Beyond The Obvious

On The Relation Between
Your Way of Being And Your Way of Acting

Part 2
The Sole **Cause** of Action & Consciousness

As you probably know, it is a universally accepted scientific fact that all of your conscious experience (for example, deciding to act), and the physical actions you actually take, are both *caused* by networks of activated patterns of neurons in your brain, and nothing else.

In short, your brain is the sole *cause* of both your consciousness (what you are aware of) and your actions.
A Simple Statement Of What Is Meant By The “Human Brain”

human brain = essentially, a collection of specialized cells (neurons) that function in activated patterns which are networked together that cause a person’s perceptions, actions, and what is going on internally for that person (plus causing a good deal of other effects about which we are never conscious).

Note: We cannot feel what is happening in our brain. In the brain, there is no sensory faculty. Consequently, we have no direct awareness of what is going on in our brain.
What Causes Our Decision To Act, and What Causes Our Action

What is going on in our brain that generates our conscious thought to act, and what is going on in our brain that generates our physical action actually happens in a very different way than the way we believe it happens – that is, it happens in a very different way than the way it appears to happen.
The Neuroscience Research that Reveals What Actually Happens in Our Brain When We Act

In an article in *Scientific American* former Caltech Professor of Neuroscience and current President of the Allen Brain Institute, Christof Koch (2012), talks about the extensive experiments which established the fact that what we believe is a so-called voluntary action is already set in your brain before you consciously decide to take that action.

“The results told an unambiguous story, which was bolstered by later experiments. The beginning of the readiness potential precedes the conscious decision to move by at least half a second and often by much longer. The brain acts before the mind decides! This discovery was a complete reversal of the deeply held intuition of *mental causation*.”
When We Act, What Actually Happens in Our Brain

The following has been confirmed and reconfirmed many times in neuroscience research, most notably starting with Benjamin Libet in 1985:

When we are (our brain is) confronted by a situation that calls for action, below our level of consciousness our brain activates a neural pattern for action called a “readiness-potential”. It is this unconscious neural pattern for action (the readiness-potential) that will generate the action we will wind up taking.

Our brain activates this neural pattern for action (the readiness-potential) up to a half a second before activating the neural pattern that causes our thought or decision to act in that way.
When We Act, What Actually Happens in Our Brain

Quoting the neuroscientist that we spoke about in the previous slide, Benjamin Libet (1993), based on his extensive research (repeatedly replicated by others) into the actual relation between conscious decisions (thoughts) and one’s actions:

“… the brain ‘decides’ to initiate or, at least, to prepare to initiate the acts [as a ‘readiness potential’] before there is any reportable subjective awareness that such a decision has taken place.” (p. 276)

In plain language, Dr. Libet is reporting that your conscious decision to act takes place after your brain has already activated, below your level of consciousness, the pattern of neurons that will result in that action. In short, the brain has already “decided” to act before you do.
More Recent Neuroscience Research

The following quote is from an article in the premier U.K. science journal, *Nature* (Smith 2011), which article speaks about more recent research regarding the cause of action (in this case using sophisticated modern imaging techniques).

“The conscious decision to push the button was made about a second before the actual act, but the team discovered that a pattern of brain activity seemed to predict that decision by as many as seven seconds. Long before the subjects were even aware of making a choice, it seems, their brains had already decided.” [underlining added]

“There has been a long controversy as to whether subjectively ‘free’ decisions are determined by brain activity ahead of time. We found that the outcome of a decision can be encoded in brain activity of prefrontal and parietal cortex up to 10 s before it [the decision to act] enters awareness.” (p.543)

“Taken together, two specific regions in the frontal and parietal cortex of the human brain had considerable information that predicted the outcome of a motor decision the subject had not yet consciously made. [continued on next slide]
More Recent Neuroscience Research

“This suggests that when the subject’s decision reached awareness it had been influenced by unconscious brain activity for up to 10 s, … Our results go substantially further than those of previous studies. …

The preparatory time period reveals that this prior [brain] activity is not an unspecific preparation of a response. Instead, it [the brain activity] specifically encodes how a subject is going to decide.” (p.545)
What Happens When A Bear Walks Into Your Life?

When something threatening happens – like a grizzly bear walking into your campground – you feel fear. Your body reacts to the fear by raising your heart rate, moving your blood flow from your digestive system to your muscles, and so forth. As a result of being frightened, your body gets ready for “fight or flight”.

Right?

No, wrong!

According to Nobel Laureate, neuropsychiatrist Eric Kandel: “surprisingly, the physiological response to a threat occurs before you are aware of any emotion (like being frightened)” (Rose 2010). This is more evidence contrary to our idea that our actions (the body preparing for fight or flight) are caused by what is going on with us internally.
The Way It Appears

It looks to us like our *Way of Being* (what is going on with us internally) *causes* our *Way of Acting*. It looks that way because when we are in a situation that calls for action, we have the thought (we decide) to act in some way, and only *then* do we act. For example, if we have the choice between chocolate and vanilla and we decide on vanilla, then “vanilla” comes out of our mouth; if we are anxious, we tend to act carefully; or if we are annoyed, we tend to act impatiently.

Because the decision we are aware of comes before the action and our action is consistent with the decision, it seems obvious to us that the decision *causes* the action.
What is on this Slide Should Now Make Sense to You

A **created context** for leader and leadership, when mastered, leaves you being a leader and exercising leadership effectively as your **natural self-expression**.

Saying that in other words: the **created context** for leader and leadership, when mastered, **impacts the occurring** of any situation requiring leadership such that your **naturally correlated (natural self-expression)** way of being and way of acting is you being a leader and exercising leadership effectively.

Participating in the course provides you with the opportunity, and supports you in using that opportunity, to do what is required to contribute to your mastery of a **created context for leader and leadership**.
EXERCISE

Discuss with a partner(s):

In your life, how would a created context for leader and leadership impact the occurring of a situation requiring leadership?
WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH
Mastering the Power of Context to Use You

In the following statement, is there any term of art or even any word you are not clear about the meaning of? Is there any part of the idea being conveyed you are not clear about?

The way the situation I am dealing with occurs for me is distorted by my context for that situation.

And, my way of being and acting are naturally correlated with (in-a-dance-with)

the way the situation I am dealing with occurs for me.
What is Meant by “What You Are Dealing With”

“What You Are Dealing With” includes:

1. **The circumstances** **on** which you are acting

2. **The circumstances** **in** which you are acting on whatever you are acting on

3. **The way in which** **you** occur for yourself in acting on whatever you are acting on in the circumstances in which you are acting

Before we leave this section, get clear for yourself that when you are engaged with life there is nothing else to be dealt with. Those three things are all that there is.
1. **Circumstances On Which You Are Acting**

The circumstances *on which* you are acting are the circumstances that you are intending to impact with your actions.

For example, if you intend to impact someone’s performance (produce a breakthrough in that person’s performance), the circumstances *on which* you are acting are the actions of the person whose performance you intend to impact.

Of course, when you are acting on something, there are also circumstances *in which* you are acting on that something.
2. Circumstances In Which You Are Acting

The circumstances in which you are acting on something are the circumstances that make up the environment or surroundings in which you are acting on whatever you are acting on.

In the example of acting to impact someone’s performance, the circumstances in which you are acting are for example, the nature of your relationship with the person whose performance you intend to impact, and might also include your boss watching what you do to produce a breakthrough in that person’s performance.
3. The Way In Which **You** Occur For Yourself

The *way in which you occur for yourself* is the way you (your way of being) shows up for you *as a part of the situation in which you are acting*. (Remember that the situation in which you are acting includes whatever you are acting on and the circumstances in which you are acting, as well as the way in which you occur for yourself.)

In the example of acting to impact someone’s performance, the way in which you occur for yourself could be that your *mental state* is one of uncertainty, and your *emotional state* is one of feeling a bit angry, and your *bodily state* is one of tension, and your *thoughts* are ones of “he is not committed to increasing his performance” and “he doesn’t listen”.

3. The Way In Which You Occur For Yourself

It is important to be clear that here we are speaking about what is going on with you internally (your way of being), but in this case specifically as the way in which what is going on with you internally (your way of being) occurs for you as part of (integral to) the situation you are dealing with.

Saying the same thing in another way: We are talking about some combination of your mental state, emotional state, bodily state, and your thoughts and memories as part of the situation you are dealing with. This is different from the way we talked about what is going on with you internally (your way of being) earlier when we talked about it as being independent of (not part of) a situation you are dealing with.
It is important for you to be clear about the difference between these two perspectives on your Way of Being.

Earlier we spoke about your way of being as nothing more than what is going on with you internally that you might or might not be noticing, and here we are speaking about your way of being (what is going on with you internally) as a part of what you are dealing with.
EXERCISE

Discuss with a partner(s):

The way in which you occur for yourself as part of a leadership situation you are currently dealing with.
“What You Are Dealing With” includes each of the following:

1. The circumstances **on** which you are acting.

2. The circumstances **in** which you are acting on whatever you are acting on.

3. The **way in which you occur for yourself** when acting on whatever you are acting on in the circumstances in which you are acting.
BREAK ASSIGNMENT
Break Assignment

What You Are Dealing With

Regarding “What You Are Dealing With” in your leadership, how do each of the following occur for you?

a. The circumstances on which you are acting

b. The circumstances in which you are acting on whatever you are acting on

c. You yourself in acting on whatever you are acting on in the circumstances in which you are acting