

I Said To Myself

Wondrous Mind

Lloyd Fell

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BIOSONG

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This book is dedicated to Penelope Ann

Our life like a breath, then, a give
and a take, a bridge, a central movement,
between singing a separate self
and learning to be selfless.

Extract from *A Seeming Stillness* by David Whyte
From the book *Essentials* by David Whyte, 2020

FOREWORD

Go on, admit it. You talk to yourself, sometimes!

Perhaps you don't take it to the lengths that I have – every page in this book is what I said and Myself said and so on.

It started out as an experiment. Given my experience writing essays and lectures about Mind and Love, based in Biological Science, I wondered if I could expand and clarify these ideas using Dialogue (with apologies to Socrates, Plato and the playwrights who write conversation so ably)?

After six months of effort, I felt I was adding something useful to my previous work. As the months became years, my drafts have received useful feedback from readers¹ and I'm ready to give birth to the book.

Despite the personal title, this is only partly autobiographical. Some events described here didn't happen to Me – or Myself. Machinations of mind that are woven around them, presumably, did.

* * * * *

It started with this silly verse that got into my head one day; then ran around reproducing itself like a family of rabbits.

*I said to myself, and
Myself said to me:
If it wasn't for us
Where would we be?*

¹ Special thanks to Penelope Fell, Terry Williams, Mark Mitchell and Sue Cannon in this regard.

Firstly, how does our ‘in here’ relate to ‘out there?’ Or, to be more precise: How does the reality we perceive in our conscious experience relate to an external reality that we regard as independent of us?

Secondly, what are some of the other mysteries that swirl around the interestingly incomplete Science of Mind?

And thirdly, do they point towards deeper Truths?

The starting point is: being conscious. The endpoint . . . ?

* * * * *

Background Note:

I had just come from a *Mystics and Scientists Conference* in Winchester, England, in 2011, when a friend asked me: Are you a Mystic or a Scientist? The answer should be simple – my experience that could be called mystical has been fleeting, at best, whereas my experience of science has been a lifelong vocation.

But throughout my working life in applied science – which is just one way of looking at the world with strict rules attached – I have reached out toward a broader sphere of knowledge, and also fretted about the ignorance and hubris that results from over-reliance on the scientific way of thinking. Hence I get excited about new ideas in science that bring it closer to the rich mythology of the Humanities.

The disparate parts of one’s psyche enjoy playing together as one grows older. Self-talk ranges far and wide, but there are also certain threads, and perhaps a certain person in the background, that remain constant.

Lloyd Fell

Faulconbridge, Blue Mountains, NSW, Australia

August 2021

FOREWORD

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1. CONSCIOUS

*I said to myself, and
Myself said to me:
If it wasn't for us
Where would we be?*

Are you talking to me?

■ Of course. Who else would I be talking to?

I don't know. There are lots of other people you could talk to. Lloyd's partner, Penelope, is the closest, but she stays at a loving distance from our conversations.

■ There's no one else here at the moment.

Are you sure about that?

■ Well, I can't see any other people.

No, but you're forgetting. That girl who humiliated us in front of everybody yesterday, and that stinking email from our so-called **friend** accusing us of lying . . . and our Mother – they're all hanging around.

■ Our Mother?

She pops up sometimes.

■ Why do we start off with worries? What about all the Beauty and Truth there is to explore?

Okay . . . why not aim for the Magic, right from the start?

■ So what's the best thing about right now?

□ We're **alive**. Good start. **Aliveness** is a wonderful thing. And though Lloyd is rather 'long in the tooth,' his being 'retired' means we don't have a busy schedule.

■ Sometimes I miss that demanding routine that used to snuff out anything creative, most days. But I like us being 'retired' because we can indulge in our own special projects – especially, writing this book.

□ That's right. What, exactly, is this book going to be about?

■ What we've been discussing for years – the satisfactions and wonders of Human **experience**. But with more 'punch' this time.

□ What do you mean: more 'punch'?

■ We want to spell it out in a more provocative and challenging way.

□ Ooh! That sounds a bit dangerous, but I'm in favour, because it might be our last chance to say something about all the dreadful problems in our world.

■ Such as?

□ Domestic violence – right next door. And the selfish greed that is robbing us of what Humans will need for our **aliveness** to continue.

■ Wow! Some problems are so big, it's hard to know where to start, and some are so near you can hear the screams.

□ Both kinds are important.

■ And people say: we have such a limited sphere of influence, we might as well turn a blind eye.

□ I didn't say we could solve the problems, but we can say something about them.

■ Yes, I know we're limited. But what about the idea that you and I might represent the greatest force for change that has ever existed?

□ Bravo! I'm with you . . . I hope.

■ You and I are a Human **mind** – part of one, anyway. Any change for the better must involve a Human **mind**.

□ And there's always a chance other **minds** will be working on it, too. I'm excited to give it a go!

■ We must start at the beginning. Some people don't even bother to **think** about **mind** and what it does.

□ There are a lot of other things to **think** about.

■ But it's because people don't appreciate what **mind** is doing that our problems keep getting worse.

□ Well, we've been researching **mind** for many years. And you remember the details that I usually forget.

■ And you're better at handling those big questions that I find difficult – about **consciousness** and free will – and the unknown force that you say might guide us.

□ I am. Because I have the BELIEF that what we DON'T know is infinitely larger than what we DO know. But you're good at the things we **think** we do know.

■ I use **Scientific explanation** as a tool.

□ So, this experience we call **mind** – what is it?

■ Okay. You and I live in a world amongst other people and things. Our senses tell us this is a substantial, material world. There's furniture here and a window there and trees and rocks outside. And concrete, lots of that. I prefer the trees.

□ So do I! We can talk to the trees when we walk amongst them in the forest. And that's important!

■ On the face of it, everything is solid matter – made of something physical that we can bump into and see and touch. Even what we hear and taste is, supposedly, a physical sensation in our ears or on our tongue.

□ Go on.

■ But you and I – and the people you mentioned just now (forgetting Mother, damn it), exist differently – NOT in a physical form.

□ No.

■ But they – and us – are undoubtedly REAL. In fact, nothing is more REAL than we are, right now. Being **mind**, this is our **reality** – our **conscious experience**, totally subjective and personal. That's actually one bit that worries me – **reality** is so personal it feels like it's mine alone.

□ How come?

■ Well, yours and mine, I suppose. Those other people – they're only here in our **Imagination**, and that's just our impression of them. Even if they were here, we'd still have to rely on this inner perception as our **reality**. How inadequate it seems just to call it **mind**.

□ It is **mind**. But that doesn't really tell us what it is. I can see your problem.

■ It's your problem, too. Are we all there is? If it wasn't for us . . . ?

□ No, but hang on. It's a relational thing. It's how we relate to the other people. And the concrete and the trees. That could be what **mind** is – an instrument for relating to other things . . . and people.

■ And for being oneself – don't forget that. You can't relate to other things unless you are something yourself. We don't just float around like formless fluff. Or bubbles in a nice warm bath.

□ (Wistfully) No, I suppose we don't.

■ Well, even if we do, that's not a satisfactory **explanation**. Because it doesn't help us to see ourselves as functional units and know how to live or achieve anything.

□ 'Win friends and influence people?' And be happy?

■ That too.

□ Why do we even need **explanations**? Couldn't we just . . . exist?

■ Ah! You have a very good point. But **experience** has taught us that we do need **explanations**. We are like babies. And we need our **explanations** like a baby needs a dummy in its mouth to stop it crying. It's the way we find contentment. It gives us peace of mind.

□ Does it work if you sucked your thumb, like we did?

■ Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.

□ You sound like somebody's Mother.

■ No! I'm saying: an **explanation** that satisfies one person might not satisfy someone else. Because we are all different.

□ Even you and I?

■ Don't confuse me.

□ Sorry. So, what is this **explanation** again? Our **explanation** of **mind**?

■ Well, even though everything is probably connected to everything else in one big, beautiful, ball, you and I need some smaller balls and goalposts or a net, so we know what we are supposed to do.

- You **mean** . . . our living is like playing a game?
- Well . . . yes. It's quite good to visualise it that way. But people get hurt. There are winners and losers. And it isn't always fair.
- So we need to know the rules?
- That's where my **explanation** comes in. To explain something, **scientifically**, you identify the parts and see what affects what – HOW IT WORKS. So, to start with, we distinguish each individual Human Being as a separate '**autonomous unity**.'
- A what?
- Autonomous means that each one runs itself, and renews itself, too, all the time. It was a great **Scientist** – Biologist, actually – who figured this out. *Humberto Maturana*. He came to our house, once.
- I remember.
- It was a life-changing experience for us, and a paradigm-shift in Biology. Everything that happens in our body and mind is controlled internally. Outside influences only nudge us, this way or that. We are **self-governing**, as are all living things. It's called **autopoiesis**.
- Sounds a bit like Magic to me!
- Within each of us is a self-renewing, self-organising, sort of 'engine' (or process, really) that keeps us going – as an individual – for as long as it can. Then we die!
- Well . . . when it's time, I suppose.
- But – and this is very big BUT. The individual can't do that unless it is adequately CONNECTED to everything else that it needs – food energy, oxygen, the other players. We can't do **aliveness** on our own.
- Yeah. Well, that's certainly true.

■ So we have to work out how to be an active part of what's happening around us, AND, at the same time, be ourselves. That's not always easy.

□ You can say that again.

■ That's not always easy.

□ So what we're saying is this: there's our individual BEING – autonomous unities, running ourselves. And, at the same time, there is our BELONGING – whereby we're connected to other things around us, especially other people, I suppose.

■ That's right. And what we BELONG to is actually **BIGGER than ourselves**. In every **experience**, from the blissful to the mundane, we must BELONG to something bigger than ourselves – so we can BE ourselves.

□ And that's not easy.

■ No. And how well we do that will be our life journey – good and bad.

□ So, there you go! This is how you and I make a living!

■ Yes. We are BEING ourselves and BELONGING to something bigger, at the same time.

□ Well, I kinda like our **explanation**. Is it any use?

■ It's just an **explanation**.

□ So, if it puts us back to sleep, it will have served its purpose?

■ Well, that's better than crying our head off. Which is what I do when I can't work things out.

□ (Consolingly) At least you keep trying to work things out. The life of the Seeker will always be troubled.

■ Eh?

□ So, do you **think** this is what they call **consciousness**?

■ What?

□ You and I, figuring things out. Is this what they refer to as **consciousness**?

■ That's a good question . . . but we'll have to look into it a bit more.

□ Needs a bit more . . . **explanation**, eh?

■ Yes, it does. It's notorious for being a bit tricky.

□ You know you said that our subjective, **conscious experience** being so PERSONAL was a worry for you? Well, I have to remind you that this is also **mind's** greatest asset. Because it requires us to make our own personal **meaning**.

■ Of course! How could I leave that out? That's the main point. We use our connections to everything else – our BELONGING – to make **meaning** of our BEING – our existence, in the world. And, as you say, it's an INDIVIDUAL **meaning**.

□ We each make own version of it. And it's NOT like a commodity, that can be shipped off to somebody else.

■ Yes, the Science about that is clear. The self-governing nature of our nervous system – our autonomy – prevents us from actually copying someone else's **meaning**.

□ Not appreciating that is part of our problem. People **think**: If I tell you my **meaning**, your **meaning** will be the same. There is usually quite a bit of overlap, though, and common ground, that they call our **shared meaning**.

■ That's why we often **think** we have a similar **meaning**, even though it's NOT quite the same.

□ So we have lots of pointless arguments and unrealistic expectations, that are simply our differing **meanings**. And misunderstandings are rife. That mightn't be our biggest problem, but it's one of the contributing factors.

■ I can see it contributing to domestic violence, but what about the selfish greed that we say is destroying the very things that Humans will need for our **aliveness** to continue?

□ Robbing us of our future! That's the big one. The consequences are so serious, I can't believe more people aren't screaming about it!

■ Perhaps they can't see the solution. Not sure I can, either. But our research into **mind** does throw some light on it. For now, let's just call it *The Curse*. We can explain it better later.

□ If we ignore it, the outlook is grim. We could be finished within a few generations.

■ Our grandchildren, their grandchildren . . .

□ That could be it! If it isn't tempered in some way. We are 'sleepwalking towards the abyss' as our **friend** *Iain McGilchrist* says.

■ He's not really our **friend**. We've never met him.

□ No, but I regard him as a **friend** because he says the same as we say. There's a lot of common ground.

■ We share **meaning** with him.

□ **Shared meaning** is very powerful. And hopeful for the future.

■ You know something? The people who are reading this will make their own **meaning** of everything we say – and it might be rather different from our **meaning**.

□ That's true. But some of it will be similar. And there's a good side and a bad side, either way.

■ What are you saying?

□ If our readers have different **meanings**, and we all respect the views of others, there will be a healthy ecology of **mind**. **Aliveness** thrives on diversity. But if there is too little tolerance of one another's **meaning** . . . there are problems. That's the down-side.

■ And where there is common ground, we have **shared meaning**, which is a precious resource that helps us to live together.

□ It is precious, indeed. Though it has an unfortunate down-side, too.

■ And that's important for our book.

□ It makes us susceptible to BRAINWASHING, whereby POWER structures can create widespread **shared meaning** that harms us as individuals and damages our whole society.

■ That's what we have to expose!

□ There's another thing that bothers me, though. If the person called Lloyd is a single, autonomous, unity, how come I'm talking to you? As if you were somebody else? Are there two of us?

■ That bothers me sometimes, too. But I believe it's okay. It's called reflection. Or introspection, or navel-gazing. Or . . . talking to yourself. It whiles away the time.

□ Does it achieve anything?

■ I'll let you know at the end of the book. It's time for another Heading.

□ A what?

■ It's a label. In big letters. Helps us work out where we're up to. And, most importantly, what might be coming next.

□ I see. It tells us where we're heading. Do we actually know what's coming next?

■ We will once we get there.

2. SHACKED UP

*I said to myself, and
Myself said to me:
If it wasn't for you
Where would I be?*

- I've been **thinking** about what you said – that there are two of us. I know we disagree a bit, but we need one another.
- I suppose.
- You know things that I don't, so we have to stick close. What about we 'shack up' together?
- What do you mean, 'shack up'?
- It means live in the same place.
- What would we do there that we don't do already?
- You know . . . amalgamate.
- Amalgamate? Holy cow! That sounds serious!
- We want to know what's best for us, so we'll **feel** more secure.
- I don't agree with that, for a start. We can't always know what is best for us, because **aliveness** has so many uncertainties.
- We'd **feel** safer if we both know for sure about some things.
- I don't believe **minds** can achieve that. There is always doubt and uncertainty.

- They make me uncomfortable. So let's try it?
- What if I don't want to?
- You should **think** about what's best for both of us.
- I don't like the word 'should.' I'm an autonomous unity! Half of one, anyway.
- There's a lot more we need to discuss about **what mind does**.
- Well . . . it's alright when we both **feel** the same way about things. But what about when you are **thinking** of 'doing us in' – for good – and I'm trying to tell you that's a bad idea?
- Now you're the one who's getting too serious.
- Well, it did happen. Remember? You were getting more and more despondent. You said you couldn't see any point in going on when our friends and family wouldn't talk to us and everybody said you were a 'loser.'
- Yes . . . I remember.
- I said we **HAD** to keep going, even though we couldn't see the point.
- And I'm very glad you did. I really am. It reminds me, actually, of *Eckhart Tolle*. When he was 29. He's much older now. And has a lot more money, I suppose.
- I'm talking about us, here and now.
- Yes, but *Eckhart* had a point. And it was about the 'now' – *The Power of Now*. He was **feeling** suicidal. And he said to himself: How come there is something in my head telling me it's hopeless, when the rest of me just keeps going? Who is this imposter, pretending to be another version of me?

□ So, what did your *Eckhart* work out was the problem?

■ He said: **mind** plays tricks. It tells lies to itself. All the time.

□ Holy cow!

■ This wonderful thing called **mind** is saying: ‘I can’t live with myself any longer.’ That’s a worry for the ‘self’ that my ‘I’ cannot live with. They can’t both be REAL. One of them must be a FAKE.

□ (Uncomfortably) Well, don’t look at me. I don’t tell lies. Come to **think** of it, I’m not so sure about you.

■ I am more likely to be the one speaking the Truth. But let’s not be too hasty. I would like neither of us to be a FAKE. After all, we are the **thinkers**. We work things out – by a process called **thought**.

□ This sounds like one of your **explanations**.

■ It is. Because of **thought** we have what we call **agency**. That is the ability to make things happen.

□ You mean dictate, control, manipulate and compel everything other than us, so it does what we want?

■ I wouldn’t have put it quite like that! But yes, sort of. It’s our ability to organise our circumstances so they work for us.

□ And other people?

■ Well, that’s where it gets more difficult. Because other people are autonomous unities – they run themselves. But there are ways . . .

□ ‘How to win friends and influence people,’ eh!

■ **Agency** is one of the most important attributes of **mind**. It enables us to get things done. But, I must admit, it doesn’t always go as planned. So I **think** we have to learn to use it carefully – with discretion and . . . delicacy.

□ Cunning, you mean?

■ Oh, BE quiet! Look, I'm glad you mentioned other people, because we NEED other people. BELONGING is the other half of the equation. We must stay connected or we'd be lost in the forest like Goldilocks was.

□ I don't think she was lost. You might be thinking of Hansel and Gretel or Little Red Riding Hood.

■ BE serious. This is important. You know what we need most of all (after oxygen etc.)? It's **friends**. So, how we relate to other people is the most crucial part of what **mind** does.

□ Not **agency**?

■ No. Getting on with other people and making **friends**. It's through friendship that we have some hope of enjoying **shared meaning**.

□ And that's important.

■ But the problem is: relationships with other people are not quite as simple as you talking to me.

□ How come?

■ Well, you can't just chat away like this. You need to take on a **persona** so it **feels** safe to talk to other people. The first thing you need is to **feel** safe.

□ What's a **persona**?

■ It's what we SEEM to BE. When it comes to the outside world, and, especially, the people in it, SEEMING takes priority over BEING.

□ So they won't know which one of us is telling lies?

■ Well, I won't tell them if you don't.

□ Now listen here! Hold your horses! I'm getting rather tired of these bloody **explanations**. First, you said that BEING is fundamental and its other half is BELONGING. Now you're adding in a **persona** . . .

■ Okay. I'll try to avoid the technical terms.

□ And what I SEEM to BE . . . that's taking the viewpoint of somebody else. I'd rather BE whatever I am.

■ That sounds nice, Buddy, but I can tell you, out there in the world, what you SEEM to be is what matters. That's how other people treat you.

□ So if I SEEM like I'm sincere and Truthful, they won't know I'm telling lies? I don't like this game. Is there another game we could try?

■ Look. It's not as bad as you're making out. We try to BE honest and REAL – especially with our **friends**. They are the ones who stick with us. We don't have to tell so many lies. And if we slip up, they make allowances.

□ What about our so-called **friend** who sent that nasty email?

■ Oh, I've sorted that out. It was just a misunderstanding.

□ And the girl who humiliated us?

■ She'll get what's coming to her.

□ Revenge? Is that part of our **agency**?

■ Shut up!

□ Well, look here! You listen to me for a bit! I've been checking up on your *Eckhart Tolle*. I'm not sure he agrees with what you said about **agency**.

■ Why not?

□ He says that **thinking** is NOT our solution – it's our problem.

■ What?

□ **Thinking** is our problem.

■ Holy Crap! We can't manage without **thinking**?

□ And *Eckhart* is not the only one who says that. There's a whole band of people called Spiritual Teachers who say we will only BE happy and satisfied . . . I can't quote it exactly . . . when our BEING derives from our BELONGING.

■ Well . . . that sounds nice. But how do you do it?

□ I know, it is rather shrouded in mystery. Not that I dislike mystery. It's nice. Like a detective story. Not knowing what will happen next.

■ There are only mysteries until someone comes up with an **explanation**.

□ I'm not so sure about that. Are you saying that everything will have been **explained**, one day?

■ Of course. That's what **Science** is for.

□ I'm sorry, I don't agree with that. For one thing, **Science** only explains what things DO – not what they actually are. Your **explanation** of **mind** only tells us what it *does*, NOT what it *is*.

■ What about Newton's Laws? And Einstein and gravity? What about Quantum Physics?

□ They just tell us how things *behave* in relation to one another. HOW IT WORKS. Which is very useful, I know, but it doesn't tell us the INTRINSIC NATURE of anything. You can explain what **mind** *does* in a plausible way, but you can't tell me what it actually *is*.

■ Are you talking about **consciousness** again?

□ I'm talking about what we **experience** as our **reality**. You said yourself: all we really know is this **mind**. That's much more like **reality** than some equation that describes an apple falling from a tree. Or a contrary cat in a sealed container. Which, by chance, could be dead or alive and we won't know which until we take a look.

■ So you remember that famous **thought** experiment, in Quantum Physics, created by Schrödinger?

□ Of course! That was Erwin. Or was it Erhardt?

■ Erwin, Rudolf, Josef, Alexander, to be exact.

□ Being exact is a pain in the arse!

■ I admit there are some things we can't **explain** very well. Come to **think** of it, one of them is: why I'm getting so bloody ANGRY about you not being objectively sensible.

□ **Reality** is our subjective, **conscious experience**. Being objective is just a tool we use in our **thinking**. And I see big limitations in this **thinking** anyway, even though we may need it. The **feelings** we have are not **thoughts**. And I'm **feeling** BLOODY AWFUL, being 'shacked up' like this!

■ **Feelings** are quite difficult to explain . . .

□ And I'm FED UP with your bloody **explanations!** They're not the answer to everything. My **feeling** is that what you and I are doing now is actually a **root cause** of all the world's problems. It's not healthy for **mind** to be avoiding other people as if you and I were ALL THAT MATTERED.

■ Okay. Okay. It seemed like a good idea. Just us, with our Beautiful **thoughts**.

□ It works for a while, but becomes toxic before very long.

- I guess we're forgetting that our BEING derives from our BELONGING. And what we're doing has short-circuited that.
- The 'life-blood' of our **mind** is the ongoing process of making **meaning**. That happens in our BEING, but it DEPENDS on our BELONGING.
- The trap is we **think**, because we are self-governing, that we must try to BE 'our own person' – that there might be some **feeling** of freedom in doing that, excluding everyone else.
- It's an illusion that misses the most Magical aspect of **aliveness** – that we can only **feel** 'free' when we're securely 'attached.'
- Correct. We can't BE unless we BELONG. And who we ARE is a CO-CREATION – with inputs from other people.
- The more we listen to ourselves, the more SEPARATE and DISCONNECTED we become. And that happens in our **meaning**. I have an idea that many people **feel** like that nowadays, the way our Society has evolved. We live in an Age of Separateness.
- There's plenty of research to support what you're saying. So we use **Science** and Psychology to try to find answers.
- We need more than that. At least, Penelope is here somewhere. She is a reminder of the ancient Greek civilisation and the great *Odyssey*, attributed to *Homer*, in which a Penelope waited faithfully, year after year, for her lover to return.
- Yes, she had a clever strategy. She wasn't free to marry someone else until her handiwork was finished, so every night she unpicked what she had completed during the day.
- While he had to find his way through one perilous situation after another – a many-headed monster on one side and a treacherous whirlpool on the other, sirens so seductive he had to be tied to the

mast, and a lot more. The myths and legends are just as important as modern **Science** in our learning about **mind**.

■ I suppose they help us to understand the challenges we'll meet along the journey of **aliveness**.

□ And how **DEPENDENT** we are on **CONNECTEDNESS**.

■ I said it was **NOT** easy to **BELONG** to everything else, at the same time as **BEING** yourself.

□ But that is what we **MUST DO**. Without other people, **mind** will probably drive itself mad.

■ You're forgetting that we have another eight Chapters to go in this book!

□ I'm not saying you and I should **NEVER** talk. Just that a fully functional **mind** needs to **CONNECT** with the outside world as well.

3. SOCIAL MAGIC OR STRESS

*I said to myself, and
Myself said to me:
We need other people
To help us to be.*

■ You know that idea we had at the beginning – that we might understand some big problems? It’s not working too well, is it?

□ I don’t think it’s the idea that’s wrong. You had to **explain** some background theory. We haven’t actually been using **mind** properly yet. But today’s a new day – and we’re out and about!

■ I’d forgotten that, when you’re **feeling** bad, the best thing to do is get out of the house and talk to some other people.

□ That would explain why I’ve been **feeling** a lot better since we did that. I’m much less hostile towards you, today.

■ I am too!

□ Meeting people can be so reassuring. Like the lady, just then, who said: ‘you look nice in that blue shirt.’

■ Green’s my favourite colour, but I do **feel** good in this blue shirt. Do you **think** she **meant** it? Or was she just wanting to sound nice?

□ I **think** she **meant** it. You can tell by the warmth in her voice and her smiling face. You can tell more from the WAY people say things than from the actual words they use.

■ And whether they smile. We TRY to remember to smile when we see another person. They often smile back. Makes **aliveness** seem lighter and brighter.

□ Mostly, people look a bit sad to me. Or perhaps they're just preoccupied with their own **thoughts**. Like us, sometimes!

■ Do you know why it is that a smile is such a potent connecting force? It's because there are dozens of tiny muscles in our face – especially around our eyes – that are NOT under voluntary control. They do their own thing.

□ They do? Yes, they do.

■ You can't control them, even if you try. Anyone can pick a fake smile from way across the street. I've heard that Stone Age Humans could tell whether to be friendly, or to throw a spear at someone, just from the look on the other man's face.

□ I always notice if it's a woman's face. The eyes seem to draw you in. When you're open to it, it really is Magic, the engagement you **feel**, deep inside, when you CONNECT with another person.

■ Now, that is something that has a very interesting **explanation**.

□ I don't know that Magic can actually be **explained**.

■ Well, not entirely. But this is a really important insight into the way our nervous system works. Many people don't realise how much is going on BENEATH our **conscious** awareness.

□ I said there was a lot of mystery.

■ But some of the mystery has been figured out. I don't like to admit this to you, but most of what Lloyd does is NOT decided or managed by us.

□ I sort of knew that. You said at the beginning: we were only part of a **mind**. And we're not the biggest part, are we?

■ No, we're not. Our INVOLUNTARY nervous system is much more powerful than the nattering of you and I.

□ So we have to TRUST that it knows what to do.

■ The branch of our nervous system that's called autonomic – it looks after all the sub**conscious** stuff. Keeps our heart pumping and our breathing going. Drives amazing self-regulation of digestion, metabolism – in every organ. And our basic **emotions**. Mostly, WITHOUT our **conscious** awareness.

□ It's nice to know we have a counterpart – a partner. We're the **conscious** and it's the sub**conscious**. I like that!

■ Now, when we meet other people . . . just **think** about it . . . our sub**conscious** process is connecting with theirs. We are 'reading' one another's hidden **mind**. NOT their **thoughts**, but deeper – their **emotions**, their internal state. Mainly through their face and eyes. And the way they stand and move.

□ And their tone of voice. But why is so much of it in their face?

■ That same autonomic nervous system that is managing our internal organs is also managing those tiny muscles around our eyes and in our ears and voicebox. So our outward appearance reveals a lot about our internal state.

□ That's how I could tell the lady **meant** it when she said: 'you look nice.' So much of what happens between us is mysterious. That's why I call it Magic.

■ But I think it helps to **explain** some of it if we can.

- With your **Scientific** bent, you can't help it. But I wonder . . . if so much just happens of its own accord, in our sub**conscious**, do we ever really know what's going on?
- Fair question. The role of our 'Autopilot' is so important, yet so unrecognised, that I've given it a nickname.
- Good on you! What will we call it?
- It's called *HANS* – short for *Human Autonomic Nervous System*.
- Well, there you go! I like *HANS* if it keeps us pumping and puffing, and puts the smile onto that lady's face.
- Now, you're talking about when everything is going well. It's a different story when things go wrong.
- What do you **mean**, go wrong?
- STRESS! Once we're out and about. It builds up.
- Oh yes. Bloody STRESS. We don't like that.
- *HANS* is our answer to STRESS. Or actually, it gives us three different answers. And only one of them really works.
- Oh Great! How do we choose the right one?
- You know that we evolved, over millions of years, from amoebas and lizards and monkeys?
- I suppose so.
- Well, even lizards had an autonomic nervous system to deal with STRESS. And we still have those same nerves today. They make our body and **mind** freeze – shut down completely. But what was a good idea for lizards and snakes is not a good idea for us.
- I should think not!

■ But that is one of the three ways we could cope with STRESS. The second way – also thanks to the autonomic nervous system – is called fight-or-flight, which many animals use to handle their STRESS.

□ I've heard of that. We need to be very strong or very fast runners!

■ Humans are not the best at that. Though we still have that option in our nervous system. But we must NOT forget, we also have *HANS*, that other animals don't. Our special method for coping with STRESS is, actually, social engagement. Which opens the door to what I call LOVE.

□ Social engagement. Well, there you go! And there is something Magic about it.

■ Yes there is. Often, Humans will argue the point or change the subject when they are STRESSED, which is our version of fight-or-flight. So they forget that we have a much better option, evolved especially for us – a certain kind of social engagement that leads, naturally, towards an ideal we call LOVE.

□ Wow, that's a BIG word! And I DON'T think there is going to be an **explanation** for that kind of Magic.

■ No. I won't even try!

□ I'm not dismissing it. When STRESS is severe, I know the benefit of just having someone to talk to. Especially, someone you trust and who trusts you. It's the surest way to calm yourself down and **feel** stronger.

■ The last thing we should be doing to deal with STRESS is to run away from it or try to deny it. It's much better to embrace it – trust in our autonomy and INCREASE our CONNECTEDNESS.

□ Yeah! Right on! We back ourselves! Stronger BEING by virtue of greater BELONGING.

- Especially for Humans, *HANS* has a *Golden Arm*.
- I like that sort of language. It's so unscientific!
- *Golden Arm* is my nickname for the newest part of our nervous system, that we Humans evolved, called the ventral vagus nerve. You can **feel** it in your chest as it calms your thumping heart, steadies your breathing and dissolves anxiety at the base of your brain.
- So, how do we get onto this *Golden Arm*?
- Well, you know that social engagement can take different forms – it's transactional, when we want to do business, oppressive when we want to control . . . it can be manipulative in many different ways.
- I'm sure I mentioned that to you a while back!
- Now, one thing I know about LOVE – it is NOT manipulative. Or if it is, it has lost one of the qualities that made it LOVE.
- You're right. That lady who smiled at us was not trying to control us when she said those **kind** words.
- She might have wanted us to like her. Let's face it, there's a bit of that in all of us. But it didn't **feel** like manipulation.
- So, we're saying: LOVE is simpler than we often suppose. Maybe just a **kind** word – or a smile.
- That's right. Simple acts of **kindness** are the natural healing balm for all our psychological STRESS.
- I'd say LOVE is also a commitment when it triggers the long-term adventures like marriage.
- Of course. LOVE takes many forms. But the natural instinct for **kindness** is its evolutionary base. Biologists refer to Humans as 'the CARING species.' Other animals care, but we took it to a new level.

□ Are you sure that **kindness** just comes naturally? Or must we make a **conscious** decision to be **kind**?

■ That's important! It is BOTH. There's no doubt we are born with it, and we start showing it very early in life. But, as our lives become more serious, it gets covered over with FEAR. That's when we have to make a **conscious** decision.

□ Did we show **kindness** to the lady who said: 'you look nice?'

■ Yes. We smiled back. And it was NOT a fake smile. That's the way **kindness** just happens, as long as it's not blocked in some way.

□ But, often, we just drift along like that 'sleepwalker,' not connecting with anyone or bothering to care about others.

■ Very true. And the problem with *HANS* is that it gets you in a rut. HABIT forming is its worst feature. Our unheeded sub**conscious** will keep us repeating the same bad HABITS, over and over again, unless we make **conscious** decisions to change. And even then, it's hard to break HABITS.

□ I know! I keep saying we should exercise more. Not buy so many chocolates. Or icecream. Or, more important, I suppose: not forget to do something LOVING today. Just a smile, or a **kind** word.

■ Making **conscious** decisions involves **thinking**, which brings us back to **agency**. But you poked fun at my **agency** for being too manipulative?

□ That's because you were forgetting something very important. Again!

■ Well, tell me.

□ Remember when you said: 'In every experience, from the blissful to the mundane, we must BELONG to something bigger than ourselves – so we can BE ourselves.'

■ Yes.

□ ‘BIGGER than ourselves.’ That’s called **humility**. And **agency** doesn’t work without **humility** alongside it.

■ That’s nicely put! Even if I say so myself.

□ I do too.

■ Yes, that’s absolutely right. You have to know where you stand in relation to everything else, to use **mind’s agency** wisely.

□ This is how our BEING (our autonomy) DEPENDS on our BELONGING to keep it the right size. We really DON’T know much at all, you know. And NOT knowing is perfectly okay.

■ You are much more comfortable with mystery than I am.

□ Yes I am. You are the one who knows a lot – and that is often very helpful. I’m the one who likes to leave some room for the Magic.

■ I don’t like the word ‘Magic.’

□ There are different kinds of Magic. There’s fictional Magic like Harry Potter. There’s the fake Magic of the illusionists. And there’s REAL Magic, which is when we **experience** something that is REAL, but there’s no **scientific explanation** for what happened.

■ That’s the kind I’m a bit wary about.

□ Don’t be wary. There are hundreds of books filled with thousands of strange, unexplained, **experiences** that people have had.

■ What sort of people?

□ All kinds. Both highly distinguished scientists and doctors – even Nobel prize-winners – and ordinary people from all walks of life.

■ They must have **felt** it was important to write books about it.

□ They did. Near-death-**experiences**, extra-sensory-perceptions, healing associated with prayer . . . that's just a few to begin with.

■ Well, . . . yes.

□ Now, some of these may be put down to pathology or even sensationalism, but there are FAR too many of them to ignore.

■ Why aren't these just accepted by everybody?

□ Because we've been BRAINWASHED by **scientific** objectivity, so we don't have enough TRUST in our own subjective, **conscious experience**. Which is our **reality**! From which we make our own **meaning**!

■ Well, I'll admit that things happened in our **experience** that I did not believe would be possible – especially when we were 'down-and-out' in Lloyd's younger days and our HABIT suddenly changed, from BEING a 'drinker' to a 'non-drinker,' miraculously, you could say.

□ Many people don't notice the REAL Magic that is happening all the time. The 'impossible' is a regular occurrence, once the blinkers of our objectivity are removed, and what we call 'miracles' are not rare at all in Human **experience**.

■ I'm just not quite comfortable with that sort of language. But I hear what you're saying.

□ Good! This is where there is so much to learn from mythology and literature. I know Lloyd identifies with *Parsifal* and the quest for the *Holy Grail*. Such a difficult journey, with missed opportunities and dark times, is also a window into a deeper and more mysterious **reality** than we normally encounter every day.

■ Don't forget how valuable **Science** has been for integrating ourselves into this complex world and knowing lots of things we need to know, to live well.

□ I acknowledge that. And **Science** also helps us understand – with your **explanations** – some of the **Intuitive** Truths, such as: we need to care for each other; we need social engagement.

■ Yes indeed.

□ You said it before: our sub**conscious mind** meets the sub**conscious mind** of another person. We **experience** this in our **feelings**. And some **meaning** is **shared**. We are not so alone. And this affects how we behave.

■ It's only the most recent **Mind Science** that has come to terms with the fact that our sub**conscious** is the REAL driving force – because it includes our **emotions**. And that's why so many of the things that Lloyd does are NOT controlled by us.

□ But our role is still very important, isn't it?

■ Yes, it is. Enormously important, as we shall see in this book. For a start, we pick up the **feelings** that are associated with the **emotions**.

□ We need the **feelings** to make **meaning**. Until there is some kind of **feeling** involved, nothing really matters – except in a mechanical, artificial, sort of way. Without **feelings**, REAL **meaning** (as distinct from superficial semantics) can never be clear.

■ I know the **feelings** trigger **thoughts**, which will contribute to the **meaning**, though they usually overcomplicate it as well.

□ There is actually MORE to making **meaning** than that. What we call **meaning** is not an objective entity, like a number or something – it's a mysterious, subjective, QUALITY of **mind**, that can't be **explained** properly in words or **thoughts**.

■ In this **explanation** of **mind**, I'm glad you keep reminding me how much is mysterious about it.

□ The mystery is the most exciting part, in the end!

- All this flies in the face of the Enlightenment idea that, to know things properly, **Reason** was to be favoured ahead of **emotion**.
- I've heard that, when **Reason** is producing words and **thoughts**, these have already been substantially fashioned and framed by the underlying **emotion**.
- The philosopher, *David Hume*, said that too . . . but many have argued against it, since then.
- When did he say that?
- Around 1740.
- No wonder I missed it! We have become conditioned – or maybe even BRAINWASHED – to use **Reason** in a very glib way.
- That's true. Research has shown that we habitually engage the parts of our brain that create simple logic, before anything else.
- We need **Science** and we need **Reason**, but we also need **Intuition** and **Imagination**. Picking up on your 'game' analogy, think of it as a hand of cards that we've been dealt. We NEED those four cards 'in our hand,' to be able to 'take tricks' or even just 'stay in the game.'
- You help me with some of those when I'm concentrating on the technical details.
- People got carried away with what could be achieved by knowing HOW IT WORKS, which doesn't actually tell you what it **means**. The better we have become at knowing how things WORK, the less **meaning** we seem to be able to find.
- And the more harmful STRESS we experience, in a society that tries to fix problems in a mechanical sort of way, relying too heavily on simple **Reason** that does not do justice to our **aliveness**.

□ It's been another good day – a pleasantly STRESS-full, good day!
Let's call in at a **friend's** house on the way home?

■ You mean the **friend** you call *Henry Thoreau* – at *Walden Pond*? Good idea!

□ This **friend** lives amongst the trees, birds and animals, which always makes us **feel** better. His poetic associates, *Emerson* and *Whitman*, could teach us a few things about the power of our **Imagination**. They were the Transcendentalists, 'singing' about a **reality** that lies just a little BEYOND our everyday **experience**.

■ I'm not sure how one could go there.

□ Those three did so through their immersion in Nature. They worshipped the trees and the sun and the sky. And *Ralph Waldo Emerson* was an important mentor of *William James*, one of the founding Fathers of Psychology, who also wrote a book called *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

■ What was that about?

□ It was about WONDER . . . and HOPE.

■ I know Penelope likes the poetry of *Walt Whitman*.

□ Yes. We enjoyed reading his *Leaves of Grass* out aloud when Lloyd was first getting to know her.

4. *KINDNESS DENIED*

*I said to myself, who
Agreed I was right:
If kindness is natural
Why do we fight?*

- After a nice day out, it was painful to come home to that.
- Yes. I didn't sleep either. The noise next door seemed not quite bad enough to call the police, and yet the pain and ANGER in their voices, each time it built up, rang in my ears all night.
- I suppose we should try to get to know them. Try to offer them some **kindness**. But they're not at home very often.
- That savage-looking dog patrolling their fence puts me off.
- The emotion of FEAR controls a lot of what we do, doesn't it? And probably what they do, too. And it's one of the reasons we **feel** more SEPARATE than we would like, as you pointed out. Deep down, we want to **feel** more CONNECTED.
- Remember you said that we need a **persona** to **feel** safe. Do you really believe other people might want to harm us?
- Doesn't everybody **feel** that – to a certain extent? I know most people are nice enough. But our evolution gave us a basic instinct to stay on guard. Strangers are an unknown quantity. We have to look them over, even though we might assume they're okay.

□ We've met so many nice people over the years, I just assume the best of everyone – at first, anyway. I think it's the daily News that makes murder and mayhem seem commonplace, when they are not.

■ Unfortunately, domestic violence is even more common than we hear about in the News.

□ Why is it that we are often **kinder** to those we don't know very well than those who are closest to us?

■ I wish I knew.

□ Domestic violence might be as difficult to figure out as *The Curse*.

■ Oh yes, *The Curse*. I haven't forgotten. And a lot of other argument and violence.

□ I think that's a distorted view. They say there is actually less violence today. But it doesn't **feel** like that because all we ever see on the News is trouble, which is not a valid sample of what is happening.

■ You're right. We don't want to believe every biased report. That gets into our sub**conscious** and affects what we **think** and do.

□ I agree with you that **kindness** is our natural state, but I have the **feeling** many people seem to doubt that, today. And when I see pictures of people being tortured in *Abu Ghraib* prison in Iraq, for example, I become unsure of it too.

■ An insidious FEAR has crept into Human **minds** over a long period. The default position in our society seems to be that Humans will naturally be mean to each other. That what we call civilization is a thin veneer, barely hiding our 'animal' instincts. Scratch the surface and you'll see the 'beast' beneath.

□ You know that famous story – so widely read – *Lord of the Flies*? Young people marooned on an island soon turned into savages.

- That's the WORST kind of FICTION, distorting the truth about Human Nature. The author's own troubled life of alcoholism and his harsh attitude towards children were revealed in his memoirs.
- But he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1983 for 'illuminating the human condition . . .' they said.
- That's my point. We all **think** the worst of ourselves.
- This is how we are conditioned to doubt natural **kindness**.
- In the nearest real-life equivalent, six Samoan boys, aged 13 to 16, were marooned on a remote island in the Pacific after their small boat broke up. They didn't see another person for 15 months, but when they were found, they were in very good health, including one who had recovered from a broken leg with the help of the others.
- There you go!
 - They had built rain water storage, food gardens, a fireplace for cooking fish and birds they caught, and even a makeshift gymnasium. Their way of defusing arguments was for those involved to go to opposite sides of the island until they had calmed down.
 - I'm pleased to hear that. But we seem to have more appetite for frightening stories than for comforting ones that are True.
 - Perhaps the Truth is so obvious we find it boring. For example, the passengers on the Titanic didn't actually panic – they cared for each other. The people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina didn't go mad with looting and crime as was reported – mostly, they helped one another.
 - And in the War, the authorities were worried that the bombing of Britain – the Blitz – would destroy morale and cause antisocial unrest. In fact, it brought people closer together in quite remarkable ways.

■ Yet the dominant mindset today, when hundreds of people were asked to choose between two possible scenarios, after a plane had crash-landed, was to choose the WORST one as being the most likely.

□ It's as if we are losing our self-belief – there's an endemic lack of confidence that allows FEAR to sneak in and then fester.

■ That's true. Research shows that, where there is reasonable self-esteem, there are also more acts of **kindness**.

□ Speaking of research – that's part of the problem. We not only take our objective **Science** too seriously – we worship Psychology experiments that support what we **think** might be true.

■ You are so right. The famous Stanford Prison experiment, where ordinary people who were assigned the role of prison guards supposedly tortured their captives, was so contrived it is referred to today as a 'hoax.'

□ There you go!

■ A chap called *Milgram* was supposed to have shown that ordinary Human beings will torture others 'at the drop of a hat.' That research is discredited today, yet still taught in many universities.

□ Is that right?

■ Yep. Follow-up investigations of the participants in that research cast many doubts on its validity. But it made a good story.

□ I'm sure there are people who can torture others – psychopaths, for example. I wonder what **emotion** (perhaps learned from their 'training') drives those young, military, men and women to do what they did at *Abu Ghraib*.

■ Torture like that is only the tip of the iceberg in warfare. But I'm sure ordinary people, in peacetime, find those stories quite repulsive.

- I've heard that many soldiers in the First World War – inexperienced as they were – found themselves reluctant to shoot to kill, unless they were under immediate physical attack at the time.
- Yes, that's interesting research. And opposing soldiers on the front line sang Carols together at Christmas. The recruitment and 'training' has been sharpened up since then, to make sure that sort of thing doesn't happen.
- What about the slaughter of Aborigines by early settlers in Australia?
- That's not a wartime example. I think it's partly racist and also an offshoot of *The Curse*, that we have yet to consider.
- Oh yes. Selfish greed – *The Curse* – is usually a bit more subtle than that. But its effects are insidious and it will be just as deadly, if it continues at the same rate.
- Are you referring to our failure to contain global warming?
- That's part of it. Not just melting ice and shattered ecology, but Human pandemics from the change in microbial populations as the temperature rises.
- The collapse of our financial structures as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer could be part of it, too. The more money you have, the easier it is to make more money. That kind of inequality is unsustainable.
- There is inequality everywhere in Nature, too, but there is also INTERDEPENDENCE, as we shall see in this book.
- Our **shared meaning** includes a dubious BELIEF that our financial system can be sustained.
- How have we reached a point where selfish greed that corrupts our social engagement and exploits so many people is taken for granted?

- The story of our evolution throws some light on it.
- No more lizards and snakes, PLEASE!
- Okay! Quite recently – in the last half-million years – we became MORE vulnerable, physically, and more dependent on each other. Our babies are now born completely helpless and, as adults, we’re not very leathery or fierce, either. As a species, we became WEAKER.
- Yes, but you told me about *HANS* and his *Golden Arm*. Which is our strength today. The Magic of social engagement.
- That’s right! As we formed larger, tighter, social groups, our brains grew much larger – we developed new kinds of **Intelligence** and a level of INTIMACY that is unique to Humans.
- I have a **feeling** that this INTIMACY and **kindness** – from our larger brain – underpins the other forms of **Intelligence** we value so much.
- It does. Because it’s part of the sub**conscious** that drives **mind**.
- When did *The Curse* become part of that, too.
- That only happened in the last few thousand years.
- Like yesterday!
- Selfish greed and exploitation depend upon POWER, which is the control that a person or a group can exert over others.
- I believe the desire for POWER over others stems from FEAR and insecurity, as much as from greed.
- True. And they fuel the selfishness, too. The word ‘selfish’ comes from ‘self,’ you know.
- You’re making me just a little nervous!

■ You don't need to worry! The lust for money, as a means of control, is what fuels selfish greed and you have no idea how to manage money – you always leave that to me.

□ Yes, money doesn't interest me, that's for sure.

■ Selfishness is actually a core part of our autonomy. So, to exert **POWER** over others, you must curtail their autonomy and strengthen your own. Even the simplest acts of **agency** impinge on the autonomy of others – and that starts to threaten their **BEING**.

□ Which elicits **FEAR**.

■ In earlier tribes, **POWER** was more evenly distributed and there were far fewer people. Awareness of Nature was much stronger also, which, by example, promotes our understanding of **BEING** and **BELONGING**.

□ Yes, the example of Nature would help to give Humans some **humility** along with their **agency**.

■ We know there was also brutality between tribes, and that some larger animals were eaten out of existence, so I'm not saying it was ideal. But there was a lot more sharing than there is today.

□ A pity we lost that.

■ A radical, new, idea called **OWNERSHIP** changed everything. Instead of the land and all its riches, foods and medicines, belonging to everyone, certain individuals started to claim the right of exclusive **OWNERSHIP**.

□ And that has continued, even more strongly, to this day.

■ **OWNERSHIP** brings more **FEAR** because someone else might want what you possess. So there was a need for greater **POWER** to control larger numbers more closely. Our **MEGA-Leaders** arrived on the scene.

□ And with them, the enormous, unwieldy, hierarchies became an insidious force of their own that is stronger than the individuals involved. And MEGA-Business became a POWER, bringing the lust for money within reach of Leaders at all levels.

■ There were two major consequences of this escalating POWER: stronger **individuality** and narrower, more controlled, **shared meaning**. I need to look after me. The **subconscious emotion** that drives selfishness grew stronger, gradually and inexorably.

□ There has been an enormous increase in **individuality** in recent times, along with more obviously narcissistic Leaders.

■ Who use the **shared meaning** of the population for their own personal ends. It follows as inevitably as night follows day.

□ Yes, I'm beginning to see how this happens.

■ As our BEING is threatened, our BELONGING gets more desperate. We want to protect our **shared meaning** and, at the same time, can be easily conditioned to FEAR and oppose OTHERS who seem to be different.

□ This is the dark side of **shared meaning**. As it BINDS us, it BLINDS us, to a bigger picture. As **shared meaning** narrows, Tribalism grows stronger and the breadth of our Empathy declines. You can't relate to a refugee far away or even a starving child when they seem so distant from your everyday **meaning**.

■ Having an Enemy is the best possible tonic for any Leader's position. And propaganda heightens the cultural divisions.

□ This is what I **meant** by BRAINWASHING.

■ The **subconscious** force of our **emotions** was impregnated with FEAR by these developments. It just happened. We didn't realise how seriously corrupted the Human **mind** could become.

□ It's not really True that the ordinary people who belong to a different religion, country, or ethnic group, naturally want to harm us. The Truth is their Leaders (and ours) are FEARFUL of losing control of what they have – or they, selfishly, covet more for themselves.

■ Part of our **shared meaning** is obedience. We will go to war in our millions if that is what a MEGA-Leader wants. Yet most of them (Stalin, Mao, Hitler, Pol Pot, etc.) were mass murderers. Millions of people have been killed for no other reason than their Leader's FEAR and greed – and, mostly, at his hands.

□ Yet we still seem to support MEGA-Leaders – through our own uncertainty, I suppose. A toxic form of Hegemony is taken for granted, as if we can do nothing about it. And the **feeling** of Separateness makes it harder for us to TRUST in our deeper, **subconscious, shared meaning**.

■ Fundamentalist religion is a very dangerous form of **shared meaning** – its fervour has fuelled many bloody battles.

□ Would you say our Leaders in Australia are the same?

■ Well, they are part of the same system. Several of our Prime Ministers have sent us to war, always at the behest of a larger POWER. The big deals like World Wars, most of us **felt** okay about, but the smaller ones created much dissent and, I would say, much unnecessary suffering for our soldiers.

□ Lloyd never had to go to war – which I'm thankful for.

■ We are told to believe that soldiers in wartime (and even in terrorist groups) are fighting for 'a cause' – which is correct, as a **concept**. But, if you ask them, they will tell you what it actually **feels** like: they do it for their mates.

□ That mateship – the intensity of BELONGING and the **feeling** of **shared meaning** – inevitably grow stronger under authoritarian control such as the military.

■ Most individuals aren't actually 'chafing at the bit' to go to war. It's our Leaders who want to do that. They BRAINWASH us to believe there are good reasons – mythical 'weapons of mass destruction,' and so on.

□ A culture of FEAR enables them to do whatever they want.

■ So, what happens is they clamp down on our rights, enlarge our armed forces, magnify the threats of our Enemies, and hire extra police to put more of us into the overflowing jails – mostly youngsters and black people. What stupidity!

□ Well . . .

■ AND WE GO ALONG WITH IT!!!

□ I think you're getting angry.

■ OF COURSE I'M GETTING ANGRY! We are trying to expose *The Curse* for what it is – selfish greed, allowed and encouraged by a CULTURE of over-concentrated, self-serving POWER.

□ Seriously manipulative POWER, I agree. **Kindness** and LOVE are also POWERFUL, in the opposite way. We need a better balance between the two.

■ But you don't seem to realise. We WON'T get out of this mess. People **think**: everyone does it this way – so why shouldn't I?

□ I don't want us to despair completely.

■ The social engagement we need, and the natural **kindness**, are so fundamentally corrupted, I FEAR they will never recover.

□ Oh stop it! There is still **kindness** and unselfish behaviour, all over the place. It would help to have a more distributed Leadership and to temper our Tribalism, so there's a bit less US and THEM. And to make more use of LOVE, which is the only REAL antidote to FEAR.

■ And I suppose you believe in fairies as well as Magic.

□ I certainly don't believe in giving up.

■ **Thinking** it through like this, there seems to be NO HOPE. I tell you: our Human society is . . .

□ Lloyd is SHAKING all over! Are you **feeling** alright?

■ I can hear a siren.

□ Penelope called an ambulance.

8 HOURS LATER

■ Are you talking to me?

□ Yes, yes, I am. I'm so pleased we're connecting again. Everything went blank when Lloyd was put into the ambulance.

■ I believe they drugged us – knocked us out.

□ I'm so pleased we're connecting again.

■ You said that twice. Where were we?

□ In a bad place. You had given up HOPE that **kindness** would ever be seen again or that our social engagement could recover from the corruption that riddles our society.

■ Oh yes. I'm glad you're back now to help me. I got very ANGRY and probably went too far. But it seems that someone has been **kind** to us, because I **feel** a lot better than I did.

□ Yes, I can see we've been given both **kindness** and caring.

■ I still can't see how we could turn around the juggernaut of personal, exploitative, greed. That makes me **feel** very SAD and LONELY.

□ It is a challenge, but we mustn't give up. And you're not the only one who feels LONELY.

■ I know. Research shows a massive increase in LONELINESS all over the world. It's one of our biggest health issues, today. Unfortunately, both Populist politics and maverick MEGA-Leaders tend to THRIVE in an Age of Separateness. They appeal to the sub**conscious** craving for community that the unwieldy bureaucracies haven't been able to satisfy.

□ That need for community can also work in our favour. There may well be an Age of Connectedness on the horizon.

■ Are you sure of that?

□ No, of course, I'm not sure. Nor is it certain that *The Curse* will destroy us.

■ There is so much we DON'T know about what will happen.

□ That's not altogether a bad thing, you know.

■ How come?

□ You remember I mentioned *William James*? WONDER and HOPE. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

■ Yes, I remember.

□ He felt like giving up many times, until he wrote a small book called *The Will to Believe*. He wrestled with the idea of Determinism so deeply that he came to BELIEVE in the unknown – the uncertainty – as the True source of our HOPE for the future.

■ We need HOPE – that’s for sure.

□ WONDER is the quality of **mind** that sees BEYOND what we know. So HOPE and WONDER go together. As long as we have WONDER, we will always have HOPE. What we know is so limited, most of our certainty leads to despair.

■ I hadn’t thought of it like that. And there’s a lot more mystery about the Human **mind** we haven’t even mentioned yet

□ We haven’t ‘played all our cards’ either.

■ You’re right. Nor have we REALLY tried to reduce the Human contribution to global warming, looked into alternative financial systems that are already operating in a few places, or seriously thought about the crippling effects of our corporate structures.

□ Or considered the millions of people whose acts of **kindness** can help to foster HOPE.

■ The idea that simple acts of **kindness** will be a match for institutionalised selfish greed, in the long run, sounds a bit *David and Goliath* to me. But I can BELIEVE in that possibility because I want to have HOPE, and we DON’T actually know what will happen.

□ Our HOPE lies in the more subtle POWER that is generated in our sub**conscious** as we make and share **meaning**. But do you **think** our evolution is driven by ‘selfish genes?’

■ NO! That **Science** is completely outdated today and replaced by an understanding of evolution, for Humans, as a steady CULTURAL progression that takes place in **minds**, not through gene expression.

□ So the **meanings** we make every day, and share with others, become part of our CULTURE. Over time there is a CULTURAL DRIFT that is shaping the decisions we make as a society. Our evolution is carried along by our collective STORY.

■ The new **Science** of Epigenetics has shown that gene expression is influenced by what we do – gene effects are not a one-way control as previously **thought**. So our **meanings** drive our evolution, as they influence our behaviours – not ‘selfish genes.’

□ The next stage of our evolution will FLOW from the way we talk to each other today and its DRIFT will be shaped by our **minds** and our **meanings**. The STORY we keep re-creating is an ongoing thread of **meaning** that becomes the next chapter in Human existence.

■ That’s good. But I’m very tired.

□ Let’s rest now and listen to the music. Penelope has tuned us in to some sweet sounds of *Mozart* – the slow movements from the Concertos that are Lloyd’s favourites.

5. FEELING AND KNOWING

*I said to myself,
In my need to belong,
I feel that I'm right
Even when I am wrong.*

- Lloyd is going to have his brain examined . . .
- Oh!
- By a very powerful machine. Today.
- Is that because of what happened last week?
- No. We'd been planning it for a while, remember?
- Is the machine going to affect us?
- I doubt it. Some Neuroscientists still cling to their original idea that **mind** is produced by our brain. But Philosophers have always said: that cannot be – one's made of 'meat,' the other of 'hot air.'
- I've never met a Philosopher who was so succinct!
- I paraphrased a bit. But you can see their point. How could a tiny bit of flesh called a Human cell – albeit connected to billions of other cells in our brain – give rise to a **thought** or a notion of ours, that we produce in a different realm of existence?
- Magic?
- That would certainly be some kind of Magic! No, I believe there's a much more plausible way in which **mind** happens than that.

□ **Scientists** have put a lot of effort into studying HOW IT WORKS, looking for signs of us somewhere in the tangled web.

■ They haven't found us. And this machine won't, either.

□ But aren't we the custodians of Lloyd's subjective, **conscious, experience**?

■ Yes, but we are not his BEING. Or even his knowledge – most of that is **implicit** and in his sub**conscious**.

□ But we are his **conscious experience**. Right now, he is typing words into this book. One after another. Very slowly. And then we keep changing them.

■ Lloyd likes words and writing them down. That's why we do it.

□ Aren't you enjoying our special project – writing this book?

■ Yes, I am. But, there's a big difference between words and **reality**. Experiencing **reality** and conceptualising it are NOT the same thing.

□ Ah yes, I was forgetting that. But we use words and **concepts** to point towards **reality**, don't we?

■ We do. It's easier with a word like 'brain' because that's a thing you can look at.

□ You'd have to be keen!

■ You've forgotten that we've studied them in the lab. They're okay.

□ But **mind**, that we are, is NOT a thing, is it?

■ No, it's not. **Mind** is a **concept** – an idea. We generally speak of it as a process, to distinguish it from things.

□ It's like a happening. All go. I don't **feel** like a thing. Do you?

■ Scientists find us difficult to study because we don't stand still – **mind** FLOWS, it's ever-changing.

- ‘Here I am, wasn’t I’ – that’s what I say!
- The idea of the ‘now’ is just a **concept**, too. But it’s one we need to TRY to **experience**, because our **concept** of ‘time’ is our biggest bugbear – it disturbs our BEING and saps our **aliveness**.
- So you and I can work with **concepts** if we can make them REAL in our **experience**?
- That’s correct.
- Earlier you said that soldiers ‘fighting for a cause’ was a plausible **concept** . . . but was not their actual **feeling**.
- The problem is: **concepts**, themselves, are not REAL. They are tools that help us connect, but the REAL **meaning** that we **feel** will be something MORE than can be captured in the words.
- Lloyd uses a dictionary to see what we **think** are the **meanings**.
- And that is helpful, because we want our words to evoke something REAL. Poets are the best at it. Your whole BEING can **feel** what they are pointing towards, sometimes.
- You said Lloyd’s knowledge was mostly in his sub**conscious**. But a lot of what we’ve done for him would be called ‘intellectual.’ I have an idea we spoke at a Philosophy Conference once, and a Psychology Convention – and lots of Scientific meetings.
- Yes, we are his **conscious mind** and that has kept us busy with **explicit** details, but that’s not all we do. We collaborate with our counterpart – the sub**conscious** – and are guided by what is **implicit**. Remember, that is our main driving force.
- Oh yes. I could forget that if we aren’t careful.
- A lot of the knowledge we acquire is **experiential**, not **conceptual**, and we learn that with our bodies. In fact, we learn mostly by

DOING. Knowledge that has been explained to us is nothing compared to what we learn from our own **experience**.

□ I do remember Lloyd, as a child, learning to use an axe and a saw and a pitchfork on the farm, by watching our Dad very closely and then copying his actions.

■ That is exactly how we learn. We **imagine** we are doing it, when we watch closely – our brain prepares itself via our **Imagination**. We learn almost everything by mimicking the behaviour of others.

□ Like learning to ride a bike. Our first bike was our greatest joy. Then, you never forget how to do it. As you practise more, you won't be **thinking** about it at all – that would only muck it up.

■ Yes, **thinking** often interferes with our **implicit** knowledge.

□ You are just **feeling** the **experience**. It becomes part of your BEING – you and the bike are ONE, and the world glides by.

■ That **implicit** knowledge is distributed throughout our body, not just in our brain. That's why they say **mind** is 'embodied.' All our senses take part in knowing, especially our sense of smell. And the sound of a **friend's** voice is familiar because it's an **implicit** knowing that holds **meaning**.

□ Can we also know with our heart? Or our gut?

■ Yes, indeed! The heart and the gut each has its own nervous system that integrates with the brain for our knowing and **meaning**.

□ I like that. We often know with our heart.

■ In China they use the same word for 'heart' as for 'mind.' That one-word-idea – **heart-mind** – extends our knowing about what you and I are up to and invites a richer **meaning**.

□ Our **experience** of BEING seems to happen **all at once**. You feel happy BECAUSE you have just smiled – as well as the other way around.

■ Yes indeed! I used to **think** I ran away from something because I was frightened, but it's equally true that I was frightened BECAUSE I was running away.

□ Together with our body, we **experience mind** as a FLOW!

■ As long as OTHER PEOPLE – other **minds** – are involved.

□ That's right. I **imagine** it as a DANCE – with a partner.

■ I like that **image**. You need to be aware of your partner's movements as well as the music you both hear. If you are only aware of yourself, the FLOW can get horribly awkward – even STUCK.

□ I'm worried about the couple next door. Each of them repeats the same words over and over – not hearing the other. As if they are STUCK.

■ That is the worst **experience** that **minds** can have – to be consumed and trapped by SELF. It's probably the root of *The Curse* in all its different forms. Our sub**conscious** – and our powerhouse of **emotions** – can be seduced by a FALSE idea of freedom that SELF-WILL seems to promise.

□ You realise this is quite a sensitive subject!? But I understand that we can only BE if we BELONG. What a paradox that is: we can only BE and **feel** free when we are BONDED to something OTHER THAN ourselves!

■ The 'BONDAGE of SELF' can control us completely. Its vice-like grip is very hard to shake. Our relationships with others become toxic and even dangerous, as time goes on.

□ That's when we can't see what is BEYOND – where the music and the Magic might be. It's like a curtain we can't pull aside unless we TRUST something OTHER than us.

■ **Mind** can hide behind that veil without even realising it's there.

□ We **think** we're more important than we actually are. Someone said that **mind** is like a stowaway on an ocean voyage who claims the credit when they reach their destination, having done none of the work that was required to get there.

■ Ah yes, we don't credit our Beautiful sub**conscious**. And we overrate our **explicit** knowledge. But that isn't our **Intelligence**, anyway.

□ Remember we said that **kindness** underpins our other forms of **Intelligence**?

■ That's how we evolved. We had to learn INTIMACY and build social engagement (which enlarged our brains) before we could unlock the creativity and technological brilliance that has now put our Human stamp upon almost everything.

□ When we are practising **kindness**, we can see more possibilities, because we are not hemmed in by FEAR.

■ And LOVE, being unconditional (ideally), makes it easier to see what is actually there – not what our prejudice **thought** would be there.

□ We know, from **Intuition**, that LOVE exists in our sub**conscious** – though it needs a **conscious** belief in its VALUE to have full effect.

■ There's no doubt our **implicit** knowledge FAR outweighs the **explicit** knowledge that regularly triggers our **thinking** – and is like a swag we hump around that's stuffed with opinions and second-hand thoughts.

□ We go around **thinking** we know things for certain – which can be a dangerous illusion.

■ It is a nice **feeling** – that MIGHT be correct. But a **feeling** is not necessarily a fact.

□ **Thinking** just happens, doesn't it? **Thoughts** arise – often 'out of the blue.' It's not like a computer, caused and directed by what is fed in. Sometimes we can relate inputs to outputs, but mostly, **thinking** just FLOWS – of its own accord.

■ Some days, I'd quite like to BE a purely rational **mind** because we wouldn't make so many mistakes, but that's NOT how it is.

□ The **feeling** that 'I am right' is very sweet. That's how we learned things in the first place – we were told: 'yes, you're right so far.' But learning's best friend is what cripples us later, because we may not be able to see when we're wrong.

■ Some people are addicted to 'knowing they are right.' Researchers found they ranked the lowest in **Intelligence**, by any of the measures that are used.

□ We had an excellent example of that in a White House in the US!

■ The stronger the **feelings** of certainty, the more narrow-**minded** we are – robbed of the ability to notice alternatives.

□ And also robbed of Empathy – which distances us from the **implicit** part of **mind**, where the LOVE lies.

■ But, remember, in practice, we just have to use what we **think** we **know**, while recognising that it's not always going to be correct.

□ So, when you said we were telling lots of lies, you weren't joking.

■ Research shows we tell lies all the time, without realising it. It's a perfectly natural part of everyone's **mind**.

- Are you talking about bias – and blind spots?
- Yes. They are huge. All self-serving – to bolster our autonomy. Confirmation bias is a common one. Once we decided to buy the Subaru, we found more reasons that the Toyota was not as good.
- And since we moved to the Blue Mountains, we've been sure it's a better place to live than anywhere else. Except sometimes, on a bad day!
- The biggest blind spots are in our memory. We don't really want to remember everything.
- 'Mistakes were made – but not by me!' That's why they call memory: 'the self-justifying historian.'
- **Science** used to say that a memory was actually stored in our brain, like a suitcase in the back room. But it certainly does NOT happen like that.
- You said Penelope was a blonde at one time, but I'm absolutely sure she was not!
- You just don't remember things.
- Well, not everything.
- When people were asked to write down what was happening and where they were on a certain important date, most of them were **AMAZED** to read it back, just a few years later. They remembered it quite **DIFFERENTLY**.
- So, there you go! You could be mistaken.
- The fact is we simply **CANNOT** store much detail for future reference – just a few vivid images that persist. So we are actually doing the remembering **HERE AND NOW**, which will mostly be a distortion of what happened originally.

□ It will be altered by what is happening now.

■ That's right. As we recall the past we tell STORIES, supposedly from our memory, but it's the STORY we are telling that is fashioning the memories.

□ And that contributes to the blatant LYING by public officials that has become so common and is a part of *The Curse*.

■ Yes, indeed! Creating and believing in 'FAKE NEWS' has become widespread. It's so easy to make up lies that are just plausible enough for many of us to accept.

□ Which is exactly what Leaders at all levels – especially MEGA-Leaders – want! They have incorporated the telling of lies into their way of operating because it works so well!

■ And CONSPIRACY THEORIES thrive on the satisfying **feelings** of **shared meaning**. A tight-knit group will sustain the most unlikely, and often unhelpful, **fantasies**, and use these to infect the broader conversation.

□ It's hard to know what to BELIEVE and what to TRUST, these days.

■ So what we choose to **attend** to and what we choose to ignore becomes a primary responsibility for **mind**.

□ We say our HOPE for the future lies in the deeper STORY that is carried in our sub**conscious**, and topped up with acts of **kindness**.

■ Yes, that gives us HOPE because our **implicit** knowing is stronger than the **explicit** details that often catch our **attention**.

□ We just have to make sure the **implicit** knowledge and **meaning** doesn't get LEFT OUT of the conversation altogether. 'The things that are important lie behind the things that are apparent,' an important Spanish Philosopher once wrote.

■ He also wrote: ‘show me what you attend to and I will tell you who you are.’ Let’s take a break now, because we’re going into the brain-scanning machine. I’ll talk to you after that’s done.

6. *PAYING ATTENTION*

*I said to myself,
As if talking to me,
If it wasn't for us
What would we see?*

- Well, the machine was a bit noisy, and I had to answer a few questions coming through the speaker, but that wasn't too difficult.
- I kept right out of the way – quiet as a mouse, and hiding.
- They will get some pretty pictures of the brain and argue about whether they represent blood flow or neural activity, or both, and why so many different parts are involved at the same time.
- But you said it's not producing us?
- It is. But not directly.
- So, what does the brain actually look like, close up?
- It's what you can't see that makes it such an amazing structure. Around 90 billion cells called neurons and as many other, more mysterious, cells – interconnected like you wouldn't believe. It's the most densely networked structure that Humans have ever seen.
- So it packs a punch, eh?
- Sure does! Our important ally, *HANS*, is only one small part of it. Our brain is the central hub of every activity in our body.
- And **mind**?

■ Without it, we wouldn't exist. But the brain is only PART of what we are. **Minds** extend outwards, beyond our head, into the world. We exist in the CONNECTEDNESS we **experience** with everything else.

□ I knew we were not stuck between two ears – we can be anywhere!

■ BEING wouldn't happen without the CONNECTEDNESS that we call our BELONGING.

□ You said before that the brain cells DON'T produce us by themselves – that there's a more plausible way to explain how **mind** happens. This is what we're talking about here, isn't it?

■ Yes. Leading researchers have been saying for a while that **mind** is actually our 'brain-world interaction.' That's what creates our **reality** – our subjective, **conscious, experience**.

□ I like that. We are the INTERFACE between Lloyd and the world he lives in. So, when we use our phone, that becomes part of **mind**. And also our encounter with the lady who smiled at us, before.

■ Yes. They call it 'extended **mind**.' The trees and the concrete are part of it, too.

□ I'd like to see less concrete and more trees.

■ What you've just said is important! Because we can activate different parts of our brain to CONNECT with different **realities**.

□ You mean the two hemispheres? The right and left halves of our brain work differently, don't they? As well as together.

■ That is the MOST important thing we need to know about our brain. It's not that the two sides handle different tasks – both are required for language or art or anything else. But we create a different kind of **reality** according to which side we choose to emphasise.

□ And this is what makes our role, yours and mine, so enormously important. As you said earlier it was!

■ Because our counterpart, the sub**conscious**, is larger and more powerful, we do play second fiddle to its **emotions**. Yet, WE still have the MOST IMPORTANT ROLE in the end. We get to decide which activity of our brain we will emphasise to create our **reality**!

□ Wow! There you go!

■ We are Lloyd's **disposition** – **attitude** or outlook – and that will define our version of **reality**. We achieve this by influencing the CONNECTEDNESS of our extended **mind** – in other words, by deciding how to use our **attention**.

□ There you go! Where we put our **attention**. What we are **disposed** to notice and focus on. Whatever our **situation** may be, there are always some things we CAN change and many others we CAN'T. So our **disposition** becomes very important.

■ Yes, it does! **Attitude** gives us the courage to change what we can change, and come to terms with what we can't.

□ It's an awesome responsibility that you and I have! We choose our **disposition**.

■ We need the left half of our brain to grasp details, to manipulate them for our **agency**, and to know HOW THINGS WORK. It files everything neatly, in boxes, learning from previous **experience**, so we can call up logical procedures, cleverly, as they are required.

□ Especially, if we've been there before.

■ Yes. The left half learns very little that is completely new, because it thrives on its internal consistency. It likes everything to add up. I call it the *Servant* (as our **friend**, *Iain McGilchrist*, does), because it holds onto the details so efficiently for us.

- Very useful. But we need the brain's right half as well.
- We need the right half even MORE, because it is the *Master*. It may be a little less obvious when things are running smoothly, but it is designed to be the guiding force for the whole operation of **mind**.
- It's the *Master* who can see things as a Whole, isn't it? Who sees the 'big picture.'
- Yes. And for you and I, that 'big picture' is like a painting by Vermeer, a symphony by Beethoven, a poem by David Whyte, and a family picnic, all rolled into one, because we are such a Beautiful **mind**.
- Hey! You can't say that!! It's just as well I'm here, to cut you down to size. What happened to **humility**? But you're right about the Beauty!
- Sorry. I got carried away. But our appreciation of art and music and everything to do with our social engagement is coming from the right half of our brain – our feelings of Empathy, the triggers for every basic **emotion** (except ANGER), and the **attention** that is LOVE.
- Social engagement, LOVE – we gotta have them!
- It's the *Master* who provides the perspective and the awareness of CONTEXT, without which we can't create **meaning**. It doesn't know things for certain, but holds different viewpoints together in a ball that also contains the vague, powerful, notions of Beauty and Truth. And our aptitude for **kindness**.
- I believe the *Master* accesses the **implicit** knowledge and **meaning** that 'FAR outweighs the **explicit**' – as you said.
- That's right!
- The *Servant* is clever, but in a more rigid way. Its **concepts** and words are representations of the world, like maps, that are useful, but

NOT REAL. It deals in dogmatic certainties and makes us ANGRY if others disagree. But, its self-consistency is so reassuring (to itself) – because everything adds up – that it makes us **feel** very satisfied!

■ It can't see when it's wrong. Also, REAL people and situations are unique – each one special and distinct from any other. Once it's put inside a category box, nothing is quite REAL, because 'near enough isn't good enough' when dealing with **reality**.

□ To see anything clearly, you have to be aware of its CONTEXT. To describe a part of anything as if it existed only on its own, and didn't BELONG to a larger Whole, will never do it justice.

■ The *Servant* makes us smug and self-satisfied because everything looks good 'on paper.' So we don't realise what we don't know. It's the bureaucrat of **mind** telling us that what looks right 'on paper' couldn't be wrong.

□ Bureaucracy was supposed to help us, but has become a burden. There must be a lot of people favouring the left side of their brain!

■ THAT'S IT! In the story of our recent evolution, the sad fact is that the *Servant* has ousted the *Master* and **thinks** it is running the world.

□ As our **friend**, *Iain McGilchrist* is saying, loud and clear. Whereas the left half of the brain should be taking its lead from the right.

■ It should. We meet the world firstly in quite subtle ways, using our right brain. Then, we employ our left brain to objectify this in words and **concepts**. After that, we need to bring in the right brain again, to utilise our **Intelligence**. But we don't always get to that.

□ Sadly, we don't. So we've only played two of our four 'cards' – the **Science** and the **Reason**. It's not a 'winning hand' without **Intuition** and **Imagination**.

■ Which we CANNOT PLAY if we are neglecting the right half of our brain. The left brain can GET and manipulate details, giving us that sense of OWNERSHIP, but it doesn't let us see how everything is related to everything else, or what other possibilities are available.

□ You can't just be GETTING or HAVING if you aren't also ATTUNING and MELDING. They are the hallmarks of **Intelligence** and WISDOM.

■ **Intelligence** is the ability to BELONG in such a way that our BEING has the best possible chance to realise its potential.

□ There are always things happening that we can't control, so the **situation** can be as much a factor as our **disposition**. As we see in Nature, not every **situation** is going to be workable.

■ But it is still our responsibility to try to use our **disposition** – in every **situation** – to activate all of our **Intelligence** . . .

□ . . . to 'BELONG in such a way that our BEING has the best possible chance . . .'

■ That's what **Intelligence means**.

□ Our left brain is a useful assistant, but an incompetent director, so it is the main source of our troublesome self-deception. The *Master* knows it needs the *Servant*, but the *Servant* doesn't know it needs the *Master*. That's NOT **intelligent**.

■ But it's typical of psychopaths and MEGA-Leaders. They are actually quite similar.

□ I'm not all that surprised.

■ They both lack a large enough sense of Humanity – the sensitivity to **feel** what others **feel** or see the CONTEXT in which ordinary people live **meaningful** lives.

- That thread of **meaning** is our STORY that we re-create in each moment of **aliveness**.
- The MEGA-Leader has created a personal STORY of selfish greed. Hitler was a classic narcissist. Apparently, he hated violence and couldn't ever be told about it. His **meaning** came from the **feeling** of certainty that 'he was right' in what he was doing. That certainty became a **shared meaning** for many others, too.
- The more I learn about our history, the worse it looks.
- That's not quite true, because each great civilisation – the Greek, the Roman (and others) – enjoyed a long period of successful BEING and BELONGING, until this very same imbalance that we are talking about here, was probably what brought about its decline. Civilisations come and go.
- I HOPE ours is still coming – not going.
- So do I.
- Remember, you said about evolution: that it was a DRIFT of **meaning**, nowadays, for Humans – a **mind-driven**, CULTURAL, progression.
- That's right. And we can see in the recent history of literature, art and Science, how our increasing left-brain dominance has narrowed the **meanings** that make up our CULTURE.
- It's not really that difficult, is it, to get to use both halves of our brain together?
- It just takes **conscious** effort and we need to practice it – to hone that skill. It won't happen while we're 'sleepwalking.'
- Let's wake up! Soon!

■ **Attention** is NOT just another aspect of **mind**. It's FOUNDATIONAL – the most crucial of our DOINGS. It's the 'rudder' we need to keep hold of to steer our WONDROUS **mind** and lay down our history of **experience**.

□ Our Spanish philosopher put it like this: 'my **experience** is what I agree to **attend** to.'

■ **Attention** is a MORAL act.

□ But even paying **attention**, you won't always know what's coming next. **Experience** keeps moving us along.

7. *DOING AND BEING*

*I said to myself, and
I share it with you:
Us chatting aside,
I will be what I do.*

- I can't believe it! We live in a quiet street. Nothing like this ever happens here.
- What a shock! Lloyd is SHAKING again.
- We should have gone over to talk to them. I blame myself in a way.
- No, you mustn't say that. People are killed, in cities, all over.
- But not right next door.
- We were asleep, before the noise started. By the time we came outside there were sirens and police and an ambulance. They must have come quickly.
- I think it was the man's lifeless body they put into the ambulance. I saw the distraught woman with the police.
- His was always the louder voice in the shouting. Perhaps it was self-defence? Or revenge?
- Who knows? Their **minds** were on a road to disaster. If only we could have intervened – helped them to DANCE, even a little.
- So we were helpless bystanders, after all.
- Yes. We can't CONNECT with everyone.

□ When we **think** we know things, we **think** we can CONTROL things, too. But what we can control is very limited. All we can DO is show **kindness**, wherever and whenever we can.

■ Yes. That is something we can all DO.

□ Every act of **kindness** is an invitation to **kindness**. And the STORY we are creating for the next stage is fuelled by each small act of LOVE. **Mind's meaning** is a mighty FLOW – each current running through it has an effect.

■ There are people out on the street, now – and a TV camera.

□ It'll be on the News – unless they're full up with worse things.

■ The News is like a drug we take every day to keep us in a state of bemused anxiety and subtle ANGER. It attracts attention by eliciting FEAR. Why do we DO that?

□ Haven't you heard of FOMO?

■ Yes, missing out – another underlying FEAR. You don't have to know much about **mind** to know that we actually MISS far more than we ever notice.

□ What are you saying?

■ **Mind** can only take in a tiny fraction of all that happens right beside us, let alone anywhere else. How many other murders do you think happened today, all over the world?

□ I'm glad we don't have to know about everything.

■ It's a blessing that we live in our own **conscious reality**. We do need to debrief, now, though, with our friends, who won't know anything about it. That gives us the broader perspective we need.

□ We all notice different things, don't we?

■ That's the **disposition** we were talking about – where you and I must lead the way. Remember? It's like we live in a house with many windows. Which one we choose to look out at the world makes a big difference to what we see.

□ I know when we're unhappy or angry, we keep going back to the same window – so we see the same thing every time.

■ We tend to blame our **thinking** for that. But it's our DOING that needs to change.

□ When different people look out the SAME window, they see different things.

■ Yes, because each of us has a different history. There's a deep, mythical/personal, STORY in our **subconscious** that has formed our World View – this organises our **outlook**. It's like looking through a template – whatever doesn't fit the shape we already have, might just as well not exist – it won't be seen.

□ And what other people say, especially **friends**, affects our **outlook**.

■ But it's still our responsibility. In the same way that our **meaning** is personal and unique, our **disposition** is also.

□ And it's NOT the same as our desire or intention, is it?

■ No. That's important. Desire implies a particular outcome, whereas **disposition** is more like curiosity or WONDER.

□ I did check the dictionary. It says: as well as denoting '**outlook**,' **disposition** is 'the way something is arranged in relation to everything else.'

■ Well said! That helps us 'get a handle on' BEING, too! A desire or an intended outcome arises from our **thinking**. But BEING is very different from **thinking**.

□ Because it's open-ended?

■ Yes, partly. It requires **Intelligence** – using both sides of our brain. And TRUST – that spontaneous quality that **disposition** has when it includes LOVE – inviting CONNECTEDNESS **for its own sake**.

□ There is a path to take, but ‘the path is made by walking,’ as the poet, *Antonio Machado*, said so sweetly.

■ No path is ever linear – there are switchbacks and spirals that make new connections. We ascend *Jacob's* staircase (not really a *Ladder*) amidst *William Blake's* vivid colours and we swirl like his paintbrush in spectacular freedom.

□ You got carried away again! Back here on earth – once we're on the path, **thinking** will likely take over.

■ Yes, it's a fact that we go where we **think**. It's like taking a trip on a train. **Thinking** controls us – not the other way around. And that troublesome sense of ‘time’ is on the same train – steaming ahead.

□ I've found that the OFF-switch for **thinking** gets rusted up if it isn't used often enough.

■ **Thinking** often interferes with what we're seeing and hearing.

□ Yes it does.

■ You know, people who are seriously blind make more efficient use of ‘time’ and are less driven by it. They have to DO things carefully, step by step, **concentrating** as they go, so they don't hurry or get distracted or try to DO several things at once. Deliberation replaces speed – something is lost, but something is gained.

□ There you go!

■ It may sound strange, but nothing is quite what we **think** it is. Living in our **thinking** is not actually living in **reality** – it is living in a

description of it. It often seems that **reality** is what we are **thinking**. But the fact is we might be marooned on an island of **concepts** and **fantasy**, blissfully unaware that **reality** only laps at the shore.

□ **Fantasy** is not the same as **Imagination**, is it?

■ The difference is that **fantasy** is ego-driven and designed for more immediate entertainment or gratification, whereas **Imagination** is a broad vision of future possibilities, related to **WONDER**.

□ I can see how different **BEING** is from **thinking** – more **implicit** and **felt**. And we don't need to **BE** any particular thing.

■ No. We're better off **NOT** actually 'BEING a writer,' or 'a loser' (or 'a winner'). Just **BEING**, for its own sake, gives us a sense of freedom, because it **feels** like anything could be possible.

□ And that freedom is realised by **DOING**.

■ **Concentrating** on what we are **DOING** is the next most important responsibility you and I have – after **disposition**. We are responsible for the **CONTINUITY** of our **attention** process.

□ I like to just daydream, too. 'Away with the pixies' suits me. But I suppose you're right – we need to be able to **concentrate**. And the best thing is, it makes you **feel** good.

■ When we are **DOING** something, wholeheartedly, there is no room for bad **feelings**. **Concentration** brings a sense of wellbeing and purpose. Psychologists call that state of **mind**: **FLOW**.

□ That's our word as well.

■ **PLAYING** chess with our Dad helped us to learn **concentration**. You were never quite so keen on it – which is why you can't remember things as well as I do.

□ I don't mind chess. But it's a bit too precise and pedantic for me.

■ PLAY is enormously important for Humans. Our culture is shaped more by PLAY than we admit. It expands the scope of our **mind**. And encourages spontaneity. Organised sports also teach cooperative behaviour, and how to handle both winning and losing.

□ We need lots of PLAY in our education system. And less reward and punishment, which are useless relics of Behaviourism.

■ Yes. Research shows that the ‘carrot and stick’ hardly ever achieve what was intended, despite what many people **think**.

□ I’m not surprised. **Disposition** is not a Behaviourist reflex.

■ The most important educational **experiences** are literature, art and music, because they utilise the right side of our brain. Listening to music occurs mostly in our right brain and also enhances the linkage between the two hemispheres.

□ That’s why the Humanities are so important for our learning.

■ Unfortunately, our school system is mostly a training in conformity – controlled **shared meaning**. A rebel and the school are soon parted, yet we need the rebel to keep **minds** open and healthy.

□ Our schooling, ideally, should equip us for **aliveness**, in all its uncertainty and WONDER. We need to learn, especially, about our HABITS of **attention**, so we can use our **disposition** wisely.

■ It seems too biased, nowadays, towards left-brain use of **mind**. Those vocation-ready facts and procedures, that will never be used by most learners, just add to the sameness of business culture, when we need innovation.

□ The ecology of **mind** needs diversity, the same as Nature does. Our education system creates a Monoculture. Our most elite schools spawn business cliques for already-privileged youngsters.

- The Autopilot we call *HANS* is a creature of HABIT, so we get stuck in our ways.
- Perhaps that's why you and I are talking about **mind** and **attention** without mentioning 'the elephant in the room.'
- I guess you **mean**: the small silver screen?
- We don't use much social media, or look at our phone 50 times a day – or I don't anyway – but we can still see that a CULTURAL REVOLUTION has occurred, in just a few years, in the way we Humans direct our **attention**.
- Yes, the smartphone in particular, has hijacked our **attention** like no other invention in history.
- The social engagement I call Magic is quite different when it's channelled through an intermediary device. We're just learning how to manage that. They say young children can't 'read' other's facial expression like they used to. And 'reading faces' is important.
- The young people lead us in adapting to change. They took us into the era of Texting – the asynchronous, disembodied, conversation, which is 'easier' and 'more efficient' than talking to someone directly.
- It's 'more efficient' because many people can be engaged all at once, and 'easier' because there is less, immediately obvious, **emotional** involvement. But that leaves a hole in our BELONGING that still has to be filled.
- There are plenty of **emotion**-triggers in Texting, though. And they affect some people very badly.
- And are being used for exploitation and abuse. We can always Tweet our displeasure, but as conversation goes, that's more like a squeak than a statement! It works best for spreading lies and malice.

■ Our left brain relishes 280-character, dogmatic, opinions that sound logical within their own narrow framework, but lack any depth or **Intelligence**.

□ The **explicit** nature of **thinking** rides roughshod over the **implicit** knowing and **feelings** we need to make satisfying **meaning**.

■ You know, this effect of technology is not new. Ever since we made the first tools, we've been getting help from technology, the trade-off being that it would shape the evolution of our behaviour and **mind**.

□ But technology changes so quickly, our evolution doesn't really keep pace.

■ That's how we end up with things we DON'T need at the expense of some of the things we DO need.

□ Some new things are very useful. We can look up 'facts' so easily, publish books online or print them ourselves.

■ But our connections with the REAL world have become less secure. We find our location from the GPS, our doctor looks at his computer more earnestly than he looks at the patient, and the most trusted advisers in Business are now called 'expert systems.'

□ Our connection to Nature is the biggest casualty in this regard. The OWNERSHIP idea amounts to the **appropriation** of Nature. What a joke! In fact, it **appropriates** us!

■ The fact that **mind** occurs as a 'brain-world interaction' is what makes us so vulnerable to outside control. We have put ourselves in the hands of the engineers who design and manage our social engagement and electronic commerce.

- And our Monoculture as CONSUMERS makes us ‘sitting ducks.’ Algorithms use our purchase history to steer us, in hapless mobs – no, NOT ‘ducks’ – more like ‘herds of cattle, driven by a dog.’
- Artificial Intelligence shapes everything we DO, and will control more and more of our lives, as we roll further down this path.
- The original ‘Big Brother’ looks tame compared to the surveillance we **experience** today – which makes MEGA-Leaders very happy.
- You know, you and I are just ‘old fogeys’ who aren’t affected much. We see some problems, but we can’t know how **minds** will go on learning and adapting – as they must DO to survive.
- So we should stick to using what we **think** we know in our OWN progress through life, here and now.
- And what we’ve learned about **mind** helps us a lot – firstly, to move on from the old ideas that exaggerated the importance of collecting ‘information.’ Bits of ‘information’ are needed, sometimes critically, but our **disposition** and **intelligence** are always going to be more important.
- Especially when what we know is changing every moment.
- That’s right! It’s shaped by our sub**conscious** history of BEING, but it arises AFRESH in each moment.
- So what is our brain’s main role in that?
- It’s a rather good ‘prediction engine,’ generating likely scenarios, all the time. Then, it is guided from action to action by our embodied sense of **meaning**. They call that: ‘action-oriented engagement.’
- I call it DOING. A lot of our decision-making is immediate. Which is why we are so easily manipulated.

■ And our DOING becomes our BEING – either hide-bound by HABITS or expressing ‘free will.’ This is the enormous responsibility that you and I have, in our role as Lloyd’s **disposition**.

□ We make it possible to look BEYOND the HABITS of our **thinking**, as we decide where to put our **attention**.

■ The **meanings** we form when we emphasise our left brain keep us trapped in a narrow, repetitive, **disposition**.

□ We need our right brain to enjoy broader **meaning** and feel fully satisfied in our **aliveness**.

■ And that is how **mind** creates VALUE for us. Our Philosopher-friend, *Max Scheler*, said that Human perception should probably be called ‘VALUE-ception?’

□ That’s important! We VALUE some things and we don’t VALUE others? And that certainly guides our **predisposition**.

■ An attitude of LOVE creates VALUE, whereas hatred or indifference DEVALUES whatever comes to our **attention**.

□ I like that, because the more we LOVE, the more VALUE we get from our everyday **experience**.

■ LOVE is really another word for the QUALITY of our **attention**. It’s the Truest and most Beautiful form of **attention**.

□ And our **disposition** drives our **attention**.

8. TRUTH AND BEAUTY

*I said to myself:
This aliveness is duty
Beyond which we hope to find
Some Truth and Beauty!*

□ This special project of ours is hard work, isn't it?

■ Yes, **mind** is a vast subject. But the hard work of knowing about it is also our responsibility to keep our **aliveness** flourishing – not let it fade away through neglect. That's our duty.

□ I remember you said, at the beginning: 'some people don't even bother to **think** about **mind** and what it does.' I can see why they don't! Penelope says this book reminds her of those Instruction Manuals that are written by the 'back room guys,' but are not easy for a new user, who just wants to know how to get started!

■ Ha-ha! Point taken. Despite what I said then about starting at the beginning, we are always starting in the middle! And it's hard to see clearly what we are living inside. There's a circularity in that, which is daunting. But I find the rewards that come from knowing about **mind** compensate for the effort involved.

□ Yes, **aliveness** is very rewarding, for sure. I LOVE it! Do you remember I said: 'let's just BE, whether we can **explain** it or not.'

■ I TRY so hard to work it out . . . I worry I might get lost. But I also enjoy the **aliveness**.

□ We won't get lost if we 'play all our cards.' **Imagination** is the last one we need to play. Didn't your great **Scientist**, *Einstein*, say it was 'more important than knowledge?'

■ He did, because it isn't confined to what's already known. There is probably far more still NOT known than what we know at present. I remember you saying something like that.

□ That's why we have to **imagine** what might fill the gaps – make things up – drawing on our **Intuition** and using our **Intelligence**.

■ Like hypotheses in **Science**. Einstein **felt** excited about the new **meaning** generated from his **imaginative** work, but its objective validity had to be tested before it was accepted as HOW IT WORKS.

□ Human **experience** is a bit different. The only test we have is our **experience** itself. What we choose to BELIEVE can be ADDED to what we **think** we know – as long as it WORKS, in our **aliveness**. This becomes a 'working Truth,' not an absolute Truth.

■ At the very beginning of this book, you seemed to equate Truth and Beauty, when I mentioned them, with what you call Magic.

□ Yes, because they are aspects of **mind** that evoke WONDER.

■ Which we associate with HOPE. You said we need WONDER to have HOPE. And you quoted *William James*.

□ I did.

■ Yet WONDER is implying a mystery – something we don't know.

□ *Einstein* also wrote that: 'the most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious . . .' If you cannot ever stand 'rapt in awe,' you are 'as good as dead,' in his words. He saw Beauty in the mystery.

■ That sense of awe goes with WONDER. But it's also curiosity – wondering what's going to happen.

□ Either way, it's the NOT knowing that is important. Knowledge that doesn't include some NOT knowing is a scam. The people who know the least often **think** they know nearly everything.

■ When we add what we BELIEVE to what we **think** we know to make a 'working Truth,' we are trying to add VALUE to our **experience**. We can talk to others about our 'working Truth,' but it is ours ALONE, like our **meaning** and our **disposition**.

□ Which brings us back to the beginning of our book. We said our **reality** is our **conscious experience**, totally subjective and personal.

■ And it is telling us, not only what the world is, but what WE ARE, as well. We change as our world changes.

□ So, an important question, then . . . Is it us CREATING the **reality** or is it already there in the world?

■ Well, I BELIEVE it is BOTH! We don't create it out of nothing, nor do we simply discover it, waiting there for us to find. We 'bring it forth,' as **conscious BEINGS**, like a midwife delivers a baby. It is BOTH already there and needing to be 'brought forth' by us – so it's a CO-CREATION.

□ We said we are drawn towards VALUE. And now we are saying that VALUE is not just a personal opinion. Some element of it already exists in the world before we apprehend it.

■ It's important to BELIEVE that! Using all of our brain! And we can't analyse VALUE or Beauty. We can't divide them into parts to **explain** them.

□ They are QUALITIES, not QUANTITIES.

■ Which we recognise in our **experience** – a Beautiful sunset, a waterfall, or a Tree.

□ You said earlier that people were closer to Nature before *The Curse* set in? How did we lose that?

■ That was *Galileo's* fault.

□ *Galileo?* The great astronomer? I heard he was in trouble with the Pope, but I thought he was one of the 'good guys.'

■ It was not only him. All the early natural **Scientists** got the idea that you have to MEASURE everything to explain HOW IT WORKS. Everything material can be QUANTIFIED. Its properties of size, shape and position can all be converted to numbers.

□ Oh yes! What a boost that was for the left side of our brain, enabling great advances in **Science** and technology. But, something important had been left out – relegated to the 'less useful basket.'

■ Subjectivity became a 'dirty word,' aligned with QUALITATIVE, rather than QUANTITATIVE, description.

□ The **feel** or the sound – the colour, texture and appearance – these became niceties of personal **experience** and opinion, no longer of much practical use in a left-brain-dominated world.

■ QUALITIES became secondary. Yet our **experience** of **reality** DEPENDS on them. What the instruments MEASURE and the numbers denote is NOT **reality**. It's an objective description of it.

□ Which is very useful, but not quite REAL.

■ What we **experience** as Truth and Beauty are subjective QUALITIES. We **feel** their **meaning** as part of our **reality**.

□ Presumably because something Beautiful and True already exists, ready for us to **bring it forth** in our CO-CREATION.

■ But that can't give us ultimate Truth – only glimpses.

□ Which is all we know of **reality**. Only the parts in which we are involved.

■ BEYOND which is mystery – the domain of WONDER. Where poetry and metaphor come **alive**, through our right brain.

□ To see ‘a World in a grain of sand, and a Heaven in a wild flower; hold Infinity in the palm of your hand, and Eternity in an hour.’
William Blake called these *Auguries of Innocence*.

■ Music is not the individual notes, yet they are essential parts of it, as are the silences between them. It’s the way the parts come together and FLOW as a composite Whole that makes the music.

□ ‘Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty – that is all . . . ye need to know.’ That’s what the young genius, *John Keats*, said about it.

■ He was speaking of a *Grecian Urn* – and the Whole of **reality**.

□ And why we needed to ‘play all our cards.’

■ This book’s **explanation** of **mind** utilised **Science** and **Reason** and is our version of a ‘working Truth’ from Biology. It helps us understand our **experience** of **mind**.

□ You like your **explanations**, don’t you! But yes – it has helped us know about **mind**, and also to appreciate **mind’s** Beauty. We **produce ourselves, again and again, at every moment**. How WONDERFUL is that!

■ We do it through Relationality – our BELONGING. In fact, we CO-CREATE ourselves by DEPENDING on everything else.

□ This is how Magic combines with Biology.

■ Biology is a more basic **Science** than is commonly supposed. It gives us an **explanation** of INTERDEPENDENCE. To know what

that **means** is important. We are not just connected – we **DEPEND** on those connections for our very existence.

□ So we don't need to be searching for an **INTRINSIC NATURE** – in the Biological realm, at least. And who knows how much of the rest of our world could be **alive**, too?

■ That's right! We only ever know **CONTINGENT NATURE**, because everything **DEPENDS** on everything else! That's my most favourite 'working Truth!'

□ When we realise that our **BELONGING** is for the purpose of **CO-CREATION**, we get a **feel** for the most **WONDROUS** aspects of **mind**.

■ And appreciate that Beauty exists in the form and colour of our Natural world, our works of Art, and our music, as well as in the **mind** that is **alive** to that Beauty. What we call **VALUE**, Beauty and Truth are **CO-CREATIONS** of our **mind**.

□ Bravo! Let's enjoy them!

■ So, to **Science** and **Reason**, we added **Intuition**, which keeps us in touch with the **implicit meanings** in our **subconscious**. You said we know, **intuitively**, that our **experience** of **LOVE** comes from our **subconscious**.

□ That was after you admitted that **LOVE** can't be **explained**. So then, we still needed **Imagination** to take us **BEYOND** the limitations of our **thinking**. What we came to **BELIEVE** was added to what we **think** we know – to fulfil our **BELONGING**.

■ That's how the **small part** of the world that we are can **feel BOUND** together into a larger Whole.

□ I heard that the main difference between a Mystic and a **Scientist** is that the Mystic sees the Whole more easily – the **Scientist** has to keep half an eye on the parts.

■ We need BOTH the Whole and the parts. But, in our **meaning**, the Whole leads the way. If you are looking at a fishing net, say, you become aware of the net as a Whole, before you focus on the individual knots that tie it together.

□ Yes. In the way we make **meaning**, Relationality precedes the things that are related – not the other way around. The Whole has a PRESENCE that embraces the parts and also dwells in them.

■ There's an image from Buddhist philosophy called *Indra's Net*, in which each of the 'knots' is a glittering jewel, so they reflect and 'light up' one another. Their individual Beauty is acknowledged along with the Relationality that HOLDS them together.

□ There you go! I like that.

9. A SMALL PART

*I said to myself, and
It came from the heart:
In all the Aliveness
We play a small part.*

■ I've had some bad news, lately.

□ Oh!

■ I've found books that say: you DON'T EXIST! There is no such thing as the 'self!' It's an Illusion created by **mind** to prop up its ego.

□ Well, if I don't exist, what does that say about you?

■ It's very bad news for me, because I like talking to you.

□ First you thought I might be a FAKE. Then you said I wasn't objective enough. You tried to associate me with the word 'selfish' and now you're saying: I'm an Illusion – I DON'T EXIST!

■ I really don't want to say that. I need you! And you've been so gracious about all those 'put-downs.'

□ I've had worse things said about me when Lloyd was younger and still growing up. 'Self-will run riot,' they used to say. I acted like we were the 'centre of the Universe' and always had to be right. You've been respectful towards me.

■ I enjoy your company. We've grown closer. I also found a book that said you were like an Onion.

□ An Onion?

- Yes. Your layers can be peeled off, one by one, until eventually, what is left is the True Self (with a capital S).
- I wouldn't like to be a Brussels Sprout!
- You **think** I read too many books, don't you?
- Yes. I don't care what people **think** of me. I'm just a part of our BEING – a small part, BELONGING to a Whole.
- We said: 'we BELONG to something BIGGER, so we can BE ourselves.' But, even now, I'm not absolutely sure I know . . . what 'something BIGGER than ourselves' actually **means**?
- Come for a walk with me in amongst the trees and down into the gully.
- It's usually helpful when we go into the forest. There's a different **feeling** comes over my whole body when the concrete fades from view and the Trees surround us. Our path runs between these rocky outcrops and the light here is filtered and soft.
- Just keep a lookout for lizards and snakes! I like most of what lives here, but I've always had a 'thing' about them.
- I will.
- If we pause for a moment to listen, there are many sounds we don't normally hear – rustling sounds of **aliveness**, bird call conversations – and then a STILLNESS that is a silence, strangely redolent with sound.
- Not sure I understand that.
- In the STILLNESS, nothing is REALLY still. The world around us FLOWS – just like **mind**.
- It is a more peaceful **feeling**, that FLOW, as I let go of the worry and immediacy of **thinking**.

□ Some Trees have been here for hundreds of years. That butterfly emerged just moments ago and will die within a few hours. ‘Time’ is a **concept** we don’t take so seriously, down here.

■ Makes you realise how small-**minded** and NARROW one’s **reality** becomes in our HABITUAL, day-to-day, existence.

□ Rest your hands on the smooth, shiny, bark of this tall Eucalypt, and let your **Imagination** bring to **mind** the INVISIBLE aspects of BEING. For a start, the trillions of microbes in great eco-systems in the soil, the water, and the air – and in us, too.

■ I’m aware of a very visible ‘beetle thing’ fluttering into my face and then crawling all over my hand!

□ The microbes inhabit every square millimetre of this Forest, and most of our bodies as well – on our skin and in our gut. They help us digest our food, protect us from disease, and are part of our identity. Lloyd is an eco-system with millions of components.

■ His autonomy is the Wholeness of all that, combined.

□ Our autonomy is no different from that of every other BEING. The SAME principle we use to describe **mind** applies to everything. All BEING depends on BELONGING.

■ So this Tree – and the beetle – are BEINGS that exist because of their BELONGING. We **think** of **mind** as ours alone, because Lloyd has a brain. Our **Intelligence** is, supposedly, due to that.

□ We **think** of **Intelligence** as the ability to solve equations, do puzzles and interpret texts, but those are just Human ‘specialities,’ not the fundamentals of **aliveness**.

■ If **Intelligence** is the ability to BELONG in a way that enables one’s BEING to thrive, other autonomous unities are NOT different from us. And they don’t necessarily need a brain.

- The only BEINGS that need a brain like ours are those that run around or fly. Only creatures that make complex movements have our kind of brain.
- A Tree stays in one place – more or less. Yet I WONDER if it might be the doyen of **aliveness** – the most respected of all.
- Weren't *Tolkien's* Ents very old Trees, and very wise?
- They were! And the whole Fangorn Forest marched on the evil stronghold in the final battle – what a sight that must have been!
- There's nothing wrong with your **Imagination!**
- I get carried away sometimes.
- We recognise **Intelligence** more easily when it resembles Human behaviour – we anthropomorphise. An Octopus, which has a nervous system, but not a brain, seems to us to be quite **Intelligent**.
- Oh yes! I've seen the research about how they recognise and relate to different Humans. They remember those they dislike and express their **feelings** by changing colour or spraying water on them. They appear to get ANGRY, but also seem to appreciate **kindness**.
- The smaller BEINGS don't even need a nervous system. Do you see that rusty-green patch on that rock? That's a Lichen. They've probably been here on Earth a hundred times longer than we have.
- Wow! There you go!
- They are part Fungi, part algae, with bacteria attached – another ecosystem/BEING. They can dissolve rock for their food and they cover more of the Earth's surface than rainforest does.
- It looks so innocuous. Most times, we wouldn't even notice it, so wrapped up in our own self-importance are we.
- Ah . . . yes.

■ Now, I do know that these Trees **DEPEND** upon Fungi attached to their roots to connect with other Trees in the ‘Wood Wide Web.’ They can ‘talk’ to one another, because what happens in one Tree affects what happens in others, even some distance away.

□ I have a **feeling** that Fungi are some of the most extraordinary creatures we will ever come across. All plants **DEPEND** on them, for **CO-CREATION**. The Fungi get a share of the energy that the plant’s photosynthesis has obtained from the sun.

■ I’ve been reading about how **WE DEPEND** on them, too! We eat them. Without microscopic yeasts we would have **NO** brewing or baking – **imagine** that! They produce medicines that keep us alive. They can also kill other animals or plants with their poisons.

□ They are the largest **BEINGS**, as well as amongst the smallest. For example, one has an area of 10 sq km and is about 5000 years old.

■ The current **Science** can’t **explain** our utter **DEPENDENCE** on all these other **BEINGS**. We would **NOT BE** here without them.

□ What we know about **aliveness** is a thimble-full from a vast ocean. We live in that ocean, but, like the fish in the sea, we take it for granted, without actually knowing what it is.

■ So it would seem that the **mind** of every other **BEING** has the equivalent of our ‘brain-world interaction.’

□ Of course! They perceive their **reality** as we do – ‘**think**’ and make decisions – like us.

■ Fungi are a good example of that. They’ve been shown to adjust their behaviour as their circumstances change, learn and remember that, and even pass that knowledge on to other Fungi.

□ The word ‘**feel**’ is better than ‘**think**,’ because it fits with the **subjectivity** that is implied in every **BEING**’s **situation**.

■ There are several philosophers (like *Alfred North Whitehead*) who ascribe **subjectivity** to ALL BEINGS. Just as our **feelings** give us **meaning**, they, also, have to **know what to DO** in every situation.

□ *Tolkien's* Elves knew that the Trees had **feelings** – and respected that, as they moved amongst them.

■ **Imaginary** parts of the STORY can be joined up with **Scientific** parts to give us richer **meaning**.

□ When Humans started to use ‘third-person description’ ahead of ‘first-person knowing,’ we lost touch with something that AFFIRMS our CONNECTEDNESS with the larger Whole.

■ The larger Whole that is ALL of **aliveness**. Every small part, like us, owes allegiance to that Whole. We exist because of it.

□ Yes! And it's NOT just a collection of parts. It is the ‘something greater’ to which we all BELONG. And that Whole exists, also, WITHIN every part, including us!

■ I've seen that in a hologram.

□ We are down by the stream now, that runs along the gully. That will take us out to the escarpment – the very edge of the Blue Mountains forest plateau on which we live.

■ Walking along by the stream reminds me that it isn't the things, themselves – it's the RELATING to them that sustains our BEING. Which is why earlier Humans didn't see such a need to distinguish inanimate objects like rivers and mountains from the animals and plants, or themselves.

□ We know that, **Intuitively**. We are negotiating our way along this stream with respect for its BEING. All BEING is Inter-BEING.

■ And INTER-SUBJECTIVE. **Subjectivity** is not confined to you and I. It's how **mind** brings forth **reality**, everywhere.

- We are just one example – though we **think** we're unique.
- As we said earlier, we are not passive observers of **reality**, nor are we its creator. We **bring it forth**, using **mind**, like a midwife delivers a child.
- So **reality** is neither 'out there' nor 'in here' – because we are NOT separate from the world we inhabit. We exist at the interface between the two, as part of both – sharing the universal FLOW.
- How did we become so **alienated** from Nature, when in fact we are simply a part of it?
- So **embedded** in it that, what we do to Nature, we do to ourselves.
- There are **Scientists** investigating this concept of Wholeness, through 'quantum fields,' and other ideas.
- Remind me about Schrödinger's cat in the box. Wasn't Quantum Physics supposed to help us understand **consciousness**?
- Do you know, that was almost 90 years ago!
- Progress may be slow, but it is happening, isn't it?
- Yes. The two biggest leads at that time were the idea that something only becomes REAL when it is **observed** – at least in the sub-atomic realm. And secondly, parts affect one another **at a distance**, without any known physical connection between them. That's called 'quantum entanglement.'
- It needs Biology (and **Imagination**) to know that everything is INTERDEPENDENT.
- The famous physicist, *Max Planck*, was way out on a limb in those days when he said that **consciousness** was FUNDAMENTAL – that **mind** is 'the matrix of all matter!'

□ Wow! But that's surely more likely than **thinking** that matter could PRODUCE the **consciousness**. It has to be the other way around – like he said.

■ One **scientist** stands out in trying to **explain** 'Wholeness' – our great **friend**, *David Bohm*.

□ I know his brilliance as a physicist was recognised early on, by *Einstein* in particular.

■ The 'McCarthy era' forced him out to the fringe. He befriended the Indian mystic, *Krishnamurti*, and went back to basics to write about the nature of **thought**, which he said FRAGMENTS the Wholeness.

□ So how can we put it back together again?

■ In 1952, the incompatibility between Quantum Mechanics and General Relativity still seemed unexplainable. They could NOT both be True. *Bohm's* paper in that year showed, mathematically, how to integrate them. But, at that time, it was a 'bridge too far' for the world of **Science**.

□ Why?

■ He was saying: we are NOT separate from the world around us. To appreciate that we must go BEYOND the current **concepts** of space and time that describe our supposedly separate existence.

□ Which is easy enough for Magic, but very hard for **Science**.

■ The easiest way to understand it is to recall what we said earlier about our **implicit** knowing, in our sub**conscious**, that lies beneath the **explicit** knowing of our words and **thoughts**.

□ The **implicit** is larger and shapes the **explicit** in ways we need our right brain to appreciate. It contributes to our **experience** of **reality** – even before it exists in an **explicit** form.

■ *Bohm* explained Wholeness as a new ORDER of **reality**, BEYOND time and space, that he called the **Implicate** order. Within this, he said, all our **Explicate** details are ENFOLDED. But they can be UNFOLDED as we encounter them in our **consciousness**.

□ Wow! There you go!

■ He said: **reality** is a state of FLOW – the ‘holomovement.’ It is MOSTLY hidden from us, but can also appear in an **explicit** form, as we bring it into our **conscious experience**.

□ So you and I, being **conscious**, can tap into an INVISIBLE realm that lies behind our **reality**. Our **explicit** and **implicit meaning** comes from that CONNECTION, imperfect though it is. And that **meaning** is what keeps us going.

■ Our **conscious reality** includes what is hidden – that infinitely BIGGER unknown. I call that a **Sacred** aspect of **mind**.

□ Our being **conscious** is as large or as small as we CHOOSE it to be. At its smallest, it’s our ego – the separate existence that gave us our autonomy. The broader our BELONGING, the larger our **consciousness** will be.

■ Walking here in the forest, along the stream, I’m CONNECTING with ALL of **aliveness** – at least in my **Imagination**.

□ Which makes me **feel** that I BELONG here, too.

■ We’ve arrived at the escarpment on our walk. This stream we’ve been following comes to an end at this cliff edge.

□ So the stream does NOT end, but becomes something NEW – a great waterfall.

■ That reminds me of an image I’ve seen in some Chinese drawings, where the tiniest Human figure stands beside a gigantic waterfall. It’s a nice reminder of what a **small part** we are.

□ So I'm NOT an Illusion? Or an Onion?

■ You've been more like a Magician! And a Tease!

10. LOVE

*I said to myself,
Below and above,
There has to be fusion
That fusion is love.*

□ We started out being **conscious** and we end the same way, arriving back where we began. To ‘know the place for the first time,’ our poetic **friend**, *TS Eliot*, suggested. Do you remember that?

■ I do. In his last work, *Four Quartets*, published in the year Lloyd was born, as the world slid into the abyss of the Second World War. With his acute sense of history, *TS* feared for ‘the end of civilisation.’

□ We can’t see the end – only the next small part of the journey.

■ We’ve said only a little about the dire threats to our civilisation. Other books say much more. But we espouse HOPE, based on our **feelings** of WONDER at the remarkable, still not fully utilised, riches of **mind** and **meaning** within each of us.

□ Do you remember when we met that lady who said: ‘you look nice in that blue shirt?’ And we exchanged smiles?

■ Yes, I do. I remember that acts of **kindness** are our Biological birthright, and that the Magic of social engagement and **shared meaning** writes a STORY of positive CULTURAL change in our **heart-minds**. The SPIRIT of **aliveness** keeps us going.

□ Our journey is a history of **meanings** and thus, a history of **feelings**.

■ With that I wholeheartedly agree.

□ You don't have to tell me at the end of the book whether it achieves anything to talk to oneself – I've worked that out. But what did you mean by the **Sacred** aspect of **mind**?

■ It's one of the three kinds of BELONGING that I BELIEVE Humans could NOT do without. They are social engagement, involvement in Nature, and a sense of the **Sacred** – a link to BEYOND where we are. That's how we pay our respects to the Wholeness that is never fully known.

□ Because we DEPEND on whatever HOLDS TOGETHER the small parts like us. Relating to the natural world, *William Wordsmith* described his own 'sense sublime . . . of something far more deeply infused . . . a motion and a spirit that impels . . .'

■ **Science** refers to the idea of an INTRINSIC life force as **vitalism** or **animism**. It's probably the most ancient BELIEF of all, so we've tried to exclude it from modern **thinking**.

□ Like the 'unknown force that might guide us' I mentioned early in the book. Before you said **Science** would **explain** everything..

■ Well, no, not EVERYTHING! But the newest Science of Complex Systems validates INTERDEPENDENCE and describes non-linear patterns of behaviour in a way that leaves space for the possibility of INTRINSIC force.

□ Which is what I call SPIRIT.

■ To DEPEND **means** to be empowered by something other than us that we could NOT do without.

□ And we don't necessarily need fancy words to **explain** it.

■ **Panpsychism** is the **Scientific** term for ascribing **feelings**, subjectivity and **mind** to all living things.

- And **panentheism** is the word for BELIEVING that GOD exists in everything.
- Many of us **DEPEND** on a **BELIEF** in GOD. Which can also be a **BELIEF** in **LOVE** – or some other **FAITH** in the **UNKNOWN**.
- It was written in one of the great books of our civilisation that: ‘ . . . only three things can last – **FAITH**, **HOPE** and **LOVE** – and the greatest of these . . . ’
- The poets have said, in a thousand different ways, that **LOVE** is a **UNIVERSAL Truth**.
- You don’t have to know what **LOVE** is to **experience** it.
- That’s the point! It’s not the **WORDS** – or even the **explanations** – that create our **meaning**. It’s our **experience** of them. All we can ever **REALLY** know is our **experience** itself.
- And **experience** is fundamentally **Mystical** – it includes things that **CAN’T** be **explained**. So there is **WONDER**. And a **heart-mind** full of **WONDER** will always have **HOPE**.
- Our most adventurous **friend**, *Aldous Huxley*, said **LOVE** is the ‘grubbiest’ word because it is used so loosely, but he also said it will always have to be ‘the last word.’
- Every time we walk down here, beside the stream, and out to the escarpment, a cascade of **feelings** and **meanings** seems to bring you and I closer together.
- Perhaps we are the same **mind**, after all!
- There was a time, long before this book was written, when Lloyd and Penelope came here to this lookout, where the stream becomes a waterfall, and looked over the valley together. You and I were agog with anticipation that day. Lloyd said to Penelope: ‘I know that I **LOVE YOU!** Will you . . . marry me?’

□ And she said: 'Yes, please.'

■ They held hands and looked towards the far horizon. They knew the **meaning** of LOVE.

□ And we did, too.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

It is only my way of putting this together that is original, of course – all my information and most of the ideas have come from other researchers and writers, many of whom are acknowledged below. There are innumerable other Sources, spread throughout my whole life, for which I am also very grateful.

1. CONSCIOUS

The explanatory model, Being and Belonging (and the ‘bringing forth of reality’) was outlined in my earlier books, *Mind and Love – The Human Experience* (2010) and *Dancing With the Unknown – Feelings and Everyday Mind and Soul* (2017). See www.biosong.org.

It is derived from the wonderful work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in the 1980’s and 90’s, that rewrote the textbooks on biological autonomy, autopoiesis and structural coupling. A general overview of that is *The Tree of Knowledge: Biological Roots of Human Understanding* by Maturana and Varela (1992). There is also a new edition of *The Embodied Mind – Cognition and Human Experience* by Varela, Thompson and Rosch (2017) and other books that refer to Maturana’s ground-breaking concept of autopoiesis (which means self-producing) and the bringing forth of reality. Some U.S writers refer to this as The Santiago Theory of Cognition.

How to Win Friends and Influence People (1936) was a popular book by Dale Carnegie.

The idea that explanations are like dummies that stop babies crying comes from one of Maturana’s lectures I attended in Australia in the early 1990’s.

The quote ‘sleepwalking towards the abyss’ is from Iain McGilchrist’s celebrated and best-selling book, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (2009). A revised edition, with an important new introduction, was published in 2019.

2. SHACKED UP

The *Power of Now* (1999) was Eckart Tolle’s first book. Others are *Stillness Speaks: Whispers of Now* (2003) and *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose* (2005).

The story of Schrödinger's cat is described in many scientific books including *In Search of Schrödinger's Cat: Quantum Physics and Reality* by John Gribbin (1984).

The Odyssey is an ancient Greek epic poem attributed to Homer, available in many translations. Penelope was the wife of Odysseus (Ulysses in Roman mythology) whose 20-year odyssey it was.

3. SOCIAL MAGIC OR STRESS

The best book about the Autonomic Nervous System in relation to stress, self-regulation and the biology of love is *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication and Self-Regulation* by Stephen Porges (2011). Other less detailed books on the same subject are *Four Ways to Click: Rewire Your Brain for Stronger, More Rewarding Relationships* by Amy Banks (2015), *Accessing the Healing Power of the Vagus Nerve* by Stanley Rosenberg (2017), and *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy* (2018). by Deb Dana, who has worked closely with Porges.

My own reading about stress includes hundreds of books and papers dating back to Hans Selye, who first coined the term 'stress' in a medical context in 1936, and later wrote *The Stress of Life* (1956 and 1978).

There is a simple, yet scholarly, book about this idea of 'Magic' – *The Flip: Epiphanies of Mind and the Future of Knowledge* by Jeffrey Kripal (2019). With regard to 'healing Magic', Larry Dossey is one of the medical doctors who have written books about that, including *Healing Beyond the Body: Medicine and the Infinite Reach of Mind* (2001).

A very readable commentary on Parsifal and the Holy Grail is *The Fisher King and The Handless Maiden: Understanding the Wounded Feeling Function in Masculine and Feminine Psychology* by Robert Johnson (1993).

Good books about the way that feelings in the body shape the meaning we create include *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* by Mark Johnson (2007), *Feelings and Moods* by Christophe André (2012) and *Intelligence in the Flesh: Why Your Mind Needs Your Body Much More Than It Thinks* by Guy Claxton (2015). Also *The Power of Meaning* by Emily Esfahani Smith (2017) is an excellent book.

This mention of David Hume refers to his famous book *A Treatise on Human Nature* that was first published in 1738-40.

The mind's need for Science, Reason, Intuition and Imagination is also an approach taken by Iain McGilchrist. His latest book, *The Matter With Things: Our Brains, Our Delusions, and the Unmaking of the World* is due out in November, 2021.

Walden, or Life in the Woods by Henry Thoreau (1854) was an experiment in immersing yourself in Nature. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a prolific, pioneering author of books about spirituality and mind, including *The Conduct of Life* (1860). Walt Whitman's best-known collection of poems was *Leaves of Grass* (1855). The three were good friends.

William James is most famous for his classic *Principles of Psychology* (1890), but, towards the end of his life, his Gifford Lectures of 1901 were published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902).

4. KINDNESS DENIED

The comment that there is less violence today is based on Stephen Pinker's scholarly book *The Better Angels of our Nature: A History of Violence and Humanity* (2011).

Much of the material in this section came from a recent book, *Humankind: A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman (2020) in which many of the common fallacies about kindness are exposed. However, it was from Humberto Maturana's lectures on the biological origins of love and the evolution of mind that I learned more about this including the fundamental way that individual ownership affected our history. Maturana's wonderful lecture material is not readily available, but the best source is *The Origin of Humanness in the Biology of Love* (2008) that he wrote with Gerda Verden-Zöllner (edited by Pille Bunnell).

A good book about the increase in individuality and narcissism is *Selfie: How We Became So Self-Obsessed And What It's Doing To Us* by Will Storr (2017).

The way in which shared meaning 'blinds us as it binds us' is taken from *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt (2012).

I first learned about the problem of loneliness from *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection* by John Cacioppo and William Patrick (2009), but more information about how it has increased and its implications for our political systems is from *The Lonely Century: Coming Together in a World That's Pulling Apart* by Noreena Hertz (2020).

A simpler interpretation of William James writing is found in a recent book by John Kaag called *Sick Souls, Healthy Minds: How William James Can Save Your Life* (2020).

The reference to a new basis for understanding human evolution has many sources, notably *Beyond Human Nature: How Culture and Experience Shape our Human Lives* by Jesse Prinz (2013). An enjoyable read is *Why Genes are Not Selfish and People Are Nice* by Colin Tudge (2013).

5. FEELING AND KNOWING

The views of neuroscientists and philosophers about the relationship between brain and mind are extremely wide-ranging and fill many books. The emphasis I put on embodied cognition stems from Maturana and Varela and is explained in broad terms by Mark Johnson in *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (1987) and *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (2007) and in *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology and the Sciences of Mind* (2007) by Evan Thompson.

The phrase ‘here I am, wasn’t I’ is the name of a book by Sheldon Kopp (1986).

It was Michael Polyani who first drew serious attention to the importance of implicit knowledge in his book, *The Tacit Dimension* (1967).

The book *Science of the Heart* at www.heartmath.org summarises new research on the brain-heart interaction. Regarding the gut, *The Mind-Gut Connection* (2016) by Emeran Mayer is interesting and informative.

Valuable insights regarding ‘the bondage of self’ are found in *Capture: Unravelling the Mystery of Mental Suffering* by David Kessler (2016). On a bleaker note is *The Selfish Ape: Human Nature and Our Path to Extinction* by Nicholas Money (2019). I also enjoyed *Prisoners of Our Thoughts* (about the work of Viktor Frankl) by Alex Pattakos (2010). The classic by Rollo May, *Man’s Search for Himself* (1953) contains much wisdom.

With regard to the limitations of thinking, there is *Unthink* by Chris Paley (2014) and *The Power of Not Thinking: How Our Bodies Learn and Why We Should Trust Them* by Simon Roberts (2020). Also, *The Book of Not Knowing: Exploring the True Nature of Self, Mind and Consciousness* by Peter Ralston (2010) is quite a practical tome.

The reference to mind as a stowaway on an ocean voyage is from *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain* by David Eagleman (2011).

An interesting book about certainty and ‘the feeling of knowing’ is *On Being Certain: Believing You Are Right Even When You are Wrong* by Robert Burton (2008). Another is *Are You Sure? The Unconscious Origins of Certainty* by Virginia Campbell (2020). Based on Leon Festinger’s theory of cognitive dissonance, there is a very readable book by Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson called *Mistakes Were Made (But Not By Me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions and Hurtful Acts* (2016). The phrases ‘self-justifying historian’ and ‘mistakes were made (but not by me)’ came from that book.

Interesting books about human memory are *Pieces of Light: How The New Science of Memory Illuminates the Stories We Tell About Our Pasts* by Charles Fernyhough (2012) and *The Forgetting Machine: Memory, Perception and the 'Jennifer Aniston Neuron'* (2017).

The quote about the 'things that are important' compared to the 'things that are apparent,' and also 'show me what you attend to and I'll tell you who you are' are from *On Love: Aspects of a Single Theme* by José Ortega y Gasset (2012).

6. PAYING ATTENTION

The emphasis on mind as connectedness and the brain-world interface comes from several different directions in the neuroscience literature, but books that led me into it were *Out of Our Heads: Why You Are Not Your Brain, and Other Lessons From the Biology of Consciousness* by Alva Noë (2009), *The Ego Tunnel: The Science of Mind and the Myth of the Self* by Thomas Metzinger (2009), and *Surfing Uncertainty: Prediction, Action, and the Embodied Mind* by Andy Clark (2016).

Iain McGilchrist's book *The Master and His Emissary*, mentioned earlier, is the main source for everything about the left and right sides of the brain that is described here. This book is influencing many different discussions about human behaviour and mind and his new book in 2021 is eagerly awaited.

The foundational importance of attention is one of his major themes. The phrase 'attention is a moral act' has been said often by Iain McGilchrist in his podcasts.

The quote about attention and experience is also from *On Love: Aspects of a Single Theme* by José Ortega y Gasset (2012).

7. DOING AND BEING

The line 'the path is made by walking' is from a revised translation of the poems of Antonio Machado, *Borders of a Dream* (2003).

There is a spectacular painting by William Blake called *Jacob's Ladder* (1806), based on the biblical story of a 'stairway to heaven.'

Some of these ideas about thinking and being are influenced by the book *On the Mystery of Being: Contemporary Insights on the Convergence of Science and Spirituality* edited by Zaya and Maurizio Benazzo (2019).

The psychologist who is best known for promoting the idea of FLOW is Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi whose books include *Flow: The Psychology of Happiness* (1992).

Books about the effects of the online world on our society are everywhere, of course. *The Cyber Effect: A Pioneering Cyberpsychologist Explains How Human Behaviour Changes Online* by Mary Aiken (2016) and *The Four-Dimensional Human: Ways of Being in the Digital World* by Laurence Stott (2015) are two that I found useful. Putting ourselves in the hands of the engineers is discussed by Matthew Crawford in *The World Beyond Your Head* (2015).

I first read about the philosopher, Max Scheler, in the writing of Iain McGilchrist.

8. TRUTH AND BEAUTY

The oft-quoted statement by Einstein regarding imagination and knowledge was originally from a newspaper interview in 1929, but was reprinted later in several places. The famous Einstein quote that beauty lies in mystery comes from his book: *Living Philosophies* (1931).

The idea of co-creation – bringing forth what is also already there – is originally from Maturana, but also espoused by Iain McGilchrist. Prioritising the relationality of the whole over the parts that are related is also emphasised by McGilchrist.

The relationship between parts and wholes is further discussed by Malcolm Hollick in *The Science of Oneness: A Worldview for the Twenty-First Century* (2006) as well as other books already cited here.

Galileo's Error: Foundations for a New Science of Consciousness by Philip Goff (2019) is a very readable book about the current understanding regarding consciousness and fundamental reality, written by an acclaimed world leader in this field.

Auguries of Innocence is a poem by William Blake from one of his notebooks. It was believed to have been written in 1803, but was not published until 1863.

John Keats wrote those words in his *Ode to a Grecian Urn* in 1819, two years before his death, at the early age of 25.

The way in which the principle of interdependence virtually does away with the notion of intrinsic nature is explained very well in *Interdependence: Biology and Beyond* by Kriti Sharma (2015)..

9. A SMALL PART

Two valuable books by Andreas Weber about the inter-subjective unity of all life are *The Biology of Wonder: Aliveness, Feeling, and the Metamorphosis of Science* (2016) and *Enlivenment: Toward a Poetics for the Anthropocene* (2019).

Books about microbes and our body that I have found useful are *I Contain Multitudes* by Ed Young (2016) and *The Secret Life of Your Microbiome* by Susan Prescott and Alan Logan (2017).

The work of JRR Tolkien mentioned here is, of course, *The Lord of the Rings* (1955).

The intelligence of an octopus is discussed in several books including *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration Into the Wonder of Consciousness* by Sy Montgomery (2016) and *Other Minds: The Octopus and the Evolution of Intelligent Life* by Peter Godfrey-Smith (2018).

Merlin Sheldrake, whose famous father I worked with briefly many years ago, wrote *Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds, and Shape Our Futures* (2020), which is the most illuminating book about Fungi that I've ever seen.

The Max Planck quote is from *The Flip: Epiphanies of Mind and the Future of Knowledge* by Jeffrey Kripal (2019).

A classic book about our fractured relationship with the natural world is *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology* (1992 and 2001) by Theodore Roszak, who is an articulate spokesperson for the 'counterculture' of the 1960's.

Another classic book about interconnectedness and the bringing forth of reality is Fritjof Capra's *The Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter* (1996). It is one of very few books that acknowledge fully the contribution made by Maturana and Varela to our understanding of life.

David Bohm's main book about a new model of reality is a collection of his essays, published as *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980). Of his other books, I found *Unfolding Meaning: A Weekend of Dialogue with David Bohm* (1985) to be very helpful. There is an excellent new film available online called *Infinite Potential: The Life and Ideas of David Bohm* that captures the great significance of his thinking.

10. LOVE

The line 'know the place for the first time' is part of T S Eliot's famous poem *Little Gidding* that was published in *Four Quartets* in 1941.

The William Wordsworth quotes are from *Lines Composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey* (2002).

The newest science of Complex Systems is explained very well in the context of serious threats to our civilisation in *The Web of Meaning* (2021) by Jeremy Lent.

The well-known lines about Faith, Hope and Love are from 1 Corinthians 13:13 in the Christian Bible.

I understand that Aldous Huxley's essay about the word, 'love,' is in *The Divine Within: Selected Writings on Enlightenment* (2013), published some years after his death.