

Biosong Blog 1 (June 1, 2022) Co-Learning

I am a human being, one of squillions of living things on this Earth. The first of many things we all have in common is that each of us has been born and each of us will die. The time in between is what this Blog is about – our lives.

With my particular training and vocation it could be called Biology – Neuroscience and Behaviour – with some Philosophy thrown in. With my physical, mental and spiritual experience of 80 years it could be called Everyday Mind and Soul, which was the name of a Course I was teaching at the University of the Third Age for several years.

At my age, I feel one should assume the role of a teacher by sharing one's experience. But, of course, I am also learning as I go, so it is a kind of teaching that is better called Co-Learning – learning together. Yet each of us will only learn separately – living life is an incredibly individual experience, which is why we need to share with one another in any way we can.

Everything that is true is also paradoxical – as I have learned. This turns out to be not a nuisance, but one of the joys. I believe all living things know what they need to know, because every living thing has a mind. That is what happened when life first began – an individual autonomy was created whereby living things exist by knowing what to do. But this autonomy comes, paradoxically, with its opposite built in – the need to connect with other living things in what is called Interdependence. So we all exist by BEING and BELONGING.

I said 'I believe this' because it is not a truth written in stone – it is simply a version of scientific thinking in Biology that I find very useful. Its key concepts came from the great Chilean Biologist, Humberto Maturana, who died in 2021 and whom I knew personally. I have written one of the tributes to him in a special issue of *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*.

We look at the rest of the squillions through our own eyes only; in fact, billions of them are invisible so we can only guess at what they are doing. Later I would like to speculate about what it might be like to be a tree, or a mongoose, or a snake, using scientific knowledge about that, but I am firmly anchored to the title of this Blog – *I Am a Human Being. What am I?*

Like every other Human Being I am endowed with something that we call Intelligence. This is what we hope will refine our 'knowing what to do' into the precious ingredients we will need to make sure that our species does not soon become extinct, like many others have. Being alive, for us, means wanting to continue to thrive and evolve and even try to satisfy some mysterious quest within us.

I want this Blog to be a journey towards this end – in other words, an ongoing Course of study that will address confronting questions and provide the food for thought that is the fuel of Co-Learning.

First up, I am concerned that what we call Intelligence across the Human population seems to be on the decline. I wrote about the reasons for that in Chapter 6 of my most recent book about Mind – *I Said To Myself* (2021) – and I will say more in next week's Blog. What can we do to arrest this decline and help one another to maximise our Intelligence?