

Finally Growing Up to Humanity's Adulthood!

Introduction

It seems like the Modern West has become socially schizophrenic.

We act like sophisticated, highly functional people for many types of activities. We use science to discover and manage the complex intricacies of our physical world. We develop technologies that provide amazing capabilities, especially with the many manifestations of our digital technologies. We engineer products that provide wonderful benefits. We produce many types of medicines including antibiotics and vaccines that overcome deadly illnesses and extend our longevity.

However, we also have another aspect to us where we exhibit a mix of pretending, delusions, and disorganized thinking and behavior. Hallucination-like certainties cause us to see things that aren't there. Tragically, this dysfunctional side of humanity keeps getting worse, so our future successes and well-being require that we understand why and fix that problem.

I have a long book manuscript drafted on fundamental causes of several dysfunctional issues we are struggling to manage, but most people are primarily interested in a small number of such topics. Therefore, in order to promulgate immediate solutions to currently impenetrable problems that are causing tragic descents in many aspects of our lives, I decided to create and make available free shorter articles aimed at specific areas, each of which will be of huge interest to a large group of people.

The material in these articles penetrates deeper into several important human-nature mechanisms than any previous effort and most importantly to a level that halts otherwise inevitable continued descents in many crucial aspects of our individual and collective lives. These articles then show how to replace those calamities with a revolutionary ascent to a greater future than humanity has ever experienced. This looks like, and indeed is, a grandiose claim, but you should become convinced in general terms as you read this Introduction and the Overview article, and then for specific topics in the other articles, how that is now possible. The new path described here is pragmatic, so it will be widely usable.

In our era of information overload and the search for quick fixes, many people gravitate to material identified as “x-minute read,” where x is supposed to be a small number to entice people to read an article. It is impossible to overcome the many chronic problems we are currently facing without breaking a bit of a sweat, so you need to engage in reading these articles if you want to have a desirable future for yourself and to participate effectively in constructing the type of country you want to live in.

This Introduction article identifies many issues that societies have failed to solve adequately, introduces the direction we must go to solve them, and shows why we have not solved them in the past. You can see a list of [articles](#) on specific troublesome topics that various groups will be interested in. I expect most people will find that more than one of these domain-specific articles will enable them to understand and manage problems that are increasingly bothering them.

The other foundational article, [Finally Growing Up to Humanity's Adulthood! Outline](#), provides the big picture of where we stand on the long slog of the development of Western societies and indeed of the maturation of the human species. It then explains why and how we must make significant transformational changes right now. It shows the path we must take to overcome our current descent from our previous greatness into mediocrity on many topics outside of our great technological prowess. It then lays out a direction to create a desirable future for ourselves and our posterity.

Over the next few months, I will post a series of articles, each of which will be of high interest to specific groups. An unavoidable turning point is underway in the West, and each article will address currently unsolvable problems in a specific domain. There are fundamental reasons why these problems have not been solved. We have lacked an empowering understanding of crucial aspects of human nature, and that has blocked our path to a better future. To understand the mental revolution that must take place now to avoid our continuing slide from greatness into mediocrity, you need to read this Introduction and then the Overview article, which provides a new view of the maturation of the human species and where we stand along that path. That will provide you with a foundation to understand and benefit from articles on specific topics of interest to you, including the collapse of democratic governments in the West and chronic problems lurking in the business world.

The West Is at an Inescapable Tipping Point

Have you ever failed to create lasting results from a New Year's resolution or a self-help program?

Those ubiquitous disappointments are just the visible tips of some massive hidden human-nature icebergs that are causing increasing failures in many aspects of modern societies. How can we continue to make amazing progress with science and technologies while simultaneously failing in many other aspects of our lives?

Mysterious mental mechanisms lurk beneath the surface of intentional human activities in the form of potent involuntary actions and thought patterns. Previous investigators have inadequately penetrated some crucial pathways of this dark subterranean labyrinth of human nature, which we finally illuminate in this series of articles.

Here is another conundrum that you may have experienced. Have you ever left work, got in your car, and then suddenly realized you were home without remembering ever driving there as if you were driving on autopilot? Once you understand some elusive and illusive aspects of the mind, you will know how that enigma, plus many other more-consequential mysterious activities, can happen.

The Status Quo Is Not Sustainable Across Many Topics

We have universal pre-college education and magnificent heavily attended universities with very smart research faculty, so how can we possibly be getting worse at any type of problem solving?

Science is our preeminent problem-solving process; why isn't it solving a large set of problems, some of which astonishingly continue to deteriorate?

To put us on a path to understand this debilitating dilemma, we should identify some of the problems that we are not solving adequately.

To remove this from a spectator sport for you and to get you on the field where you are playing the game, I strongly recommend you take a break from reading to identify troublesome human-activities problems in society that we are not solving adequately. After you work your way through that enlightening exercise, you can compare items on your list to the ones that I identify below.

We have reached a unique point in the course of human events where a massive transformation of the US, Western society, and other advanced nations is inevitable. Without a mental revolution, we will suffer increasingly dire consequences, as happened with all previous highly successful societies, while we idly and sadly continue watching ourselves deteriorate toward mediocrity. The current status quo cannot be sustained because we have hit an inflection point where we will either transform to an unprecedented higher level of successes and well-being or continue descending. That is a strong assertion that I justify in many ways in these articles.

Some Human Activities that Are Becoming Increasingly Damaging

I hope you created a robust list of types of human activities that we are not solving adequately. Following is a dozen items of highly troublesome to downright catastrophic problems that I identified. How many of these did you list? Did you recognize some that I missed?

Where Are We Failing?

1. Structurally collapsing democracies: checks and balances from Enlightenment are failing
2. Businesses failing and careers derailing at high rates – chronic leadership deficiencies
3. The press suffering increasing political-based assaults and losing unfair fights
4. Manipulating consecrated documents: e.g., US Constitution, Bible
5. Absence of effective mechanisms to make religions more-consistently beneficial for societies
6. Excessively high drug addictions
7. Rampant prisoner recidivism, particularly in US
8. Undermining of aspirational-values enactment and maintenance in our troubled times
9. Inadequate understanding/managing of revolutionary changes, including in business, society
10. No mind-level foundation for most academic research on social systems
11. Missing education-system processes to conquer the above problems: beyond STEM/STEAM
12. Reestablishing an unfair competitive advantage for democratic societies (and companies)

What can these diverse failing activities possibly have in common?

Following are some explanations of each currently troublesome issue identified above.

#1. Democracies destabilizing: Self-governance is on a slippery slope with several countries experiencing significant challenges. In NATO countries, Slovakia under Fico, Turkey under Erdogan, most illustrative of our dire situation, Hungary under Orbán have moved into so-called “illiberal” democracies, which in many respects operate like authoritarian regimes that maintain the façade of democracies. Italy is in the process of recapitulating Mussolini’s Fascism. France remains ever vulnerable with the Le Penn family always lurking in the background waiting to take over. Israel, while not part of the West, is closely aligned with it and is suffering through an assault on its democracy by its own prime minister. The multi-faceted attempt by the incumbent

to stop the peaceful transfer to the duly elected new president of the US, culminating in the infamous events of January 6, 2021, is the most dramatic example of an overt effort to overthrow a democracy in the West since Hitler took over Germany nearly a century ago. Our situation has become so unstable that it has induced discomfort in large numbers of citizens to the level that they would rather become stable chattel than enjoy the fruits of freedom and long-term prosperity and dignity by working their way through our problems. Their despair is understandable because we have not had adequate solutions to many problems plaguing them, so people often retreat to any form of stability when chaos and uncertainty prevail. That dire situation can now change because these articles show a viable path forward by reducing their discomfort through solving the underlying problems causing it.

#2. Business failures: A recent Mackenzie [report](#) showed the following depressing statistics. Median age of S&P top 10 in 2000: 85 years. Median age of S&P top 10 in 2018: 33 years. Average S&P 500 tenure by 2027 is projected to be 12 years. “Rather than a shortage of inspiration, we’ve observed that older companies’ main challenges are an excess of institutional control and an inability to scale up innovations...To overcome the scale-up challenge and respond to the threat of disruption, companies must rethink their operating model for innovation-led growth.” You will learn much more about fundamental leadership deficiencies that cause this disturbing result in the business article, including chronically lacking reliable capabilities to make repeated reconstructions to business models due to escalating disruptions in business environments. You will also gain access to the underlying distinction between management and leadership.

#3. Revitalize free press: Free press organizations in the West and particularly in the US are suffering from two types of problems. They are under assaults by people who want them to stop exposing their disinformation including Big Lies. They also suffer by engaging in unfair fights. They remain stuck in providing information to create helpful *knowledge*, while their detractors are relentlessly constructing erroneous *beliefs*. An article on this topic shows how to overcome both of these deficiencies to make the free press more effective in our troublesome times.

#4. Consecrated documents: Societies need to wake up to the fact that they do not, and realistically cannot, directly use their foundational documents. The article that addresses this topic examines the United States Constitution and the Bible as highly consequential examples. The United States Supreme Court produces a *meta-constitution* (i.e., a consecrated story about the Constitution that masquerades as the Constitution) that increasingly is highly politically skewed and sometimes seems to bear little association with the actual Constitution. Massive numbers of Christian sects, televangelists, mega-churches, and even local churches and individual worshippers have freedom to interpret the Bible. Because the Bible was written over a period of centuries, by people in different locations, and with different agendas, the result is anybody can select and interpret passages to support any issue they want to promulgate. That leaves us with an unlimited and chronically unmanaged number of *metabibles* (i.e., sacred stories about the Bible that masquerade as the Bible) that people use to guide, or more realistically to justify, their behaviors and beliefs. I dedicate an article to this topic because the current inability to recognize the meta-document-creation process and manage it is now long past the tipping point where it is creating widespread havoc in societies.

#5. Religion benefits: As with other types of human activities, we would do well to pay attention to how involuntary human activities relate to religions. It is common to assume that religious activities automatically provide positive benefits to individuals and societies. Fortunately, that has often happened in the past and frequently occurs today. Unfortunately, religions, including

Christianity, have also been used for nefarious purposes and are doing so today. To create an environment where religious groups have the means to make themselves more consistently beneficial for individuals and societies, this article identifies an explicit distinction between the *supernatural objects* of religions, such as the Christian Trinity and the Hindu Trimurti, and the *natural mental processes* of religions as acquired, practiced, and experienced. It then shows how to manage these natural aspects of religions.

#6. Drug addictions: According to a National Institute on Drugs and Addiction [report](#), 40 million people in the United States had a substance use disorder in 2020. In 2021, about 107 thousand people died of drug overdoses. Those numbers are tragic. Many organizations work hard on getting this epidemic under control, but so far with manifestly inadequate success. While the article in this series that focuses on drug addictions will not make much progress on recovery, it has the potential to make enormous improvements in *preventing* substance abuses.

#7. Prisoner recidivism: A 2021 [report](#) from the U.S. Department of Justice that followed over 400 thousand released prisoners for a decade showed that 43% were rearrested within the first year, 76% within 5 years, and a whopping 82% were arrested at least once during the 10 years following release. Since many sincere, hardworking people and organizations have failed to control this epidemic, we can safely conclude that something fundamental must be missing in the processes currently available. The prisoner recidivism article in this series outlines a novel approach that has the possibility to dramatically reduce this blight on society. It provides a means to greatly reduce the financial costs of re-incarcerations and of the crimes themselves, plus significantly lowering the social costs to victims and families of victims and perpetrators.

#8. Managing values: At their entry into the Modern West, most countries articulated a set of aspirational values. In the US, we have “all men [people] are created equal,” we are “the land of the free,” and we have the right to “liberty and justice for all.” These were aspirational values because for most of our history we did not actualize them for large groups of people. Shared values don't become effective in a society until they transform from thoughts to shared beliefs. The process of actualizing aspirational values has previously occurred slowly and often painfully through a poorly understood indirect construction or reconstruction process. That has made some of our hard-won shared values subject to more rapid deconstruction, as is happening now in our troubled times. As we move to the next level in the maturation of the human species, this is yet another area where we can take direct control of our lives by creating and sustaining the process of explicitly managing aspirational-values beliefs.

#9: Revolutionary changes: In his seminal book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn distinguished between *normal science* and *revolutionary science*. We need to expand Kuhn's potent insight into generalized problem solving and place it in a particular mental mechanism so we can leverage it much more effectively.

#10. Social “sciences”: The processes of science have consistently proven to be enormously effective at solving extremely complex problems. All of the increasingly troublesome problems above have been addressed by brilliant investigators in the social sciences disciplines. If the science methodology was adequate to solve these problems, they would have been conquered long ago. We need to draw a hard distinction between *physical-domain* and *mental-domain* problems. The human brain is a complex physical mechanism that science is ideally suited to understand and manage. **Since the human mind is a unique non-physical entity, we should suspect, and indeed it is the case, that we need a different type of theory to solve the above social-systems and personal-responsibilities problems.**

11. Education inadequacies: One of the great innovations of the Modern West was the creation of universal, taxpayer-funded pre-college education systems. Those mechanisms were necessary to produce knowledgeable citizens who could provide the people-power to fuel the industrial revolutions, and to create literate voters. The West also established magnificent universities that provided the intellectual horsepower to drive prosperity and well-being in the West. However, as so many aspects of our Western social structures crumble, the current knowledge-based education systems are no longer adequate. To raise up citizens who can manage our currently intractable problems, we need to add fundamentally new capabilities to pre-college and college processes. Educational systems have long focused on what they call STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) topics to provide the people-power to fuel our technology-driven society. Many perceptive educators have now suggested we switch from STEM to STEAM (adding art) to handle emerging needs. The education article identifies how we must add transformability to STEM and STEAM education to meet the requirements of the next phase of human development.

12. Unfair Advantage: The Science Revolution, along with the Enlightenment that underpinned self-governance, market economies, and personal freedoms, created the Modern West, which provided an unfair competitive advantage for the West that lasted for about two centuries. About a half-century ago, that competitive advantage started to atrophy as other parts of the world began catching up technologically and adopted market economies. It's now clear that democratic governments no longer provide a competitive advantage because of growing political dysfunction, and our personal freedoms also often work against us now due to massive manipulations. We must launch a new mental revolution of the same magnitude as the science revolution, but authoritarian regimes will soon make that transformation. Where then might the West find the means to recapture an unfair competitive advantage? This last article identifies what may be the only realistic possibility.

Human Nature: “A Riddle Wrapped in a Mystery Inside an Enigma”

That famous WWII statement by Winston Churchill aptly describes our current situation with respect to human nature. The currently unmanageable issues discussed above are all due to some enigmatic idiosyncrasies of human nature.

Evolution has blindly bequeathed us an extremely powerful but also a deeply mysterious mind. Astonishingly, **the human mind has so many enigmatic mechanisms that it has defied effective understanding and management until now** – a quarter of the way into the 21st century. These articles focus on overcoming that chronic barrier.

From a Dumbfounding Mystery to a Problem We Can Solve

Dr. Noam Chomsky, a famous linguist, has provided us with insight into that distinction, “Our ignorance can be divided into problems and mysteries. When we face a problem, we may not know its solution, but we have insight, increasing knowledge, and an inkling of what we are looking for. When we face a mystery, however, we can only stare in wonder and bewilderment, not knowing what an explanation would even look like.” Because we have lacked an

empowering theory of human nature, the issues in these articles appear as dumbfounding mysteries to most people.

Breaking Through Successive Barriers to Conquering Human Nature

We should all be surprised that highly educated and talented academics who have addressed solving our many intractable problems, including those listed above, have so far failed to achieve adequate results. After studying this dilemma for a very long time, I have determined that **human nature has evolved in such a way that it hides many consequential properties of human nature from us**. The aspects of human nature that have eluded our effective understanding and management are both devastatingly *elusive* and dumbfoundingly *illusive*, and you will learn about these two types of barriers to success below. Unfortunately, this has led to a chronic lack of capabilities, as illustrated by the many unsolvable problems listed above, which has now set the US and the rest of the West on a systemic descent from greatness to mediocrity. You will learn as you read on that **we have no path to a desirable destiny in the West unless we finally conquer some mysterious aspects of human nature**. Following is a list of barriers to understanding human nature that we will methodically and successively break through until we crack the code on our devastating lack of understanding of mysterious aspects of the mind.

Barrier #1: Myopia – seeing only isolated parts of our chronic deficiencies

- Many helpful insights, but fundamental solution missing
- Narrowly focused research blinds us to root causes of our problems

Barrier #2: We sometimes act like a robot, don't we?

- We must explicitly acknowledge that we operate in *two distinct modes*
- Our automatic mode is highly *elusive* – we cannot observe its internal processes

Barrier #3: This advance is a no-brainer

- When researchers say they are addressing the mind, they often focus on the brain
- We need to draw a clear distinction between the mind and brain, and focus on the mind

Barrier #4: Surprise – we can't solve all our difficult problems with science

- Our problem-solving processes are effective within specific *domains*
- We must recognize that the human mind is outside the *domain of effectiveness* of science

Barrier #5: It's all in your mind

- Solving problems in the *physical* world vs. *mental* world, particularly our automatic mode
- 2Selves Theory is the only extant mechanism to adequately solve our human-nature problems

Barrier #6: Our deep certainties are all true, aren't they?

- In addition to being elusive, this mental mechanism is devastatingly *illusive*
- ***Certainty illusions are the most devastating obstacle to a better future – they deceive us***

Barrier #7: Worldviews determine progress! How?

- *Worldviews* are a specific incarnation of certainty illusions
- Behind the scenes, worldviews determine what we can understand and manage effectively

Barrier #8: *Comfort imperative* blocks transforming ourselves, our society

- We gravitate toward pleasure, but we chronically flee discomfort – we fall for *simplistic solutions*
- Apply the *counteracting principle* to overcome transformational-change discomfort

Following are explanations and solutions for each of these barriers, which we must now finally break through in order to head off a dismal future and replace it with a wonderful one.

Barrier #1: Myopia – Seeing Only Isolated Parts of Our Chronic Deficiencies

I have interacted with many university researchers who are very smart and accomplished, but most struggle when faced with the problems listed in this article. As researchers get increasingly better at any topic, they typically become more specialized. As a result, most scholars have focused on specific parts of human nature. We need a holistic, overarching approach – a comprehensive view of the nature of this elephant in the room.

The ancient parable of the blind men and the elephant can provide us insights into our current mental myopia with respect to understanding crucial aspects of human nature. In this parable, the blind men each grabbed hold of a different part of the elephant and drew erroneous assumptions about the nature of the elephant.

We use our well-honed thinking abilities to tell stories (describe, explain) about something we want to understand. I use stylized anthropomorphic (human-like) light bulbs to represent our thinking mode.¹

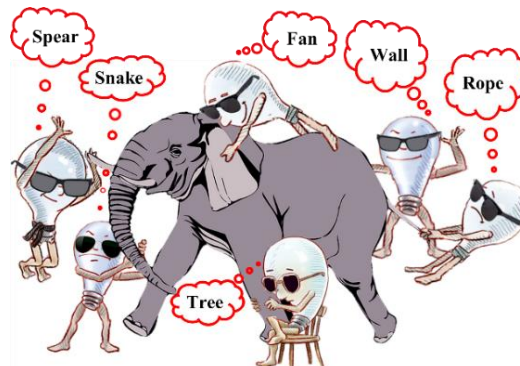
We Think Very Effectively



You are doing that now!

I employ blind light bulbs as the icons for the blind men in the following diagram to illustrate the conclusions they drew.

Blind Men and Elephant Parable



Another way to view this blind men and elephant parable is through a clever poem written by the American, John Godfrey Saxe, a century and a half ago.

¹ Versions of stylized lightbulb and robot images are from the artist Dan Nelson, with some image manipulations by the author.

Blind Men and Elephant Poem

<p>It was six men of Indostan To learning much inclined, Who went to see the Elephant (Though all of them were blind), That each by observation Might satisfy his mind.</p> <p>The First approached the Elephant, And happening to fall Against his broad and sturdy side, At once began to bawl: 'God bless me! but the Elephant Is very like a wall!'</p> <p>The Second, feeling of the tusk, Cried, 'Ho! what have we here So very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear This wonder of an Elephant Is very like a spear!'</p> <p>The Third approached the animal, And happening to take The squirming trunk within his hands, Thus boldly up and spake: 'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant Is very like a snake.'</p>	<p>The Fourth reached out his eager hand, And felt about the knee. 'What most this wondrous beast is like Is mighty plain,' quoth he; 'Tis clear enough the Elephant Is very like a tree!'</p> <p>The Fifth who chanced to touch the ear, Said: 'Even the blindest man Can tell what this resembles most: Deny the fact who can, This marvel of an Elephant Is very like a fan!'</p> <p>The Sixth no sooner had begun About the beast to grope, Than, seizing on the swinging tail That fell within his scope, 'I see,' quoth he, 'the Elephant Is very like a rope!'</p> <p>And so these men of Indostan Disputed loud and long, Each in his own opinion Exceeding stiff and strong, Though each was partly in the right, And all were in the wrong!</p>
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The following table lists some inspired insights into involuntary activities published over the last century.

Published Insights into Something Mysterious Going On

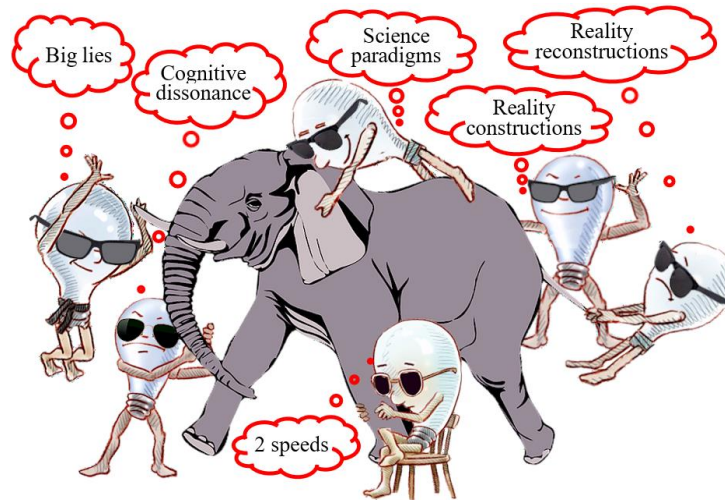
Enigmatic Mental Issues	Book Title	Authors	Date
Big lies	<i>Mein Kampf</i>	Adolf Hitler	1925
Cognitive dissonance	<i>A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance</i>	Leon Festinger	1957
Science paradigms	<i>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</i>	Thomas Kuhn	1962
Reality constructions	<i>The Social Construction of Reality</i>	Berger & Luckmann	1966
Reality reconstructions	<i>Snapping</i>	Conway & Siegelman	1978
Two processing speeds	<i>Thinking, Fast and Slow</i>	Daniel Kahneman	2013

The next diagram incorporates the penetrating insights into mysterious aspects of human nature listed in the above table.

These insights provided helpful steps in understanding the mental mechanisms responsible for our intractable problems, but each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong because they missed the big picture, or root cause, of our mental myopia.

I started trying to solve mysteries in business, particularly bad behaviors and culture rigor mortis, but soon realized that something fundamental was missing that indicated a general lack of understanding of some mysterious aspects of human nature, which I assumed must also occur elsewhere. Accordingly, I amassed a huge personal library over several years, and I investigated enigmas in many additional disciplines including politics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, philosophy, religion, values, education, history, and science paradigm shifts.

Noticing Enigmatic Human-Nature Parts While Missing the Whole



This barrier is situational – it is caused by the way we have organized ourselves to solve our perplexing problems. The remaining barriers result from poorly understood and managed human-nature properties.

That takes us to our next human-nature barrier to solving our mysteriously troublesome problems, our very shy “robot within.”

Barrier #2: We Sometimes Act Like a Robot, Don't We?

As I investigated, one common human-nature mechanism appeared as a source of unsolvable problems across all of the diverse types of activities – **we have an automatic mode to us that we neither understand well nor manage even close to adequately.**

We must face the fact that we exist in two distinct modes, which operate independently. Sometimes they complement each other and other times they oppose each other in the course of our life's activities.

We have become so amazingly good at using our thinking mode to solve many complex problems that we have now created technologies and products that overwhelm our automatic mode's capability to accommodate them.

The *abilities mismatch* between our outstanding abilities to manage the physical world and our anemic abilities to manage the mental-world ramifications of our technological progress is a fundamental cause of our growing suite of currently unsolvable problems.

I use stylized robots to represent our automatic mode – our “robot within.”

This robot-within is the most consequential source of human-nature mysteries for us, which repeatedly blocks us from reversing the dreadful descent in many aspects of our individual and shared lives.

We already acknowledge the existence of this involuntary mode, directly through psychology's unconscious and subconscious theories, and indirectly through such other concepts as tacit

knowledge, implicit bias, and the enigmatic “box” that mysteriously we have so much trouble thinking outside of.

Our Two Modes



Thinking Mode



Automatic Mode

We operate effectively within an intentional, explicit-knowledge, transparent thinking mode. However, we also have an unintentional, implicit-knowledge, opaque automatic mode. In the Modern West, through mandatory early-life education and via excellent universities, we maximize the effectiveness of our thinking mode. However, we have made only meager progress in understanding and managing our automatic mode.

Most involuntary activities are elusive because their mechanisms operate outside of our awareness – they elude detection. **Other people, and surprisingly even we, cannot see what is happening in this involuntary part of our mind**, making it very difficult to understand and manage stealth automatic activities. In organizations, we use a 360°, or multi-rater, survey to enable us to become *aware* of our behavior habits. To *observe* our involuntary behavior habits as we enact them, so we can create the possibility of reconstructing counterproductive ones, is much more difficult. That process usually requires a professional transformation coach to make it happen for crucial leaders and individual contributors in organizations. The equivalent in personal lives would be a therapist or counselor. Our counterproductive and sometimes dysfunctional certainties create an even greater barrier to future successes than our problematic behavior habits.

Why has it been so difficult to conquer our automatic mode? That takes us to our third human-nature barrier to solving our mysteriously troublesome activities.

Barrier #3: This Advance Is a No-Brainer

All too often, when scholars say they are addressing the mind, they actually focus on the brain. The human brain is an extremely complex physical mechanism that resides in our head. The human mind is a magnificently powerful non-physical mechanism that emanates from brain functions. As such, changes in the physical brain can alter mental functions. Surprisingly to many people, changes to mental functions can also alter brain structures. This entire set of articles focuses on understanding and managing the human mind, independent of the brain’s role.

You, and a critical mass of others in the West, must learn to understand and manage the mind in order to reverse the long-term trend toward overall mediocrity in spite of – or more frighteningly, because of – amazing technological advances.

We are failing in many types of activities because the West has neglected to draw an explicit distinction between the brain and mind, and focus concerted efforts on understanding and managing the human mind.

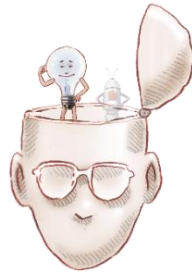
The Human Brain



Scientists have revealed a lot about our *physical brain*

Unfortunately, investigators have not revealed a sufficient amount about the mind to empower us to solve our growing suite of intractable problems.

The Human Mind



We currently have an inadequate understanding of our *non-physical mind*

To construct a desirable future for ourselves and our posterity, we must now make revolutionary improvements in how we understand and manage the human mind.

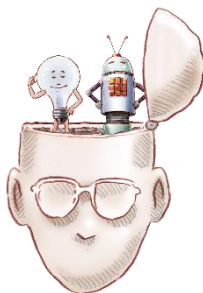
Discovering Hidden Artifacts of the Mind



We need to act like archeologists excavating buried mental artifacts

The following image shows our newfound solid access to the two distinct modes of the mind.

Robust View of Our Two Modes



The next advance in the maturation of the human species will come from understanding and managing our automatic mode as well as we now do with our thinking mode.

By focusing on the mind, we do not need to burden ourselves with such complex brain functions as neurons, the neuronal electrophysiology of brain cells, or the top-level parts of the brain such as the cerebral cortex and the cerebrum. The same is true for the deeper structures within the brain including the amygdala, hippocampus, and limbic system. Instead, we need to focus on such mind functions as hopes, intentions, internal certainties, and how otherwise smart people can so easily fall for simplistic solutions and deeply believe assertions that are verifiably false.

As a result of switching focus to the mind, our performance-improvement techniques are not such brain-related interventions as psychoactive drugs, brain surgery, or transcranial magnetic stimulation. Instead, our improvement mechanisms employ mind-focused processes such as becoming self-aware, committing to goals, declaring intentions, inducing positive and negative feelings, and revealing and sometimes reconstructing hidden contents of internal certainties. In business, this empowers us to improve leadership capabilities, transform errant behaviors, and change obsolete or dysfunctional cultures. **Our large class of inadequately solved problems are much easier to grasp (both understand and grab hold of) at the mind level than focusing on their brain underpinnings.**

So, we need to focus on the mind, and science is our premier problem-solving mechanism, so why hasn't it solved the intractable problems listed above? That takes us to our fourth human-nature barrier to overcoming our mysteriously troublesome activities.

Barrier #4: Surprise – We Can't Solve All Our Difficult Problems with Science

If we look carefully, we can notice that the types of problems we solve effectively exist in the *physical* domain. We use our thinking mode to solve these problems. That is why researchers often erroneously focus on the brain, when the need is to manage the mind, because the physical brain is where science is effective. **The common denominator of our most troublesome mysterious problems turns out to be widespread elusive and illusive activities emanating from the *mental* domain.** More precisely, we have lacked adequate root-cause theories and improvement processes to make systematic transformations of the automatic mode of the mind when it stands in the way of our successes.

We have no path to a successful future unless we now explicitly recognize, comprehensively understand, and systematically manage our involuntary mode. These articles provide not just a path but a roadmap through some uncharted morasses of our previously inscrutable automatic mode.

Science has been our preeminent problem-solving process since the Science Revolution, which was the main transformation that launched the Modern West. Because science has been so enormously successful, the West now has a deeply embedded overarching worldview that causes most investigators to tenaciously believe that science is the only way to solve all of our difficult problems. Unfortunately, that tenacious underlying assumption, born out of the traumatic battle when science had to claw the understanding and management of the physical world away from religion, has now become a major cause of our inability to solve our growing intractable problems. Science is highly effective for solving physical-world problems, but **our currently unsolvable problems are in the mental world, which we now must bravely face is outside of the domain of effectiveness for science.**

After we overcome the barrier of recognizing that science will not solve our current intractable problems, we need a new type of process to solve our mental-world problems. That takes us to our fifth human-nature barrier to solving our mysteriously troublesome problems.

Barrier #5: It's All in Your Mind

We now have the opportunity to solve problems and make enormous progress concerning the mental world because we finally can operate there at the root-cause level for a wide range of human activities by creating a generalized theory of the human mind.

As we become accustomed to explicitly recognizing that we operate in two distinct modes, it can empower us to understand how to manage both modes better if we assume that we operate as two “selves.” We have a *thinking-self* and an automatic self, or to make it shorter, an *auto-self*.

There's an elephant in the room that we keep ignoring, which is the cause of the many intractable problems we have identified.

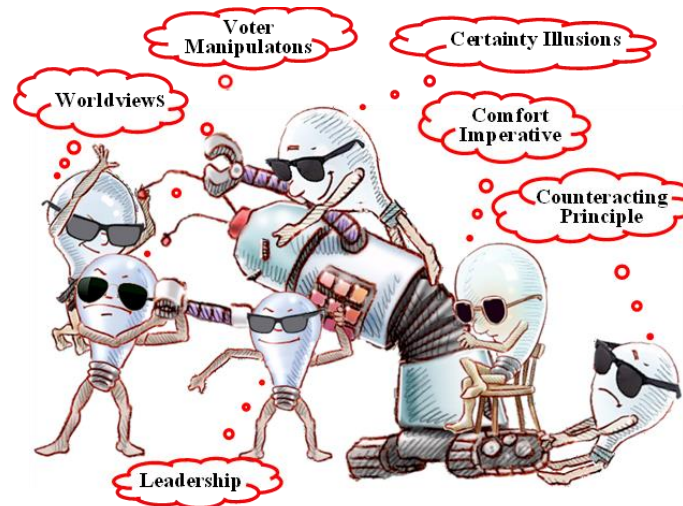
We cannot reverse our downward slide and construct a desirable future until we solve this enigmatic elephant problem. Fortunately, from what you've already seen, plus some key concepts you will soon learn, we can now recognize that this mysterious aspect of human nature is actually our auto-self. The following diagram replaces the elephant in the blind-men parable with the robot we use to represent the auto-self.

The human mind is a unique non-physical phenomenon in the universe, so it should not surprise us that we need a unique theory to master it. Experts in many disciplines have achieved highly useful insights into what lies beyond the foggy boundaries of key aspects of human nature, but each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong! **2Selves Theory empowers us to occupy the territory beyond the previously impenetrable auto-self frontier of human nature.**

Inhabiting that new mental terrain will empower us to reach unprecedented levels of prosperity, well-being, and useful control over other aspects of our lives. This new 2Selves Theory models the nature of, and interactions between, our thinking-self and our auto-self.

2Selves Theory has the potential to produce a stupendously beneficial social revolution because it now systematically solves problems in the mental domain as effectively as the Science Revolution enabled us to methodically conquer problems in the physical domain.

Assembling Disparate Insights



The human mind has many enigmatic properties. We must focus our attention to make progress.

Primary Involuntary Activities that We Must Conquer Now

Behavior habits

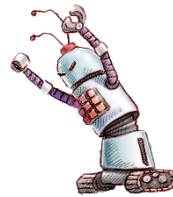
Succumb to simplistic solutions (Barrier #8)
Undermine thinking-self intentions

Barriers to actions



Comfort imperative (#8)
Debilitating procrastination
Impairs efforts of self

Overbearing actions

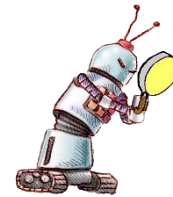


Intimidations
Dysfunctional bullying
Impairs efforts of others

Certainty illusions

Succumb to disinformation (#6)
The “mind’s eye”

Untethered realities



Worldviews (#7)
Paradigms; Business cultures
Chronic pretending

2Selfs Theory recognizes four auto-self types:

- *Auto-behaviors* [aggression, bullying, procrastination, fear (e.g., of failure, embarrassment)]
- *Auto-contexts* [certainty illusions: worldviews, paradigms, business cultures, mental lenses]
- *Auto-expertise* [intuition, Jack Welch’s “gut,” seeing repeated patterns holistically]
- *Auto-skills* [sports, music, evocative nonverbal communications]

For the purposes of solving the problems identified above, we will focus on just two auto-self types: auto-behaviors and auto-contexts. Because these articles are aimed at a wide audience of people who want to solve pragmatic problems but are not interested in becoming experts on human nature, we will refer to these auto-self types in more intuitively appealing terms as behavior habits and *certainty illusions*.

In our troubled times, unreliable information is becoming increasingly destructive. While often used interchangeably in the press, there are two different types of suspect information that we will do well to distinguish. *Misinformation* is a frequent manipulation ploy. Additionally, many groups, including the mainline press, exaggerate; they hype an issue, and they avoid other

possibilities. *Disinformation* is different because it asserts a point that opposes known or knowable facts. It is possible to propagate disinformation innocently for a short time until someone points out it does not correspond with known facts. A huge problem we now face is that many malicious perpetrators are getting rich and gaining power by deliberately spewing disinformation.

As you should now realize, **disinformation, including whopper big lies, propagated repeatedly with attached feelings, constructs potent *certainty delusions***, which are certainty illusions that verifiably do not correspond with facts in the world. Some politicians have raised constructing certainty delusions to an art form. **We have no hope of sustaining the viability of self-governing systems until we overcome this widespread, highly dysfunctional certainty-delusion construction process based on relentlessly propagating disinformation.**

Now that we have methodically penetrated the formidable barriers of seeing only isolated parts of the human-nature foibles creating our many unsolved problems, explicitly acknowledging that we have a second robot-like automatic mode, focusing directly on the mind, recognizing that science cannot solve the problems addressed here, and outlining a new robust theory of the mind, where do we go next? The sixth barrier that we must break through to conquer our many intractable problems is devastatingly deceptive. **Certainty illusions create the greatest mental challenge humankind has faced since overcoming the deep belief that capricious supernatural forces control the physical world, which launched the Modern West.**

Barrier #6: Our Deeply Experienced Certainties Are All True – Aren't They?

In what is the greatest and most inaccessible mystery of human nature, **the social environment imperceptibly constructs certainties hidden within our automatic mode that operate independent of any correspondence with facts or with success needs, and that are often opposed to established facts.**

Ubiquitous digital media is making this problem increasingly destructive to our future due to relentless manipulations by naïve exploitive actors and malicious charlatans for their own power and fortune. This has led to a culture of chronic pretending induced in victims, especially in politics, but it also happened spectacularly in business as you can learn about in the business leadership article.

Exposing the increasingly dysfunctional aspects of our certainty illusions creates cognitive dissonance, resulting in deep discomfort, so **most people, most of the time, tenaciously resist examining their internal certainties.** Our successes and well-being could withstand that reflexive mind phobia until recently. Now, failing to penetrate deeply into this potent human-nature property of involuntary activities will cause individuals, businesses, and even whole societies to continue staggering down a path of lost opportunities and increasing mediocrity.

Internal certainties do not automatically create external facts nor align with success needs, although most people reflexively act as if they do. Our goal has to be the opposite – to align our internal certainties with external realities. Because we live in a rapidly changing world, that will require that we learn to make systematic and increasingly frequent reconstructions of our devastatingly powerful certainty illusions, especially in business.

Certainty illusions are the most important human-nature mechanism that stands in the way of an optimistic destiny for the West. They are the epitome of a riddle wrapped in a

mystery inside an enigma – trapped within a stealth conundrum, which gets imperceptibly constructed in us!

A major reason we have not solved the mystery of certainty illusions is that most people passionately do not want to even address them, much less take action to reconstruct the ones that are demonstrably certainty delusions. **A quirk of human nature causes us to experience our constructed certainty-illusions as profound realities even though we are well aware that many people embrace such realities that verifiably do not correspond with realities outside of their mind.** The Modern West failed to conquer the difference between realities “out there” and those that exist only “in here,” which was a devastating flaw in its underlying structure.

“That Is How We Do It Here.”

As I was leading a culture-change workshop for top leaders of a mid-size engine design and manufacturing company that included how certainty illusions operate, Chris, who was the director of a design function, got an ah-ha moment, which he courageously shared with us. He said that an intern came to him some time ago to ask why they used a specific process. Chris said he explained to the intern, “That is how we do it here.” When the intern asked him again later, Chris reported being annoyed and telling him, “That’s just the way we do it, stop worrying about it, and get on with your assignment.” The intern later mustered the courage to come back for a third try, only this time he told Chris that he realized he was just an intern but that he was there to learn, and he just could not figure out why they used that process.

The intern said that he would appreciate it if Chris would take the time to explain why they used the process they did. Chris reported that finally out of frustration he decided to sit down with the intern and explain it to him so that the intern would get off his back. This is where Chris bravely revealed to the assembled group of his peers and his boss his astonishment to realize he could not explain it at all. He said it was obvious to him that the current process was the correct one to use, but when he examined it closely, he couldn’t explain why. Chris finally figured out that he had probably learned the process when he started with the company many years earlier and just accepted it without question.

When Chris finally made his assumptions behind the process in question explicit, he was able to analyze them with the intern and realize that although the process did work, or else they would have encountered a problem with results, it wasn’t optimum, and a better process was available. Chris said that learning about certainty illusions was liberating. It enabled him to understand what happened because he was dumbstruck when it occurred. He could not understand how he could be so certain about something that turned out to be wrong.

Chris also revealed that this activity caused him a great deal of discomfort. I used this disclosure to explain to Chris and the other participants that this was a quintessential example of cognitive dissonance, which created confusion and discomfort when information forced on him by the intern contradicted an internal belief in the form of a cultural element buried in a certainty illusion. Cognitive dissonance routinely occurs when unavoidable thinking-self-based information collides with auto-self-based beliefs, as for instance most people experience when confronted with the results of a 360° survey. I was then able to use Chris’s gutsy disclosure to help others in the workshop understand that certainty illusions, and particularly shared ones that affect them in the form of professional worldviews or elements of an organization’s culture, are hidden assumptions and beliefs that appear to us as the way things “really are” or as “the way we do it.” Chris’s story also helped the participants understand that once we can make our hidden

assumptions explicit, we can test them, which creates the opportunity to reconstruct them if they do not support our success and well-being needs.

Two Forms of “Truth”?

Here is another insight into certainty-illusion mysteries. People in my network know that I have created a theory about the mind, so they ask me how can people possibly believe the many Big Lies currently being told by politicians? They specifically ask how could millions of people be made to believe that the 2020 US presidential election was stolen from Trump when there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary? The answer lies in **an overwhelmingly dumbfounding human-nature oddity that causes us to have two distinct forms of what we consider to be “truth.”**

This failure to distinguish between unrelated mechanisms that people label as “truth” should give us painful insight that **we frequently do not operate at the overall adult problem-solving maturity level in the West that we have long congratulated ourselves we had attained.** You will learn much more about this chronic deficiency in the Overview article. The failure to distinguish between two distinct ways we experience truth causes massive confusion and invites easy manipulations. To extricate ourselves from the massive problems associated with two radically different forms of truth, we need to name them and refer to these specific forms rather than the generic name of “true.”

Most people assume, at least implicitly, that when something is true, it corresponds to some fact in the world – to something that is “out there;” that is, outside of our mind. For instance, someone could assert that it is true that “my name is John Doe and that I live in My Town” or “the earth is not the center of the universe.” Those statements would normally correspond with verifiable facts of that person’s life, which driver’s license agencies strive to verify, and would correspond to the physical world. A major characteristic of this form of truth is the absence of knockout contradictions, or anomalies, when searching for correspondence with facts “out there.” We refer to this type of truth as the *correspondence verification*, or *correspondence* for short, form of truth. We use our thinking-self to verify that an assertion corresponds with external (that is, outside of our internal mental states) reality using such mechanisms as science, formal logic, and the examination of documentary evidence.

If that was the only form of truth we had to deal with, our lives would work much better and many of our social systems would not be in decline. This is where 2Selves Theory powerfully helps us because we can view this as the thinking-self form of truth. As a cruel trick evolution has blindly foisted on us, **humans experience a radically different and overwhelmingly potent form of truth that relies on an auto-self mechanism, and societies have failed to recognize and manage this mechanism to our increasingly grave and widespread detriment.**

The auto-self creates this second form of truth through embedding it as a certainty illusion. Not surprisingly, if we feel certain about assumptions, assertions, or theories buried within our auto-self, then we automatically experience the contents of these certainty illusions as profoundly true. We do that independent of correspondence with any facts out-there or alignment with our successes, prosperity, security, and dignity needs. This applies broadly, including for professional worldviews, science paradigms, business cultures, self-images, and attitudes. We refer to this type of truth as the *certainty construction*, or *constructed* for short, form of truth.

Two distinct mental mechanisms, one that relies on using our thinking-self to verify that an assertion corresponds with facts in the world outside of the mind and one that is constructed in the auto-self that operates independent of any correspondence with external realities, create a form of split reality. The thinking-self correspondence version focuses on actual realities. The auto-self constructed version is subject to increasing manipulations and therefore often results in certainty delusions.

There is an old adage that states, “seeing is believing.” We now live in a world of widespread certainty-illusion, and tragically certain-delusion, constructions to the point where we can create a new adage, “believing is seeing.” That mental aberration has always been with us, but as we strive to achieve an adult level of being, we must now explicitly acknowledge that chronic confusion and teach people to manage it, which is yet another example of a human-nature albatross we must rid ourselves of.

If forced to confront the correspondence form of truth that contradicts a certainty illusion, cognitive dissonance sets in, which routinely causes people to reject actual realities. That is what happened with Chris in the story just recounted, and that always occurred during the many 360° surveys I have conducted.

We now need to focus on a particular form of certainty illusions that determines fundamental ascents and descents at all problem-solving levels including for your personal and professional life and for nations and groups of aligned nations such as the West. We will now turn our attention to our penultimate barrier to conquering human nature, in the form of success-controlling worldviews.

Barrier #7: Worldviews Determine Progress! How?

Many people will look at the long list of currently intractable problems and conclude they are fundamentally unsolvable – they are destined to remain Chomsky-type mysteries. However, **it is not a fundamental aspect of human nature that we cannot solve these currently intractable problems but rather a quirk of human nature that makes it extremely difficult to envision and enact revolutionary advances.** That mental oddity turns out to be worldviews that have been imperceptibly constructed into the certainty-illusion part of our collective minds that frame what reality means to us.

Worldview is a common term (sometimes rendered “world view” or “world-view”). We will use the term worldviews in these articles to mean specific incarnations of certainty illusions. They provide stealth assumptions about some domain, including at the business and even societal levels, which become the foundation for solving problems. Worldviews are a generalization of Thomas Kuhn’s concept of science paradigms, which now becomes **normal problem-solving occurs within an established worldview, whereas revolutionary problem-solving requires reconstructing a prevailing worldview.**

Here is a different stupefying conundrum we now face, which has contributed to blocking badly needed progress: **Managing worldviews is one of the breakthroughs we need, and we need a new worldview to create that breakthrough!**

Because we have so many unsolved and currently unsolvable problems, it might occur to us that, in casual terms, we need a paradigm shift in how we are going about addressing these issues. To take this informal approach still further, we need a paradigm shift in how we understand and

manage paradigms and paradigm shifts. In 2Selves Theory terms, **we need a worldview reconstruction regarding how we understand and manage worldviews and worldview transformation, and therefore fundamental progress.**

For more than a tragic millennium, our Dark Age ancestors did not realize they were in a mental prison concerning understanding and managing the physical world they lived in, to their enormous suffering. They finally escaped that mental prison when, after a long, painful battle, the West finally constructed and widely propagated a science worldview.

Likewise, most current citizens do not realize they are trapped in a different type of mental prison regarding understanding and managing crucial aspects of human nature, to their (our!) massive impairment. A major reason we are currently in a catastrophic societal descent is because **an incapacitating property of the human-nature mental myopia we are trapped in is that it blocks us from recognizing we are trapped in a debilitating form of mental myopia!** We will finally escape that mental prison when the West constructs and widely propagates *2Selves Worldview*, which will happen with repeated successful application of 2Selves Theory.

Worldviews provide us with a way to look at Chomsky's distinction between a mystery and a problem at the mental level. An issue we need to handle works as a problem for us that we can solve if we have an enabling worldview. A mystery occurs when we do not have a worldview that empowers us to understand the nature of the issue, and therefore we cannot create an effective process for attacking it, compounded by not even recognizing that we have this debilitating deficiency. That is why most of the currently unsolvable problems identified above appear to most people as mysteries. That situation will change once we propagate 2Selves Worldview!

Another advance that conquering worldviews provides is to acquire new and very powerful capabilities to understand and finally directly manage revolutionary progress. That is the main topic of the Overview article, which builds a series of revolutionary progress and regress maps for the West. That provides new empowering visibility to the fundamental descent the entire West is suffering through now. This development also shows how to escape our descent into mediocrity and elevate ourselves to a new way of being that will provide a magnificent West-wide ascent equivalent to that of the Science Revolution.

Even with a theory that explains how the mind operates, we still have a major barrier remaining to conquer success-undermining mechanisms of human nature because understanding certainty illusions does little to empower people to transform them, which is Barrier #8, where we now turn our attention.

Barrier #8: *Comfort Imperative* Blocks Transforming Ourselves, Our Society

Let's get you back on the playing field. Before you read on, try to list parallel, contrasting types of activities that our thinking-self and our auto-self execute. Here is an example to get you started: we notice what our thinking mode does, but we are oblivious to most of our automatic-mode activities. Please create a robust list of distinctions between how our thinking-self and auto-self handle similar types of activities!

Now, compare your list to the one below.

How many types were you able to identify?

Some of these distinguishing features should be obvious to you now. We will not analyze the rest in this article. You will become familiar with them as you read other articles where applying these distinctions will help you understand and manage hidden aspects of human nature.

Expert transformational coaches need to learn about many details of 2Selves Theory. However, for people reading these articles wanting to get a handle on mysterious aspects of human activities and learn to take actions to overcome the most dysfunctional ones that impact them, we will keep it simple by focusing on three paramount aspects of human nature.

Key Distinguishing Features of Our Two Distinct Modes

Property	Thinking-Self	Auto-Self
Visibility	Center of awareness, attention	<i>Elusive</i> : stealthy, opaque
Realities	Malleable thoughts/knowledge that connect with external realities	<i>Illusive</i> : rigid certainties/beliefs that operate independent of external realities
Control	Takes actions through <i>intentions</i>	Enables/blocks/drives actions through <i>feelings</i>
Empowerment	Solves specific types of problems	<i>Worldviews</i> frame types of problems solvable
Simultaneity	Sequential; one action at a time	Parallel; many simultaneous activities
Complexity types	Solves unique problems slowly	Handles routine, repeated activities rapidly
Communications	Verbal: informative	Nonverbal: evocative
Truth types	Correspondence	Constructed
Improvement process	Education systems: turn information into knowledge	Transformations: overcome comfort imperative, use counteracting principle
Our prowess How conquered?	We are very effective at managing Science Revolution	We are increasingly ineffective at managing Mental revolution needed

We will focus on:

- **Certainty illusions** and their major offspring, worldviews
- The **comfort imperative** and its results of simplistic solutions and transformation blockage
- The **counteracting principle** to overcome unfair fights

Experiencing Needed Transformations from Divergent Perspectives

Because human nature is elusive and illusive, it can be exceedingly difficult for people to gain empowering access to its intricacies. To aid understanding various aspects of involuntary activities, the articles after this Introduction and the Overview provide information and insights in the form of a dialogue among four people who had intense interactions over an extended period conducted in person at first and then via chat sessions after the COVID pandemic hit.

Becky is an HR business leader focused on talent, leadership, and organization development in a medium-size IT company. She worked her way up the management ranks to where she became just one level away from the C-suite, reporting to the EVP of HR. Becky comes from a conservative political family from the old US Republican Party. Her parents were Reagan Republicans, and she supported George Bush. She belongs to a mainline Protestant denomination. Becky has a calm, non-confrontational demeanor.

Travis is an attorney. Lacking relevant experience, he did not add significantly to discussions on deficiencies in business leadership, but he made valuable contributions to other topics. He is progressive politically and secular religiously. He deeply believes that the MAGA movement is destroying American democracy. He also likes to criticize some of the excesses of religions. He can be quite aggressive in arguing about his positions.

Rob is a Joe-six-pack type of person. He is an enthusiastic MAGA supporter and, like Travis, can be quite forceful in asserting his beliefs. He is an evangelical Christian and sees no contradiction with that and some of the positions of the MAGA movement. Rob is Becky's cousin, and she invited him to join us in our discussions on various topics related to involuntary human activities to provide a working-class perspective.

I participate in the dialog as Barry. I am the expert on involuntary activities and particularly certainty illusions and the comfort imperative, so I guide much of the discussions. I act as an advocate for understanding and managing mysterious aspects of human nature and try hard to serve as a neutral moderator when it comes to controversial issues. Except for me, the other names are pseudonyms to protect anonymity in these troubled times.

Here is recount of a conversation with a person very dear to me on the eve of the 2024 US presidential election. He said he could not believe that projections were still for a close result. He lamented that so many people believed such utter lies coming from Trump and his acolytes. He further stated that he expected that the US would have to go through a traumatic destruction of many societal benefits until we could rebuild ourselves again. He also discussed a mutual friend whose family is deeply involved in evangelical Christianity, and he wondered if they all supported Trump even though they have always been moral people and Trump seems to epitomize depraved immorality. I tried to comfort him by revealing I was working on this series of articles that will provide the only currently available mechanism to keep the US and indeed the West from sinking further into dysfunction, which we agreed was running rampant.

After this set of articles gains traction on specific topics, I may roll out a book that covers all of them and much more so that people can attain a robust view from the big picture to specific details of how we must now conquer automatic human activities. That will explain with greater forcefulness why what we can fruitfully see as the 2Selfs Revolution is now required to create a desirable destiny for the West. In the meantime, you can look forward to seeing additional articles appear over time.

Why do I claim that we in the US, elsewhere in the West, and indeed for humanity are not solving, and are chronically unable to solve, our pressing problems like mature adults right now? Go to the [Overview](#) article to find out.

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