. The conversation turned real as we dropped the professional topics.

She complained about her roof tiles and the mess and the traffic, all in a tone of aggravation at the disruptions. Not being able to help myself, I asked her if there was a good side as well. Her whole tone changed, and as the agitated edge softened, she sounded more relaxed and said, yes, it was wonderful. People had stopped being focused on hustling to get where they were going, and instead were reaching out to help each other. In her words, the quake really "shook them up"—both literally and figuratively.

At least for this one woman, the quake caused a crack in the day-to-day hustle of life revealing the humanity of those around her. What other stories are there from San Francisco like that one?

That earthquake, did in fact, have a direct benefit for me. Remember the lucrative seminars I was going to teach and the visions of plane crashes they gave me? I had committed to do the seminars but didn't want to do them.

The company sponsoring the seminars had scheduled its biggest money-making show in San Francisco for the week following the quake. They had already laid out the expenses for the show and took a large financial loss when nobody could come. This loss, coupled with other factors, made it difficult for them to adequately promote the seminar series I was to give—so they canceled it.

Wars

Most analysis of why there are wars misses the most important point. They fill a deep need.

The war stories of the veterans of WWII are a striking illustration of this. They revel in accounts of the war. Comics and movies glorified the exploits of our soldiers. As a child growing up in the 1950's there was certainly lip service paid to the horrors of war, but the overall impression was WWII was a glorious adventure in which good triumphed over evil.

It was a powerful catalyst for change, replacing the depression of the 1930s with the boom economy of the 1950s.

An interesting look at the British perspective of World War II is shown in the movie *Hope & Glory*. It shows the positive effects of the war on the English. The war brought a time of change, and a liberation from the stifling English pre-war society. The movie is told through the eyes of children, growing and maturing as England itself was. If this is an accurate portrayal of much of England during the war, then it gives a glimpse of one need the war filled for some of the English.

I've read that the ancient Celtic tribes used to war every spring. They did it in part for fun. They were careful not to wipe each other out, otherwise there would be no war the following spring.

Look at the invasion of Grenada. Shortly thereafter there was a rush of young men trying to get into the armed forces.

And now, in 1990, with a major portion of our economy dependent on our war machine, the enemy of the day, the USSR, has decided not to play anymore. We need a justification for our military might and Sadaam Hussein suddenly enters the picture.

We haven't always needed the glory of defeating bad guys. The America of the 1960s was filled with self doubt and the emerging image of the ugly American. That America needed to learn the other side; that America had Viet Nam.

Final Thoughts

"I have heard it said that there are men who read in books to convince themselves there is a God"

—Hawkeye in *The Last of the Mohicans*, James Fenimore Cooper

This book has covered a wide range of implications of an old idea, from sprained ankles to wars and from dice games to God. Ultimately, however, the idea provides us with a way of understanding and looking for the answers we each carry within.

The truth of the idea can only be learned by trying it on and seeing what connections it reveals. So, this last chapter is left as an exercise for the reader. Drop, for awhile, pre-existing notions of how it all works and what it all means, assume the ideas in the book are true, and see what the world and your life looks like from there.

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This book has evolved over a number of years and has been influenced by the many people who have read it and provided comments and direction. The help has all come as needed, from those who liked it and those who didn't, and ranges from the simple but honest publisher's point of view provided by Helen Martineau to the extensive reading and critiquing of multiple versions provided by Nancy Wilson.

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For this latest version, *Human Entanglement and The Spiritual Core*, I want to especially thank Rosemary and Eve Christoph whose encouragement led to this update and re-issue, and Maureen Moore, for her inputs on the design of the re-issue, and, more important, ways to better explain the paradox that I'm not a woo-woo sort of person, but a very logical one whose logical mind dictates that woo-woo is real.

Invaluable to this effort were the three groups in Shelburne Falls for authors to try out and read their works: Joan Livingston's third Sundays, Cindy Snow's third Fridays, and Maureen Moore's last Sundays.

About the Author

Dennis C Merritt has been a programmer, now called a software engineer, for most of his life, but spends his time writing now. He's always had a fascination with learning the mysteries underlying surface appearances.

There is a chapter in the book about IEFBR14, and his interest in that bit of software. Why was it fascinating to him? Because it didn't do anything. Rather, whenever you ran that program you unlocked all of the mysteries of the operating system underlying those big old computers.

This is what he loved about the programming language Prolog. Prolog made it appear as if one could program a computer simply by making logical assertions. Except it didn't quite work like that. It's only when you understood the underlying algorithms that created the illusion of logic that you could really make use of the language.

The same with *Jazz Chords for Baritone Ukulele*. It was when he began to understand the music theory behind the chords that all of the shapes used to play the chords made sense.

And so it was with *Reflection*, when Ramona Garcia first opened his eyes to what might be happening beneath the events of our lives...

Other Books etc. by Dennis C Merritt

Alice at Plum Island and Other Stories, Threads & Magic—A collection of fun stories from the life of Dennis C Merritt.

I've Got a Better One—Stories from Dennis' best friend, more like a brother, Sid Feldman's life.

Jazz Chords for Baritone Ukulele—Using music theory to understand how four note jazz chords map to the four strings of the baritone ukulele.

Understand Jazz Chords on Guitar—Music theory explains chords played in different places on the six strings of a guitar.

Find-a-Frog—A children's picture book with hidden frogs.

Adventure in Prolog—A tutorial on the logic programming language Prolog, using an interactive fiction game as the main teaching example.

Building Expert Systems in Prolog—A tutorial on using Prolog for developing intelligent systems.

dennismerritt.substack.com—Periodic writings and podcasts by Dennis on a variety of topics.

www.youtube.com/@dennismerritt—Dennis' YouTube channel with videos on a variety of topics.

www.dennismerritt.com

Shelburne Falls Authors

Peter Champoux in his book *Gaia Matrix* studied energy flows on the North American tectonic plate and determined that the very center was Shelburne Falls, MA. I'm not sure what to make of that.



