

Preamble

Constructive Feeling Meditations complement Autogenic Practice, and are an integral part of Luis de Rivera's Autogenics 3.0. [de Rivera 2018 pp 129-145¹].

In these meditations on Constructive Feelings, de Rivera states that they are:

❖ "a static meditation because the focus is on the unchanging selected feeling"

de Rivera 2018 p 130

This does not exactly work for the feeling / realisation of Inter-Being, which by its very nature is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon. However, I am including it within the Constructive Feeling Meditation group as I feel this is where it rightly belongs, and I sense that this is in the spirit of de Rivera's perspective. In this meditation we allow our feelings and reflections to evolve in time, that is, during the meditation itself. Inter-Being is essentially about the flowing nature of life.

The initial part of this paper is by way of an introduction to the concept of inter-being; and then, with some of these ideas resonating within our being, we can go on to the actual constructive feeling meditation on these resonating matters. This is the first of two linked articles on the subject: the second being designated F 11.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Michael Ross and Annie Sturgeon for their most helpful suggestions and proof-reading.

Contents /

¹ De Rivera calls this series of Meditations: "Meditation on Feelings" – and are based on Constructive Feelings that are "deemed beneficial for your personal development" [de Rivera 2018 pp129-130]. I have opted to call these Constructive Feeling Meditations, to distinguish them from Feeling the Feeling Meditation (generally a meditation on a distressing feeling) – which de Rivera notates in English as "Feeling Meditation". See also F5A: "Feeling the Feeling Meditation" on this website.

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Notation: words appearing in the glossary are notated [thus](#).

I. Introduction

1.1 Flourishing Birch Tree

In the garden of the house my wife Bernie and I live in, is a wonderful birch tree, upon which I often look out. What is the nature of this birch tree? Well, it can only grow because of the sun, the clouds which provide rain, the atmosphere which provides it with both oxygen and carbon dioxide, the earth – from which it can absorb water and nutrients, and countless other matters that are not intrinsic to the birch tree. So there is no such thing as a birch tree, or any other thing, that can be said to have a separate existence. In this sense we can say the birch tree inter-is with everything else.

Is inter-is a proper word?!

1.2 Inter-Being

Inter-Being is a wonderful word developed and used frequently in the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh.

If you are a poet, you'll see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper "inter are."

Interbeing is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter" the verb "to be", we have a new verb, "inter-be".

If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact nothing can grow. Even we cannot grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. And the logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

Hanh 2012 The Pocket Thich Nhat Hanh pp 55-56

1.3 Full of non-self elements

We can look at this in another way, and say that the tree is full of non-self elements. In fact, the tree cannot exist on its own: in this sense, it has no separate self. It inter-is with the whole cosmos. Nothing can exist on its own (including feelings, views and bodily sensations); everything inter-is with everything else. These ideas are expressed beautifully

in the ancient writings about Indra's net², which is embraced in the [Diamond Sutra](#). Danah Zohar³ refers to this in her 1990 classic: *The Quantum Self*:

❖ In the house of Indra there is said to be a network of pearls so arranged that if you look at one you see all the others reflected in it. In the same way, each object in the world is not merely itself but involves every other object, and in fact is every other object.

Zohar 1990 pp 55 – 56

The teachings of the Diamond Sutra embrace the concept that a rose is not just a rose; it is full of non-rose elements. If we realise this, we real-ise its true nature, its [suchness](#)⁴.

In the Autogenic Sequence, we embrace the phrase "It Breathes Me", which in the Schultz model is Standard Exercise 4. In Autogenics 3.0 of Luis de Rivera, it becomes Standard Exercise 10. In the context of Inter-Being, this is rather nice, as it is a reminder at the end of the sequence of our inter-dependence on all that is. In Sue McLennan's variation of the phrase: "Life Breathes Me"⁵, the essence of the nature of our lives for me becomes more immediate, more in this moment. We are full of non-self elements; and each breath in our lives can be a reminder of this: of the magic of the creation of oxygen produced by our Mother Earth.

1.4 Empty of a separate self

A further teaching of this concept in classic Buddhist writings is that everything is empty. Thich Nhat Hanh then asks with a glint in his eyes:

"Empty of what?"

And he replies, with a wonderful, wry smile:

"Empty of a separate self."

Meaning: each thing, object, living being, leaf, and cloud is full of non-self elements; and so is empty of a separate and independent self.

² Indra's net is "is a metaphor used to illustrate the concepts of Śūnyatā (emptiness), pratīyasamutpāda (dependent origination), and interpenetration in Buddhist philosophy". [[Indra's net - Wikipedia](#)]

³ Heartfelt thanks to Nigel Allinson, one time GP registrar with us at the Rose Garden Medical Centre, who gave me this wonderful book following his year with us.

⁴ Suchness: see glossary. Note that suchness comes to life when realised with [sign](#), [signlessness](#), [emptiness](#) and being [full of not-self elements](#). I have found these concepts most helpful for getting a deeper feeling of the nature of Inter-Being; however, they are best seen not a theoretical concepts to speculate upon, but rather as a grounding for daily mindful practice. See also Hanh 1993A (*Sutra on Knowing the Better Way to Catch a Snake*); e.g. pp 30-34. "If we take these teachings and use them as theories, we will be trapped" [op cit p 31].

⁵ Sue McLennan is a Yoga and Autogenic Therapist living in Scotland.

He goes on to say:

If we are not empty, we become a solid, inert block. We cannot breathe, we cannot think. To be empty means to be alive, to breathe in and to breathe out. Emptiness is impermanence⁶; it is change. We should not be afraid of emptiness, impermanence, or change; we should celebrate them.

A man once came to see me and complained that life was empty and impermanent. He had been a Buddhist for five years and had thought a lot about emptiness and impermanence. But one day his 14 year old daughter told him:

☯ “Daddy, please don't complain about impermanence. Without impermanence, how could I grow up?”

Of course, she was right.

Hanh 2017 p 41

1.5 Impermanence

The acorn as an acorn has to give up any idea of permanence if it dreams of being an Oak Tree. So, to become an oak, it gives up the idea of (being) a separate self and simply allows its inner crucial nature to evolve spontaneously over time – till eventually it can give life and shelter to birds, rabbits and insects.

Impermanence and Change Inter-Are

The nature of reality metaphorically, and actually, is more like a flow. Heraclitus⁷ said “You can never step into the same river twice”⁸.

1.6 Change and Growth

To grow, we have to change. To transform ourselves on our life journey, we have to change. Learning and developing new skills depend upon the ability of the neurones in our brains to change, be pruned, and new synapses and neurones to develop and grow. This is the essence of our neuro-plasticity and future development; if the direction is to be

⁶ Impermanence is one of the Five Sounds that can Heal the World. See Hanh 2015 pp 9-12; and F7 on website: “Meditation on Five Sounds that can Heal the World”.

⁷ Heraclitus: 535 – 475 BPE; a Greek philosopher, “known for his doctrine of change being central to the universe” [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Heraclitus]

Image also Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclitus>



⁸ Meaning that the next time we step into it, it will be a different river in that it will contain different water. The nature of the cosmos and life is one of Flow [e.g. Iain McGilchrist 2021F Vol II: Chapter 23: Flow and Movement pp 945-996; Csikszentmihalyi 1992: Flow: *The Psychology of Happiness*].

wholesome, then we need to choose mindfully. To choose mindfully, we need time, space, and a meditative type of practice [See also B25, B26, and B27 on website].

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Figure 1.6 illustrates schematically some of the dynamics discussed above.

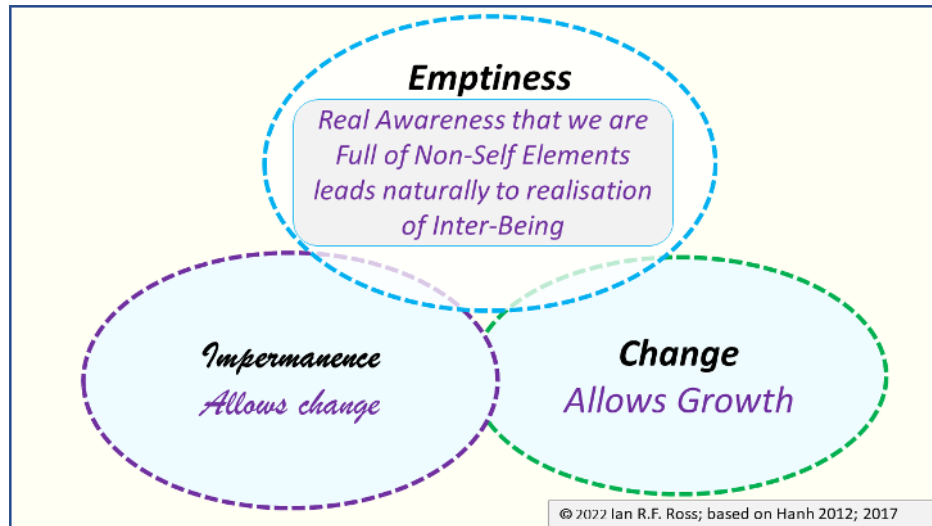


Figure 1.6
Three inter-related aspects of inter-being
Based especially on Hanh 2012; and Hanh 2017 pp 37-41

1.7 Reality and mental health

In March 2022 I attended a wonderful neuroscience webinar on:

- ❖ Working with the Pain of Loss by Dr Phyllis Kosminsky, with Dr Jan McGregor Hepburn as the excellent facilitator.

Phyllis Kosminsky came up with a remarkable statement:

Mental Health is a commitment to Reality.

Kosminsky 2022

This initially surprised me with a shock – like a sort of mild yet significant electric shock; and reminds me of something I recently wrote following an advanced AT-CPD session with two women who work for a charity:


There is suffering; there are causes of suffering; there are skilful means to deal with suffering [from the Four Noble Truths – Hanh 1998]. If we do not have this knowledge, we are ignorant (no blame per se). Yet our task on our life journey is to become informed and so our ignorance is reduced; and then we are better able to help ourselves and others.

Mental, social, and cultural health are interdependent. This becomes clear in Iain McGilchrist's 2009 epic: "The Master and his Emissary – *The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. Yet what perhaps can now be seen as his Opus Magnum is his 2021: "THE MATTER WITH THINGS – *Our Brains, Our Delusions, and the Unmaking of the World*." Since Descartes, there has been a tendency in our thinking and our being to become divorced from our feelings and nature. We live in a mainly linear world created and perceived through linear left brain modalities. Feelings and [spiritual](#) matters are often regarded as of secondary value, if any. The final chapter in McGilchrist's "The Matter with Things" reflects on the nature of the sacred [McGilchrist 2021B: Chapter 28: The Sense of the Sacred]; the unmaking of our world is likely to come about if the sacred is not honoured and restored.

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Mental health is a commitment to reality. Suffering caused by allowing the [second arrow](#) to penetrate us more deeply is a form of ignorance when at the time we have not seen reality for what it is. The task for therapists (and all of us) is to allow and enable us to see reality more clearly. This will involve breaking down transgenerational negative [Habit Energies](#) and Cultural / National negative Habit Energies.

Reality and inter-relatedness inter-are [Capra & Luisi 2014]. This is because that is.

All things by immortal power
Near and Far
Hiddenly 
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star.
Francis Thompson (c. 1859-1907)

1.8 Mammals and our CARE circuits

Mammals, including of course humans, tend to have relatively long childhoods during which the younglings need nurturing and a safe environment for them to develop and reach their potential. Mammals share seven discreet Emotional Operating Neuro Systems which include CARE (nurturing) and PLAY circuits – which inter-are between parent and offspring. If the parent is unable to CARE adequately, the children will suffer [Bowlby 1953 ; Winnicott 1960 ; Panksepp 1998; Sunderland 2016; Panksepp and Biven 2012].

The fundamental relationship and inter-ness is illustrated in Alex Grey's painting: Nursing.



Figure 1.8A
Nursing

Grey 1990

Mother-child communication in the early months of the infant as portrayed by Alex Grey

Imported from Ross 2010 p 181 Figure 5.1B.
(With permission and thanks 2010)

With the original figure from "Sacred Mirrors", these words appear:

"The bonding of mother and child is a miraculous outpouring of unobstructed love channelled through the mortal coil. Nursing is the physical bond of nourishment..... Between mother and child, there are also bio-electromagnetic bonds, emotional and psychic bondings, and ultimately the spiritual bond that brought them together".

Grey 1985

See also: B 25 on website

CARE, nurturing, PLAY, and wholesome SEEKING [Panksepp 1998] lay the foundations for flourishing humans societies.

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Figure 1.8B below is a playful representation of inter-being.



Figure 1.8B
A Playful Representation of Inter-Being

Comments on Figure 1.8B

The icons / pictures, clockwise from top left are:

- i. Mother earth from space depicting much of Africa and the Saudi Arabia massif and adjoining countries
- ii. The sun, cloud, and rain
- iii. Our moon
- iv. Mother-Infant Dyad
- v. An elephant
- vi. A rain forest from the air
- vii. A rain forest close up
- viii. A family manifesting togetherness and joy
- ix. A human on a mini sailing vessel on the sea,
 - o which contains Plankton, supplying perhaps 50% of our planet's oxygen. "Scientists estimate that 50-80% of the oxygen production on Earth comes from the ocean. The majority of this production is from oceanic plankton" [<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/ocean-oxygen.html>]
- x. Palm trees
- xi. Flowers, and insects – including butterflies; and in centre right:
- xii. A galaxy

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II. THE EXERCISE: MEDITATION ON INTER-BEING

This is a dynamic reflective meditation, which we can create in our own preferred way. Here are some suggestions.

- i. Start with a brief Calm Abiding form of Meditation⁹ or Autogenic Sequence (not more than once through; or a Partial Exercise).
- ii. We then reflect on the nature of our own understanding of inter-being, having already reflected for a few days / weeks or so on some of the matters raised in Section 1 above.
- iii. We allow the inter-relatedness to permeate our whole being: body, mind and soul.
- iv. We can then reflect on “What are the implications of Inter-Being for ourselves, our life, and our world?”

After the mediation, we may like to consider drawing / painting all the inter-related matters / dynamics that have come to mind.

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III. Appendices preamble

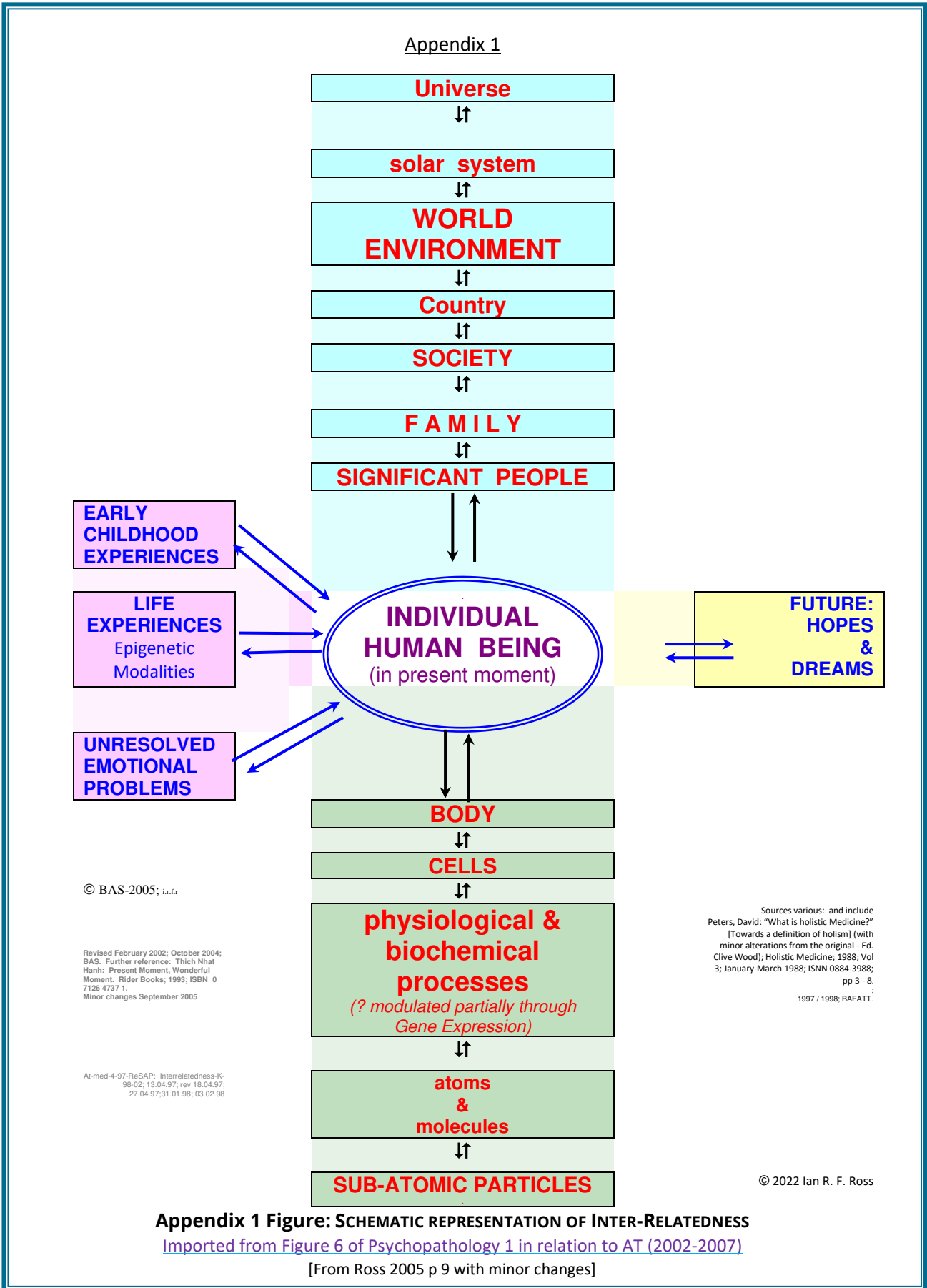
There are two Appendices; each gives a different yet overlapping perspective on the inter-relatedness of all things – and so on Inter-Being.

The first of these is related to the relationship of each person to the cosmos on the one hand, and subatomic particles on the other; and where this intersects with our own childhood / ancestors; and our future hopes and dreams.

The second is specifically related to the miracle of photosynthesis and the provider of life.

Appendix I /

⁹ For example, see Ringu Tuku 1998



Comments on Appendix 1 Figure:

- 1) The individual being is represented in the centre of the Figure.
- 2) We all have a history of life experiences going back to childhood; and our ancestors.
- 3) Negative and Positive Habit Energies are transmitted from these ancestors; yet also from our culture, political leaders past and present; and the state of the earth / climate.
- 4) We also have hopes and dreams about the future.
- 5) The above 2), 3) and 4) can result in us not living in the present moment. This means we may be pursuing the past or getting lost in the future [Hanh 1990].
- 6) We could call the above the horizontal and historical dimension.

- 7) We are also inter-linked, of course, with what is here represented in the vertical dimension. We have a body that is made up of cells, which themselves are made up of complex molecules, atoms, and these themselves are made up of sub-atomic particles that are in constant movement, vibration and flow.
- 8) We are also linked with siblings, family, parents, off-spring, friends, community and culture.....and the world environment, whose very stability is now problematic.
- 9) Beyond this, the atmosphere of Mother Earth, our moon, the planets, the sun and our galaxy¹⁰. And beyond that the vastness of curved space and the origins beyond the big bang.
- 10) All is in flow.
- 11) Within this flow and these vibrations is what can be regarded as the ultimate dimension.

Appendix 2 /

¹⁰ In the Introduction to the Cambridge Companion to Kant, the editor, Paul Guyer quotes a passage direct from Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason': "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: *the starry heaven above me and the moral law within me.*" [Kant 1781/1787]. The starry heaven above, when we are experiencing it live (vivencia) brings this sense of Awe and Wonder. Reflecting on "the morale code within" challenges us with the questions such as: "Why am I here?" and "What is the purpose of human life?" [The second of these questions is from: Chidvilasananda 1995 – reading for 11th October]. For each of us the purpose of life will be different; so the question for each of us becomes: "What is the purpose of my life?" This links in with the whole theme of Inter-Being and the implications of Inter-Being for each one of us.

Appendix 2:
Inter-Being and Life
Some reflections on aspects of respiration and photosynthesis

As I look out of the window while typing this, I can see countless leaves on a tree. The leaves provide the tree with the carbon for growth, through photosynthesis. In this process, oxygen is released from the tree.

At the same time, and during the night, the tree needs oxygen for respiration – to provide vital energy for the cellular activity of the tree.

I am only able to write this because of the oxygen provided by leaves and the plankton in the oceans. It is now estimated that plankton of the oceans provide more oxygen world-wide than do trees.

The basic chemistry of these processes is indicated below.

I. Respiration

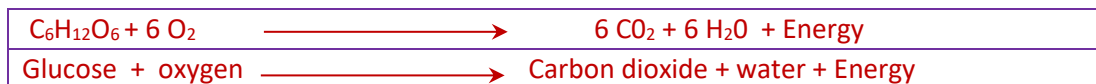


Figure Appendix 2A
A Basic Formulae for Respiration

II. Photosynthesis

As will be seen in Figure 2B, photosynthesis is, in chemical terms, essentially the reverse of respiration.

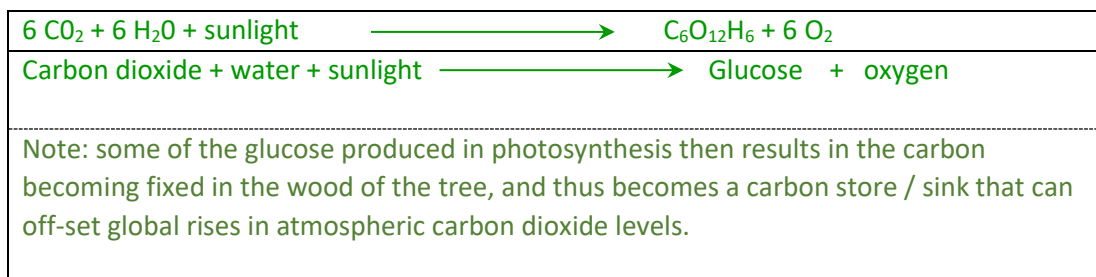


Figure Appendix 2B
A Basic Formulae for Photosynthesis

In summary:

The oxygen that we breathe in came from within the leaves of the tree – and the plankton. So what was part of the tree / plankton becomes part of us. The oxygen that we breathe in gives our cells within the energy to live – by carrying out amazing chemical reactions that support the life of cells, organs, body and mind. As a result, we breathe out carbon dioxide, as do all other animals; in time, this can then be taken up by plants / trees etc to give them the carbon structures (sugars; wood etc) to grow. All life, whether plant or animals, depends on these extraordinary processes of nature – and none of these could be without the constant stream of energy our planet receives from the sun.

Without nature, we cannot be. These processes inter-are with life, and therefore with ourselves.

IV. Thematically related articles

B 22	A playfully sympathetic approach to the Polyvagal Theory: <i>An introduction to the concepts of Flourishing Autogenically</i>	2021
B 24	Autogenic Switches and Well-Being. This deals with some of the underlying dynamics that can facilitated balance and harmony in those regularly practising Autogenic Training (this article)	2020
B 25	Themes of Neuroscience relevant to Well-Being	2022
B 26	Well-Being and Flourishing as a Skill we can Develop	2022
B 27	Three Key Types of Meditation and their varying and specific effects on Well-Being (after Ricard, Lutz, and Davidson)	Autumn 2022
C 2	Mindsight – our seventh sense and associated pre-frontal cortex function [based on Siegel 2010]	2011
D 4	Duhkha, Impermanence, and Inter-relatedness – <i>Some Reflections on Sakyamuni, Inter-relatedness, and Well-Being</i>	2012
D 8	Duhkha II The Second Arrow and Sympathetic Afferents	2017
D 9	Duhkha III Reducing Duhkha: <i>Experiential Modes, Mindfulness and Intuitive Working Memory</i>	2017
D 11	Sukha: Paths of Well-Being, PSNS Afferents, and Inner Warmth: <i>from Duhkha to Sukha</i>	2017
E 03	Look at the Cypress Tree – <i>Autonomic Afferents and Well-Being</i> (Background paper for a talk given to the British Autogenic Society Schultz and Luthe Memorial Lecture 2016)	2016
F1	An introduction to Autogenics 3.0 – based on the work of Luis de Rivera	2018
F6.1	Constructive Feeling Meditation I: Calm (After de Rivera)	2019
F6.2	Constructive Feeling Meditation 2: Existence	2019
F 9	Inter-Being Part I (Meditation on Constructive Feelings Series) ^{this article}	Autumn 2022
F 10	Constructive Feeling Meditation on Compassion (after Akong Rinpoche)	Autumn 2022
F 11	Inter-Being Part II (Meditation on Constructive Feelings Series)	Planned for 2023
F 12	Constructive Feeling Meditation on The Diamond that Cuts Through our Illusions – <i>Based on the Diamond Sutra</i>	Planned for 2023

V. GLOSSARY /

V. GLOSSARY

The glossary below is relatively brief, yet it embraces some important concepts related to Inter-Being and the true essence of matter and beings

<p><u>Diamond Sutra:</u></p> <p>From Glossary of Ross 2010 with minor changes</p>	<p>One of the basic tenets of Buddhist psychology is the inter-relatedness of all things. A tree could not exist without the sun; without clouds; without the air (atmosphere); and without soil. Some strands of Western Psychology embrace this concept – such as Family Therapy, in which the idea that psychopathology can reside in just one member of a family is absurd: our being and behaviour is intimately related to those we are with (Minuchin 1974**). Zohar quotes a passage from the Diamond Sutra thus:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>❖ In the house of Indra there is said to be a network of pearls so arranged that if you look at one you see all the others reflected in it. In the same way, each object in the world is not merely itself but involves every other object, and in fact <i>is</i> every other object.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Zohar 1990 pp 55 - 56</p> </div> <p>These concepts are also embraced by David Bohm in “Wholeness and the Implicate Order” [Bohm 1980].</p> <p>** Some of Minuchin’s research and thesis is briefly reviewed in Ross 2010: pp 90-91.</p>
<p><u>Empty</u></p>	<p>The concept of emptiness is intimately linked, in Buddhist psychology, with that of Inter-Being.</p> <p><u>Everything</u> in this concept is considered to be empty of a separate self; that is, nothing can exist that is not dependent upon other dynamics (since the big bang, to use our present metaphor for origins).</p> <p>“Empty of a separate self” means that each thing / manifestation of anything in the cosmos is full of non-self elements. This includes thoughts, feelings, emotions, music, colours and eggshells.</p> <p>This ancient concept has been embraced by, for example, nuclear physicists and Capra & Luisi in their Systems View of Life: <i>A Unifying Vision</i> [2014].</p> <p>See also in main text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 1.2 Inter-Being ❖ 1.3 Full of non-self elements ❖ 1.4 Empty of a separate self
<p><u>Four Noble Truths</u></p> <p>See Hanh 1998 (e.g. pp 9-11; and the whole book).</p> <p>See also: D 4: relating to Dukha and D 11: relating to Sukha – perhaps best translated as Well-Being or Flourishing.</p>	<p>These are sometimes referred to as the Four Ennobling Truths, and form a basic foundation of the Buddha’s teaching. Briefly put:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. There is suffering (Dukha) II. There are causes of this suffering – in terms of its “origin, roots, nature, creating.....” [Hanh 1998 p 9]. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ “We need to recognise and identify the spiritual and material foods we have ingested that are causing us to suffer” [op cit p 10] (Food in both actual and metaphorical sense.) III. There is a path out of the suffering. “The cessation of creating suffering by refraining from doing things that make us suffer” [Hanh 1998 p 11] IV. This path is called the Eightfold Path: by refraining from “doing the things that cause us to suffer” [op cit p 11; and especially the footnote 1 re the meaning of “Right” in the context of “Right View, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Diligence, Right Mindfulness, , Right Action, and Right Concentration].

<p><u>Full of non-self elements</u></p>	<p>Nothing can exist or come into being by itself. Every thing, thought, feeling, awareness is inter-related with other beings and the cosmos. In this sense we can say that it is “<u>empty</u> of a separate self”.</p> <p>Thus we can go on to say that we, including stones, clouds, stars and sparrows are full of non-self elements.</p> <p>The realisation that all things and modalities are full of non-self elements can allow us to see the essence, the <u>suchness</u>, of all.</p>	
<p><u>Habit Energy</u></p> <p>Extracted from Glossary of B 26 and D 11 on website (See section IV above: Thematically related articles)</p> <p>See also Hanh 1998; e.g. pp 24-25; 45-48; 61-62; Habit Energies can be neutral, negative, or positive</p>	<p>As we grow up, we take on certain patterns of behaviour and attitudes from, for example: our parents, teachers, and ancestors. Some of these may be helpful, some may be neutral, and others may be dysfunctional. In Buddhist psychology, these are termed Habit Energies, and overlap with Procedural Learned Tendencies [Ogden 2009] and Complexes [Jung].</p> <p>In the context of habit energies, the image is sometimes given of a man on a horse; the man does not know where he is going because the horse has a will of her / his own. The horse in this context is our habit energy [Hanh 1998 pp 24-25]. Habit energies can influence us at an unconscious level and so lead to volitional actions that may later perplex us – that is, we can be driven by these unconscious forces.</p> <p>Complexes, in the Jungian sense, are forms of habit energies.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Everyone knows nowadays that people ‘have complexes’. What is not so well known, though far more important theoretically, is that complexes can have us.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jung CW 8 para 200</p> </div> <p>These can be passed down to us by our ancestors, and in turn we can pass down habit energies to our offspring. These may manifest in terms of Procedural Learned Tendencies [Ogden 2009]. Negative habit energies can very easily be transmitted to our children, starting when the baby is in the womb. Hanh suggests pre-marriage classes to reduce such negative transmission.</p>	
<p><u>Meta-awareness I</u> (meta-attention)</p> <p>Extract from glossary of B 26</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>From Figure 1.5 of B 26 on website</u></p> <p>“Being able to track the quality of one’s own awareness – for example, noticing when your mind wanders or you’ve made a mistake.”</p>	<p>Reference</p> <p>Lapate et al 2016</p>
<p><u>Meta-awareness II</u></p> <p>Extract from glossary of B 26</p>	<p>A complementary perspective on meta-awareness is given by Dahl et al.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “....An awareness of the processes of conscious experience, such as recognition that one is expressing an emotion, a thought, or a sensory perception as it occurs in real time.” ○ It “is involved when one suddenly recognises an emotion before it provokes a reaction, for example, and also when one suddenly realises that one has been ‘on autopilot’ while engaged in a daily routine.” 	<p>Dahl, Wilson-Mendenhall, and Davidson 2020 p 32198</p>
<p>Mindfulness embraces both aspects of meta-awareness.</p>		
<p>Spiritual /</p>		

<p><u>Spiritual</u></p> <p>Adapted from Ross 2010 Glossary page 289</p> <p>(In the general context of Mind-Body healing);</p> <p>And from E-03 on web</p>	<p>The term spiritual, as used in this document does not assume a belief in God, gods, or any particular religious set of beliefs (or a belief in a “deus ex machina”). The following definition of spiritual I have found most helpful in practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☸ “By spiritual we mean the needs and expectations which all humans have to find meaning, purpose and value in life: even people who are not religious have belief systems that give their lives meaning and purpose. Spiritual distress can hinder physical healing, and its identification may improve healing outcomes. Thus we consider this a dimension relevant in holistic health care.” ○ Quoted from: The Department of General Practice (Edinburgh University); notes for 5th Year Medical Students – 2002. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Also see Frankl 1946 / 1984.) <p>A further interesting perspective on spiritual is given by Pollard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Some people find spirituality through religion; others find it through science, music, art or a connection with nature, while still others find it in their personal values and principles. No matter how it is defined, this elusive entity describes the way we find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in our lives.” (Pollard 2004)
<p><u>Second Arrow</u></p> <p>Adapted from glossary of: D 11 on Web: Sukha: Paths of Well-Being, PSNS Afferents, and Inner Warmth: <i>from Duhkha to Sukha</i> [Ross 2017]</p>	<p>There are, of course, many things in life that can result in us suffering. In Buddhist psychology the perceived cause is sometimes referred to as the ‘first arrow’. However, what can cause us to suffer deeply is not this, but rather <i>what our minds tend to make of this</i>. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We may get a bad cold; and start to say to ourselves: “Why me? Why should this happen to me right now at this important time in my life?” ➤ We may be irritated by someone at college, at work, or in the family – and embark on negative ruminations about them in which we plot to get our own back – feeding the “negative wolf” within [Fredrickson 2009 p 179] <i>with hatred and ill-will towards the other</i>. <p>These are both examples of our response (the second arrow) inflicting more suffering within us than the original event / incident.</p> <p>Autogenic Training, and other Mental Training approaches, can help us to prevent or deflect this second arrow from penetrating. This ability is associated with a growing meta-awareness.</p> <p>The Four Noble Truths help us to become less prone to the second arrow piercing us.</p>
<p><u>Sign</u></p>	<p>In Buddhist psychology, a sign is the apparent manifestation of any thing, object, thought, feeling emotion. This sign does not reveal its true essences, its suchness.</p> <p>We generally live our life in the mental state of assuming the sign is the reality. This is the world of delusion in the Plato metaphor of the Cave.</p> <p>The true nature of reality is seen in terms of signlessness.</p>
<p>Signlessness /</p>	

<p><u>Signlessness</u></p>	<p>If we see the signless nature of the word, an object, a thought, a person, we are entering the world of suchness: the true nature, the real essence.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>“If you see the signlessness of signs, you see the Tathagata”. This is a sentence from the <i>Diamond Sutra</i>¹¹. <i>Tathagata</i> means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The wondrous nature of reality”. <p>To see the wondrous nature of water, you need to look beyond the sign (appearance) of the water, and see that it is made of non-water elements. If you think that water is only water, and it cannot be the sun, the earth, the flower, you are not correct. When you can see that the water <i>is</i> the sun, the earth, and the flower, that just by looking at the sun or the earth you can see the water, this is “the signlessness of signs.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Hanh 1998 p 149</p> </div> <p>In addition, we tend to look at an object such as a tree, or look at a person, and assume that they are not changing. In fact, the whole of nature and the cosmos are in flux; nothing is permanent; a river is flowing and changing every moment with eddies and vortices [McGilchrist 2021 pp 945-996]. In ancient China there were no words for nouns; everything was seen in terms of an evolving process. Rather than nouns, they described “things” in terms of verbs: Treeing; rivering; elephanting. See also Hanh 2014: The Little Plant of Corn and the “eyes of Singleness” Thich Nhat Hanh Diamond Sutra - YouTube Upper Plum Village – Sunday, 26th April 2012</p>
<p><u>Suchness</u></p>	<p>The suchness of anything: object, thought, emotion, feeling, expression is its true essence. A flower appears to be simply a flower. A rose is a rose.</p> <p>However, the formulation a rose is a rose misses the true nature of the rose. The rose in this context can be seen as a sign. If we see the rose only as a rose, we are deceived. The realm of signs is the realm of deception. Meditation and Mindfulness can help us to see that the rose is made up of non-self elements, and that is why it is a true rose. It is in a state of flow from the bud to the full flowering rose, to the flopping flower and rose hip.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Perceptions have signs as their object, and our perceptions are often inaccurate and sometimes quite erroneous.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Hanh 1992 p 46</p> </div> <p>Hanh goes on to quote a saying of the Sakyamuni Buddha:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>“Where there is sign, there is illusion.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Hanh 1992 p 48</p> </div> <p>From this arise the aphorism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Where there is perception there is deception” (after Hanh). <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued /</i></p>

¹¹ Note that the term Diamond Sutra is not the true name of this sutra. The original name was: “The Diamond that Cuts Through Illusion” [e.g. Hanh 1992]. The suchness of this sutra can be said to be not the diamond but “the *diamond that cuts through illusion*”!

Suchness continued

The above statement: “Where there is [sign](#), there is illusion” is pertinent, as we tend to see the rose as a fixed object; yet actually it is in flow (see [signlessness](#) above).

The deception is there because the sign implies the rose is only a rose; rather than also being full of non-self elements. When we begin to see the [signless nature](#) of the rose, then deception begins to dissolve as we begin to feel its true essence, its suchness. (See [signlessness](#) above).

Let us return to the basic concept of suchness. We can use this formulation, which in due course we can see is derived from Thich Nhat Hanh’s wisdom.

- a) A is A; yet this is not quite accurate. This implies A as a fixed entity; this is the realm of signs.
- b) A actually contains and is embodied by B, C and D. This is the realm of true essence, going beyond mere perception; it is Full on Non-Self Elements (FNSE) manifesting as the B, C and D.
- c) Once we see that it is full of B, C, and D, we can see A as it truly is, which we can now designate as A^{FNSE}.
 - ☸ And the A^{FNSE} is not the A of a) above, as we recognise it is Full of Non-Self Elements, i.e. [FNSE](#).

When we achieve insight, our knowledge is no longer based simply on perceptions, and we call this knowledge *prajñā*, wisdom or understanding beyond signs.

Hanh 1992 p 46

The nature of Inter-Being comes with the realisation in which we embrace, or become embraced by, the signless nature of reality. Hanh clarifies and deepens our understanding in the following exposition:

When the Buddha sees a rose, does he recognise it as a rose in the same way that we do? Of course he does. But before he says the rose is a rose, the Buddha has seen that the rose is not a rose. He has seen that it is made of non-rose elements, with no clear demarcation between the rose and the elements that are not the rose. When we perceive things, we generally use the sword of conceptualisation to cut reality into pieces, saying:

- “This piece is A, and A cannot be B, C, or D.”

But when A is looked at in the light of dependent co-arising, we see that A is comprised of B, C, D, and everything else in the universe.

- “A” can never exist by itself alone. When we look deeply into A, we see B, C, and D, and so on. Once we understand that A is not just A, we understand the true nature of A and are qualified to say “A is A,” or “A is not A.” ☺
- But until then, the A we see is just an illusion of the true A.

Look deeply at the one you love (or someone you do not like at all!) and you will see that she is not herself alone. “She” includes her education, society, culture, heredity, parents, and all the things that contribute to her being. When we see that, we truly understand...

Hanh 1992 pp 46-47
Layout changed with the
bullet points added

Continued /

Suchness *continued*

The implications of these realisations are discussed further in the companion article F 11:
Constructive Feeling Meditation: Inter-Being Part II.

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The ancient Chinese perhaps understood suchness profoundly. Many years ago I found that in one of Alan Watts books, he suggests that we in the western world have reality distorted. We have nouns: for example: table, sparrow, dog, tree. This implies a fixed entity. This does not reveal the essence of the object. He goes on to say that, in ancient Chinese, nouns did not exist; rather, they would point towards what we call a tree and say (the equivalent of) treeing.

For a light-hearted yet profound animated talk on You Tube, Alan Watts describes the tree as treeing, the apple apple-ing; the planet planet-ing.

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvrfnE7Q-0w>]


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(Also see: Section IV. Thematically related articles on website)

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