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the Emergence Explorer

Questions for the Week of July 23, 2007



The Mind Body Perspective On Physical Sensation



- Is sickness just physical sensation we cannot understand?
- Is asking a Mind First person what they feel an unnatural question?
- How does sensing more (physical) sensation interfere with thinking thoughts?

Do you know?

This Week's Questions

[Question 1] How does sensing more (physical) sensation interfere with thinking thoughts?

[Answer] Let's start with a brief review of what we know about the mind body connection, beginning with that the mind body connection is not really a connection. It's actually a continuum, just as Spinoza said it was. However, because the part which overlaps occurs below the threshold of our perception, we experience the mind and body just as Descartes said we do, as two separate and distinct experiences.

Add to this that because the mind and body are actually two aspects of one continuum, that Descartes was right in that the mind and body each interact with each other as well; that the body influences the mind,

and the mind, the body.

Now add to this the two ideas which carry these concepts into the physical world.

The first idea is that our experience of this continuum, from thoughts to feelings, derives from what we sense along a physical continuum which extends from the top of our heads to the base of our spines. Here, by what we sense, I mean all the physical sensations we can possibly notice including not only the five observable physical sensations but also intuition, which in essence means our less than measurable occurrences of these physical sensations. Our slightly there, slightly not there sensations, such as when we sense someone is standing behind us or is staring at us from across a room.

How then do these sensations become thoughts and feelings? By one thing and one thing alone; by our noticing them. Thus by noticing the physical sensations occurring along this vertical column, we convert physical sensation into observed physical sensation, and this becomes what we then call thoughts and feelings.

How do these observed sensations differentiate into our thoughts and feelings? Very simple. The speed at which we perceive these sensations determines how we refer to them. In other words, the faster we sample sensation, the more we experience this observed sensation as thought. And the slower we sample these sensations, the more we perceive this observed sensation as feelings.

Now to see this as true, simply speak to someone while deliberately varying the speed at which you are speaking. If you do, what you will find is that the faster you speak, the higher in the body the person will feel this being observed. Conversely, the slower you speak, the lower in the body the person will feel this being observed.

Thus if you have someone speak to you at a very rapid pace, you may find yourself even physically looking up. An involuntary reaction which reflects our intuitive sense of where we are observing this sensation. Thoughts; we look up. And if you have someone speak to you at an exceedingly slow pace, you may find yourself physically looking down. Again, an involuntary action which reflects our intuitive sense of where we are observing this sensation as well. Feelings; we look down.

Now if you'd like to further test this hypothesis, simply try to look down while being asked what you think. Or try looking up while you are being asked what you feel. In either case, you will feel what practitioners of NLP know all too well; that the body and the mind parallel each other with psychophysical programming.

Want to test this even more? Try saying something very meaningful to a close personal friend and while you do, deliberately slow down the speed at which you are saying this thing. What you will find is, the slower you say these words, the more the both of you will feel emotion. Possibly even to the point of being overwhelming.

Now try saying this same personal thing to this same personal friend, only this time deliberately say it as fast as you can. What you will find is the personal meaning will have dissipated, perhaps to the point wherein you feel no personal meaning. This despite the fact that contextually, this meaning will still exist.

Examples? Tell your wife or lover that you love him or her and while you do, deliberately speak these the

speed at which you are saying this, first slower, then quicker. Here what you will find is that the slower you say these words, the less able to person will be to discern the logical meaning present while at the same time, feeling more emotional. Conversely, the faster you say these words, the more able to person will be to discern the logical meaning present while at the same time, feeling less emotional.

The point? The only thing being varied here is the speed at which these words are being noticed. Logically the content and intent will be the same. Despite this sameness however, what will be observed is that your experience of this communication will change from thoughts to feelings or feelings to thoughts. Simply because you vary the speed at which you are noticing the sensations present; e.g. what you see, what you hear, and so on.

Finally, we need to add to all this one important point; that the mind can create sensation in the body. This, in fact, is one of the more important things to know about the mind body connection, in that most current neurological researchers overlook or discount this part of what we experience.

To recap, what I'm saying is:

- All thoughts and feelings begin life as physical sensations which occur at some specific height with regard to the primary vertical nervous system. This system extends from the top of the head, including the brain, through the enteric nervous system, to the base of the spine. Thus, this is the same path referred to in the ancient Ayurvedic system of medicine as the chakras.
- What we call thoughts and feelings then get created when we notice these physical sensations. And the speed at which we do this noticing determines which we will experience; faster noticing results in thoughts, slower, in feelings.
- The mind then interacts with this whole process in a chicken and egg manner by, in and of itself, creating physical sensations. Which if then noticed become thoughts and or feelings, again based on the speed at which we do this noticing.
- Finally, stated as the beliefs of the four philosophers, we can say several things. One, that Descartes was right in that we experience the mind and body as two separate and distinct things, both of which interact with the other. Two, that Spinoza was right in that the mind and body literally are two aspects of the same continuum. Three, that to see these two things as true, we must apply Herbart's idea that we have a threshold of perception, above which we perceive Descartes as right, and below which we find that Spinoza was also right. And four, that Leibniz was right in that our sense of time is what creates movement along this continuum, in that the faster we notice sensations, the more we experience them as thoughts, and the slower we notice sensation, the more we experience them as feelings.

All this said, so how does sensing more (physical) sensation interfere with thinking thoughts? The more we notice physical sensation, the lower in the body we sense it. And the lower in the body we notice this sensation, the less we experience it as thought and the more we experience it as feeling. Which is to say emotion, spiritual experience, and or warm fuzziness.

[Question 2] Are feelings just physical sensations interpreted slowly? Are thoughts rapidly interpreted physical sensations?

[Answer] Are feelings just physical sensations interpreted slowly? Yes. Are thoughts rapidly interpreted physical sensations? Again, yes.

[Question 3] Is sickness just physical sensation we cannot understand? Is it that we simply cannot think and or feel it clearly?

[Answer] This is an extremely interesting suggestion and one I myself am not sure I have an answer to. My guess? My first reflection is that this is probably true. That we interpret physical sensations which we cannot identify clearly as that we are sick.

For example, during my discovering the nature of the mind body connection, I spent an entire week feeling sensations in my gut which I interpreted as fear. I felt literally sick with fear. This despite the fact that I was logically certain I was safe. As I then acquired experience interpreting these sensations, this meaning; fear, evolved into a richly expansive but normal experience. One which I am still learning to interpret in detail. But one which ceased to feel like a sickness in my body.

Yet another example would be when you feel symptoms in your body which alarm you until your doctor tells you they are normal. At which point your "sickness" becomes discomfort or less. And may even disappear off the radar entirely.

[Question 4] How does thinking rapidly interfere with sensing your body?

[Answer] As I spoke about in my answer to question one, the more we notice physical sensation, the lower in the body we sense it. And the lower in the body we notice this sensation, the less we experience it as thought and the more we experience it as feeling. Which is to say emotion, spiritual experience, and or warm fuzziness.

The answer here then lies in seeing that converse of this idea is also true. The higher in the body we notice sensation, the less we can notice what is physically happening in our body. And the more we experience noticed sensation as thought.

Note that while we speak about this as if one thing, thought, is displacing another thing, physical sensation, in reality this is happening only in our experiences of these sensations. Below the threshold of our perception then, we are simply experiencing a shift in the speed at which we are doing this noticing, up towards the faster end of the mind body continuum. Which by design, then creates our more mental than physical interpretations of these sensations.

[Question 5] Is asking a Mind First person what they feel an unnatural question? Is asking a Body First person what they think an unnatural question?

[Answer] Yes. And yes. Both these statements are true. Now let's look at why.

Let's start with defining these two terms. Very simply, Mind First people notice the physical sensations life creates in their minds first, as thoughts. Only then may they experience these noticed sensations in their body, if indeed, they experience any of them at all physically.

Body First people, on the other hand, notice the physical sensations life creates in their bodies first, as emotion, and only then in their mind, as thoughts. If indeed, they experience any of these noticed sensations mentally.

As for how this affects being asked questions, the basic thing to remember is that the two groups

Mind First people respond best to questions stated as quickly spoken, logically well phrased words,

followed by physical demonstrations. Body First people respond best to seeing a physical demonstration of this question followed by a brief description of what they were shown.

This then is makes both the questions being asked here true. These preferences exist within the actual nature of these people and not only as personal preferences. Moreover, because not observing these personal preferences creates great barriers to being heard, observing them can make a profound difference in peoples' communication skills.



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