

Are We Born Hardwired for War

A Genetically Maladapted Instinctive Reaction for Survival?

"Most honest combat vets will tell you, perhaps not eloquently but in their own way, the same thing: essentially that combat is in our human DNA and demands to be exercised...The question is, can we humans evolve peacefully, or will we succumb to instincts we can't transcend?"

- Quote from former Marine Corp helicopter pilot in Vietnam

Too often understanding human conflict has been conventionally addressed in a remedial, reactive way at the secondary level of "resolution" through therapeutic or moralistic means, as in the case of individual conflict, or through diplomatic or political intervention, as in the case of social conflict — or it has been addressed at the tertiary level of managing conflict through judicial or military intervention. These remedial, reactive approaches do not address conflict at the primary prevention level in understanding and avoiding the fundamental factors that create conflict in the way we have been conditioned to act and are therefore essentially ineffective because they do not prevent conflict from happening in the first place.

Realizing what was necessary was the prevention of conflict at this level one has to go beyond the surface of conditioned thinking to explore the foundation of conflict it creates in the way the brain is essentially hardwired for war, that it is by design rooted in the genetically programmed physical make up of the brain – in the fight or flight survival mechanism.

What triggers this biological hardwired automatic survival reaction is the instinctive fear of who and what we think is a threat to "our" survival. In this case of war it is the image of "the enemy," that ethnocentric ideological nemesis – "them" – that is in competition with "us" for our survival.

The conditioned image of "the enemy" is solidly in place due to the constant reinforcement it has received over time. This image created what you could call a biological self-defense blueprint, like a computer database, that over time has created an inborn or inherited pattern in the brain's physical structure in order to feel protected and to therefore ensure its survival. It is acting automatically, on its own without our consciously doing it. It is a machine built like a robot to ensure its existence instinctively. It is like having something that makes you feel secure deep inside. It is what can be called a "genetically programmed instinctive reaction," which simply means, that our brains are hardwired for war because we have inherited the

tendency at birth for what we mistakenly believe will help us to survive. In other words, like being a puppet and someone else pulling the strings, it has us believing that what it's doing will guarantee our continued existence when in actuality, it is threatening it because it doesn't work any longer as it perhaps did in ancient times.

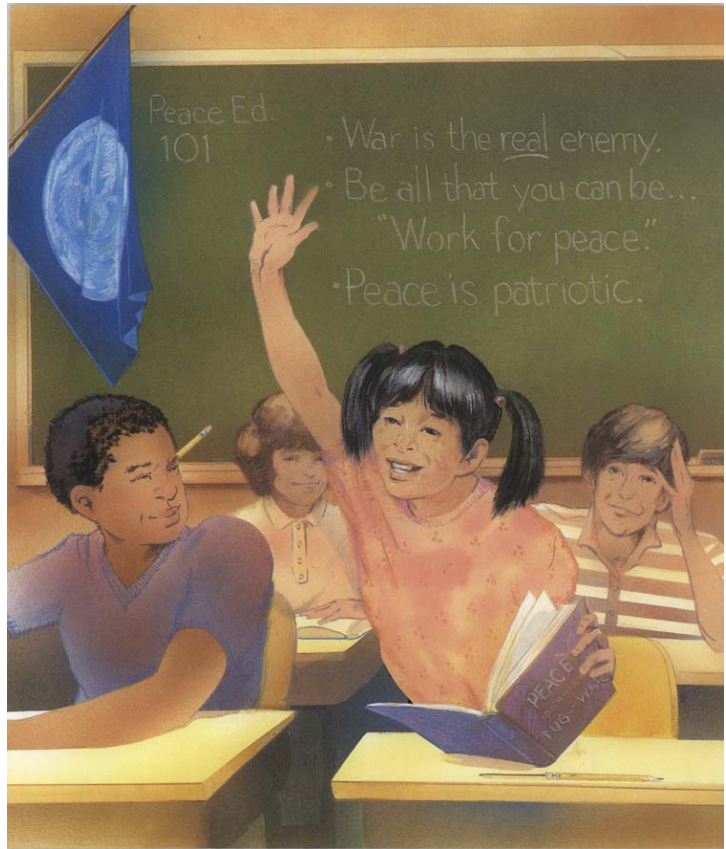
The information that has been put into our brain is like a software disk — it is information the culture you live in tells you what to do, how to act and — in certain cases — who is a threat to you, who your enemies might be. It is like a corrupt computer disk creating a virus that is killing us. It is like a driver of a car telling it where to go and it doesn't see that it is going off a cliff. When confronted by a potential conflict due to what it supposes as a threat, it awakens our biological brain that is equipped for combat — which is like a car — it is like a hard drive — and off they go together along the same road to war they've been on since before we were born — inherited from generations of people before us.



That disk keeps getting put into our brain because we are used to it being there even though it doesn't work for our survival any longer — it is maladapted — it's not able to adapt to what is necessary. It's corrupt. It

doesn't work. And being maladaptive it continues to activate inappropriately the old primitive brain to protect us when it is not necessary. This happens because it cannot tell the difference between a real threat and a supposed one. It reacts to the image of threat that the disk has been programmed to say is real.

Knowing this then, we can see that conflict created by this biological genetic program is no one's fault – it is not a “personal moral shortcoming” – it's not my fault or your fault – it's the fault in the brain's system, its malfunctioning primitive biological make up, that is not working correctly. It can be called a systemic defect in that the human brain is defective, operating on an archaic program driven to survive not being aware that it's causing conflict. It's also like a collective virus for it affects the whole human race because we are born with this “fault” in our brains, a primitive defect that is corrupt, contaminated. Being so, it is one's responsibility to look at it, to pay attention to it as it arises in the moment and to not react out of it. Then it has no place to go. This survival mechanism thinks it's doing the right thing. It just doesn't understand that it is misguided, that it's not working to guarantee our survival any longer.



What is of utmost importance is to see that conflict created by conditioned thinking emanating from the biological brain is the same in all human beings. In other words – conflict is conflict. It is essentially the same in everyone since the human brain is basically identical structurally. It works alike for everyone. The content may be different in each one but the brain is anatomically equal in all human beings, thus what happens to me happens to us all. Self-understanding is understanding the whole human race, for we are the world and the world is us. And this fundamental maladaptive drive to survive has been going on since humans started their journey on this earth,

trying to stay alive in world that was harsh and threatening. Humans have been at war with themselves in this way since the start, having biologically inherited a brain with an inborn hard drive that is driving the human race to its destruction. As an old saying goes, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

Technologically and scientifically we have advanced at great lengths, but psychologically we are still in the cave of ignorance. The essential question is: can we bring insight to this maladaptive means of survival and therefore be free of this self-destructive genetic inheritance or "*will we succumb to instincts we can't transcend?*"



What it takes to rectify this maladaptive process is the right education to look anew at the old program that creates conflict by mistakenly trying to protect us from what seems to be a real threat to our survival when it is only a imagined one. In this fresh awareness, free of intellectual suppositions, one can see what is, without prejudice or without trying to correct or solve it, for conflict is not a problem to be solved but a reality to be observed. In this awareness, it can end. This is called "proprioceptive learning." It is "nonaccumulated learning" as opposed to knowledge, which is accumulative learning, the gathering and analysis of

information to arrive at a certain intellectual conclusion. Knowledge at this level has no place. But we have to very careful not to make proprioceptive learning an ideal, a solution, an answer in the conventional sense, to the "problem" of conflict. Thought can take up these words and make them seem like, just by their definition, to be the remedy, the antidote it themselves. The words here are pointing to what is, the fact of what is perceived without any reference to the meaning of the words used to describe the need to look. In other words, the word in not the thing.

Proprioceptive learning is the state of noncumulative observation that sees the conditioned thinking as it is without judgment or trying to

change it and in that moment of observation realizes the danger of it and does not act on it thus freeing the mind from it's habitual conditioned divisive state of reaction.

Proprioceptive learning is an innate capacity for psychological self-correction. This faculty is self-operating in that it sees that which is unhealthy in the thinking process and in the moment of intelligent awareness in nullifies the effect of the conditioned thinking thus making it ineffective. One doesn't need to do anything, for proprioceptive learning is self-corrective in and of itself. But in order for proprioceptive learning to come into effect,



the education of the young person has to address the nature and structure of conditioned thinking that is preventing this capacity from performing its innate capacity.

As Quantum Physicist Dr. David Bohm once stated, "We could say that practically all the problems of the human race are due to the fact that thought is not proprioceptive. Thought is constantly creating problems and then trying to solve them. But as it tries to solve them, it gets worse because it doesn't notice*

that it's creating them, and the more it thinks, the more problems it creates – because it's not proprioceptive of what it's doing.”

“One gives close attention to all that is happening in conjunction with the actual activity of thought, which is the underlying source of the general disorder. One does this without choice, without criticism, without acceptance or rejection of what is going on. And all of this takes place along with reflections on the meaning of what one is learning about the activity of thought.”

David Bohm was a Quantum Physicist who made significant contributions in the fields of Theoretical Physics, Philosophy and Neuropsychology. He was once a professor at Princeton University where he worked closely with Albert Einstein. His books that reflect proprioceptive learning are Thought as a System, On Dialogue and Changing Consciousness.

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