the Emergence Explorer

Questions for the Week of May 21, 2007

"Does Learning Release Energy?"

- Where does the energy for learning come from?
- Where do you find the energy to escape a Dead Stop?
- Does moving from a Dead Stop to The State of Unknown release energy?

Do you know?

This Week's Questions
[These questions were posed by Ed D.]

[Question 1] Where does the energy for learning come from?
[Answer] Terrific question, Ed. Not an easy one to answer either. Especially in just a few words.

Where do we begin then? Let's start with something Khalil Gibran mentions when he speaks about children; that they come from "life's longing for itself." Of course, Gibran is talking about our human children. However I would add to this our ideas, thoughts, feelings, and doings. Our mind's and body's

children.

What am I trying to say here? I am saying is that the energy for learning comes from "life's longing for itself." In other words, I see the energy which drives us to learn as coming from life's need to reinvent itself in an infinite number of ways. Somewhat Hindu like. Somewhat Native American. But all life's longing just the same.

Why say this? Because life as we know it is fractal. All of it. And because death as we know it is the end of fractility. In other words, when I say life is fractal, I mean that life is constantly reinventing itself. Always in recognizable patterns. But never in the same way.

Death then is the end of life reinventing itself. The end of some recognizable pattern which is always recreating itself in infinitely variable ways.

Interestingly enough, Maturana and Varela, the authors of the Santiago Theory (a theory of what defines things as being alive) say something very similar to what I've just said. And while they state their theory in much more scientifically precise terms, nonetheless, it amounts to much the same thing; that a living system is one which continues to recreate itself, a process they call, "autopoiesis," or "self making."

"An autopoietic system is defined as an entity that can be clearly distinguished and is realized through a ***closed*** *organization of production processes such that the products of the process interact in the same way as the organization that produces them and a discernable topological boundary emerges as a result of these same processes."*

Brain twisting stuff, eh? Just the same, amazingly succinct and in my opinion, true.

So what am I saying? I'm saying that what we call "learning" may simply be another way to refer to what defines things as being alive. If so then the energy for learning comes from what happens to all living things in between birth and death.

What happens?

In between birth and death life is constantly looking to reinvent itself. And the longing which drives this looking is, to me, the source of the energy inside us which then leads, pokes, points, and directs us toward ever new learning.

In the end this is just another way to say, the energy for learning comes from life's search for new ways in which it can reinvent itself. Which, if we were to redefine the word "curiosity" as a drive rather than as a choice or an emotion, we might also call, "life's curiosity about itself," I suppose.

The energy which drives learning; life's curiosity about itself. Maybe defining this idea in a few words is easier than I thought.

[Question 2] Where do we find the energy to escape a Dead Stop?
[Answer] Where can we find this energy? Primarily from two places. One external and one internal.

The external energy source is our teachers. Thus, in this first possibility, we gain the energy to escape

Dead Stops by connecting to the energy and momentum of another. Primarily to the energy of the teacher with whom we are currently working.

The internal energy source then comes from within ourselves. It is available to us whenever we experience a state wherein our mind and body connect. Including when we connect our mind and body to our longing to reinvent our own life. Whenever we connect to our own curiosity, in other words.

As for these two possibilities, with regard to the first, we need to remember to choose our teachers wisely. Why? Because we will many times need to run on their energy. Each time we need to escape the leaden gravity of the Dead Stops which all learners face.

Thus, if we study with teachers who themselves are burnt out, we will have no external energy to draw on when we as learners lose our way. This means we will inevitably end up having to rely entirely on our internal energies, which, because we all have limits, will inevitably run out too.

With regard to this second possibility then, we need to recognize, acknowledge, and heal as many of our blocks in and around learning as we possibly can. Preferably as soon after discovering them as we can possibly manage. Why? Because the best energy source of all lies within our own curiosity. And while we do indeed need to develop the Tai Chi style moves necessary to know how to dance with our mind's pessimistic side, even with just a few of these moves under our belts, we will find escaping from the mind wrestler's head lock of Dead Stops far easier than we previously thought possible.

Teachers and curiosity. The two energies needed to escape Dead Stops. Both are important. Neither alone is enough.

[Question 3] Is there a limit to how much you can learn by extension? Or is it a self-contained system? Or both?
[Answer] Is there a limit to how much you can learn by extension? Yes. And this question is very astute. Thus the answer to your second question is, no. Learning by Extension is not a closed system. However, because we have limited processing and storage capacities in our bodies and brains, we also have limits to how far we can extend things we learn by emergence.

Of course, this also depends on a lot of other factors too. For one thing, on the particular emergence we are trying to extend and if it is an early in life emergence or a later in life aha. For another, on what kind of momentum were you in when you experienced this emergence. Did it come out of nowhere or did it come after years of developing momentum?

Also, there is the idea that peoples' Social Priorities affect this process too. The more vulnerable you are to digressions, the quicker you will exceed your capacity to sustain the extension.

All this said, yes, there is a there a limit to how much you can learn by extension, because there will always be the possibility we will exceed our capacity to learn. Through digression. Through a loss of momentum. And through the sheer scope of the emergence.

[Question 4] Does moving from a Dead Stop to the the State of Unknown release energy?
[Answer] Admitting you do not know something definitely *releases* energy. But it does not *create* energy. Thus, whenever you admit you do not know something, this admission then frees up the energy

you were previously expending to maintain that you did know something when you didn't. But only having an emergence creates energy. Or at least, reorganizes something within you in a more tightly packed and organized way. Which is the essence of how substances become energized.

Did I just confuse you? Sorry. what I'm saying is, nothing in our world can be created or destroyed. At least, nothing which exists at the scale at which we exist. Thus since matter and energy are the same stuff just in different states, we cannot actually create energy. Or matter. We can only at times reorganize stuff in such a way as to make it more fractally organized and tightly packed. Which is to say, we can at times change the stuff in our world from matter into energy. By fractally reorganizing it in a tightly packed form.

Moving from a Dead Stop to the State of Unknown is the first stage in this process. Here, we alter our view of what we are working with from that it is waste to that it is raw materials. Largely by altering our opinion of what we are working with from that it is useless to that it has potential.

Next, we begin to process these raw materials, in what amounts to the state of learning we call, Learning by Momentum. A kind of temporary universal inertia which is built into all the processes in our world which involve refinement and discernment. The better it looks, the more we want to continue.

Finally, if we stay with these processes, we arrive at Learning by Emergence. This is the point at which the actual change occurs. Here, matter becomes energy. Facts and knowledge become personally authentic learning.

Learning by Extension is how we then use this energy wisely. We use it to explore further into the newly created energies. What can we do with this newly created learning? How can we apply it to making life better?

Eventually then we exceed our capacity to contain the matter into energy transformation process. At which point, the process feels heavy and burdensome. Which is why we call it a Dead Stop. Why? Because we are carrying the weight of all the stuff which recently was energy but is now matter. A state we humans call, waste.

Still too obtuse?

Admitting you do not know something releases you from the need to rationalize and search for something you do not yet know. This rationalizing and searching takes energy. Stop doing it and you stop expending this energy. You are then free to reallocate this energy for better things. Things like trying to gain enough momentum to have an energizing emergence.

[Question 5] Might you call *the Four Stages Of Learning*, the "Four Stages of Healing" as well? Would this make learning a window into divinity?
[Answer] Wow! What a great set of questions, Ed. So great in fact that I feel sadness at this being the last question.

Know I rarely feel this with written questions. Perhaps because people rarely ask an entire sequence of such well focused questions.

So could you call *the Four Stages Of Learning* , the "Four Stages of Healing" as well? Let's look.

The Four Stages of Learning are:

- [1] by Unknown,
- [2] by Momentum
- [3] by Emergence
- [4] by Extension

The Four Stages of Healing are:

- [1] the honest admission we have a wound
- [2] the therapeutic process
- [3] the healing moment
- [4] integrating this healing

So are these two sequences just two ways to say the same thing? Yes. In fact, if we extend this comparison to that our injuries (the startling inability to picture something) are the same as the experience of being in a "Dead Stop" during learning, then the honest admission we have a wound is the same as moving from a Dead Stop to the State of Unknown.

We could also then say that Momentum Learning is the therapeutic process wherein we "refine our raw materials," by separating them into what we can and cannot see (the therapeutic process).

Learning by Emergence then is identical to those moments wherein we make therapeutic breakthroughs. Which is to say, those moments wherein we feel the energizing excitement of finally becoming able to see the beauty in what we previously believed was nothing more than an "empty hole."

Finally, Learning by Extension becomes the same as the processes wherein we therapeutically integrate this healing into ourselves. Learning to use in life the beauty which just emerged in us.

Does this make learning a window into divinity then? In my opinion? Definitely. Which interestingly enough, then makes learning, and healing, a divine endeavor.

This page last updated on
May 21, 2007

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